

It takes a village to put on the Music is Art Festival

By **Jeff Miers** | News Pop Music Critic | [Google+](#)

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- [Robby Takac's Music is Art celebrates 11 years](#)

“You’re only as good as your team,” insists Robby Takac when asked how the MiA Festival, and the MiA organization itself, has weathered rough patches and endured for all these years.

Here, Takac shines the spotlight on a few behind-the-scenes members of that team. He’s eager to point out that there are many more than the few highlighted here – “from board members to volunteers, we’re blessed by the contributions of talented, dedicated people,” he said.

Don Keller, Art Director

“He is crazy dedicated. And he’s diplomatic as all hell, which is something that is incredibly important in a position where you have to make so many different things come together between so many different people, under enormous pressure. He makes sure that the festival covers an amazing amount of artistic ground every year.”

Tracy Shattuck, Executive Director

“To us, she’s kind of the MiA mother – she oversees the entire show. And like Don Keller, she’s incredibly dedicated. A few years ago, as the festival was growing, we realized that we couldn’t do everything ourselves anymore – we would have to take on an event company, because there were just too many people to coordinate, and absolutely zero window for things to go wrong. Tracy came with the event company, and she did so well that eventually she stayed on and ended up in charge of running the whole show.”

Bob Mussell, Board Member

“Here’s what I’ll say about Bob, and it tells you an awful lot: He is the first guy I call when I have some sort of quandary, when things are going wrong, or simply when I want someone to agree with me that I’m right about something. (laughs) He’s a rock.”

Marc Hunt, Board Member

“Marc is amazing. Every year, he brings his students from BOCES to the festival, and they help us set up and tear down the entire show. Even more importantly, they shoot video all day long, do live-stream broadcasts, post videos to YouTube throughout the festival, and handle so much of the social media on the day of the event. This is really in keeping with the spirit of MiA, because they are getting real-life experience, while at the same time, helping to make the festival a reality. That’s huge.”

Robert C. Takac Sr., Board Member

“His contributions are immeasurable, really. Here’s one thing in particular: He was the one who swooped in just as the thing was starting to grow and become big who said, ‘If someone doesn’t take charge of this thing soon, you’re going to end up in trouble.’ Because it’s one thing to have the ideas and the ideals – I’m good at that part. But it’s another to make the thing a real thing that can survive. At the beginning, I bankrolled everything, and I was happy to be doing it. But he came to me, and he was really upset. Not

because I was spending money – it wasn't that. It was the fact that if I stopped spending money, there would be no festival. And he said it to me at the time – 'This has to be real. This can't just be some pet project, because it's too important, and it has to survive.' And at the time, I didn't get it, you know? But I get it now. And he was right."

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