

# D E A N P I T C H F O R D

1 September 2004

RE: FOOTLOOSE

To Whom It May Concern:

Gary John La Rosa is the real deal.

Since "Footloose" ended its two year run on Broadway in 2000, my collaborators and I have been re-working aspects of the script and score. In many productions all over the U.S. and the world (Sydney, London, Tokyo, e.g.), we've tried out those evolving revisions.

When Gary John was hired to do our show at the California Musical Theatre in Sacramento, he contacted me and asked to read the updated script; I found his suggestions so insightful and invigorating that I spent the next three months e-mailing him re-writes and discussing musical and staging options with him and my collaborators.

A week before he began rehearsals, we had the chance to meet in New York and, together with his terrific Musical Director Darren Cohen, to work through the show; it was an invigorating session, and I left them that day knowing we were in good hands.

But I wasn't prepared for what I experienced when, three weeks later, I flew to Sacramento and saw the stunning job that Gary John had done - in the round, no less! - with "Footloose." The performances were vivid and moving, the musical numbers were thrilling, and the staging was impeccable and wildly inventive.

And let me re-emphasize - Gary John was not working from some tried-and-true chestnut of a libretto; he was moving through uncharted waters, and he did so brilliantly, bringing fresh perspective and great energy and heart to our material.

I am a great fan of this man.

*Dean Pitchford*

