

RECORDING MUSICIANS ASSOCIATION

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INTERNATIONAL

NEWSLETTER



RMA

A PLAYER CONFERENCE OF THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF MUSICIANS OF THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA

AFM, Union Democracy, Dollars and Cents Part 1

A new person was just hired to direct operations at the AFM Electronic Media Services Division (EMSD). Recording Musicians had no knowledge that an opening existed or had been created, and we played no role in vetting candidates. RMA has communicated with our new Director to wish her luck and offer our support in the difficult and complex tasks that face her, but she has some real hurdles ahead. Through no fault of her own, the individual hired has never worked in the music profession, has never been a professional musician, and she appears to have no experience in labor organizing, in entertainment union practice, or in contract administration. How can she possibly have a constituency or empathy with the members she has been hired to serve?

What will this mean to you, the musicians who work under AFM electronic media contracts?

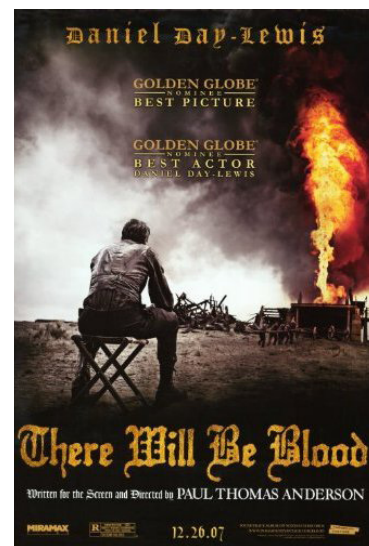
The individual running the EMSD (the Division of the AFM that controls all Federation Recording contracts) has a number of very important responsibilities that impact you directly.

It affects you. It affects all of us.

Banking and Exchange: Over time and without ever making an announcement or allowing you to vote on it, the AFM has ceded the right for studios to “bank and exchange” films. That means the AFM allows a film that should be scored AFM to instead go overseas to score, in exchange for a studio’s claim that they used their influence to cause an independent film to be scored here. Whoever is head of the EMSD has the power to tell Fox, Warner Bros., Paramount or other signatory giants that they can take a project to London, Bratislava, or Prague. The AFM has that power, and they use it. You remember the blockbuster “The 300”? How about “The Bourne Ultimatum”? Or “There Will Be Blood”? Those are all movies scored overseas - with the AFM’s permission. No wages, no health care, no secondary markets for any of us (including anyone who worked on records used in the film).

The next time you notice a studio picture scored in London, Prague or elsewhere, it might well be because the AFM gave them the green light. In our current economic climate, shouldn’t our union be fighting for us - fighting every inch to protect our contract? Instead, the AFM says “go ahead, our players can live without that work”.

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Live TV/Videotape and Awards Shows: The last negotiation for a collective bargaining agreement in Live TV/Videotape, which includes awards shows like the Oscars, Grammys and Country Music Awards, was almost 8 years ago. Before live downloads, before ringtones, before DVD compilations. The most recent contract in print dates back to 2002. So every time a show comes along, figuring out the money and the rules is like voodoo - the AFM asks the employer to follow rules that aren't even written down anymore... or they make them up as they go along. That's why every time you play a show it seems as if the ground shifts under you and you have no idea what the money or work rules will be. How much will you be getting for needle drop, reuse for foreign distribution or even basic wage rates for your next Live TV job? The EMSD decides all these things, and it is done behind closed doors.



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So when you hear your RMA leadership expressing deep concern that there is no process, no consultation, no oversight as required by AFM Policy and Bylaws, remember: It's not personal - it's just business!

Your livelihood is being harmed and your democratic rights are being denied.

***It's about your work - It's about your rights
Rank-and-file oversight is your only protection.***

Check out RMA's new web presence!

www.rmaweb.org has changed.

We will now be able to bring more up-to-date information,
in a format that allows you to keep up to speed.

Catch our videos, newsletters and get the latest updates
through an RSS feed straight to your own computer.

www.rmaweb.org