

# REUGE

Geneva Watch Days, August 2020

## « MILIARIUS » - A TRIBUTE TO THE ROMAN EMPIRE

On the occasion of its 155th anniversary, REUGE presents "Miliarius", an automaton that brings epic battles to life by recreating the scene of the Circus Maximus and its legendary horse races. Miliarius was the name of the charioteer winning more than a thousand victories. A star sportsman and fine strategist, he was revered by the public and the elite for his courage and bravery. This popularity inspired REUGE for his new piece of mechanical art.

Miliarius is both an animated spectacle and an acoustic experience, combining the intricate motion of a fight for victory with the pure resonance of music. It's a time travel to the past – turned towards the future with the most modern technicality and acoustic purity.

### **Design and finishing**

Four golden columns, designed after the Corinthian architectural order, mark the angles of Miliarius, while a pleated drape made of bronze, outlines its perimeter. The columns hoist a glass panel in the air, allowing for the mechanical and musical movements underneath it to be in full view of the observer. The horses and fighter chariots are the only items that stand above on the glass and put into motion, they levitate without touching it thanks to an ingenious magnetized system.

Every single element of the Miliarius, whether technical or decorative, is made entirely by hand by the craftsmen of the REUGE Manufacture in Sainte-Croix with outstanding quality and artisan expertise constituting each Miliarius unique. The sculptor craftsman carves the last intricate features, right up to the details of the horses' mane or the veins of the foliage on the crown. The decorative elements are gilded in 18 carat gold and carefully manipulated for a perfect finishing.

### **True emotions are unforeseeable**

Upon activation of a lever, the race starts and bets are cast among the viewers as five chariots are fighting. No one knows its outcome as a different horse wins each time but behind this apparent game of chance, there's an incredibly intricate mechanism engaging the five chariot fighters on a random basis. The true ingeniousness of REUGE consisted in creating Miliarius with a sense of unpredictability so as to give viewers the thrill of never knowing how the race will end.

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The mechanism of this automaton took more than nine months to conceive and develop within the REUGE ateliers of Sainte-Croix. It encloses more than 2'200 components which interact flawlessly together, bringing the automaton to life.

Each stage of conception or assembly requires a precision which is testament to REUGE's unique know-how. The mechanism of the automaton is linked to the object's second mechanism accounting for musicality. The timing of this interaction must be perfect so that movement and sonority are impeccably orchestrated.

### **Conveying emotion through music**

The horserace occurs without music so as to enhance the rhythmic sound of a gallop, keeping everyone's eyes on the prize. As all horses breathlessly cross the finish line, the incomparable REUGE musicality rises from the mechanism. The "Victory Parade" melody, used as the celebratory anthem after all Roman races held in the Circus Maximus Arena, is reproduced with a panache that only REUGE can master.

The in-house movement SH 3.144 was fully assembled by hand. It generates its tune thanks to a 144-note keyboard animated by a rotating cylinder and hand-tuned by an artisan. The cylinder, on the other hand, bears more than 2'200 pins. Each of these pins is a steel wire, as fine as a hair and is carefully set in the tiny holes drilled beforehand into the cylinder. The craftsman then tunes the comb until its vibration is perfect, for he knows that this is the secret to a pure, unmitigated sound.

Miliarius embodies REUGE's creativity and know-how. The automaton brings an epic battle back to life; the music consecrates the scenery. Behind the Brand's mystical quest for a genuine sonority and a creative motion, lies a desire to transcend an experience. Music and movement engage senses: when played right, when timed just so, they have the power to take us back in time so that we relive emotions we thought were hidden.

#### **About REUGE**

CREATING MUSIC, MOTION & EMOTION: based in Sainte-Croix (Switzerland) since 1865, REUGE is considered as the world leader of musical automatons. With more than 155 years of expertise, REUGE manufactures pieces that are technically, acoustically and aesthetically superlative. Combining the motion of an automaton with an exquisite sonority offers an unparalleled experience of the senses. Forward-thinking and innovation define REUGE just as much as its respect for traditional craftsmanship. The Brand relentlessly seeks new materials, original themes and ground-breaking acoustics, making way for the contemporary music boxes of the 21st century. REUGE's ability to transform inanimate metal into emotion continues to enthral those who seek a true work of art, reaching beyond fleeting trends.

## MILIARIUS Technical Information

- Roman Chariot Race musical and sound automaton
- Limited Edition of 50 pieces – each numbered
- 5 chariot fighters, silver
- 1 victory crown, silver and 18k gold plated finish
- 2 dolphin winders, silver and 18k gold plated finish
- One cylinder playing one melody
- More than 2'200 components in the mechanism
- In-house movement (SH 3.144) produced and assembled by hand in our atelier
- More than 2'200 pins on the cylinder and 144-note keyboard
- Manual and individual tuning of musical comb, nickel plated finish
- About 35 seconds per tune
- 41 minutes power reserve