

About the Pagan Arts Initiative

Contributed by Administrator
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An interview with Franklin Evans about the genesis of the Pagan Arts Initiative and their first project, Electra Organized in December 2004, the Pagan Arts Initiative (PAI) was conceived as a way to promote Pagan art. The new organization is part of DVPN, but it's also a way to reach out to the wider community: In addition to promoting Pagan artisans, craftspeople, and performers, the PAI will also include non-Pagan artists who work with classical and emerging neo-pagan themes.

DVPN President and PAI Executive Producer Franklin Evans -- who helped to organize the PAI along with co-conspirator Bob Bruhin -- talks more about they're up to.

SG: What made you decide to form the PAI?

FE: PAI started with the realization that DVPN's most successful activity has been community outreach via the arts. It was almost that simple, and we decided to act on this by giving our arts activities as much clout as we could. Quite simply, there is money out there for arts where social programs are begging for crumbs. DVPN could never get access to the funding that PAI will potentially get.

SG: What types of art do you think are most practiced among the Pagan community in the Delaware Valley?

FE: The demographics for Pagans are the same as mainstream. The bulk of artists are performance (music and theater), with a smattering of visual arts and crafts.

SG: Do you anticipate that certain types will get emphasized over others?

FE: No more so than in societally mainstream organizations, where performance tends to get the bulk of promotional money. Just read the Weekend section of the Friday Inquirer.

SG: Do you know of any other Pagan groups like this?

FE: I'm sure others exist, but I've not encountered them.

SG: Are you modeling the PAI on any existing groups (Pagan or otherwise)?

FE: We are definitely drawing on the wealth of experience found in other such organizations in the Philly region. Our networking was fast and easy.

SG: Are you networking with any organizations in particular?

FE: Not really. We are merely plugging into the existing networks and getting information as we can. It's easy, because the networking structures have been out there forever. We are joining a well-established "culture."

SG: Are you planning to actively reach out to non-Pagan artists?

FE: Yes. The goth sub-culture is especially appropriate to our mission, and many of them do not identify as Pagan.

SG: Do you anticipate any problems with the Pagan connection?

FE: Our underlying motivation, which is the DVPN mission to be the public face of Pagandom, has not changed. Whatever comes with the territory. . .

SG: Is the organization intended as a form of outreach for local Pagans, or are you planning to play that aspect down?

FE: I'm planning on making that our primary characteristic.

SG: Tell me about your first project, Electra. Why did you choose the play as the launch for PAI?

FE: Electra was proposed by our major partners in PAI, B. Someday Productions. We worked with them last year to produce The Midlife Crisis of Dionysus, and they are as excited and enthusiastic about PAI as Bob and I are. Stan Heleva is the director and adapter of the original script by Euripides (translated, of course), and I've left that completely up to him. He has a strong resume and a proven record of writing and adapting. Michelle Pauls is Electra, and she directed Dionysus last year. The two of them are the executive directors of B. Someday.

SG: What will be PAI's next big project after Electra?

FE: Don't know yet, but Winter Solstice will be a PAI production.

SG: How do people join the PAI?

FE: PAI is not a member-based org (yet). We need to establish ourselves first. But anyone who has questions or who wants to get involved should contact me via DVPN (dvpn@dvpn.org).