



August 4, 2005

To The Board of Directors of the Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre:

As a member of the American Federation of Musicians (AFM), as an active recording musician, and as President of the Recording Musicians Association (RMA) I feel compelled to express my outrage at your decision to attempt professional ballet performances without live music.

Recorded music is an integral part of our contemporary culture; I make my livelihood recording music for the films, television shows and records that people see and listen to all over the world. I understand and value the art form that is recorded music. While it would be appropriate, for example, to use recorded songs by Frank Sinatra if a choreographer's creative vision imagined that as a setting for a new ballet — nothing could be more corrupt than to violate the artistic integrity of *The Rite of Spring* by attempting to perform it to canned music. Would excellent pre-recorded digital images of dancers projected on screen also constitute "live ballet" as long as the orchestra was "live". Of course not!

If the next Shakespeare festival runs low on money, should they use a robot to act the role of Desdemona? Would musicians or the community tolerate the Pittsburgh Symphony using a taped woodwind section in the middle of the orchestra if management decided it could only afford strings and brass for the coming season?

Traditional ballet repertoire represents a unique relationship amongst all the creative performers and audience that is totally undermined by the use of recorded music.

The appropriate and productive role of arts organizations that use their tax-exempt status to present art to their communities is to cultivate living artists, and educate audiences about the richness of the living art. What a sad loss to all of our communities if the "live" is taken out of live performance! Better to do fewer performances right, than to do an entire season "all wrong".

The citizens of Pittsburgh deserve better and you have an obligation to art and culture which must not be betrayed. I urge you to reconsider this unfortunate decision. The standing of Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre at home and throughout the country depends on it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Phillip W. Ayling". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Phillip Ayling
President, Recording Musicians Association