

NEWS MEMO

INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITY

MUSICIANS TO BLAST CANNED MUSIC AT BALLET OPENER

***\$700K PAID TO TWO BALLET BOARD MEMBERS, THEN ORCHESTRAS OUSTED
BALLET ROBBED MUSICIANS' JOBS TO COVER LOSSES, FLEECED PATRONS OUT OF LEGIT SHOW***

- WHO:** The Dallas-Fort Worth Professional Musicians Association, affiliated Local 72-147 of the American Federation of Musicians, which represents more than 1700 professional musicians across North Texas and Southern Oklahoma, including musicians of the Dallas and Fort Worth Symphony Orchestras and The Dallas Opera Orchestra.
- WHAT:** Professional musicians will protest Texas Ballet Theater's canned music policy by forming picket lines and distributing informational leaflets at the company's season opening performances, October 2, 3 and 4 in Fort Worth.
- WHERE:** Bass Performance Hall, 4th and Commerce Streets, Fort Worth, Texas.
- WHEN:** Friday, October 2, 2009, 6:30pm – 8:00pm; Saturday, October 3, 2009, 6:30pm – 8:00pm; Sunday, October 4, 2009, 12:30pm – 2:00pm.
- WHY:** Texas Ballet Theater has dumped its live pit orchestras for the 2009/10 season, saying it will use pre-recorded "canned" music tracks instead. The company boasted that it saved between \$600,000 and \$700,000 by emptying its orchestra pit last season and outsourcing local musicians with recordings, some it made in China. *Prior to the company's fiscal collapse in August 2008, two of Texas Ballet Theater's Board of Directors were paid six figure annual sums totaling more than \$700,000, which went unreported in the company's IRS filings.* "WERE THE PAYMENTS TO TWO OF THE COMPANY'S BOARD MEMBERS WORTH THE COST OF AN ENTIRE SEASON OF LIVE ORCHESTRA?", SAID MUSICIANS' UNION PRESIDENT RAY HAIR. "I DON'T THINK SO," HE SAID. Board members of non-profit organizations are generally expected to serve without compensation. The Ballet company has traditionally employed the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra to accompany its seasonal performances at Bass Hall in Fort Worth, and has used the Dallas Opera Orchestra for holiday Nutcracker performances in Dallas. The company's decision to replace live orchestra with recordings deprives audiences of a legitimate ballet performance and has eliminated the jobs of hundreds of professional musicians. "Texas Ballet Theater is cheating patrons by charging regular ticket prices without advance notice that the orchestra pit is empty. Patrons paid for live music. They should get it," said Hair. "Recorded music will never duplicate the power, beauty and spontaneity of a live orchestra. With canned music, Texas Ballet Theater presents artificial, fake ballet," he said. ***The Union will protest the ballet's canned music policy with informational picket lines and leaflets at all performances during the 2009/10 season.***

For further information, visit www.musiciansdfw.org or contact Local 72-147 President Ray Hair at (Metro) 817-469-6040 or 817-988-5238 (cell).

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