

September 28, 2010

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We are writing to bring your attention to a very serious situation which has been developing here in the Dallas-Fort Worth area for some time, and to ask for your participation and support. You may have seen or heard some of the publicity surrounding the Richardson Symphony Orchestra's refusal to negotiate with Local 72-147 on behalf of the musicians to reach a successor collective bargaining agreement, and to use a non-union orchestra. Because of this, the American Federation of Musicians in the United States and Canada has placed the RSO on its International Unfair List.

This coming Saturday night, RSO music director Anshel Brusilow intends to conduct the opening concert of the season with a non-union pick-up orchestra replacing our musicians who have rightfully refused to play without a legitimate AFM contract. The professional members of the RSO are losing their jobs to those who would undercut them and play for less or no money, without a CBA, and at the whim of the RSO's executive director George Landis and Brusilow, whose proven track record of abusive treatment has been on display for all the world to hear. It is indeed a shameful situation.

Since the RSO's announcement that they would walk away from the CBA and recruit a non-union orchestra, the administration has been actively pursuing this agenda with the help of a few of our members and former members. Area musicians (mostly students) have been lured to play with positions offered and promises made, and heady repertoire such as Strauss' *Don Juan* and Dvorak's *New World Symphony*. Of course, such demanding works are impossible to perform without the right instrumentation or with sub-standard musicians. We understand that the RSO has had to change the program for a smaller, less-skilled complement of players. This proves that our efforts to highlight the RSO's disgraceful behavior have already begun to have an effect.

It is now time for us to unify, publicly stand up to the RSO management and music director, and show them that they cannot succeed in their attempts to union-bust in an industry where nearly all professional orchestral musicians are members of the AFM, and nearly all professional orchestras have a contract with the AFM. Unlike many other unions, the members of the AFM are unique in that not only do we represent the professional workers in our industry throughout the US and Canada, we also *are* the product, own the equipment (our instruments) and can perform practically anywhere at any time. This empowers us with great strength and unity.

We are asking for you to show your support to your colleagues who are being pushed out of the RSO in an attempt to replace them with non-union musicians. **What hurts any one of our members hurts all of us as a union, and threatens the livelihood of every professional musician not only here in Texas, but around the country.** If we don't fight the RSO in their efforts to turn a professional orchestra into something much less, then we fuel similar schemes of others who would take the same path. It could be any of our orchestras next, and any of our jobs.

To inform the audience about what they will now be getting for their money, we will hold an informational leaflet and picket at the Eisemann Center in Richardson on Saturday evening, October 2, at 6:30 p.m. We ask everyone to attend and send the message that we will not stand by quietly while our members' jobs and artistry are thrown out to be replaced by sub-standard musicians who would take our jobs, play for nothing, and destroy what was a fine orchestra. Please be there – your fellow musicians need your help.

For more information concerning the situation in Richardson please visit the Union's website: www.musiciansdfw.org, and click on "Orchestras in Crisis" or call the office: 817-469-6040.

In solidarity,

Local 72-147 Executive Board