

NEWS MEMO

INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITY

MUSICIANS TO PROTEST “CANNED CLEOPATRA” SHOWS *BALLET COMPANY REPLACING MUSICIANS WITH RECORDINGS IT MADE IN CHINA* COMPANY OUTSOURCED CULTURE, IS AN ARTISTIC FRAUD AND CONSUMER RIP-OFF, MUSICIANS SAY

- 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 employed with every major, regional and suburban professional orchestra in the area.
- WHAT:** Musicians will protest Texas Ballet Theater’s canned music policy by forming picket lines and distributing informational leaflets at the company’s performances of *Cleopatra* in Fort Worth.
- WHERE:** Bass Performance Hall, 4th and Commerce Streets, Fort Worth, Texas.
- WHEN** Friday, Saturday and Sunday, March 27, 28 and 29, prior to ballet performances.
- WHY:** Musicians are upset because Texas Ballet Theater is using recorded music it made in China to replace them in the orchestra pit at Bass Hall. *When it owed the Fort Worth Symphony Association and Bass Hall more than \$300,000 for services and rent last season, the company’s artistic staff traveled to China in June 2008 and paid the Chinese government \$30,000 to obtain a recording utilizing the staff orchestra of the National Ballet of China, which the company will use in lieu of professional musicians for performances of Cleopatra.* The company’s canned music policy killed weeks of work that have hurt professional musicians and cheapened the art form, outsourcing not only musicians’ jobs, *but culture as well.* The company is selling tickets to its 2009/10 shows at the new \$400 million Dallas Center for the Performing Arts without acknowledging that with an empty orchestra pit, consumers won’t be getting what they’ve paid for. “By using recordings – including some it made in China – Texas Ballet Theater is cheating its patrons out of a legitimate ballet experience and is committing artistic fraud,” said Union president Ray Hair. “We cannot stand idly by and see beautiful Bass Hall transformed into a Big-box discount store where the goods are made in China. We will not sit quietly while professional musicians are hurt by the company’s mismanagement. We think consumers who have paid for a professional ballet experience – with a live orchestra – deserve to get one. We urge arts lovers everywhere to stay away from the company’s canned performances and we’re asking ticket holders to ask for refunds. We’re inviting the public to join our protest and boycott the company until musicians return to the orchestra pit.”

www.musiciansdfw.org Release #4, March 18, 2009 4:00 pm
For further information, contact Local 72-147 President Ray Hair
at (Metro) 817-469-6040 or 817-988-5238 (cell).