NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART ONLINE EDITIONS
Dutch Paintings of the Seventeenth Century

image not available

Gerrit van Honthorst
Dutch, 1592 - 1656

The Concert

1623

oil on canvas
overall: 123.5 × 205 cm (48 5/8 × 80 11/16 in.)
Inscription: upper left, GH in monogram: GHonthorst fe 1623
Patrons' Permanent Fund and Florian Carr Fund 2013.38.1

ENTRY

Gerrit van Honthorst's *The Concert*, which measures more than four by six feet, depicts a group of colorfully attired singers and musicians as they bend forward, fully engaged, to follow the musical scores laid out on a large, tapestry-covered table. [1] A bearded concert master, dressed in a black trimmed wine-colored doublet, guides them by pointing the bow of his bass viol at notes in one of the books. So close are the musicians to the front of the picture plane that their joyous song seems to pour into the viewer's space. Behind this group, a cheerful young man raises his glass in celebration while he simultaneously places his finger over his mouth to urge the viewer to listen quietly to the melodious sounds of this musical ensemble. [2] Two other smiling background figures at the far right add to the festive character of the scene.

Honthorst executed this remarkable painting in Utrecht in 1623, shortly after he had returned from a prolonged stay in Rome where he had become enthralled by the revolutionary style of Caravaggio (Roman, 1571 - 1610). [3] The immediacy of Caravaggio's religious and genre paintings inspired Honthorst as well as other painters of his generation in Rome who became known as the "Caravaggisti." [4] Like Caravaggio, these artists generally worked directly from models and brought

© National Gallery of Art, Washington

their scenes close to the picture plane as though they were but an extension of the viewer's world. They emphasized the momentary quality of their images through dramatic gestures and pronounced contrasts of light and dark.

In Rome Honthorst often introduced artificial light sources to create the dramatic chiaroscuro effects in his scenes, as in *Merry Company with a Lute Player* in the Uffizi [fig. 1]. Such works were so renowned that he later became known as "Gherardo delle Notti." (Gerrit of the Nights). So esteemed was Honthorst in Rome that he received patronage from important collectors there, including Cardinal Scipione Borghese (1577–1633); Cosimo II, the Grand Duke of Tuscany (1590–1621)' and the Marcheses Benedetto and Vincenzo Giustiniani (1554––1621 and 1564–1637), in whose Palazzo he resided for a significant period of time. [5] When Honthorst returned to Utrecht in 1620 he was a famous man, and a celebratory feast in his honor welcomed him home.

Despite Honthorst's predilection in Rome for painting scenes with dramatic effects of light and dark, often by means of artificial light sources, *The Concert* is bright and airy. He has here fused Caravaggism and classicizing traditions to create an image appropriate for the artistic tastes and expectations of the Dutch Court in The Hague. Natural daylight falls evenly across the composition, illuminating the shimmering fabrics, flowing feathers, and smooth wooden musical instruments. It models the figures' varied flesh tones, which range from the ruddy complexions of male performers to the women's pale breasts and rosy cheeks. It creates realistic shadows, such as those on the music books under the concertmaster's hand and bow that reinforce the significance of individual gestures and help enhance the sense of immediacy. Even with the *repoussoir* figure of the concertmaster, on whom light does not fall as strongly as on his companions, it accents the curls of his hair and brings out the sheen of his glistening wine-colored doublet.

In Rome, Honthorst drew his inspiration primarily from Caravaggio's mature paintings, but for the subject matter and naturalistic light effects of *The Concert* he seems to have turned to that master's early genre scenes, such as *The Musicians*, c. 1595 [fig. 2]. [6] For example, the captivating shadow cast on the face of the instrument by the lute player's right hand as she strums its strings is a pictorial effect he derived from Caravaggio's *The Lute Player*, c. 1595–1596 [fig. 3], versions of which were in both the Cardinal del Monte and Giustiniani collections. Despite this thematic and stylistic similarity to Caravaggio's early depictions of musicians, however, the visual impact of Honthorst's painting is quite different. The reds, yellows, blues, greens, and lavender of the musicians' brightly colored satins, some

© National Gallery of Art, Washington

of which are festooned with ostrich feathers dyed to match, lend a remarkably festive air to this gathering. In part he derived this rich palette from other Caravaggisti working in Rome in the 1610s, among them Orazio Gentileschi (Florentine, 1563 - 1639), Simon Vouet (French, 1590 - 1649), and Lionello Spada (1576–1622). Spada's *The Concert*, c. 1615 [fig. 4], moreover, includes various motifs that Honthorst effectively exploited in this painting, including the concertmaster using his bow to direct the musicians' attention to notes in a musical score, and a boy looking out at the viewer while bringing his finger to his lips to encourage silence.

The Concert has a classicizing quality that separates it from his strongly Caravaggist works, a stylistic characteristic that becomes increasingly strong over the course of his career, particularly in paintings he made for the Dutch court. Honthorst's classicism, evident in the even light that floods the scene, is apparent in his balanced composition of singers and musicians arrayed behind a table situated parallel to the picture plane. The clarity of the smoothly modelled, slightly idealized figures speaks to that same artistic impulse. This classicistic framework likely stems from the academic training Honthorst received from his teacher Abraham Bloemaert (Dutch, 1566 - 1651), but it was reinforced in Rome by the paintings of Annibale Carracci (Bolognese, 1560 - 1609) and Domenichino (Italian, 1581 - 1641) that he saw in the Giustiani collection. [7] The timing of Honthorst's return to Utrecht in late May or early June of 1620 was undoubtedly tied to the political circumstances in the Netherlands. Honthorst had been in Rome during the Twelve Years' Truce (1609–1621), a period during which hostilities between the United Provinces and Spain had been temporarily halted. With the end of the Truce fast approaching, Honthorst returned home before warfare recommenced and travel became more complicated. His return was celebrated in Utrecht and he was greeted with a feast attended by most of the established artists in town, including his former teacher Bloemaert. [8]

Honthorst's fame quickly spread throughout the Netherlands. In June 1621 Sir Dudley Carleton (1573–1632), the English ambassador to the Dutch Republic, wrote from The Hague to Lord Arundel, his London patron, that Honthorst, who had spent "some yeares at Rome & other parts of Italy to mend his art; wch consisting much in night works…," is "growing into reputacion in these parts." [9] Carleton was so impressed with the artist that he commissioned a painting for Lord Arundel, *Aeneas Fleeing from the Sack of Troy* (now lost). After receiving it, Arundel wrote Carleton to say how delighted he was and how he admired Honthorst's ability to

© National Gallery of Art, Washington

emulate the style of Caravaggio. [10]

It is not certain how Carleton came to know of Honthorst and his Caravaggist manner of painting so soon after the artist had returned to Utrecht. The English ambassador may have been advised of Honthorst's abilities from Bloemaert, but Carleton, who had acted as an art agent for English collectors when he lived in Italy in the 1610s, also continued to have his pulse on the Italian art market. [11] Whatever the source of information, Carleton quickly concluded that Honthorst's ability to work in Caravaggio's revolutionary style would be welcome among English and Dutch courtiers who wanted to be *au courant* with international trends.

This history is significant for *The Concert* since all evidence indicates that Honthorst painted this masterpiece for a courtly patron in The Hague. Its life-size scale and its carefully crafted and thoughtfully conceived composition indicate beyond any doubt that it was a commissioned work, probably intended to hang high on a wall to lend a festive atmosphere to a grand room. The large red and green Ushak Star carpet, imported from western Anatolia, carefully rendered to indicate both the four-leaf clover design and the nubs of the pile, was an expensive table covering of a style traditionally intended for a Sultan's court. [12]

The beautifully conceived and expensive musical instruments, including a bass viol, violin, lute and bandora with a gilded figurehead, were of a type played in courtly settings. [13] However, according to the Dutch musicologist Louis Peter Grijp, this combination of instruments, and, in particular, the bandora, is rarely, if ever, represented in Dutch painting. [14] How Honthorst came to depict this distinctive set of instruments is an intriguing question. The combination of instruments resembles that of an "English mixed consort," which may indicate that the work was commissioned by a patron familiar with this musical tradition. The oblong, soft-covered music books, which are similar to those seen in other Dutch paintings of the period, were handwritten: transcribing individual musical parts from a printed source was the responsibility of each musician. The foreground book, partly shaded by the concertmaster's hand, has only musical bars and notes, whereas the book to which he points with his bow also has text for the singers. Unfortunately it is not possible to identify the music in these books even though the notes are quite legible, particularly as preserved in a partial copy of the painting in the Whitaker Museum in England [fig. 5]. [15] Grijp, nevertheless, concluded that the presence of such music books indicates polyphonic singing of a fairly skilled nature. [16] He has also confirmed that the combination of instruments would produce a harmonious musical experience. [17]

© National Gallery of Art, Washington

Evidence that *The Concert* was in a princely collection in The Hague in the early seventeenth century comes from contemporary palace inventories and documents from the Napoleonic era. In early 1795, after French forces had overrun the Netherlands, the Dutch Stadhouder, Prince Willem V of Orange-Nassau (1748–1806), fled the country. On May 16, representatives of the French Republic and the newly formed Batavian Republic signed the Treaty of The Hague, and, shortly thereafter, representatives of the French government in the Netherlands packed up numerous paintings and shipped them to Paris as spoils of war. Among the 191 paintings taken from the Gallery of Willem V in The Hague was: "A concert of several men and women musicians, life size, half-length on canvas by G. Honthorst, 4 feet 5 inches [by] 6 feet 5 inches." [18] The dimensions and description of this concert scene can be associated only with *The Concert*. [19]

Most of the paintings in the collection of Willem V had been assembled by the prince's ancestors in the early-to-mid seventeenth century, and had passed by inheritance to him. *The Concert* is likely the painting described in the inventory made in 1632 of the contents of the Palace Noordeinde in The Hague, the residence of Prince Frederick Hendrick (1584–1647), as: "A painting for the fireplace mantle made by Honthorst, being a music." [20] Since the description is so vague and no dimensions are indicated, one cannot be certain of this identification, nevertheless, hanging above the fireplace in the palace's largest room, the "*groote bovensael*" (upper great hall), this painting would have commanded the most prestigious spot in the chamber, an appropriate location for the Gallery's masterpiece. The same painting must be the one listed in an inventory made in 1702 describing the contents of the Palace Noordeinde after the death of Prince Willem III. [21] In 1791, Honthorst's "A musical company, on canvas" was transferred from Noordeinde to Prince Willem V's cabinet of paintings at the Buitenhof, the very location from which the French removed *The Concert* in 1795. [22]

Surprisingly, when the confiscated Dutch paintings were unpacked in Paris, six of the 191 works sent from The Hague were missing, including *The Concert*. [23] It is not known when these paintings became separated from the others, all of which were destined for the Musée Napoleon at the Louvre, but apparently some French dignitaries were allowed to select a few choice works for their own collections. [24] No further trace of *The Concert* exists until the 1840s, by which time it had entered a French private collection where it remained through the generations, unknown to scholars. The only visible trace of the painting is a watercolor made around 1900

© National Gallery of Art, Washington

by the painter Etienne Azambre (1859–1935), which depicts *The Concert* hanging in the grand salon of the family's country estate [fig. 6]. The reappearance of this masterpiece in 2009, one of the most remarkable discoveries in Dutch art in recent years, demonstrates that Honthorst's stylistic and thematic innovations had an even greater impact among Dutch artistic circles in the early 1620s than had been previously realized.

In 1623, when Honthorst painted *The Concert*, only two courtly patrons in The Hague could have commissioned such a large and imposing work: either Prince Maurits of Orange (1567–1625) or Frederick I (1596–1632) and Elizabeth Stuart (1596-–1662), the exiled king and queen of Bohemia, who had arrived in The Hague in April 1621 just as the Twelve Years' Truce was ending. [25] Since the painting hung in 1632 in the private quarters of Prince Frederick Hendrick, Maurits' half-brother and successor, it seems plausible to assume that Maurits had commissioned *The Concert* to embellish his residence at the Stadhouderlijk Kwartier. After the end of the Twelve Years' Truce, however, Prince Maurits was fully involved in leading the Dutch forces against Spanish troops, and had little time (or interest) to develop a large art collection. [26] Nevertheless, even if Maurits was never was a very active patron of the arts, he did try to enhance the international reputation of his court by expanding his residential quarters in the Binnenhof, improving its interior décor, building impressive gardens, and entertaining lavishly, often with musical entertainment. [27] The paintings he possessed generally came to him as gifts, either from municipalities (often mythological scenes with political implications), admiralties (Maurits was the admiral-general of the Republic, hence he received paintings depicting victorious maritime battles), or other courts wishing to curry favor (mostly portraits). [28]

The other court in The Hague, that of exiled King Frederick I of Bohemia and his consort Elizabeth Stuart (known as the "Winter King and Winter Queen"), was better situated to respond to Sir Dudley Carleton's enthusiastic endorsement of Honthorst in 1621. Frederick I and Elizabeth Stuart were, respectively, the nephew of Prince Maurits and the daughter of King James I, and so they were treated with the highest respect by Carleton, who, as English ambassador, served on behalf of King James. [29] When the Winter King and Winter Queen arrived in The Hague in April 1621, Carleton provided them lodging in his own home until a suitable residence in The Hague could be refurbished for their use. [30] The couple's arrival in the English ambassador's home, thus occurred only a couple of months before Carleton's letter to Lord Arundel in which he praised the artistry of Honthorst. No

© National Gallery of Art, Washington

documentation exists that the king and queen of Bohemia developed an immediate relationship with Honthorst at that time. Nevertheless, by the late 1620s they were clearly in close contact for, when Honthorst was invited to paint at the English court in 1628 he took with him, as gifts for Elizabeth's brother, King Charles I, two portraits he had painted of the couple. [31] In 1630, after he returned to the Netherlands, Honthorst became their court painter, and he continued to work for Elizabeth Stuart after Frederick's untimely death in 1632.

Life in The Hague in the 1620s was no hardship for the exiled king and queen, no matter how badly the king's political fortunes in Germany were faring. [32] The couple was treated well by the Dutch, who were determined to honor their royal visitors. When they traveled, generally in elegant horse-drawn coaches and accompanied by attendants dressed in colorful livery, crowds would line the route. Their personal prestige was quite high, particularly in 1623. That year not only marked the tenth anniversary of their wedding, which had taken place in London, but also the tenth anniversary of their arrival by ship in Vlissingen, a stopover on the newlyweds' way to Heidelberg, the seat of Frederick's domain as Elector Palatine. [33] In Vlissingen, the couple had been greeted by Prince Maurits, both because of family connections, but also because the marriage of Frederick, the Elector Palatine, and Elizabeth Stuart had created a political alliance that greatly strengthened the Protestant cause in central Europe.

The events of 1613 had huge political implications in their day, and still resonated in 1623 despite the defeat of Frederick's forces by Catholic armies in 1620, after which he and his consort lived in exile in The Hague [fig. 7]. Even though Frederick's political situation in Bohemia was dire, he continued to be a leader of the Protestants. He firmly believed that he would regain his realm once he received sufficient military and financial support from the Dutch and the English governments, a general perception that seemed reinforced by the couple's sumptuous lifestyle in The Hague. [34] A clear indication of the ongoing popularity of the king and queen is that, in 1623, three different marine painters—Hendrick Vroom (1566 - 1640), Cornelis Claesz van Wieringen (Dutch, c. 1580 - 1633), and Adam Willaerts (1577–1664)—created enormous panoramas depicting the festive arrival of Frederick and Elizabeth Stuart at Vlissingen in 1613. [35] Although it is not known who commissioned these works, they were likely ordered by municipalities (probably, among them, Haarlem) that felt it was politically advisable to demonstrate support for the king and queen of Bohemia in their efforts to regain their realm.

© National Gallery of Art, Washington

The king and queen had a close personal relationship to Prince Maurits, Frederick's uncle. They were also beholden to him and the States General of the Netherlands for the military and financial backing they had already received for their cause, as well as for the generous way in which they had been welcomed in The Hague. In a courtly culture where gift-giving was a means of expressing gratitude for past support but also an accepted mode for strengthening bonds to ensure future backing, it is quite likely that Frederick and Elizabeth Stuart would have followed this tradition and honored Prince Maurits with a substantial gift in 1623 when there was such enthusiasm for them and optimism about their cause. What better gift for Maurits, who was intent upon raising the international reputation of his court, than a celebratory painting by a dynamic young Utrecht artist, just returned from Rome, who was greatly admired by the English ambassador in The Hague, Sir Dudley Carleton?

Even though no document confirms such a scenario, pictorial and iconographic aspects of the painting reinforce this hypothesis. Without question, the musicians in *The Concert* are fully engaged in their song, which, given their smiles and gestures, must be both delightful and uplifting in its rhythms and its lyrics. All the musicians, save one, are the wholesome, full-bodied and vibrant types familiar from Honthorst's other genre scenes from the 1620s. The one unusual figure is the concertmaster with his long hair and full beard. Nowhere else does such a figure appear in Honthorst's early works, an indication that the artist portrayed a specific individual to assume this important role in the composition. As Henriette Rahusen first noted, this individual's distinctive appearance is akin to that of depictions of the Winter King in a manuscript by Adriaen Pietersz van de Venne (Dutch, 1589 - 1662) that portrays various aspects of courtly life in The Hague in the mid-1620s. The foreground player in a folio page depicting the game of balloon is likely the Winter King, and he so resembles the concertmaster that he must be the same individual. [fig. 8]. [36]

The identification of the concertmaster as King Frederick I of Bohemia adds a political dimension to *The Concert*, a not uncommon phenomenon in "genre" paintings from this period. Here, Frederick guides the performers' efforts by directing their attention to the proper notes on the musical score, thereby ensuring that they will play and sing in harmony. The implication is that he would rule in a similar manner, and that peace and harmony would result from his enlightened reign. This message is, in fact, one underlying Julius Wilhelm Zincgref's emblem book, *Emblematum Ethico-politicorum Centuria*, 1619, which was dedicated to

© National Gallery of Art, Washington

Frederick, and which celebrated that leader's political and moral ideals. [37] Frederick's concept of leadership, appropriately, is expressly conveyed in the emblem *Concordia Discors* [Harmony from Discord], which features a lute [fig. 9], the most prominent of the musical instrument in *The Concert.* The text reads:

Comme de sons confus s'entonne l'harmonie

D'vn accordant discord, de mesme vne cité

Quoy que d'homes diuers maintiendra l'equite,

Si par des bonnes loix sagement de manie.

[Like confused rhymes sung in harmony

From discord an agreeable sound, the same for a city

Where equity can be maintained among diverse men

If [they are] wisely handled by good laws.]

The Concert's pictorial and iconographic associations with the Winter King make it quite plausible that he commissioned this work as a gift for Prince Maurits. The painting, which presumably hung prominently in the Stadhouderlijk Kwartier, would have provided a striking backdrop to the musical entertainment that Maurits so enjoyed, and would also have served as a constant reminder of the rightness of Frederick's cause and the need to have Dutch support in his efforts to regain his realm.

By 1632, when *The Concert* was listed as hanging over a fireplace in the centrally located *groote bovensael* in Prince Frederick Hendrick's palace at Noordeinde, both Prince Maurits and King Frederick I of Bohemia had died, and while the political overtones of this work were no longer current, the painting's compelling pictorial qualities endured. The musical ensemble was just as vivacious and enthusiastic as before, and the song had not lost its luster. Honthorst's career, likewise, had not dimmed, and his fame had continued on its upward trajectory.

© National Gallery of Art, Washington

By the late 1620s Honthorst had become actively engaged in painting for both the English and the Dutch courts, often painting portraits or *portraits historié*. In these *portraits historié,* nobility assumed pictorial guises, generally in the form of mythological, historical or Arcadian personages. To accommodate the large number of commissions he continued to receive, Honthorst established a large and productive workshop that remained active well past mid-century. However, in retrospect, the artist rarely again reached the artistic heights he achieved in this masterpiece of 1623. In *The Concert* Honthorst skillfully infused the artistic knowledge he had gained from his years in Rome with the energy and fresh vision of an artist at the height of his powers, knowing full well that success with this courtly commission would ensure a long and successful career.

Arthur K. Wheelock Jr.

June 14, 2015

COMPARATIVE FIGURES

fig. 1 Gerrit van Honthorst, *Merry Company with a Lute Player*, c. 1620, oil on canvas, Uffizi Gallery, Florence. Photo: Scala / Art Resource, NY

fig. 2 Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, *The Musicians*, c. 1595, oil on canvas, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Rogers Fund, 1952 (52.81)

© National Gallery of Art, Washington

fig. 3 Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, *The Lute Player*, c. 1595–1596, oil on canvas, The State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg. Photo © The State Hermitage Museum / Vladimir Terebenin

fig. 4 Leonello Spada, *The Concert*, c. 1615, oil on canvas, Musée du Louvre, Paris, inv. 681. Photo © RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY. Photography by René-Gabriel Ojéda

© National Gallery of Art, Washington

fig. 5 (style of) Hendrick ter Brugghen, *The Music Lesson*, oil on canvas, The Whitaker (previously Rossendale Museum & Art Gallery), inv. PA-129

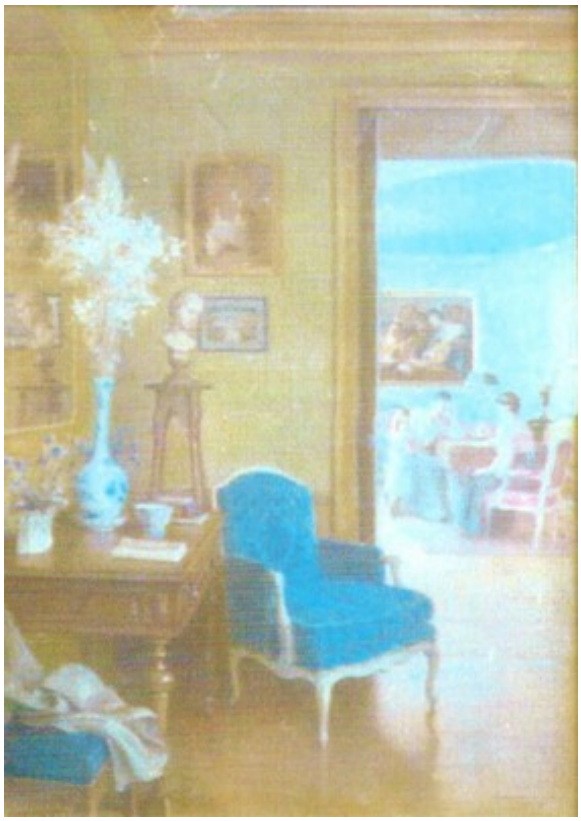

fig. 6 Etienne Azambre, *Interior of a French Country Estate*, c. 1900, watercolor, private collection

© National Gallery of Art, Washington

fig. 7 Adriaen van de Venne, "The King and Queen of Bohemia," from Adriaen van de Venne's *Common-Place Book*, c. 1626, watercolor, The British Museum, London. © The Trustees of The British Museum

fig. 8 Detail, Adriaen van de Venne, "A Game of Balloon," from Adriaen van de Venne's *Common-Place Book*, c. 1626, watercolor, The British Museum, London. © The Trustees of The British Museum

© National Gallery of Art, Washington

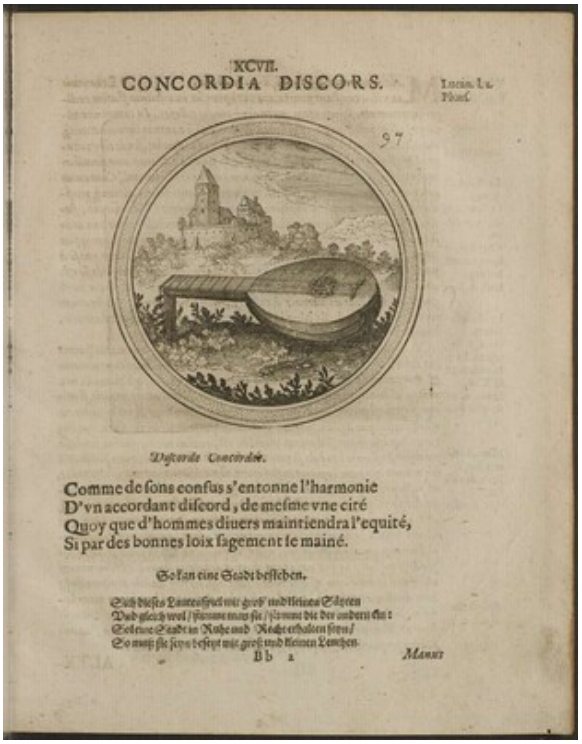

fig. 9 Julius Wilhelm Zincgref, "Concordia Discors," emblem 97 from *Emblematum Ethico- politicorum Centuria*, Oppenheim, 1619, engraving, Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel. © Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel, http://digilib.hab.de/inkunabeln/14-Astron/start.htm

NOTES

[1] I am enormously grateful for the extensive research on this painting undertaken by Henriette Rahusen, Research Assistant in the Department of Northern Baroque Painting at the National Gallery of Art, which has provided me with an outstanding framework for writing this entry.

[2] This gesture, meaning “silence,” is illustrated in: John Bulwer, *Chirologia: or the Natural Language of the Hand and Chironomia: or the Art of Manual Rhetoric*, London, 1644, rev. ed., ed. James W. Cleary, Carbondale, 1974, 143, fig. H.

© National Gallery of Art, Washington

[3] The date of Honthorst's arrival in Italy is unknown, but it was certainly by 1616, when he made a drawn copy of Caravaggio's *Martyrdom of St Peter* in the Cerasi Chapel of Santa Maria del Popolo, Rome. The drawing, in the National Gallery, Oslo, is illustrated in J. Richard Judson & Rudolf E.O. Ekkart, *Gerrit van Honthorst 1592–1656*, Doornspijk, 1999, pl. 395.

[4] Among the artists in Rome most inspired by Caravaggio at this time were Bartolomeo Manfredi, Orazio Gentileschi, Carlo Saraceni, and Valentin de Boulogne.

[5] A. R. Peltzer , ed., *Joachim von Sandrarts Academie der Bau-, Bild- und Mahlerey-Kunste von 1675. Leben der beruhmten Maler, Bildhauer und Baumeister*, Munich, 1925, 303. Honthorst probably would have received the invitation to live at the Palazzo Giustiniani from Benedetto Giustiniani, whose extensive collection included a large number of works by Caravaggio and the Carracci, as well as by Raphael, Giorgioni, and Titian. After his death in 1621, Benedetto's younger brother, Vincenzo (1564-1637), who also lived in the Palazzo, inherited the property. It seems that other northern artists lived in the Palazzo, which was located near the Church of San Luigi dei Francesi.

[6] He would have seen this painting in the collection of Cardinal Francesco Maria del Monte.

[7] Honthorst's classicism distinguishes his style from that of the other two major Caravaggist artists who flourished in Utrecht in the early-to-mid 1620s, Hendrick ter Brugghen (1588–1629) and Dirck van Baburen (c. 1594–1624), both of whom had been in Rome in the 1610s as well.

[8] For a discussion of this event, see J. Richard Judson & Rudolf E.O. Ekkart, *Gerrit van Honthorst 1592–1656*, Doornspijk, 1999, 14.

[9] W. Noel Sainsbury, ed., *Original unpublished papers illustrative of the life of Sir Peter Paul Rubens, as an artist and a diplomatist. Preserved in H. M. State Paper Office. With an appendix of documents respecting the Arundelian collection; the Earl of Somerset's collection; the great Mantuan collection; the Duke of Buckingham ... etc., etc., etc.,*London, 1859, 290–291. For Carleton, see: M. F. S. Hervey*, The Life, Correspondence and Collections of Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel*, Cambridge 1921, 297. Carleton, as English Ambassador in Venice and in The Hague, actively sought to find paintings for Arundel's collection.

[10] [1] W. Noel Sainsbury, ed., *Original unpublished papers illustrative of the life of Sir Peter Paul Rubens, as an artist and a diplomatist. Preserved in H. M. State Paper Office. With an appendix of documents respecting the Arundelian collection; the Earl of Somerset's collection; the great Mantuan collection; the Duke of Buckingham ... etc., etc., etc.,* London, 1859, 291-292. On July 21, 1621, Arundel wrote: "I thinke that the painter hath

© National Gallery of Art, Washington

expressed ye story wth much arte & both for the postures & ye colouringe, I have seen fewe Duch men arrive unto it, for it hath more of ye Itallian then the Flemish & much of ye manor of Caravaggioes colouringe, wch is nowe soe much esteemed in Rome."

[11] See: Robert Hill, "Sir Dudley Carleton and his relations with Dutch artists 1616–1632," in *Dutch and Flemish artist in Britain 1550-1800, Leids Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek*, 13, 2003, 255–274.

[12] See Onno Ydema, *Carpets and their Datings in Netherlandish Paintings 1540–1700*, Zutphen, 1991, exp. 41–48. I would like to thank Sumru Krody, Senior Curator at The George Washington University Museum and The Textile Museum, for identifying this carpet for me. I am also grateful for Rosamond Mack for sharing her observations of the carpet with me in a letter of December 20, 2013. She notes that the carpet "features a distinctive star with 4 spade-shaped lobes attached to the diagonals of the octagonal center." It is a type that was developed commercially in the Ushak region of Ottoman Turkey during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Honthorst's design is roughly accurate, although the green color of the lobes is not otherwise known for such rugs. Generally the lobes are dark blue, and green plays only a minor role in the ornaments within the lobes or on the red grounds. Whether or not Honthorst varied the color palette of the carpet for compositional reasons is not known.

[13] I would like to thank Stephen Ackert, head of the music department at the National Gallery of Art, and the Dutch musicologist Louis Peter Grijp, for helping identify these instruments, and discussing the nature of this musical ensemble. Grijp's observations are contained in an e-mail he sent to the author on Nov. 20, 2014 (curatorial records). The bandora is a type of cittern.

[14] Louis Peter Grijp's comments are contained in an email he sent to the author on Nov. 20, 2014 (curatorial records).

[15] I would like to thank Jackie Taylor for sending me this image of the Whitaker painting, which measures 111.8 x 97.8 cm. This partial replica must have been executed in Honthorst's workshop simultaneously with the Gallery's painting.

[16] Louis Peter Grijp, "Conclusion and Perspectives," in Edwin Buijsen and Louis Peter Grijp, eds., *The Hoogsteder Exhibition of Music & Painting in the Golden Age* (Exh. cat. Hoogsteder & Hoogsteder, The Hague; and Hessenhuis Museum, Antwerp), The Hague and Zwolle, 1994, 120.

[17] Louis Peter Grijp's comments are contained in an email he sent to the author on Nov. 20, 2014 (curatorial records).

[18] "Een Consert, van verscheide speelders en speelsters Leevens groote halverlijf op doek door G. Honthorst, 4 voet 5 duim 6 voet 5 duim." Although the dimensions and proportions of the painting indicated in this inventory

© National Gallery of Art, Washington

differ slightly from those of *The Concert*, there is little doubt that it is the painting in question. *The Concert* currently measures 123.5 x 205 cm, and the dimensions given in this document, when calculated in Rijnland feet (current at that time), would be 138.7 x 201.5 cm. Technical examinations of *The Concert* do not indicate that it has been cut at the top or bottom, but it is difficult to judge whether some trimming of the canvas support occurred in the past.

In 1795 a French commission, under the leadership of the botanist André Thouin, decided which paintings to send to Paris take from the Netherlands. The list of paintings taken from the Galerie Willem V in The Hague appears in Beatrijs Brennikmeyer-de Rooy and Arthur Hartkamp, "Oranje's erfgoed in het Mauritshuis," *Oud Holland*, 102, no. 3 (1988), 181-233. The painting by Honthorst is no. 69 on the list. The information in the article is based on a copy of the list of all of the paintings, prints and books taken by the French from the Netherlands to Paris in 1795 and 1811 that was made by Baron A.J.C. Lampsins in March 1814. This document is in the Rijksarchief, The Hague, ARA, Archief Binnenlandse Zaken, Onderwijs, Kunsten en Wetenschappen 1815-1848, dossier no. 4019.

[19] In the past, the painting listed in 1795 has been erroneously identified as *The Concert*, 1624, Musée du Louvre, in which only women and putti are depicted. See, for example, S. W. A. Drossaers and Th. H. Lunsingh Scheurleer, ed., *Inventarissen van de inboedels in de verblijven van de Oranjes en daarmede gelijk te stellen stukken, 1567–1795*, 3 vols., The Hague, 1974–1976, 1 (Inventarissen Nassau-Oranje, 1567-1712) (inventory no. GS147), 207, no. 611, note. See also J. Richard Judson & Rudolf E.O. Ekkart, *Gerrit van Honthorst 1592-1656*, Doornspijk, 1999, 207-208, no. 273. This mistaken identification is partly because Honthorst's 1623 painting of *The Concert* was only rediscovered in 2009.

[20] S. W. A. Drossaers and Th. H. Lunsingh Scheurleer, ed., *Inventarissen van de inboedels in de verblijven van de Oranjes en daarmede gelijk te stellen stukken, 1567-1795*, 3 vols., The Hague, 1974–1976, 1 (Inventarissen Nassau-Oranje, 1567-1712) (inventory no. GS147), 207, no. 611.

[21] S. W. A. Drossaers and Th. H. Lunsingh Scheurleer, ed., *Inventarissen van de inboedels in de verblijven van de Oranjes en daarmede gelijk te stellen stukken, 1567-1795*, 3 vols., The Hague, 1974–1976, 1 (Inventarissen Nassau-Oranje, 1567–1712) (inventory no. GS147), 490, no. 170: [Huis in het Noordeinde (Oude Hof) 1702] "Een schilderij [doeck] voor de schoorsteen, zijnde musicanten van Honthorst." [A painting [canvas] for the chimney, being musicians by Honthorst]. This painting hung on the lower level of the palace, in the "antechamber." Two other inventories of the Oude Hof, one dated 1707 and the other, undated but post-1702, also mention the painting: GS147, p. 543 [Huis in het Noordeinde (Oude Hof) 1707] "*Suyderquartier, (no. 3) Slaepcamer* (Bedroom) *Een Musijcq van Honthorst* (A Music by

© National Gallery of Art, Washington

Honthorst)"; and GS147, p. 547 [Huis in het Noordeinde (Oude Hof) (undated), na 1702 (after 1702), *"(no. 4), Slaepcamer* (Bedroom), *Een Musijcq van Honthorst* (A Music by Honthorst).

[22] "Een muziceerend Gezelschap, op doek." S. W. A. Drossaers and Th. H. Lunsingh Scheurleer, ed., *Inventarissen van de inboedels in de verblijven van de Oranjes en daarmede gelijk te stellen stukken, 1567–1795*, 3 vols., The Hague, 1974–1976, 3 (Inventarissen Nassau-Oranje, 1763-1795) (inventory no. GS149), 216, no. 65. The word "Gezelschap" implies a mixed company of men and women.

[23] Royal Picture Gallery Mauritshuis. *Catalogue raisonné des tableaux et sculptures*. The Hague, 1935, p. XVI, and footnote 2, nr. II: *Catalogus van de schooner verzameling Schilderijen die zig in den Haag bevonden in de Galerij van den voormaligen Stad-houder Willem den vijfden Prins van Orange etc. etc. en die in Frankrijk getransporteerd zijn voor en door de Fransche Natie als gereekend zijnde te behooren onder de geconquesteerde goederen van dien Prins in Mey 1795*, 8o , 36 pages, décrivant 191 tableaux sous 192 nos. (191 paintings under 192 numbers). Significantly, the French "unpacking" list of September 1795 only contains 185 paintings, a discrepancy of six paintings leaving The Hague but not arriving in Paris. See *Tableaux du Stathouder apportés au Musée Central des Arts a Paris (Inventaire dressé par Le Brun et Mazade les 5, 6, 7 et 8 vendemiaire an IV)* (= 27-30 Sept 1795) [Archives national. F. 17, 1276 (dossier no. 6) and F17/1277 "*4eme envoie de la Haye*"] published in: Ferdinand Boyer. "Une Conquete artistique de la Convention: Les Tableaux du Stathouder (1795)" in *Bulletin de la Societé de l'Histoire de l'Art Français* (annee 1970), (Paris, 1972) 149–157.

[24] Louis Gourajod. "La Révolution et les Musées Nationaux, Part II" in *Révue des questions historiques* 24 (Paris, 1878) 203. "[Alexandre Lenoir] trouvait exorbitant que la hautaine administration du Musée [des Arts] ... s'arrogeât le droit de lui enlever les meilleures de ses pacifiques conquêtes, et même les objets précédement refusés ou dédaignés par elle." I would like to thank Henriette Rahusen for this reference.

[25] In 1619 the Protestant leader, Frederick V, the Elector Palatine, accepted the elective crown of Bohemia, and became Frederick I, King of Bohemia. His action incurred the wrath of Ferdinand II, the Holy Roman Emperor, who ousted him after a twelve-month reign. Subsequently, Frederick and his wife Elizabeth Stuart fled to The Hague, where they lived in exile. Because they only reigned for one winter they were derisively called the "Winter King and Winter Queen."

[26] Unfortunately, no inventory of Prince Maurits' collection or estate has survived. In the 1620s, moreover, Maurits suffered from a number of military setbacks, a plot against his life, and deteriorating health, all of which

© National Gallery of Art, Washington

hindered his attempt to raise the international reputation of his court.

[27] For an assessment of life at the court of Prince Maurits of Nassau, see, in particular, Kees Zandvliet, "Het hof van een dienaar met vorstelijke allure," in Kees Zandvliet, *Maurits Prins van Oranje*, exh. cat., Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, Zwolle, 2000, 37–63. Frederick Hendrick had a far greater interest in the arts than did Maurits, and, after he became Prince of Orange in 1625, he expanded the cultural character of the Dutch court, partly through the support of his consort Amalia van Solms (1602-1675) and the guidance of his secretary, Constantijn Huygens (1596-–1687).

[28] For the types, and political implications, of gifts that Maurits received, see Wouter Kloek, "Maurits en de beeldende kunst," in Kees Zandvliet, *Maurits Prins van Oranje*, exh. cat., Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, Zwolle, 2000, 147–150.

[29] In 1630, Honthorst became the official court painter of the king and queen of Bohemia, and the exiled couple commissioned at least fifty-eight portraits of family members from the Utrecht master, who ended up opening a second studio in The Hague in order to keep up with the demand for his work.

[30] The States General allotted Frederick of Bohemia a monthly pension of 10,000 guilders and paid for the refurbishment of the Naaldwijk Hof, a home on the Kneuterkijk in The Hague, for the couple's use (in addition, Elizabeth received a monthly stipend of 26,000 guilders from England). The house had previously belonged to Cornelius van der Mijle, the exiled son-in-law of Johan van Oldenbarneveldt, the senior statesman executed in 1619 after clashing with the politics of Prince Maurits and his supporters. The Winter King and Queen and their growing family would live there for nine years, followed by a move to a palace at Rhenen that the States of the province of Utrecht built on their behalf. This information is taken from Martin Royalton-Kisch, *Adriaen van de Venne's Album in the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum*, London, 1988, 23.

[31] Willem-Jan Hoogsteder, "De Schilderijen van Frederik and Elizabeth, Koning and Koningen van Bohemen," Ph.D. diss., Kunsthistorisch Instituut der Rijks Universiteit te Utrecht, Utrecht, 1986, 99.

[32] In 1623, Protestant Union forces fighting on Frederick's behalf during the Thirty Year's War had little success against the army of the Catholic League. Nevertheless, in August of that year, King James I granted permission for the leader of the Protestant Union's army (mercenaries paid with Dutch money) to raise 12,000 men in England, a positive development that Frederick hoped would have an impact on the balance of power. Unfortunately, that was not to be the case, and the political and military situation in Bohemia continued to worsen for the Protestants.

[33] Before Frederick was elected king of Bohemia in 1619, he was Frederick V, Elector Palatine (1610–1623).

© National Gallery of Art, Washington

[34] Frederick's optimism about finding financial support for his military campaign is evident from his trip to Haarlem and Amsterdam in June of that year to try to raise funds for that purpose.

[35] For Vroom's painting, see Jeroen Giltaij and Jan Kelch, *Praise of Ships and the Sea: The Dutch Marine Painters of the 17th Century,* exh. cat., Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen Rotterdam, and Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Gent, 1996, 86–89, no. 4; for those of Willaerts and Van Wieringen, see: George S. Keyes, *Mirror of Empire: Dutch Marine Art of the Seventeenth Century*, exh. cat., The Minneapolis Institute of Arts, The Toledo Museum of Art, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Cambridge, 1990, 201–203, no. 53; 204-–206, no. 54.

[36] Martin Royalton-Kisch, *Adriaen van de Venne's Album in the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum*, London, 1988, 96–97, 132, note 138; 178-–179, fol. 18. Although Royalton-Kisch only tentatively identifies this figure with the Winter King, the visual evidence that he is the Winter King is compelling. (see also 202–203, fol. 31, in which Frederick is identified positively) The game of balloon, moreover, had its origins in German courtly culture, where Frederick would have learned it and presumably brought it to the Dutch court. As with other games depicted in this manuscript, the game of balloon had allegorical implications related to the political issues of the day.

[37] Julius Wilhelm Zincgref*, Emblematum Ethico-politicorum Centuria*, pl. XCVII. Oppenheim, 1619.

TECHNICAL SUMMARY

The support is comprised of two pieces of coarse, plain-weave fabric that are sewn together vertically down the center of the composition. The fabric has been lined. Although there is cusping around all four edges, it is more prominent along the top, right, and bottom, indicating that the left side may have been trimmed slightly. The original tacking margins have been removed, but the x-radiographs reveal regularly spaced holes around the edges, which do not correspond to the cusping. This implies that at some point the edges were turned over to create a tacking margin, making the painting smaller, then subsequently opened up again to return the painting to its original dimensions. The current stretcher is slightly larger than the painting, extending the dimensions by approximately 0.5 cm on all sides. These areas have been covered with paper tape and inpainted to incorporate them into the design.

© National Gallery of Art, Washington

The support was prepared with a tan ground. Honthorst applied the paint in a series of smoothly blended brushstrokes. He used glazes in the dark areas and slight impasto in the highlights. The x-radiographs and infrared reflectography do not show any artist's changes, but examination of the surface reveals that the lute held by the figure in blue on the right has been enlarged.

The painting's texture has been compromised somewhat by the uneven application of the glue used in the lining, which has created a lumpy surface. The area along the seam is also slightly raised. The paint and ground are in fairly good condition. There is a large triangular area of loss that begins at the top of the purple hat of the center figure and extends to the left along the top of the painting. There is abrasion in the hair of the concert master and in his black cloak; in the hand, hair, and robe of the woman on the far right; and in the dark hat of the man in the right background. There is lighter abrasion scattered throughout the composition, though mostly in the darker portions. The painting was treated when it entered the collection in 2013.

PROVENANCE

Probably Prince Frederick Hendrick of Orange [1584-1647], The Hague, by 1632; by descent to Prince Willem V of Orange [1748-1806], The Hague;[1] requisitioned as a 'spoil of war' by the Revolutionary Government of France, and taken to Paris, May 1795.[2] private collection, Paris and Senan, France, since 1840;[3] purchased jointly 2009 by (Anthony Speelman, London) and (Adam Williams Fine Art, Ltd., New York);[4] purchased 31 July 2013 by NGA.

[1] According to the inventory of the Stadhouderlijk Kwartier (the Stadholder's official residence) made in August 1632: "In the Great Hall: (no. 611) A painting for the fireplace mantle made by Honthorst, being a Music." The inventory covers the collections of both the Prince of Orange and of his wife, Amalia van Solms. The painting was not inherited by (female) heirs of Amalia van Solms, which indicates that in 1632 it was owned by the Prince of Orange and later inherited in the male line. The *Catalogus Kabinet van Schilderijen van Willem V op het Buitenhof* (*Catalog of the Gallery of Paintings of Prince Willem V of Orange*), undated, but no later than 1793, includes: "(No. 65) A company making music, on canvas in [black frame with gilded inside edge] by Honthorst."

© National Gallery of Art, Washington

[2] *Catalogus van de schooner verzameling Schilderijen die zig in den Haag bevonden in de Galerij van den voormaligen Stad-houder Willem den vijfden Prins van Orange etc. etc. en die in Frankrijk getransporteerd zijn voor en door de Fransche Natie als gereekend zijnde te behooren onder de geconquesteerde goederen van dien Prins in Mey 1795*. Likely No. 69: "Een Consert, van verscheide speelders en speelsters Leevens groote halverlijf op doek door G. Honthorst, 4 voet 5 duim 6 voet 5 duim" (A concert of several male and female musicians, life size, half length on canvas by Honthorst, 4 feet 5 thumbs). (1814 copy of 1795 original, Rijksarchief, Den Haag, ARA, Archief Binnenlandse Zaken, Onderwijs, Kunsten en Wetenschappen 1815-1848, dossier nr. 4029.)

[3] A set of four interior scenes of the owner's country residence, circa 1900, by French artist Etienne Azambre (1859 -1935) includes a *View of the 'grand salon' as seen from the 'petit salon'* in which the right 2/3 portion of the NGA's painting is visible on the far wall. (Photos of the four paintings are in the NGA curatorial files.)

[4] Permanent French export license no. 111555, issued on 23 July 2009; copy in NGA curatorial files.

EXHIBITION HISTORY

2018 Utrecht, Caravaggio and Europe, Centraal Museum, Utrecht; Bayerisches Staatsgemäldesammlungen - Alte Pinakothek, Munich, 2018-2019.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1930 Drossaers, Sophie Wilhelmina Albertine, Cornelis Hofstede de Groot, and C.H. de Jonge. "Inventaris van de meubelen van het Stadhouderlijk kwartier met het Speelhuis en van het Huis in het Noordeinde te 's-Gravenhage." *Oud Holland* 47, no. 5 (1930): 231, no. 240.

1974 Drossaers, Sophie Wilhelmina Albertine, and Th. H. Lunsingh Scheurleer. *Inventarissen van de inboedels in de verblijven van de Oranjes en daarmede gelijk te stellen stukken 1567-1795*. 3 vols. The Hague, 1974-1976: 1:207, no. 611.

© National Gallery of Art, Washington

2014 Wheelock, Arthur K, Jr. "The Evolution of the Dutch Painting Collection." *National Gallery of Art Bulletin* no. 50 (Spring 2014): 2-19, repro.

2015 "Art for the Nation: The Story of the Patrons' Permanent Fund." *National Gallery of Art Bulletin*, no. 53 (Fall 2015):33, repro.

To cite: Arthur K. Wheelock Jr., “Gerrit van Honthorst/*The Concert*/1623,” *Dutch Paintings of the Seventeenth Century*, NGA Online Editions, https://purl.org/nga/collection/artobject/163184 (accessed March 30, 2021).

© National Gallery of Art, Washington