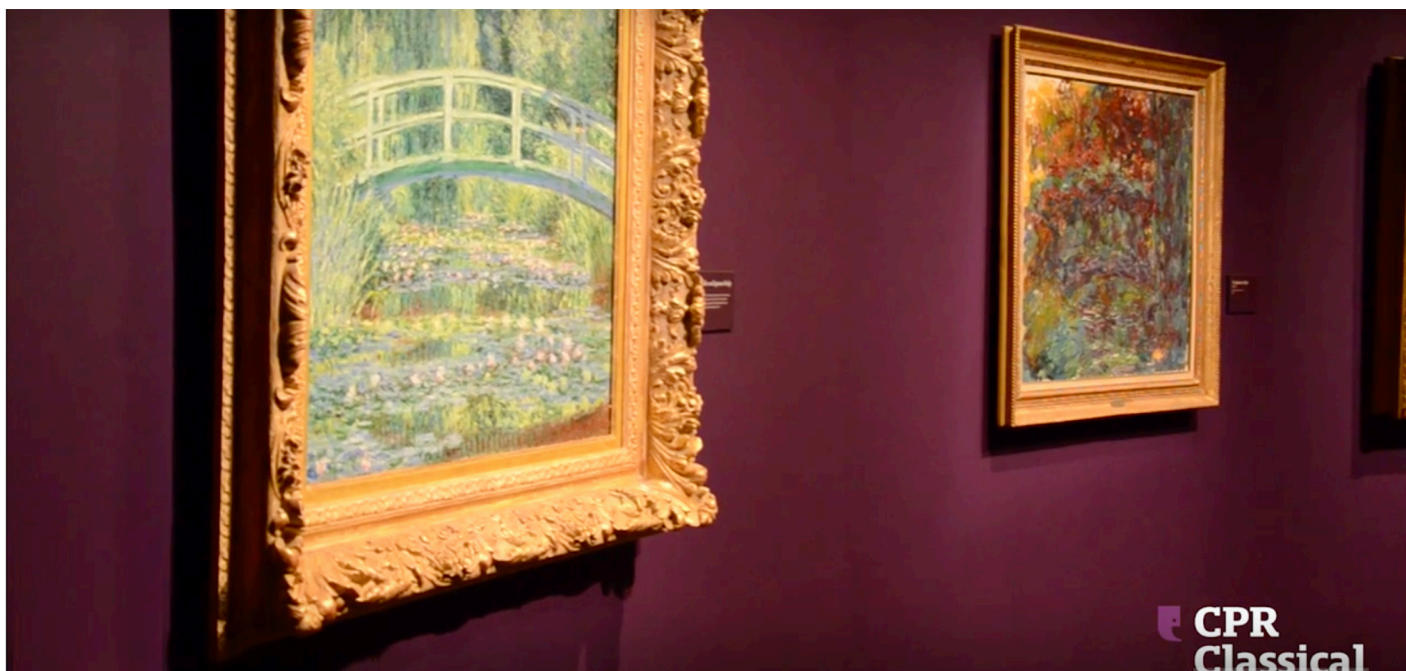


Katie Mahan On Being The Pianist For The ‘Claude Monet: The Truth of Nature’ Exhibit

By Karla Walker March 17, 2020



The Denver Art Museum’s exhibit of more than 120 paintings by Claude Monet has come and gone, but the impact remains – both visually and musically. If you were one of the [nearly 400,000 people](#) who saw the “Claude Monet: The Truth of Nature” exhibit, then you also experienced an immersion into the world of Impressionism in music.

CPR Classical curated a playlist of French Impressionist favorites for the museum to play in the galleries while you viewed the paintings and all the piano selections were performed by Denver native pianist Katie Mahan.

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“Impressionism in music is the musical equivalent to Impressionism in art,” Mahan said. “It means you have blurring of colors which in painting is created by actually blurring the colors. In music it’s created, at least on the piano, by blurring your harmonies through special uses of the pedal. In Debussy, part of the charm and character of the music is really what you do with your foot.”



Mahan was born and raised in Denver and graduated with a piano performance degree from University of Colorado at Boulder. She then spent a number of years being mentored by famed French pianist Pascal Rogé.

“We had long discussions about French life, French culture, and art. He really helped to make it a whole picture for me -- that the music was really a reflection of the culture,” Mahan said.

She said Claude Debussy aimed to find a uniquely French voice in his music.

“He, like the painters and poets of the time, did a lot of soul searching to find what is it that makes French things French. The result is that it’s totally different,” she said.

Debussy and Monet were [titans of Impressionism](#). They each helped create and define Impressionism in their respective artistic realms. Hear more about what Impressionism in classical music means with [CPR Classical’s series “Monet Mondays.”](#)

Mahan now lives in Austria to accommodate her European concert career. She has performed multiple times in the [CPR Performance Studio](#).