

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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MUSEUM ACQUIRES PICASSO OF FOREMOST IMPORTANCE

The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, announces the acquisition through the Mrs. Simon Guggenheim Fund of the famous cubist painting Three Musicians by Pablo Picasso, painted in 1921. With the addition of this outstanding canvas to the Museum Collection, the Museum's representation of the work of Picasso is now the most important in the world. Two of the Museum's Picassos, the Dog and Cock of 1921 and the famous Girl before a Mirror of 1932, have also been acquired through the generosity of Mrs. Simon Guggenheim. The painting will be on view on the first floor facing the main entrance to the Museum. Another and somewhat smaller version of the Three Musicians is in the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

Commenting on the large painting (6' 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ " x 7' 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ "), Alfred H. Barr, Jr., Director of the Museum Collections, says:

"The Three Musicians is possibly the greatest 20th-century painting thus far acquired for the Museum Collection.

"During his long career as a painter Picasso has periodically concentrated his energies to produce a single large composition which sums up a whole period of his work. The Three Musicians is such a picture. And not only is it one of Picasso's climactic achievements, it is perhaps the culminating work of cubism, the most important movement in the art of the first quarter of our century.

"Cubism began with another great Picasso canvas, the Demaiselles d'Avignon of 1907, acquired by the Museum ten years ago. It developed as an art of austere analysis, of breaking up the shapes of figures or objects into angular fragments and cross-sections which were thus transmuted into a new form or construction. About 1913 the cubists, Picasso, Braque and Gris, turned toward a simpler, flatter and more decorative style often called 'synthetic cubism' and magnificently demonstrated eight years later by the Three Musicians of 1921.

"In the previous year Picasso had designed costumes for Pulcinella, a ballet based on the old Italian Commedia dell' Arte. In the Three Musicians the traditional Commedia characters appear again as musicians seated around a table: Pierrot in white at the left playing a recorder, Harlequin, in the center with a guitar, and at the right a strange figure in a monk's black habit and cowl, singing behind his veiled mask while he holds his music on his knees. Beneath Pierrot's chair sprawls a dog (which appears as the principal character in the Dog and Cock).

"The subject of the Three Musicians is gay; but by means of the monumental size of the picture, its sombre background and mysterious masks, Picasso transforms the three music-making comedians into a solemn and majestic triumvirate."

Museum of Modern Art, New York