

The Art of Sound

LACMA and the David Geffen Galleries and Mastermind Production Group Inc Transform the Live Music Experience

Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) hosted a unique audio event inside the unfinished David Geffen Galleries, featuring over 100 musicians performing six original Kamasi Washington compositions across 11 separate stations. Though physically apart, they played in perfect harmony, creating a spatially immersive soundscape. Powered by Yamaha's advanced audio setup and Mastermind Production Group Inc., the experience let audiences explore a live composition within a still-developing architectural space.



Introduction

In a bold fusion of art, architecture, and immersive sound, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) staged a groundbreaking musical experience inside the unfinished David Geffen Galleries—before any artwork was installed. Over three nights, more than 100 musicians performed six original compositions by Kamasi Washington across 10 spatially distributed “stations.” Though physically apart, all played in perfect unison, creating a unified yet spatially deconstructed soundscape.

Powering the event was Yamaha's advanced audio infrastructure, deployed by Chad Griswold and Mastermind Production Group Inc in close collaboration with LACMA and Washington's team. For audiences, it was a rare chance to wander through a living composition—an immersive journey through sound within a space still under construction.

The Vision

The creative concept was as unconventional as it was ambitious: allow guests to roam freely through the museum,

experiencing a different sonic perspective depending on where they stood. Five stations featured a complete ensemble - grand piano, upright bass, drums, and horns - while additional sections included strings, woodwinds, brass, and a 24 - voice choir. Though every ensemble played the same piece in sync, the auditory experience constantly evolved based on the listener's path through the space.

“It was like a deconstructed symphony,” said Chad Griswold. “You could walk from one end of the building to the other and hear the same song evolve in completely different ways.”

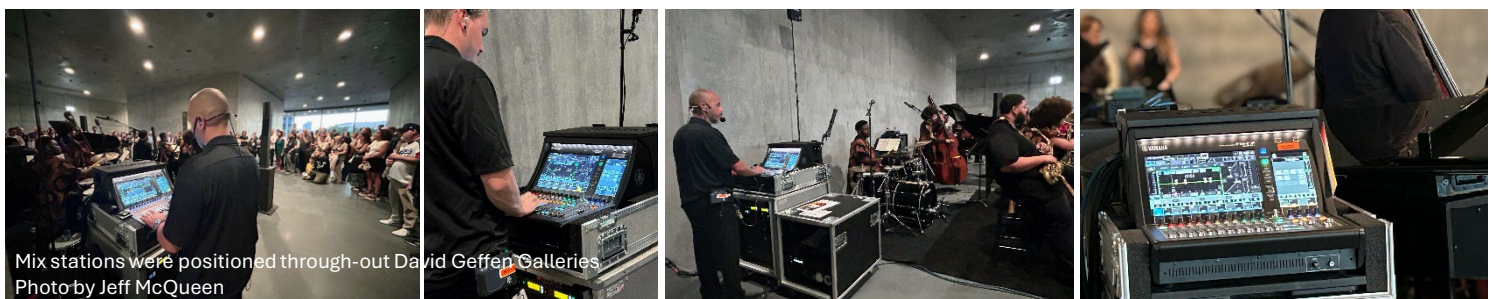
Audio Infrastructure and Execution

The complexity of the event demanded a flexible, rock-solid system. Yamaha's Dante-enabled infrastructure formed the backbone, with 11 consoles deployed across the venue, including (2) DM7-EX, (4) DM7-C and (5) DM3 systems, each acted as a local mix point and I/O hub.

Key technical highlights included:

- **11 mix positions**
- **130 channels** of 96kHz Dante recording
- **Click and talkback** routed from a master conductor's console for precise sync
- **Minimal PA reinforcement** to preserve natural acoustics
- **Creative antenna placement and low-profile speaker setups** to reduce visual impact

“We had the entire network burning in our shop for two weeks prior to our onsite install,” said Chad. “Full failover tests. Everything was rock solid.”



Challenges and Solutions

The unfinished museum introduced unique challenges. Polished concrete floors and glass walls created a highly reflective space, which the team used to their advantage. Rather than masking the natural reverb, they leaned into it to enhance the immersive effect.

Speaker placement was sparse and strategic. “They were there more for the pictures,” Chad joked. Most of the sound was acoustic, with subtle reinforcement only where needed.

Network routing was carefully planned to ensure clean cable paths and uninterrupted audience flow. A central control hub - nicknamed “audio control” - housed all Dante routing, managed by a dedicated technician affectionately known as “Dr. Dante.”

Audience Experience

Across three nights, 5400 guests flowed through the space with no fixed seating or stage. Some settled in with favorite ensembles, while others wandered constantly. The experience was designed to feel personal, unstructured, and constantly evolving.

“The vibe changed every night,” said Chad. “Thursday was more formal; Friday and Saturday felt like a spiritual jazz pilgrimage.”

Guests described the performance as magical, transformative, and unlike anything they’d ever experienced. One attendee compared it to “walking through a living composition.”

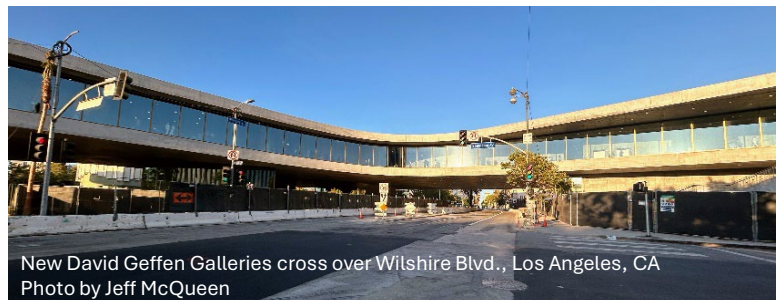
Creative Collaboration Vision

The production emerged from a long-standing friendship between Kamasi Washington and LACMA’s director. Planning began nearly a year in advance, with repeated on-site tests to evaluate the space’s evolving acoustics. Chad’s team coordinated closely with Washington’s production crew - conveniently located just blocks from Yamaha’s shop.

At the core of Mastermind’s approach was customization over convention. As Director of Operations Kate Griswold explained, “Each job is unique, and that means that a one-size-fits-most approach to audio is often not the best solution for customers - especially those in entertainment and creative fields. The reason customers like Disney, Universal, and LACMA use Mastermind as a trusted vendor is because we take the time to customize racks, choose equipment, and design systems that are as unique as the art they are making. It’s how we’ve grown this company with little to no advertising - the attention to detail.”

That attention was evident throughout the process. Musical arrangements were crafted specifically for the space, with each ensemble contributing a distinct layer to the whole.

Conductors and key players used in-ear monitors to stay synced, ensuring a seamless performance that felt spontaneous, yet was carefully engineered.



New David Geffen Galleries cross over Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, CA
Photo by Jeff McQueen



Legacy and Future Potential

While the performances were for a few special nights only, their impact could be lasting. The entire event was recorded at full resolution, with discussions underway to transform it into a virtual or spatial audio experience for broader access.

“This could be a model for future site - specific performances,” Chad noted. “It shows what’s possible when you combine creative vision with the right technology.”

Conclusion

The LACMA project was more than a concert - it was a multi-sensory exploration of architecture, sound, and human perception. Yamaha’s precision - engineered tools and Mastermind’s custom approach enabled a performance that felt effortless, despite its enormous complexity. For Chad and his team, it was a defining moment in heightening audio experience. For audiences, it was an unforgettable invitation to walk through music in motion.