



Spotlight

VectorWorks
Helps Stage the
2008 GRAMMY
Celebration®

VectorWORKS®



The 2008 GRAMMY Celebration: the largest awards show celebration in the entertainment industry. Produced by The Recording Academy® and Along Came Mary Productions, and designed by Angel City Designs.

The GRAMMY Celebration is the largest awards show celebration in the entertainment industry. With 6,000 guests, this year's celebration covers 98,000 square feet of party space—the size of three football fields. It took four months to plan, but planners only had four hours to transform Hall A of the Los Angeles Convention Center from the pre-telecast show into the post-telecast party.

Pre-eminent high-end special event and catering company Along Came Mary Productions, Inc., pulls it off with the help of many hands and VectorWorks Designer.

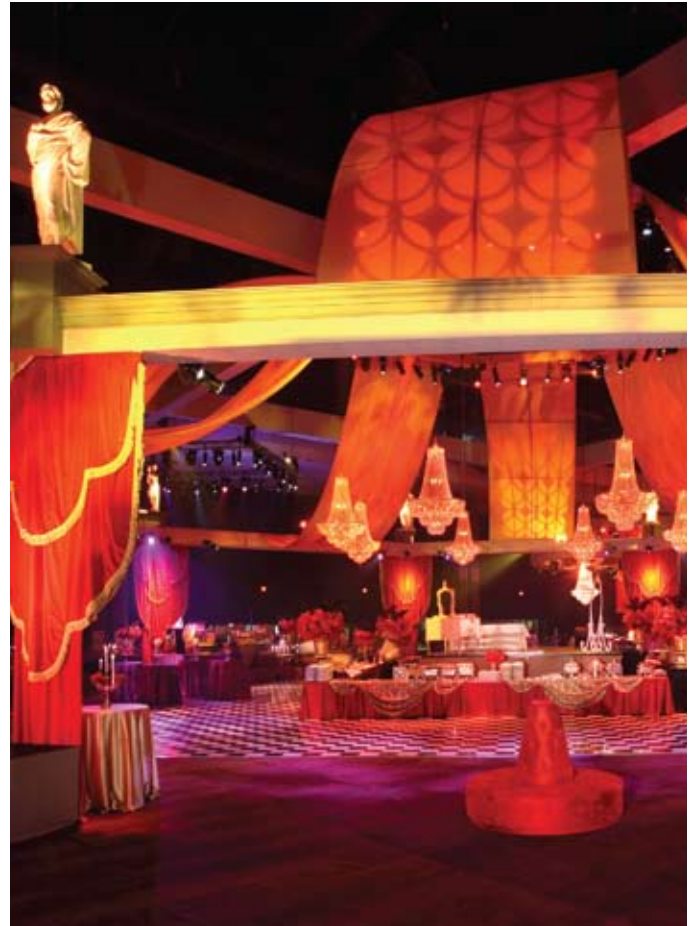
Best Performance by a Single Software Program

VectorWorks Designer is used every step of the way, according to Erick Weiss, who orchestrates the event as senior producer for Along Came Mary Productions with owner and founder Mary Micucci. Along Came Mary has been producing this event for more than ten years. From the initial conceptual design by Angel City Designs to the placement of every last chair by Classic Party Rentals, every detail is executed in VectorWorks.

"We use VectorWorks Designer for all our applications in producing the GRAMMY Celebration—for laying out every inch of our event floor space," says Weiss. "Whether we're planning for somebody's back yard or a convention center, we include everything from buffets and bars, to lighting trusses and water barrels, to fire safety code requirements. Most of our vendors use VectorWorks, as well, which is critical for an event of this magnitude."

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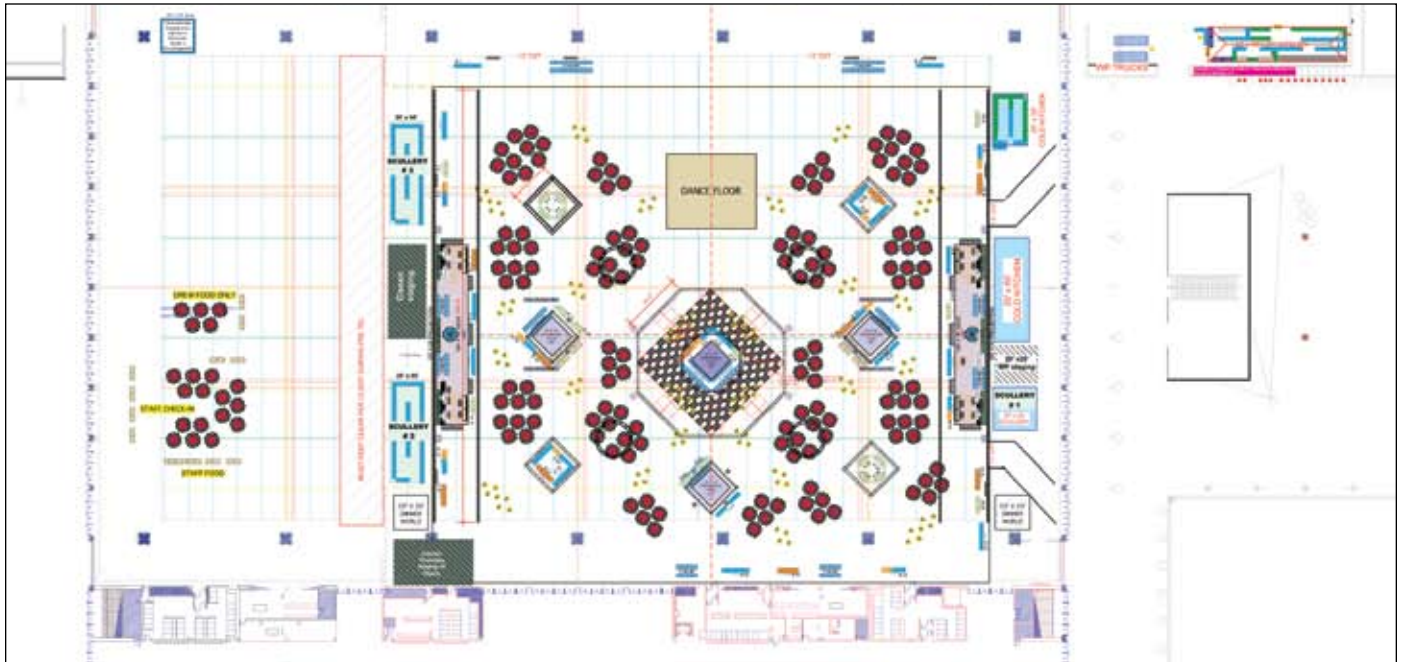
He continues, "Because everyone has all the needed information right there in one drawing with many layers, VectorWorks essentially solves all our problems. When we know a floor plan is good, we're in great shape. The fact that we can produce plans that are accurate to within a millimeter is phenomenal for an event this size."



Since everything is to scale, there's no guessing, "We know exactly where things are going to lay out, and we have accurate counts of everything, which eliminates surprises when it comes time to set up."

And the ability to change things on site with a laptop is another benefit for Weiss and his team—"to be able to say, 'you know what, that's not going to work; let's shift that four feet this way' is a tremendous benefit for us. Our ultimate goal is to keep everything hidden from pre-telecast attendees and then work quickly to bring the remaining equipment in to create that 'a-ha' moment of awe for guests as they enter the transformed space, and VectorWorks allows us to do that."





Best Software for Collaboration

Given the size and scope of the event and the tight turnaround time, Weiss describes the GRAMMY Celebration as an "intense situation."

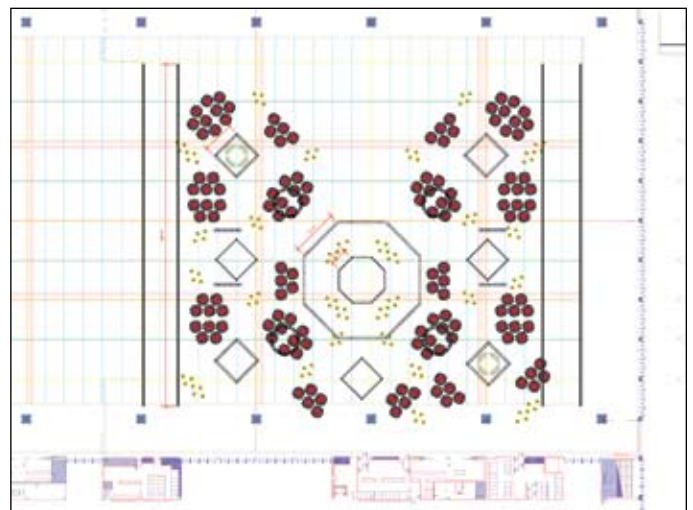
The production team has four hours during the telecast to transform the event space—where the pre-telecast takes place—into a party space, without missing a beat. To ensure a smooth transition, Along Came Mary works closely with John Cossett Productions, producers of the pre-telecast, and all other vendors involved.

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"There's a lot of teamwork, organized around VectorWorks as the rallying point, for the GRAMMY Celebration," says Weiss. "There are many people using VectorWorks and sharing files across a broad range of situations. Each player adds another layer to the master drawing we all work from, and VectorWorks keeps it all together."

From conceptual designs by Angel City Designs, to lighting from ShowPro, to truss and infrastructure engineering provided by Branam Enterprises, to layouts of tent structures, seating, bars, buffets, and kitchen equipment from Classic Party Rentals, every detail is contained in the same master file.

So that everyone can share the design, all information is entered into the master drawing on many different layers, and the master file is available from an FTP site.





Best Software for Design

For Damon Drescher, partner and creative art director of Angel City Designs, who conceptualized the design for the GRAMMY Celebration in VectorWorks, that master VectorWorks drawing is "the heart and soul" of the event.

The theme for the 2008 GRAMMY Celebration—its golden anniversary—was "A Night at the Opera." With direction from The Recording Academy and Along Came Mary, Angel City Designs created an opulent turn-of-the-century environment that depicted a rich history of tradition for the GRAMMYS®.

"Our clients wanted an elaborate backdrop to envelop the guests in, while still allowing them to mingle freely, so we had a lot of elements to contend with," says Drescher. "So we started with a general layout in VectorWorks, and we fit everything we needed to have happen into that space—stages, seating, buffets, bars, décor pieces, trusses, lighting, audio equipment, and HVAC systems. Our master VectorWorks file became the heart and soul of the event."

Best Software for 2D and 3D

Drescher builds the master drawing in 3D and extracts all documents from that, creating renderings from the 3D models to show his clients and 2D drawings for fabrication.

"The fantastic thing about VectorWorks is all my documents are done when I build my initial layout, so I don't have to draw things twice."

"I use renderings to show clients exactly what the end product is going to look like," he explains. "Out of those models come the 2D technical drawings I give my shop for execution. The fantastic thing about VectorWorks is all my documents are done when I build my initial layout, so I don't have to draw things twice."

Best Software Program for Ease of Use

Ease of use is another big benefit for both Drescher and Weiss.

"In a word, VectorWorks is intuitive; it's a brilliant program," says Drescher. "Basic tools are readily available for the novice user to pick up. Yet it has a ton of other tools that allow expert users to get what they need out of the program, too."

"VectorWorks really simplifies things for us in a number of ways—for one, it's intuitive," Weiss echoes. "Two, we absolutely love that we can make changes on the fly and present different options in a matter of seconds. Three, we find it easy to work with all the different vendors we need to on a project, which is critical on such complex events as the GRAMMY Celebration."

Best All-in-one Software Solution

On top of that layout, Drescher labels all the décor pieces and details that are included in that layer for his production people.

"From the décor sheet, our production people know how many yards of fabric they're going to need for the drapes, how tall the fabric panels are, what they need to be sewn into, how the buffets are going to be laid out, how many tables are required, and so on," explains Drescher. "We do all that from our VectorWorks resources. I have a library of tables, chairs, décor pieces, staging, etc., already built. By using the Create Report function, I can print out a sheet that lists exact quantities of each piece without having to physically hand count everything. That information then goes into creating a pull sheet, which becomes the budget, and so on."

This process applies to creating trusses, too. Drescher works with a library of custom truss components he created, so every stick of truss is broken down into what he's actually going to get from each vendor. This allows him to create reports from very elaborate shapes. He's able to build components from existing library pieces in VectorWorks and give his rigging vendor a spreadsheet that includes all the pieces needed.

"The way 2D, 3D, and all the different suites of tools are integrated into one program makes VectorWorks essential to the success of an event as big as the GRAMMY Celebration and invaluable for the entertainment event planning industry."

"For the GRAMMY Celebration, we built an elaborate octagonal truss 120 feet in diameter, using many of the features in the Spotlight suite found in VectorWorks Designer to generate our circular trusses," he says.

He also uses the Spotlight's curtain feature for curtain definition. "Being able to use the Curtain tool to quickly lay in drapes is really powerful, as it saves us so much time with the details work."

A lot of this décor is already in the room during the pre-telecast, but it's hidden behind two 320-foot drapes that are untied and flown up in the ceiling out of sight, to be dropped down on motors before the party begins.

The document also goes to lighting designers who use the Spotlight suite of tools to create light plots for the celebration and then on to the rental company to generate counts for all the equipment they're going to supply.

Drescher sums it up, "And all this is generated out of one initial document. The way 2D, 3D, and all the different suites of tools are integrated into one program makes VectorWorks essential to the success of an event as big as the GRAMMY Celebration and invaluable for the entertainment event planning industry."



And the winner is— VectorWorks Designer

Both Drescher and Weiss have been using the program for more than ten years and encourage their vendors who don't use VectorWorks to try it out.

"We use VectorWorks every day, and I don't see that changing," says Drescher. "I'm amazed at how many people I run into who use VectorWorks, versus the old days of CAD users, and I'm working on getting even more people involved with it every day."

"In Hollywood's event planning industry, as far as I can tell, VectorWorks is ubiquitous."

"In Hollywood's event planning industry, as far as I can tell, VectorWorks is ubiquitous," says Weiss. "Almost everyone is using it, and I encourage anyone I encounter who isn't using it to check it out, as it certainly makes our job a lot easier."

VectorWorks Upstages AutoCAD

Drescher started on AutoCAD but soon switched to VectorWorks when he found out how much more user friendly the program was.

"AutoCAD is a very technical, math-oriented program, whereas VectorWorks is very graphically oriented—more of a designer's tool," he says. "It's a lot more intuitive and not so intimidating."

Another advantage VectorWorks has over AutoCAD for Drescher is that it's easy to train new users on VectorWorks, "I can bring people in and train people in a few days, whereas it would take a few months for a beginner to master AutoCAD. With VectorWorks, I can work with people who have multiple talents, while AutoCAD requires more of an architect or engineer's background."

Photos courtesy of Line 8

Event production by Along Came Mary Productions, Inc.

Designs by Angel City Designs

