

NEWS MEMO

INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITY

PROTEST CRIPPLED “*CANNED CLEOPATRA*” *UNIONISTS RECEIVED OVERWHELMING PUBLIC SUPPORT AT BASS HALL* DALLAS PRESS PANNED ‘CLUMSY MUSIC’ IN BALLET CLOSER

- 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 from Boston, Shreveport and San Antonio.
- WHAT:** Hundreds of musicians and their union brothers and sisters formed picket lines, distributed leaflets, in protest of Texas Ballet Theater’s canned music policy. Demonstrators inflated a giant rat balloon to draw attention to musicians’ concerns.
- WHERE:** Bass Performance Hall, 4th and Commerce Streets, Fort Worth, Texas.
- WHEN:** Friday, Saturday and Sunday, March 27, 28 and 29, 2009 prior to the start of the company’s *Cleopatra* performances.
- WHY:** The ballet company outsourced its orchestra pit during last weekend’s performances of “*Canned Cleopatra*,” replacing musicians with a recording it made in China. Company artistic staff traveled to Shanghai in June 2008 and paid the Chinese government \$30,000.00 for a recording of the Rimsky Korsakov score of *Cleopatra*. The ballet company cheated its patrons with canned music this season and says it intends to replace musicians indefinitely, including shows planned next season at the new \$400 million Dallas Center For the Performing Arts. “Over three hundred musicians and members of other area unions stood outside Bass Hall last weekend,” said Ray Hair, president of the musicians’ union, and a trustee of the Tarrant County Central Labor Council. “We sent a strong message to the ballet company and the arts community. When you hurt professional musicians, there are consequences.” A *Dallas Morning News/Fort Worth Star-telegram* review of Friday’s performance criticized the musical accompaniment as clumsy and hamstrung. “...the progression seemed hurried. Raw, rough-hewn, taped music barged forward, when a more caressing tempo was needed to mirror the emotions...” Labor Council President T.C. Gillespie predicted dark days ahead for the ballet company. “The protest was a huge success. We had tremendous support from patrons who were saying they wouldn’t return to hear canned music. It’s obvious the company is on its knees from poor attendance and the high number of ticket giveaways. If they crawl over to the Winspear, we’ll take our show on the road and protest fake ballet there, too,” he said.”

http://www.musiciansdfw.org/pages/ballet_crisis.htm Release #8, Wednesday, April 1, 2009 11:00am
See Backgrounder, protest photos and review at link above, or contact Local 72-147 President Ray Hair
at (Metro) 817-469-6040 or 817-988-5238 (cell).