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Metro Senior Public Arts Officer Alan Nakagawa (left) performed at the grand opening of the Broad Contemporary Art Museum, Feb. 16-18. Nakagawa assembled various sound artists to perform for the crowds. Here Nakagawa performs with Steve Rodin, who Nakagawa classified as an "ambient sound" artist.



Photos: Jimmy Stroup

Metro Arts Officer Performs at LACMA Grand Opening

By JIMMY STROUP

(Feb. 19, 2008) By day, Alan Nakagawa, a mild-mannered senior public arts officer, works with artists the agency selects to bring art to bus and rail stations.

Come nightfall and during the weekends, Nakagawa trades in his day job for a guitar and a drum kit, changing into Super Contemporary Music Performer Man!

For 20 years, Nakagawa has created his own brand of music. His talent prompted the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) to request he perform for the masses of people who attended the grand opening of the Broad Contemporary Art Museum (BCAM) this past weekend.

"At first we didn't know what we were going to do, but they said 'propose something,'" Nakagawa said. "So I decided it would be fun to call up my friends, people I



LACMA was bustling with all sorts of activities to please the young and old who came for the grand opening of the Broad Contemporary Art Museum. This giant swan was a favorite of the

admire, and some people I've never children.
worked with before to see if we
could all get together and perform for this three-day event."

That idea turned into "Found Sound," a collection of sound artists whose music is as contemporary as is BCAM's artistic selections. In other words, Nakagawa and his friends don't play pop music. Think Philip Glass or Brian Eno. "Found Sound" lays down some completely new sounds.

'Experimental sound'

"It's eclectic," Nakagawa said. "We'll do stuff that's hip-hop oriented and then the next one will be experimental sound, for lack of a better description."

Of the eight acts that compose "Found Sound," none performs the same style of music.

"We have ambient pieces and a video piece that I do the soundtrack to live," he said. "That one's actually about oil development in Los Angeles, which is a big part of the roots of modern Los Angeles."

Nakagawa plays the drums mostly, but he is also a connoisseur of all things percussion. He played the guitar and the mandolin for the "Found Sound" performances at the BCAM.

He said that music has been a part of his life for a long time and that he was grateful to have been able to be a part of the LACMA free weekend to celebrate the opening of BCAM.

"We're getting paid to do this, so I guess it's not a hobby," he said. "I'd call it a passion. That's what music is for me. It keeps me sane from Metro – print that!"

OK, Super Contemporary Music Performer Man.