



Searching for truth and beauty, preaching through the transforming power of the arts

Summer/Fall 2011 **E-Newsletter** Volume XIII No. 3
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Heritage our heart - Future our hope!

1997 - 2011

Anita Smisek OP – 2011 Recipient of the Fra Angelico Award

At a unique, thoughtfully designed ceremony in the Chapel of the Sacred Heart in Springfield, Illinois, the DIA named musician Anita Smisek OP the 2011 winner of the Fra Angelico Award for Preaching through the Arts.



Phyllis Mrozinski OP, designer of the bronze Fra Angelico award, processed down the aisle flanked by handsomely mounted photographs of previous Fra Angelico honorees. A series of readings and prayers and a stirring homily by Pat Daly OPA, inspired members with a renewed dedication to art as gift and vocation.

Anita received the DIA's highest award for her outstanding accomplishments in every aspect of professional musicianship: vocalist, composer, choral director, educator, publisher, and instrumental performer on piano, organ, guitar, and harp.



Anita has released many of her performances and compositions on CDs. A graduate of Rosary College with an M.A. in Music History and Liturgy from the University of Minnesota, Anita is recognized nationally for her work with the US Pastoral Musicians Association. A founder and past board member of the DIA, this Sinsinawa Dominican has promoted other Dominican musicians by publishing their works through Alliance Publications.

Following a time-honored tradition, DIA Chair, Liz Sully, withheld the name of the award recipient until the very last sentence of the citation. But as the resume began to enumerate certain activities, members **recognized the only one it could be.** Under a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, Anita researched music published in the Czech Republic and worked

with Dominican sisters there to retrieve Czech music hidden during the Communist regime. In 1995, the Czech community honored Anita with that nation's highest award, The Order of Knights of Comenius. (Comenius, Latin for Jan Amos Komensky, believed in a notion radical for his time: the education of the whole human race—all ages and conditions, both sexes, all races.) Anita was knighted for her contributions as teacher, translator, researcher, and restorer of long-forgotten music. The Fra Angelico Award, Anita insists, means as much to her as knighthood.

Springfield Dominicans Welcome DIA



From door to door, meal to meal, and smile to smile, the Springfield Dominican sisters

graciously guided visiting artists through their magnificent facilities and surrounded us with natural beauty and art. Hospitality extended beyond the planned program to include an emergency visit to the optician and other services that will forever remain unpublished.

From Wednesday evening July 27, through the closing liturgy, Saturday morning July 30, fifty Dominican artists from New York to California and from the UK and South Africa united in their love for the arts and shared their talents in workshops, concert performances, and celebratory prayer. Magdalena Ezoe OP, Alyce VanAcker OP, Mary Pat Reid OP, Sue Tracy OP, Pat Daly OPA, Mary Ellen Paulson OP, Liz Slenker OP and young adults from Sacred Heart-Griffin High School in Springfield offered workshops ranging from liturgical music for the new texts to laughter therapy — and everything in between: acrylics, calligraphy, reflexology, photography and Dominican high school preaching.

Evenings provided entertainment. As Emcee for the traditional coffee hour, Elaine DesRosiers OP



impersonated an irresistible

grouch as she dispensed hilarious equal-opportunity insults to all.

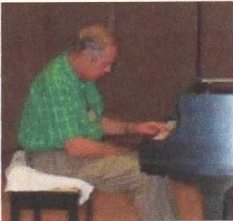
This year's Gala and Art Auction began



with a magnificent concert by DIA performing artists and others. Marjorie Delaplane OP fed us with magnificent piano music and what followed was

certainly more nourishment for the soul.

Melissa Blankestyn OP, at right, and Constance Klamroth OP performed four charming clarinet/piano pieces.



Michael Burke OP gave passionate delivery to Rachmaninoff preludes that segued

into his signature café style.

Magdalena Ezoe OP followed with a brilliantly composed and rendered Chopin medley.



Anita Smesik OP concluded the evening with rich soprano vocals.

All these aesthetic experiences made it truly a Gala Evening.



DIA Hails Peter Sellars as Honorary Dominican

After the Peter Sellars experience at Springfield, one thing is certain: if the Dominican

Institute for the Arts Gathering is ever the same again, we are destined to feel guilty. He embodies his belief that the true function of art, like the true function of the Gospel, is to change people. *"Meaningful theatre must meet people where they are,"* he began. However, we soon discovered, when art meets people where they are, it never leaves them there.

From the moment he embraced each arrival, this giant of the theatre expressed his commitment to the concept that everyone is created equal. Equality, he believes, needs protection as an endangered species. The distinction between professional and amateur disappeared; so did the distinction between religious and secular. Still it was amazing to hear him describe how his art events bring together on the same stage acclaimed performing artists with aborigines and street people. Despite the fact that he has achieved international fame as a director of opera, the most expensive of all art forms, Sellars' deepest commitment is to bringing the power of the arts to serve the poor. Being himself educated among the privileged at Philips Exeter Academy and Harvard University, he draws his greatest inspiration from the other end of society. *"Globalization makes everybody the same, but not equal."*



Standardization deepens inequality. The real miracle of equality is in diversity. It took God to perform that miracle. The Greeks understood that tragedy is the great equalizer—when humility is all we have left, we understand each other. Until someone understands the terrorist as a freedom fighter, no one will be safe."

Sellars often uses his art to protest the "suburbanization of Christianity." About fifteen years ago, he began to concentrate on "sacred things." In 2000, with composer John Adams, he staged **El Nino**, the story of the birth of Jesus as told by women.

Women's voices proved so compelling that in 2010, Sellars and Adams collaborated again, this time on a women's version of the passion. As the work concludes with the resurrection, *"Mary looks at Jesus and thinks she sees the gardener. Of course, Jesus is the gardener now. That's where we need to see the risen Jesus, in every one of those Mexican gardeners mowing our lawns."* Peter also dramatizes sacred texts from other traditions and deliberately introduces them in counter-cultural settings: Muslim Palestinians perform in a synagogue; Jews perform in a mosque.

Wherever he goes, Sellars connects his works to social events and issues. For example, hired to direct the Los Angeles Arts Festival in the wake of devastating fires in the ghetto, he deliberately staged its grand opening in the charred ruins of the inner city. *"The elite discovered the meaning of exclusion. People who paid to support the festival were afraid to come to the neighborhood. Only patients in the city's worst hospital got to see some featured performances."* An arts festival in France brought together politicians, refugees, and immigrants, on the stage and in the audience

– after sharing stories of their lives at the same dinner table. Even his mounting of classical works focuses on contemporary social problems. Handel's 1744 **Hercules** explored post traumatic stress syndrome in men returning from today's wars.

A room full of educators, we were thrilled to hear Peter acknowledge: *"I've had amazing teachers all my life."* The first of these was his mother (an English teacher) who took him from a childhood in Pennsylvania and Ohio to live in Paris and in Japan. Raised in the Christian Science tradition, he learned *"to put faith in the body"* and *"the gospels demand visible outcomes."* On his eleventh birthday, Peter was taken to a marionette theatre which transformed his life. From then until he was sixteen, Sellars worked with this troupe of puppeteers who taught him how to use small things to make powerful statements. In Paris and again in Japan, international artists introduced him to a wide variety of religious texts and engaged him in intercultural dialog. This convinced him that all people are equally loved by the God who made them inexhaustibly different.

At a very young age, Sellars became Director of the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in the nation's capitol. He immediately set out to open the center's events to the poorest children and to involve them in the performing arts. Sellars' many activities off stage include: Muslim Youth Retreats, graduate courses in Art as Social Conscience, theatre workshops in California prisons.

Now an Honorary Dominican, Peter had a little special advice for us: *"Don't confuse Preaching with*



Marketing. Advertising is necessary only when what you're saying isn't true. Preaching should be reciprocal. We are all here to learn from each other. Self-satisfied people do not have breakthroughs."

Before he departed we asked Peter Sellars two questions:

• **How would you describe your experience of God?** *"I experience God in action. I feel God's presence especially in healing action."*

• **How would you describe your experience of the DIA?** *"As soon as I walked into this place, I could sense quiet, care, and focus. It is deeply moving and refreshing and humbling to be with people who have committed their lives to the things and people that I believe in, who are bringing art to the people who most need it in their lives. It is refreshing to be truthful without caution. I name what others are afraid to express. So I can't talk this way everywhere -- I have to be more strategic. My surfaces are deliberately treacherous, so that you have to go deeper. God is under the surface in the part that no human eye will ever see."*



Peter Sellars left each artist pondering one question: How can I bring art to the poor who are nearest to me?

The Planning Commission for Gathering 2012 may not be formed yet, but already they have a theme.

Noting Great Spirit



Receiving the 2011 Spirit of the DIA Recognition are Mary Ellen Paulson OP, Jeanne Stickling OP and Paula Marie Jarosz OP

At the Gathering concluding ceremonies board members Mary Reid OP and Joeann Daley OP presented the 2011 Spirit of the DIA Recognitions to Jeanne Stickling OP of Adrian, Mary Ellen Paulsen OP and Paula Marie Jarosz OP of Racine.

Presenting Jeanne Stickling OP, Mary Reid OP praised her for the *"peace that radiates from her presence, Christ's peace that comes from a soul intending God's honor in all things."*

Jeanne, a ceramicist and art instructor, has also been a missionary to Santo Domingo and Puerto Rico and a worker for social justice. She is a founding member of the DIA and has served on its board as Treasurer and as member of multiple Planning Commissions including the 2011 Gathering. Presently she volunteers to be the DIA's official Archivist.

Joeann Daley OP presented the Spirit of the DIA recognition to Mary Ellen Paulsen OP and Paula Marie Jarosz OP with the words, *"It is hard to think of one without the other. These two Racine Dominicans are like two cups filled to the brim with generosity and caring involvement with the Dominican family and DIA through lively participation in DIA through planning committees, giving workshops, support and faithfulness to the organization. All of this is done with smiles and generous hearts. We thank you for sharing your spirits with us."*



The DIA is indebted to all who volunteer to make our annual Gathering a challenging and spiritual experience of the arts in all of its various forms.



Montesinos 500th Anniversary
Update
can be found as a second attachment
along with this newsletter.

Minutes from DIA Membership Meeting July 29, 2011

Submitted by Dominic DeLay OP, Board Secretary

1. Make something new happen

- **sow seeds** for Dominican/DIA/vocations reach out to the young through art, including performing arts, and one-on-one; ask young people to teach us
 - **interact** more with non-Dominican artists
 - **encourage** other Dominicans to pursue art; be more visible to other Dominicans, esp. through DomLife newsletter; show at Santa Sabina; invite non-Dominican artists to the gathering or a retreat
 - **adjust format of gathering**, including to reach out to members missing from the gathering (especially by considering a retreat; also, briefer keynote, more interaction. Add days? Gather in regions? include time for people to share art?) -- planning commission could solicit ideas just before they start planning
 - **preach to the world**, including "poor," esp. thru collaboration with local DIA members; teach other orders how to form something like DIA
 - **board might open up the strategic plan** more for membership; the plan sites most of these topics
2. Annual report.
 3. Financial report.
 4. Members encouraged to put their bio, etc. on our website, www.diarts.org
 5. New board members elected:
Jill Poehlman OPA, Elaine Taylor OP

Joeann Daley OP Keynoter - Artist Articulator

DIA member, Joeann Daley OP was the keynoter and artist articulator in Calgary, Canada in the June Conference sponsored by the International Policy Governance Assoc. The theme was: **The Art and Craft of Good Governance**. 130 people representing public and non profit boards gathered at the Hotel Arts.

Sue Radwa, CEO of the sponsoring organization, said in her welcome: "This year's theme, **The Art and Craft of Good Governance**, is an artistic articulation of shared human imagination, passion, energy and commitment. In the world of art, the artists' tools, technique and dreams converge to create an impact in the eye of the beholder. In the world of governance, we also embrace tools, technique and dreams to create, impact and change lives."

Joeann set the scene by showing how art and governance are connected. She drew on her Dominican roots for the first image: The Hall of Good and Bad Government at Palazzo Pubblico, Siena, Italy.

Besides being keynoter and artist articulator, Joeann worked with participants on a talking community wall activity.

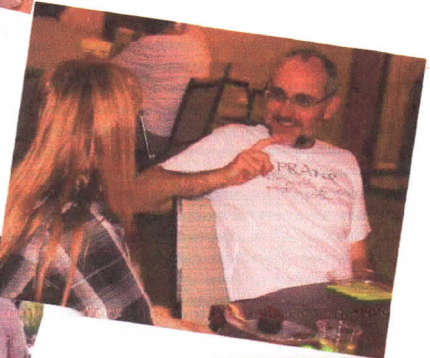


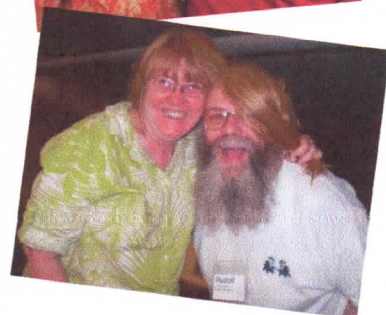
Joeann's Welcome Words Tray
changing CEO Sue Radwa's words into design.
Note the woman figure and the glass ceiling.

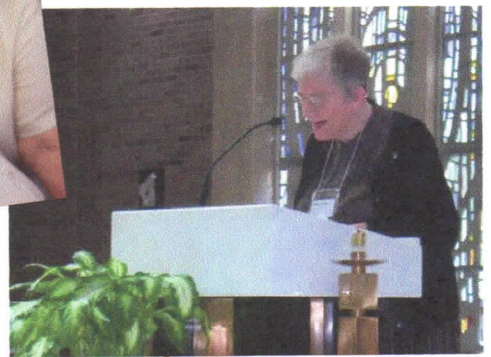
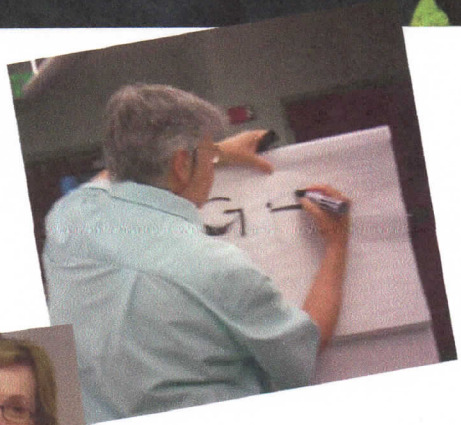
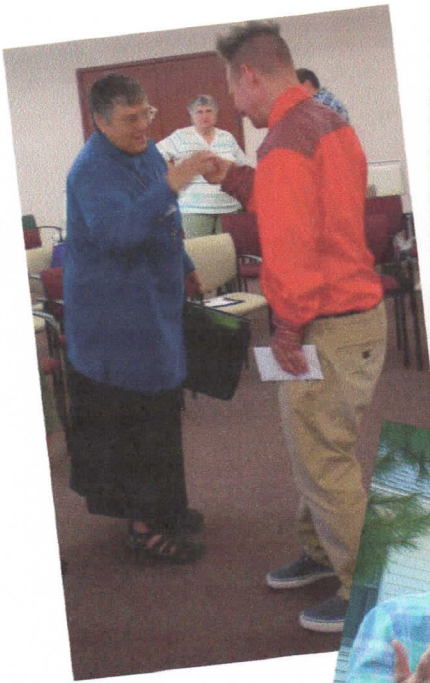


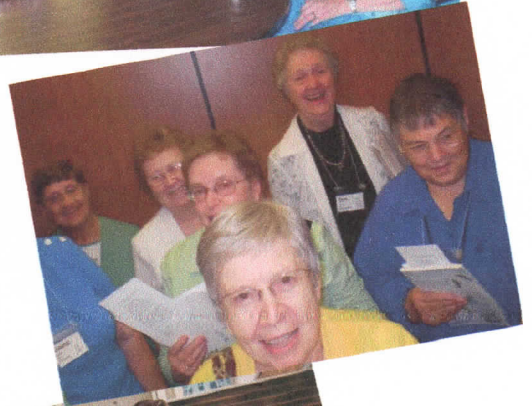
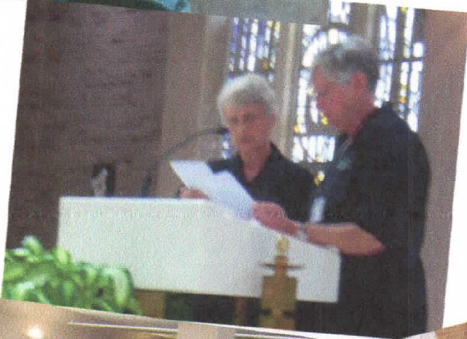
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DIA Artist Featured in Springfield Historical Center Elaine DesRosiers, OP, Dominican Sisters of Peace



One of the most joy-filled moments in a visual artist's life is to have a one-woman exhibit in a prominent place, and on top of that, to have someone purchase the art. Such a moment happened to me at age 80! At an exhibit of twelve of my oil paintings, someone bought them all!

God has been generous. Although I could draw, and as a biology teacher, I'd always illustrated my own class lectures and graphics for my 1960's television series on Boston Catholic TV -- I'd never painted. But when I was in my mid-fifties I said, "When I am a little old lady with white hair living at our Motherhouse, I'll want to paint, and I'll want to know how to paint." So, in 1985 I took oil painting lessons at the local museum. Excellent teachers inspired me to continue for almost 20 years. People who saw my work would ask, "How do you, a busy person such as you are find time to paint?" I'd reply with a simple answer -- "Tuesday night!" My particular delight was painting buildings, old and new.

In my first few years I created no more than five paintings. In 2008, however, thanks to the DIA, the picture changed. When the Gathering speaker in Columbus, Jan Phillips, urged us to make a lasting commitment to our creativity, I made some serious time resolutions to which I've been faithful. That fall, I painted a one-hundred year old Victorian house and won an award plus the painting was purchased by the owner of the family home! This gave me confidence to paint other old buildings in my own locale. During the next 52 Fridays, I painted the beautiful buildings of Main Street of Springfield, IL. In the late 19th century local tobacco farmers had invested some of their new found wealth into these architecturally attractive stores and offices.

In August 2010, after seeing my paintings, the mayor of Springfield sponsored an exhibit



in the remodeled old Opera House. As attendees viewed the buildings, they poured out stories of the past: "Remember when this was Robertson's Department Store?" - "Oh, that's where I bought my wedding dress!" - "The National Guard used to keep its horses behind the Campbell Building." Individuals wanted to buy the paintings, but the mayor announced that the City of Springfield was purchasing *all of them* for a permanent collection in the Opera House. Since then, I've received a commission from the president of St. Catharine College to create oil paintings of all ten college buildings.

I believe that years of yielding to the Spirit have brought me to this moment of fulfillment; I am grateful to the God who made us in the image and likeness of a creator.

DIA Board Members

Mary Fran Gorman OP
President
mfgop@yahoo.com

Mary Boyce OP
Vice President
mary@sistermaryboyce.com

Dominic DeLay OP
Board Secretary
dominic@mudpuddlefilms.com

Jill Poehlman OPA
Treasurer
jpoehlman@wowway.com

Mary Pat Reid OP
Membership Liaison
marypreid@gmail.com

Joeann Daley OP
Member at Large
jdaley40@aol.com

Elaine Taylor OP
Member at Large
etaylorop@verizon.net



Other Contacts

Jeanne Stickling OP
sjsclay@yahoo.com
Archivist

Carol O'Connor OPA
coconnor@oppeace.org
Web Editor

Elizabeth Michael Boyle OP
emichael@caldwell.edu
Newsletter Editor

Jude Bloch OP
jubloch@aol.com
Newsletter Editor

Wise Words from Peter Sellars

☛ If you can get paid to do it,
it probably doesn't need to be done.

☛ Resistance is the sign that
you're doing something
right—like telling the truth.



☛ Art isn't a career,
it's a calling.
Art isn't dessert; it's protein.

☛ When I recognize my own ideas on stage,
I've failed.
When it's unrecognizable,
I know it's God's work.

☛ Our vocation is to listen
to what they're NOT saying.

☛ It's not enough to be against;
art must be for something.
Make your art about
what you love.

☛ Evil is unsustainable.
Be ready with its replacement.

