



As Founder, Owner, and Executive Producer of the Deep Ellum Arts Festival, it is with mixed emotions that I announce, after 28 years, the annual Deep Ellum Arts Festival has come to the end of its era. The Festival has had a great run, but with the current economic conditions, along with security concerns affecting all major public events, producing a free-to-attend art and music festival in Deep Ellum has become too costly and arduous to continue. We have always been dependent on support from the local community, national sponsors and in-kind media, and I have become unable to move forward at this time without taking on unjustifiable personal financial and liability risks. Under these circumstances, the Festival has simply - and sadly - become unsustainable.

Thankfully, we were able to skillfully navigate through three consecutive pandemic-induced cancellations, and our last Festival in April 2022 was successful enough to cover outstanding debts and commitments. But lacking outside subsidies or investments we did not generate enough reserves to finance another production in 2023. I am very proud of the Festival's overall accomplishments and the talented and committed individuals, contractors, volunteers, local sponsors, property owners and supporters who have devoted themselves to its success over the years. The Festival's goal has always been to draw new audiences into Deep Ellum through original art and music in the signature style of Deep Ellum, and we have achieved and even surpassed this goal over the years. Special recognition and thank you to Carlyle McCullough III, our long time Art Director, who created most of the iconic posters, backdrops, advertisements, etc. that have become synonymous with the Festival,

As for myself, with this conclusion of the Deep Ellum Arts Festival I plan to finally retire from a 45-year career focused on service in the hospitality and major special event productions industry. I do plan, however, to remain available for consultation on future events as well as speaking engagements regarding the production of major city-wide festivals like the ones I have produced over the years. In the meantime, I plan to point the bow south and set sail on my 53' classic sailboat, which has also served as my West Coast home and office since I moved there from the Dallas area in 2010.

Bon Voyage,  
Stephen Millard  
President Main Events International (MEI)  
Founder/Producer Deep Ellum Arts Festival

## **History of the Deep Ellum Arts Festival:**

The first Deep Ellum Arts Festival™ was produced in 1994 by Stephen Millard and his Dallas-based company, Main Events International (MEI) - also known as “The Celebration Engineers®” - with the cooperation of the newly formed Deep Ellum Association and various Deep Ellum property owners. The free-to-attend event quickly grew to become the signature performing and visual arts event for Deep Ellum as well as Dallas, Texas, and achieved international recognition for presenting the finest in original performing and visual artists. Beneficiaries of the Deep Ellum Arts Festival have included The Deep Ellum Community Association - a 501(c)(3) organization - and the local business community. The Deep Ellum Arts Festival is owned by Stephen Millard and his company, Main Events International (MEI), to this day.

Each annual Festival regularly featured over 100 continuous “original only” bands, singer/songwriters, performance artists, and hosted a national headliner each evening. These artists represented a wide variety of genres on 5 different outdoor concert stages - as well as numerous performance areas located throughout the festival site. These performances were built on a core of over 200 juried visual artists displaying and selling their one-of-a-kind works, over 30 restaurants serving scrumptious, trendy and classic foods & beverages, and great people watching over a span of six city blocks in the heart of the Deep Ellum Entertainment district. The Festival faithfully pursued its free-to-attend nature with sponsorship underwriting and in-kind support, various grants, exhibitor booth fees and income generated from a percentage of all food and beverage sales generated during the event.

Since its inception, the Deep Ellum Arts Festival has showcased over 2500 original performers and 5000 fine artists to over two million attendees. The Deep Ellum Arts Festival was where attendees could always count on discovering the freshest up-and-coming names in the music industry, as well as innovative, intriguing and engaging visual art representing many genres and disciplines. At its peak, over the span of its three-day weekend duration, the festival was attracting over 150,000 enthusiasts who purchased approximately \$2M in art annually. Consistently voted “Best Festival in DFW” by local polls, the Festival was also ranked among the top 50 arts festivals in the nation by participating artists.

Stephen Millard, founder of Main Events International, was also the original producer of the award-winning Main St. Fort Worth Arts Festival from 1986-1994. During MEI’s tenure, the Main St. festival became nationally recognized as one of the Top 10 Events of its kind in the country. Millard also founded many of the most acclaimed annual events in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex, including the Bedford Blues Festival, The Dallas Festival of Art & Jazz, Irving Texas July 4th Music and Fireworks Festival, Gran Fiesta de Fort Worth, Texas Hydrofest, Generation eXpo Music Festival and numerous other major concerts and special events. Mr. Millard’s expertise in managing multi-faceted organizations and special events was honed through a career of executive and general management experience with major world-class hotels and resorts, operated by both the Hilton and Hyatt Hotels Corporations.

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