

CHARLIE HOOPER-WILLIAMS

Play & See
Sculptural Edition

INFORMATION FOR FESTIVALS, VENUES AND COMMISSIONERS

IN DEVELOPMENT · 2026–27

THE WORK

An acoustic piano with a clear tube of light rising from every key.

Sit down and play. At its heart is an acoustic piano, a striking design from the Danish makers Keybird. Each key sends light into its own clear tube, up out of the instrument and into a canopy above the player's head.

The light listens the way a musician does. A soft note rises slowly; a hard one leaps. Hold a note and its light keeps flowing, fading as the sound fades; let go and it is cut off at the source, so short notes climb the tubes as separate pulses. Near the top the light slows and gathers into a drifting memory of what has just been played.

Colour comes from the music, not from the keys. The sculpture listens for the key you are playing in and gives it a colour; every note leans away from that colour towards its own, as far as it pulls against the harmony. A change of key floods in beneath the old colour as it drifts upward. Put a fist on the keys and the whole thing flinches.

Play & See began as the live-visuals system for my own concerts and became an installation anyone can play: in galleries, on tour and on a children's hospital ward. The Sculptural Edition makes that conversation between sound and light into a freestanding object.



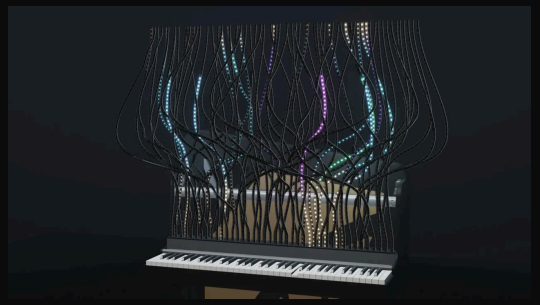
Touch

Light leaves the key white and rises at the speed you played.



Colour from the music

The key sets the colour; each note leans towards its own.



Changing key

A new key floods in beneath the old colour.



Clusters

A fist on the keys makes the sculpture flinch.



Teaching mode

The next notes of a piece come down the tubes towards the keys to play, arriving as each one is due and as long as it should be held. Hesitate and the music waits; press the wrong key and the right one keeps pulsing. A way in for people who have never played.

Images are simulations rendered from the working design and the real-time software that will drive the sculpture. Films: charliehooperwilliams.com/installations/sculptural-edition

DETAILS (provisional)

INSTRUMENT	An acoustic piano by the Danish makers Keybird, a striking design in its own right
LIGHT	A clear tube for every key, each with a metre of light: 60 individually addressable LEDs per tube, 4,140 in all
RESPONSE	Custom software reading touch, timing, the sustain pedal and harmony; a teaching mode guides newcomers through a piece
SIZE	Approx. 170 cm high, 140 cm wide, 55 cm deep
AUDIENCE	One player at a time, with an audience gathered around; all ages, no musical experience needed
POWER	Mains
STATUS	In development 2026–27, supported by Arts Council England and The Marchus Trust

For light festivals, galleries and public spaces

The Sculptural Edition doesn't need me there to perform it: anyone can sit down and play, and it is different with every person who does. I'm talking to festivals, venues and commissioners about where it goes first.

FORMATS

- Festival runs, indoors (it is strongest in low light)
- Residencies and longer placements, with optional teaching-mode sessions for schools and community groups
- Commission or acquisition for a permanent home

WHAT A HOST PROVIDES (to be confirmed)

- An indoor space with low ambient light and room for an audience around the piece
- Mains power near the piece
- Light-touch invigilation while open to the public

CHARLIEHOOPERWILLIAMS.COM/CONTACT

SUPPORTED BY

Supported using public funding by ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

THE MARCHUS TRUST