



Johannes Vermeer, *The Guitar Player*, about 1672
On loan from English Heritage, The Iveagh Bequest
(Kenwood), © English Heritage

VERMEER AND MUSIC THE ART OF LOVE AND LEISURE

Supported by :

The Hata Stichting Foundation

The Blavatnik Family Foundation

Susan and John Singer

The Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

26 June – 8 September 2013

Sainsbury Wing

Admission charge

Featuring the Academy of Ancient Music as Resident Ensemble

This summer the National Gallery presents a captivating exhibition exploring the concept of music as one of the most popular motifs in Dutch painting, and as a daily pastime of the elite in the northern Netherlands during the 17th century.

The exhibition aims to enhance viewers' appreciation of some of the most beautiful and evocative paintings by Johannes Vermeer and his contemporaries, by juxtaposing them with musical instruments and songbooks of the period. Visitors will be able to compare 17th-century virginals, guitars, lutes and other instruments with the paintings themselves to judge the accuracy of the depictions, and understand the artistic liberties the painters might have taken – and why – to enhance the visual appeal of their work. Three days a week visitors can experience live performances in the exhibition space by the Academy of Ancient Music, which aim to bring the paintings to life with music of the period.

Forming the centrepiece of *Vermeer and Music: The Art of Love and Leisure* are three magnificent paintings by Johannes Vermeer portraying female musicians, brought together for the first time in this exhibition. The National Gallery's two paintings by Vermeer, *A Young Woman standing at a Virginal* and *A Young Woman seated at a Virginal*, will be joined by Vermeer's *The Guitar Player*, which is on exceptional loan from the Iveagh Bequest, Kenwood House. Vermeer's *The Music Lesson* will also be on show, on loan from Her Majesty the Queen.

Music carried many diverse associations in 17th-century Dutch painting. In portraits, a musical instrument or songbook might suggest the talent or sophistication of the sitter, while in still lifes or scenes of everyday life, it might act as a metaphor for harmony, a symbol of transience or, depending on the type of music being performed, an indicator of education and position in society.

The captivating depictions of domestic musical performances in *Vermeer and Music: The Art of Love and Leisure* range from contemplative images of single musicians to lively concerts and amorous encounters between music-master and pupil. In addition to works by Vermeer, the exhibition will include paintings by Gerard ter Borch, Gabriel Metsu, Jan Steen, Pieter de Hooch and Godfried Schalcken.

Betsy Wieseman, Curator of Dutch Paintings at the National Gallery, says: "This exhibition presents a marvellous opportunity to understand the key role that music played in 17th-century Dutch art and society. We're hoping that Gallery visitors will experience the same sort of pleasurable musical associations our 17th-century predecessors would have had when looking at these evocative paintings by Vermeer and his contemporaries."

For further Press information, please contact Michelle Gonsalves at michelle.gonsalves@ng-london.org.uk / 020 7747 2512. Publicity images can be obtained from <http://press.ng-london.org.uk>. To obtain a username please contact the National Gallery Press Office on 020 7747 2865 or email press@ng-london.org.uk

For public enquiries, please contact 020 7747 2885 or information@ng-london.org.uk

NOTES TO EDITORS

The Academy of Ancient Music will perform every Thursday, Friday and Saturday in the exhibition space. In addition, musicians from the AAM and curator Betsy Wieseman will present two illustrated concerts in early July and September. These will feature talks from Betsy Wieseman and AAM musicians on Vermeer and music, interspersed with music from the period. The musicians will perform works by Netherlandish composers, Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck, Willem de Fesch and Joannes Florentius a Kempis, alongside works known to have been familiar to Dutch musicians by other European composers, such as Arcangelo Corelli. For more press information on the AAM please contact: Rebecca Driver Media Relations rebecca@rdmr.co.uk | isobel@rdmr.co.uk / 020 74485336 www.aam.co.uk

Organisation

Vermeer and Music: The Art of Love and Leisure is organised by the National Gallery, London.

Publication

The publication to accompany the exhibition is *Vermeer and Music: The Art of Love and Leisure* by Marjorie E. Wieseman, Curator of Dutch Paintings at the National Gallery. Paperback £9.99 (72 pages).

Prices

Full £7.00

Opening hours

Press View: 25 June 2013

Open to public: 26 June 2013

Open to public: 26 June 2013

Daily 10am–6pm (last admission - 5pm)

Fridays 10 – 9pm (last admission 8.15pm)

Release date: 19 March 2013

