

# CREATIVETIME

**DAVID BYRNE**  
***PLAYING THE BUILDING***  
**THE BATTERY MARITIME BUILDING, LOWER MANHATTAN**  
**MAY 31 – AUGUST 10, 2008**



David Byrne, *Playing the Building*, installation rendering by Danielle Spencer, 2008.

## **PLAY DAVID BYRNE'S 9,000-SQUARE-FOOT INTERACTIVE SOUND INSTALLATION**

*Playing the Building*, a 9,000-square-foot, interactive, site-specific installation by David Byrne, will transform the interior of the landmark Battery Maritime Building in Lower Manhattan into a massive sound sculpture that all visitors are invited to sit and “play.” Byrne’s project will consist of a retrofitted antique organ placed in the center of the building’s cavernous second-floor gallery that will control a series of devices attached to its structural features—metal beams, plumbing, electrical conduits, and heating and water pipes. These machines will vibrate, strike, and blow across the building elements, triggering unique harmonics and producing finely tuned sounds. As Byrne explains, it is an elaborate system for “activating the sound-producing qualities that are inherent in all materials.”

*Playing the Building* marks the first time in decades that the second floor of the Battery Maritime Building will be accessible to the public. The space will be open and free to all visitors on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday throughout the summer of 2008. Everyone will be invited to sit at the organ, tap on the keys, and create a unique array of sounds that travel through the space. In addition, David Byrne and Creative Time will invite guest musicians to challenge his creation through a series of performances and jam sessions.

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Since the early days of his practice, Byrne has been a dynamic force in public space, having installed artworks in Belfast, Toronto, Stockholm, San Francisco, Tokyo, and Sydney. Byrne first collaborated with Creative Time in 2002 by creating a sound installation at the World Financial Center in downtown Manhattan as part of the exhibition *Sonic Garden*, with Laurie Anderson, Marina Rosenfeld, and Ben Rubin. Byrne is internationally renowned as the co-founder of the groundbreaking Talking Heads (1976-88)—a band that took popular music in new directions—and has won Grammy, Academy, and Golden Globe awards for his music. He has been creating book projects and exhibiting his visual artwork for more than a decade.

*Playing the Building* continues Creative Time's history of animating and amplifying unique spaces in New York City's urban landscape. This practice began over 30 years ago, when Creative Time transformed sites in Lower Manhattan that were left in disuse or neglect by the city's recession, including the U.S. Customs House, the First Precinct House, a beach created from the landfill of building the World Trade Center (that eventually became Battery Park City), and the Battery Maritime Building, with the performance "Love of A Poet" by John Kelly in 1990. Creative Time's recent projects include Paul Chan's *Waiting for Godot in New Orleans*; Mike Nelson's *A Psychic Vacuum*; Doug Aitken's *sleepwalkers*, a film projected on the Museum of Modern Art, NY; and *Tribute in Light*, which served as a gesture of hope and healing after 9/11.

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