September 1, 2015

To the DU Department of Theatre community,

In Winter Quarter 2013, I approved the production of a student project – GYM PARTY – without the permission of its creators, Made in China (http://madeinchinatheatre.com).

I sincerely and unequivocally apologize to Jessica Latowicki and Tim Cowbury of Made in China (and to our departmental community) for my actions in doing so. Jess and Tim are extraordinary artists, creators of provoking, exciting, and acclaimed work. Like all artists, they have every right to assert control of their work in whatever way they see fit: Made in China does not grant performance rights to its shows.

Departmental support of any publically-performed student project that has not been properly licensed is wrong, regardless of earnest intentions and no matter how successful or rewarding the process may be to the students and audiences involved. In the case of GYM PARTY, imitation may have been the sincerest form of flattery, but as approval to do so was not granted by its original creators, pursuing that imitation was both misguided and wrong.

We remain adamantly dedicated to supporting every student in the passionate exploration of any type, genre, or style of stage performance that inspires them, with this crucial reminder to emphasize: when any such exploration grows into the form of a publically-performed project of another artist’s work, the student must acquire the proper permissions and/or licensing of the original artist before the project begins rehearsals.

Thank you for all you do as members of our community, and for your commitment to ethical artistry. If you have questions about this or anything we do as a department, please ask.

Rick Barbour
Associate Professor & Chair
Department of Theatre
fbarbour@du.edu