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**International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians**

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**From the desk of the Chairman  
Jan Gippo**

August 12, 2005

To the Board of Directors of the Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre:

I am writing you to express my dismay at your decision to eliminate live orchestral music from the Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre performances. In my view, this is a short-sighted move that will grievously harm the performance experience for PBT patrons and will inevitably exacerbate the financial issues the company is facing. It is a prototypical example of a short-term fix that will lead to greater long-term problems.

Live orchestral music is and has always been an essential part of ballet performance from ballet's beginnings at Versailles up to the tremendous artistic achievements of the greatest American ballet companies over the past century, and including throughout the history of the PBT. Ballet lovers and supporters expect to hear and see a live orchestra just as much as they expect to see live dancers. Can you imagine Pittsburgh Symphony patrons paying to watch Mariss Janssons or Marvin Hamlisch conduct the stereo? Why would you think eliminating live music at the ballet won't lead to a lesser reputation and to declining ticket sales and revenues?

Equally dismaying are your decisions not to bargain in good faith and to withhold financial information. Transparency and accountability are the hallmarks of enlightened non-profit management and, as in the corporate world, increasingly becoming legal requirements. Your failure to bargain in good faith and your decision to withhold information undermine your credibility with the community, with your employees and nationally.

It is my hope that you will reverse these decisions and act quickly to restore the artistic integrity and the corporate reputation of the Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre.

Best regards,