

NEWS MEMO

INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITY

“CANNED CLEOPATRA” DRAWING A CROWD

**BALLET EJECTED ORCHESTRA FROM PIT, DANCING TO RECORDINGS IT MADE IN CHINA
MUSICIANS TRAVELING TO PROTEST FROM BOSTON AND SHREVEPORT
DIVERSE DEMONSTRATION WILL INCLUDE DOCTORS, IRONWORKERS**

- WHO:** Members of The Dallas-Fort Worth Professional Musicians Association, Local 72-147 of the American Federation of Musicians, with union members from Tarrant County Central Labor Council AFL-CIO and other AFM members.
- WHAT:** Musicians and their union brothers and sisters will form picket lines and distribute leaflets in protest of Texas Ballet Theater’s canned music policy.
- WHERE:** Bass Performance Hall, 4th and Commerce Streets, Fort Worth, Texas.
- WHEN** Friday through Sunday, March 27, 28 and 29, one hour prior to performances of *Cleopatra*.
- WHY:** The ballet company will use a recording it made in China to replace an entire orchestra of professional musicians at this weekend’s Bass Hall performances of “*Canned Cleopatra*.” Company artistic staff traveled to Shanghai in June 2008 and paid the Chinese government \$30,000.00 for a recording of the Rimsky Korsakov musical score. The foreign outsourcing of Bass Hall’s orchestra pit, home to the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra – *a revered cultural asset* – has prompted an outcry from musicians across the country. “If you want to ruin a ballet company, put the music in a can,” said **Bob Couture, principal trombonist with the Boston Ballet Orchestra**, who will attend the protest and carry a picket sign. “We musicians are all connected,” he said, “An injury to one is an injury to all.” **Kym Grant of the Doctors Guild of Texas** is a former dancer with the Joffrey Ballet. “I can say from experience that the absence of live music is an embarrassment to the dancers. The music and choreography of orchestra and ballet is an art that can’t be replaced with a recording,” she said. “Union Doctors will be outside Bass Hall protesting with the musicians.” **Ironworkers Local 263 Secretary Ron Smitherman** expects at least 30 of his members will participate in the *Canned Cleopatra* demonstration. “The company is hurting musicians and hurting patrons, too” he said. “They’ve advertised this show as a ‘\$1.2 million spectacular’ but when you buy a ticket, the ballet company doesn’t tell you that they’ll be dancing to a Chinese tape. People paid for an orchestra, but they won’t get one,” he said.

http://www.musiciansdfw.org/pages/ballet_crisis.htm Release #6, Thursday, March 26, 2009 9:00 am

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