

VANDERVEN ORIENTAL ART



Stone Drummer

Stone | Height: 49.3 cm | China, Sichuan, Eastern Han Dynasty (25 - 220 AD)

Provenance:

- With Galerie J. Barrère, Paris 1998
- J.J. Studzinsky CBE Collection, United Kingdom 2019

This very rare carved stone figure of an entertainer, is captured whilst performing. He has a very exaggerated facial expression, head thrown back, forehead wrinkled, eyes squinting and his tongue sticking out. He has a slightly squat body, with his back arched showing an ample belly. He stands upright with knees bent; in his left hand he holds a small round drum and in his right he holds a beating stick. His upper-body is unclothed except an armband on his left arm. He wears low-slung voluminous trousers, with a sagging waistband, just about covering his bottom half. On his head he wears a close fitting cap tied over a pointy bun. The comical and caricatural posture and facial expression, show the sculptor's desire to immortalise the performance mid-act. Drummers such as this specialized in a kind of part-spoken, part-sung storytelling called *shouchang*. These exceptional figures with their lively expressiveness, appear to be unmatched in the art of the ancient world. Their popularity, must mean such entertainers were highly appreciated for their virtuosity and an important part of court life.

