

# Stage Right opens 'Barefoot in the Park'

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When creating entertainment on stage, you must, of necessity, leave some elements to the viewers' imaginations.

However, when a skylight is crucial to the plot, you can hardly leave that to make believe.

It's exactly what Stage Right play director Jillian Nolan faced when she took on the job of directing "Barefoot in the Park," opening Feb. 17 on weekends through March 4 at Conroe's Grighton Theatre, 234 North Main St.

"Barefoot in the Park" is one of the most recognized among playwright Neil Simon's comedies. It tells of young newlyweds; serious attorney Paul Bratter, and his free spirited bride, Corie. They live in Manhattan on the fifth floor of an apartment building with no elevator.

Add woes such as a leaking skylight, and bad plumbing, plus an interfering mother-in-law, an outlandish neighbor, and other assorted characters, and you see where this is going.

"One of the biggest challenges in this play is the set," Jillian said. "The skylight is a key piece in the story, but also a challenge to create. You have to build a huge back wall to support that skylight."

With much theatrical experience in their backgrounds, Jim Bingham and Kat Gilcrease found this task surmountable, and the skylight will be functioning – more than less – before opening night.

Of course, choosing actors for all the parts is another task, one that excites Jillian, who teaches theatre at Woodcreek Middle School.

"Chemistry is one of the most essential elements in this particular play," she said. "You have two leads that need to be able to quickly show intense love for each other, but they have an almost volatile annoyance at each other's traits. Then you have the mother/daughter pairing, and a new relationship building in the older couple."

This is the first time on stage for Richard Wilcox, who portrays the young lawyer, Paul.

"Richard's mother read about Stage Right auditions for 'Barefoot in the Park,'" said sound designer Carolyn Wong.

"She thought he'd be perfect for the part of Paul. She encouraged him and sure enough, Mom was right. Richard got the male lead."

Crys McClure portrays effervescent Corie, after comedic roles as three different characters in "Mama Won't Fly."

Yvonne Nelson, the hilariously hateful Miss Hannigan in "Annie," depicts Corie's mother, Mrs. Banks. Patrick Slagle becomes Mrs. Banks' potential suitor, who also is the unconventional neighbor, Victor Velasco. Steve Dowell and Gerald Livingston complete the cast.

Audience members are invited to provide items for the county food bank. All patrons who donate receive a coupon good for a \$5 adult discount on their choice of a SR play in April or July, when this SR season ends. Tickets cost \$17 and \$15 depending on age. Group rates are \$12 per person. Call 936-441-7469, or visit [www.stage-right.org](http://www.stage-right.org).



Peggie Miller / performing arts columnist