

## **RESPONSE TO FILM MUSIC MAGAZINE FROM RMA INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT PHIL AYLING CONCERNING THE DISSOLUTION OF THE RMA SAN FRANCISCO CHAPTER**

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RMA has long been supportive of commercial recording in San Francisco. In response to reports of non-union records and jingles, we worked vigorously with local musicians to confront that. Neither the Local President David Schoenbrun, nor AFM President Tom Lee has made substantive efforts to organize that employment. The closure of RMA SF is all about AFM leadership failure in representing recording musicians. The unfortunate fact is that a film, television, or videogame industry using AFM musicians has never really developed in San Francisco. Claims to “recapture” work are without substance.

Fortunately the San Francisco musicians have a vibrant symphony and opera orchestra scene, as well as other live music venues – these have always been the primary AFM employment for San Francisco’s excellent musicians.

Even as RMA San Francisco President Wieslaw Pogorzelski participated fully in all RMA proposals brought to the AFM, Local 6 President David Schoenbrun continued to claim to speak for RMA in San Francisco. David Schoenbrun inappropriately made proposals to the AFM on the Chapter’s behalf and would use the weight of his office to back-in local approval afterwards. His actions drove people from the San Francisco RMA Chapter — members expressed concerns to me about intimidation and he effectively destroyed the independence of the Chapter there. The RMA President in San Francisco resigned 6 weeks ago citing health considerations.

Claims that RMA International, along with RMA LA conspire with multi-billion dollar Media Companies to prevent recording work from going to San Francisco (or anywhere else) is not a realistic scenario. All of the powerful Hollywood entertainment unions combined (AFTRA, DGA, SAG, IATSE) are unable to impose their will on the production decisions of the entertainment industry. Musicians from Los Angeles, who are attached to the less powerful AFM, cannot and do not dictate recording locations to Film, Record or Video Game companies for any of their products.

Despite all the claims about “outsourcing” in the film scoring business, more unique AFM film projects were processed in 2006 than in any year since recordkeeping began in 1978. So far in 2007, AFM film employment is up a healthy 40% over the same period in 2006. This is not because more films are being released (in fact big studio films are on the decrease) but because efforts made by RMA (not the AFM) to organize foreign films and low-budget independent films have been fantastically successful.

The lack of film scoring in San Francisco is not the result of scheming or politics or the AFM Agreements; rather it is a result of business trends. The Skywalker post-production facilities in Marin County are being phased out. The increasingly compressed and fluid

post-production schedules for big budget films often preclude recording at a remote location like Skywalker, and small independent projects can't afford it.

As RMA President, I am sad to lose a chapter of the RMA, and even more disappointed to have internal AFM politics manipulating that loss.

Phil Ayling  
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