

NEWS MEMO

INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITY

MUSICIANS TO PROTEST CANNED MUSIC AT TEXAS BALLET THEATER OPENER *ORCHESTRAS DUMPED AFTER TWO BALLET BOARD MEMBERS GOT \$700K* BALLET IS CHEATING PATRONS OUT OF LEGIT SHOW, KILLS MUSICIANS' JOBS TO COVER LOSSES

- 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 says it will not use its pit orchestras – the Fort Worth Symphony and Dallas Opera Orchestras – and instead will utilize “canned” pre-recorded tracks for its 2009/10 season. 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 has eliminated hundreds of jobs for professional musicians and deprives audiences of a legitimate ballet performance. “Texas Ballet Theater is cheating patrons by charging regular ticket prices with no advance notice that the orchestra pit is empty. Patrons paid for live music, but they won't get it,” said Musicians' Union president Ray Hair. “Recorded music cannot replace the power, beauty and freshness of a live orchestra. With no orchestra, Texas Ballet Theater presents artificial ballet.” In June 2008, the ballet company traveled to China and paid \$30,000.00 for recordings it used to displace musicians in March of this year. 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 made in China. *Information obtained by the Union shows that 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 \$700,000.00 which went unreported in the company's IRS filings. Board members of non-profit organizations are generally expected to serve without compensation. **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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