Painter Jan Steen is best known for his humorous scenes of daily life. He loved to show people eating, drinking, dancing, or playing music. The man strumming a lute may be Steen himself. The other figures may represent members of Steen's family.

Jan Steen (Dutch, 1626–1679).
The Family Concert, 1666.
Oil on canvas.
Gift of Timothy B. Blackstone.
Music and Art

- What is going on in this painting? What instruments do you see?
- Give students a chance to explore how sounds are made with various types of musical instruments. (Small instruments can be played quietly in the museum.) How are the sounds made? Describe the sounds.
- If you were in the painting, what would you hear?
- Play various types of music. What type of music fits this scene? Why?
- Have students dance while listening to several types of music, such as classical, jazz, and hip-hop. How do your movements change according to the music?
- Have students make drawings while listening to different types of music. How do the drawings relate to the music?

Illinois State Goals: 4, 19, 25, 26

Family Gatherings

- How does your family celebrate? What do people do at your family gatherings? Do people sing, watch movies, play games, eat?
- Have students look at and talk about family photographs with their family.
- Have students bring in one of their favorite family photographs and share with the rest of the class.
- Have students make a drawing or write a story about a family gathering.

Illinois State Goals: 3, 4, 25, 26

Animal Adventures

- What animals are in the painting? What are they doing? Are the dog and cat friends? Are they interested in the music? If they could talk, what would they say?
- Read and discuss books that tell stories about animals and their adventures.
- Ask students to create a story about the animals in this painting. Have them illustrate their stories in a comic book format.

Illinois State Goals: 1, 3, 4, 25, 26
Draw a party.