

## Related Events

### Exhibition Tours:

Alex Cecchetti

*If all matter jiggles, the universe is an orchestra*

Saturday 5 May 2018, 11am–12pm

Free, booking advised

This performative exhibition tour by artist Alex Cecchetti invites the audience to resonate like musical instruments along with the artworks.

Vanessa Boni, curator

Saturday 30 June 2018, 2–3pm

Join Vanessa Boni for a tour of Cecchetti's exhibition with a focus on the relationship between storytelling, gesture and sound.

Book online at [www.spikeisland.org.uk](http://www.spikeisland.org.uk),  
call 0117 929 2266 or visit reception.

## Spike Island

133 Cumberland Road, Bristol BS1 6UX

Tel. 0117 929 2266

[www.spikeisland.org.uk](http://www.spikeisland.org.uk)

[admin@spikeisland.org.uk](mailto:admin@spikeisland.org.uk)

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### Visitor Information

Gallery open Tuesday to Sunday, 12–5pm  
(during exhibitions only).

Admission to the gallery is free.

Café open Monday to Friday, 8.30am–5pm  
Saturday and Sunday, 10am–5pm.

Spike Island aims to be a fully accessible building.

Alex Cecchetti's *Singing Chandelier* is produced with the generous support of Nicoletta Fiorucci, Founder of the Fiorucci Art Trust.

*Singing Line* is produced with the generous support of Traudi Messini.

*Music Hall* is co-commissioned by Spike Island, Bristol and Void, Londonderry.

*Cetaceans* was originally commissioned by *The Institute of Things to Come*, Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo (2017).

Alex Cecchetti wishes to thank Centre for Contemporary Art Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw for supporting the production of *Erotic Cabinet*.



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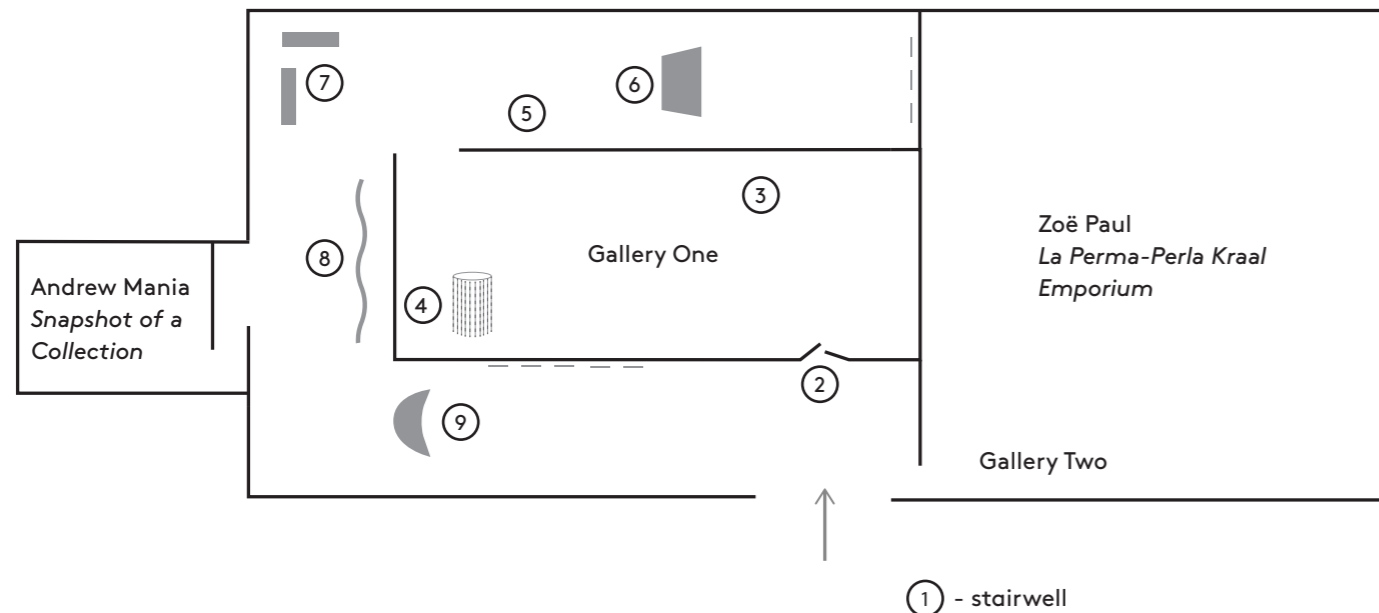


# Exhibition Guide

## Alex Cecchetti At the Gates of the Music Palace

5 May to 8 July 2018

## Spike Island



- ① *Music Window* (2017) (stairwell)  
Light sensors, computer, vibrators  
Technical realization Emilien Ghomi and Simon Larcher, trublion.org
- ② *Music Door* (2017)  
Wooden door, piano wires, music box
- ③ *Ceateans* (2018)  
8 channel audio, speakers, pillows, vinyl and carpet
- ④ *Singing Chandelier* (2018)  
1000 unique blown glass pieces, waterphone, iron structure
- ⑤ *Song of Solitude* (2012)  
China Ink on paper and bird callers
- ⑥ *Erotic Cabinet* (2016-2017)  
69 works mixed techniques, furniture in solid oak wood, frames, poems disguised as paintings
- ⑦ *Reading Room and Fleurs D'ennuis* (2017)  
Benches, poems, paintings
- ⑧ *Singing line* (2018)  
Alcantara, glass, metal, copper, story, wind chimes  
Produced thanks to Traudi Messini
- ⑨ *Music Hall* (2018)  
Sonar sensors, copper sound cone, crystal watercolours  
Co-commissioned by Spike Island, Bristol and Void, Londonderry

## Alex Cecchetti

Alex Cecchetti has exhibited his work broadly and recent solo exhibitions include: Tamam Shud at La Ferme du Buisson, Noisiel, France and Centre For Contemporary Art Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw, Poland; Ceateceans, Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin, Italy (all 2017); Comrades of Fear and Wonder; Contemporary Art Centre (CAC), Vilnius, Lithuania (2012). Cecchetti's performances have been presented at venues including Palais de Tokyo (2017); South London Gallery (2013); Serpentine Galleries, London (2015); Palais de Tokyo, Paris, (2014); and MAXXI museum, Rome (2012).

Alex Cecchetti's works often begin with a poem that he transforms into an object, a performance or a situation. At *the Gates of the Music Palace* is inspired by Samuel Taylor Coleridge's poem *Kubla Khan*, in which Coleridge dreams of music that alone is able to erect an entire palace surrounded by fountains, underground caves, and a river. Music is ever present in Cecchetti's exhibition, filling and sculpting the galleries, transforming them into discreet sound environments that both guide and respond to your physical movements as you pass through this immersive concert.

Each artwork is a musical instrument to be activated; the wind, the light and even the space itself becomes part of the orchestra. One of the first encounters is with *Music Hall*, a mysterious invisible instrument that transforms movements into musical notes from the pentatonic scale (a scale with five notes per octave) using sonar technology. You can play with it to compose sounds with your body, re-establishing the ancient link between movement and music. The musical notes are amplified from a suspended copper sound cone.

A strip of looping burnt orange alcantara swoops through the perimeter gallery. Titled *Singing Line*, this abstract form is a three-dimensional line drawing and within it, a brass and glass wind chime softly sings in the passing breeze. Cecchetti proposes that if we imagine the movements of handwriting until they are visible as larger and larger circles and ellipses, then every writer can be considered a dancer. This sculpture tells a story about the beginning of the world and two musicians, one of whom is in love with the other.

At the core of the *Music Palace* is *Ceateceans* – an eight channel sound installation – set within a dark blue basin to give the illusion of floating in water when sitting or lying down. Holy music, poems and a human choir who sing like whales are mixed together to form a polyphonic composition. This concert has been imagined to make you fall asleep and accompany you in your dreams. Hanging low from the double height ceiling is *Singing Chandelier*, a cylindrical sculpture made of a cascade of colourful hand blown glass bird beaks, each one touching the other to make a sparkling jingle when it is played.

## Performances:

During the course of the exhibition, scheduled performances are taking place within *Music Hall* involving a dancer who activates the work by creating melodies through choreographed movement, and a soprano singing a love song from within *Singing Chandelier*.

**Dancer Tilly Webber and singer Emma Huggett:**  
Friday 4 May, 6-9pm (during the exhibition preview)

Tilly Webber: Saturday 19 May, 2-5pm

Emma Huggett: Saturday 2 June, 2-5pm

Tilly Webber: Thursday 14 June, 2-5pm

Emma Huggett: Thursday 28 June, 2-5pm

Free, no need to book

**Emma Huggett** is a second-year philosophy student and Vice-Chancellor's Music Scholar at the University of Bristol. Until 2016, she studied at the Royal College of Music where she was awarded the Concordia Foundation Singing Prize. She recently performed Vivaldi's Gloria (London Pro Arte Choir) and Bach's Cantata BWV 51 (Bristol University Baroque Ensemble).

**Tilly Webber** trained at London Contemporary Dance School, graduating in 2008. She has worked extensively as a freelance performer working with an electric mix of artists and companies. She is also a movement and rehearsal director for companies and has performed in operas and music videos.

Alex Cecchetti  
*At the Gates of the Music Palace*

Dear You,

Let me welcome you as a musician and not as a spectator. Dancers, singers, readers, builders, sleepers and dreamers, this is us, constantly busy, willing or not, to participate in the world. No exhibition or representation can suspend for a moment the joyful and inexorable process of becoming.

The music palace recurrently appears in dreams, as an architecture and a landscape erected and created by music only. Poets, writers, musicians and anonymous sleepers, many have dreamt of this miracle; few, once awakened, have remembered the music. Only some fragments have been reported, never the whole composition. And even if every dreamer agreed that this must be the music that creates the world, there is still a question without answer: who is playing?

The molecules in rocks, in plants, or in water. Those in a glass, in a table, or in a hand. All of them are constantly vibrating, obeying the oscillatory mechanism of matter. If something vibrates it must make a sound. And if everything makes a sound, then the universe is an orchestra that is created while being played by all the matter it is made of. And if the universe is an orchestra, happiness must be a form of accord, a note we sing all together.

In the music palace there are three toucans and a blackbird, sometimes they take human shape. When humans are possessed by birds they will tell you stories, show you how to play some instruments, disclose your hidden artworks, secret botanical experiments or just help you spot some poems disguised as paintings in the erotic cabinet.

You are welcome, musician, to take part in this concert no matter if you never heard the beginning, because there is no beginning, everyone is welcome.

*Music Door, 2017*

Wooden door, piano wires, music box  
Technical realisation Thierry Madiot

This door appeared for the first time in my dreams, it was the door of another artist's studio. "It is an experiment", she said in the dream, "do you want it?" The door was shipped directly from the dream. When you open it, the door plays the sound of your desire to see the show.

*Music Hall, 2018*

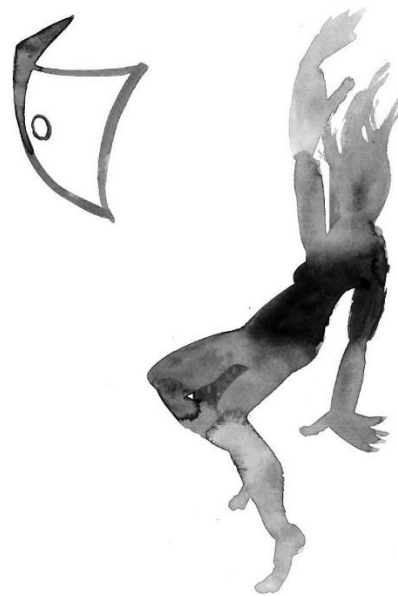
Sonar sensors, copper sound cone, crystal watercolours

Co-commissioned by Spike Island, Bristol and Void, Londonderry

It is said that every step you take inside the music palace is transformed into a note. Some people move in music, some people move in noise. Sonar sensors track your movements as you pass through the gallery space producing notes from the Chinese pentatonic scale. The musical notes are played out of a sound cone made from copper.

On the wall along the hall there are five watercolours; they are the view of the music palace. Their position on the wall is equal to the five 'notes' of the pentatonic scale. It seems that these are the notes that created the world.

Use your bodies to make your own music.



*Reading Room and Fleurs D'ennuis, 2017*

Benches, poems, paintings

The pieces of furniture are inspired by Enzo Mari *autoprogettazione*, a booklet of instructions for the production of tables, chairs and benches. You are welcome to sit down and read pages from these books of poems. Maybe a toucan will come to show you a secret drawer, maybe not, birds are unpredictable.

### *Singing Line, 2018*

Alcantara, glass, metal, copper, story, wind chimes  
Produced thanks to Traudi Messini

A ribbon is hanging from the ceiling and resting on top of copper strips. When a breeze blows in, or you walk by, the ribbon swings and sings. If you wait long enough a bird will come to tell you a story or a poem and reveal the secret of these curves.



### *Song of Solitude, 2012*

China ink on paper and bird callers

When you want to draw a cloud, you cannot look at what you are doing on the paper, as once you glance back at the sky, the cloud is gone, or has changed shape. These drawings have been made without looking for a single moment at the paper, the eyes just chased the clouds in the sky. Each drawing is a music partition for bird callers. Twist or tap the bird caller to play.

### *Erotic Cabinet, 2016-2017*

69 works mixed techniques, furniture in solid oak wood, frames, poems disguised as paintings

Please enjoy.

### *Cetaceans, 2017*

8 channel sound work

We have been told that the frequency of whale song makes it easier to fall asleep. *Cetaceans* is a concert for a human choir who sing like whales. They are accompanied by a glass harmonica, which is an instrument played by wet fingers and a water-phone. This concert has been imagined to make you fall asleep and accompany you in your dreams.

### *Singing Chandelier, 2018*

1000 unique blown glass bird beaks, waterphone, iron structure

The chandelier of the music palace is made of glass bird beaks: toucan, parrot, hummingbird, ibis and pink flamingo.

This is a musical instrument you can play if you are delicate, because love is like a bird at your window. The glass is fragile, if you are careful you can play the water-phone by passing your fingers around the rods. The accompanying score is placed on a stand, which you can sing if you know how to read music when the right moment comes.

Only one person may enter at a time.



### *Music Window, 2017*

Light sensors, computer, vibrators  
Technical realisation Emilien Ghomi and Simon Larcher, [trublion.org](http://trublion.org) (located in the stairwell)

The music you hear is the sound of light played by the windows themselves. For each little wooden box you can spot on the windows, there is a light sensor. It captures light information and sends it to the algorithmic box. The programme analyses light data and transforms the information into notes and rhythms. It arranges everything according to the position of the sun in the sky. The music of light is then sent back to the windows via metal cylinders which cause the glass to vibrate. There are no speakers, the music is amplified by the vibration of the windows, singing the light that runs through them.