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William Strang, R.A. (Dumbarton, Scotland
1859-1921 Bournemouth)

The Opera Cloak, 1913

Signed and dated (lower left): 'W. Strang. 1913'

Oil on Canvas

48 x 40 1/8 in. (122 x 102 cm.)



Provenance

The Fine Art Society, c. 1980.

The Alan M. Fortunoff Collection, thence by descent.

Exhibited

Royal Portrait Society, 1913 (as 'Miss Nancy Strang').

Graves Art Gallery, Sheffield; Glasgow Museums and Art Galleries; National Portrait Gallery, London, *William Strang R.A., 1859-1921 : painter-etcher*, 6 December 1980 - 18 January 1981 [et al.], London, pp. 41-44, cat. no. 21.

During his lifetime, William Strang acquired an international reputation for his prolific and highly successful portraiture. His sitters included many literary and artistic plenipotentiaries of the day, such as Robert Louis Stevenson and Thomas Hardy. He also produced numerous self-portraits, as well as images of his relatives. These private works rank amongst his very finest, for they not only demonstrate his variety of technical and pictorial approaches, but employ a more relaxed, experimental approach. This can be seen in *The Opera Cloak*, which portrays David and Nancy Strang - the artist's children - in staged, theatrical guise. The ease with which their costumes are rendered is breath-taking, from the understated

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folds of the evening suit, through to the shimmering, luminous finish of Nancy's dress. And to further complement the vividness of these materials, the artist introduced the still-life and wall hanging - bright with the colours of the Ballet Russe, and redolent of pleasure.