

# NEWS MEMO

## INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITY

### CANNED MUSIC PROTEST SPOILS BALLET OPENER

*“FLAWED SOUND” TOOK CENTER STAGE, CRITICS SAID*

**LIVE MUSIC SILENCED AFTER TWO BALLET BOARD REPS COLLECTED \$700K**

- 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 protested Texas Ballet Theater’s canned music policy by forming picket lines and distributing informational leaflets at the company’s season opening performance October 2, 2009 in Fort Worth.
- WHERE:** Bass Performance Hall, 4<sup>th</sup> and Commerce Streets, Fort Worth, Texas.
- WHEN:** Friday, October 2, 2009 (Saturday night and Sunday protests were cancelled due to weather).
- WHY:** Musicians protested Texas Ballet Theater’s use of pre-recorded “canned” music tracks which silenced the company’s live pit orchestras for the 2009/10 season. The recorded musical accompaniment and the musicians’ demonstration against it dominated a *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* review of the company’s season opening performance, posted online immediately after the show. Under the headline, **“Flawed Sound Takes Center Stage,”** classical music critic Punch Shaw observed that “it was impossible to ignore the elephant in the room: the issue of live vs. taped accompaniment.” The protest itself was featured by the reviewer, who noted that “pickets were seen outside the hall before the performance with placards protesting the [canned music] move (“Press the Eject Button” read one).” Taking aim squarely at the show’s obvious shortcomings without customary live orchestral support, the *Star-Telegram* reviewer complained that the recorded music “sounded brutally loud and mechanically harsh.” To read the review in its entirety, [CLICK HERE](#). The company boasted that it saved between \$600,000 and \$700,000 last season by replacing live orchestra with recordings, some 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.* **“WHAT IS WORTH MORE – \$700,000 FOR TWO OF THE COMPANY’S BOARD MEMBERS OR AN ENTIRE SEASON OF LIVE ORCHESTRA?” SAID MUSICIANS’ UNION PRESIDENT RAY HAIR..** Board members of non-profit organizations are generally expected to serve without compensation. ***The Union will protest the ballet’s canned music policy at all 2009/10 ballet performances.***

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

Release #12, October 5, 2009 10:00 am