

Linking art to music: a tour of CMA's “Monet to Matisse” exhibit with Lionel Bringuier

by Mike Telin



Impressionism provides a unique intersection between visual art and music. You can draw parallels between what composers were writing and artists were painting in other periods — baroque, romantic, modernist — but “aha” moments come with remarkable spontaneity when you put Debussy and Monet side by side. It’s like art you can hear, and music you can see.

In a happy coincidence, the Cleveland Museum of Art is glowing with the exhibition “Painting the Modern Garden: Monet to Matisse” the same week that The Cleveland Orchestra is presenting a program of works by Claude Debussy and Hector Berlioz led by French conductor Lionel

Bringuier, including the premiere of Bernard Rands’ *Concerto for English horn*, commissioned by the Oberlin Conservatory for the Orchestra’s solo English horn, Robert Walters. Rands has been heavily influenced by the music of the Impressionist composers.

On Tuesday, November 24, “Monet to Matisse” curator Bill Robinson led Bringuier and a small group of invited guests on a tour of the exhibit, which included stops at Monet’s great *Waterlilies* triptych depicting the artist’s water garden at Giverny, which connects in its colors and textures to Debussy’s *Prelude to an Afternoon of a Faun*. The



tour also visited Vincent Van Gogh's *Garden at Auvers*, which complements Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique*.





Photos by Kathy Pahr.

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