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Steve Barton Musical Theater Project of Nederland ISD Summer Rec's Emma Fornier, left, and Connor Perkins rehearse for the Music Man at Nederland High School.

'Music Man' to honor local theatre legend

By Darragh Doiron
The News staff writer

NEDERLAND — The pool hall trouble, gossip and librarian love bringing a tune to "The Music Man" will honor one of Nederland's own music men in a new city project.

The Steve Barton Musical Theatre Project honors the former resident who achieved international success in musical theatre. Barton, born in 1954 and died in 2001, grew up in Nederland and played roles with Swiss, German and Austrian theater companies. He appeared in "Godspell," "The Fantasticks," "Jesus Christ Superstar," "Evita," "Guys and Dolls" and "Camelot," before playing the role of Munkustrap in the original Vienna cast of "Cats" and originated the role of Raoul in Andrew Lloyd Webber's "The Phantom of the Opera" in London.

Director Kim Williams said the group is pleased to honor Barton, who gained such fame abroad.

Bert Rogers, a Nederland city councilman in real life, has an on-stage promotion to mayor in this production. It's his pool table coming to town that gets the visiting con man to persuade townsfolk to support a community band for the young folk. Harold Hill may

"THE MUSIC MAN"

The Steve Barton Musical Theatre Project honors the former resident who achieved international success in musical theatre. Students and community leaders will share the stage in the production, set for 7:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday, June 25 and 26, at the Nederland High School Performing Arts Center, off Spurlock Road. Admission is \$5 at the door.

have skipped town with the money for nonexistent instruments, until he falls for Marion the librarian.

Nederland High School graduate Matthew Taylor plays the title role and Angela Pickering, a Nederland grad and assistant professor at Lamar University, will play Marion Paroo. The cast will also feature current students and teachers from the Nederland school district, former students and school board members.

Taking the stage is new for Rogers, who repeatedly noted how he'd never done anything like this before. He refers to his character as "obnoxious in his wording" and "outlandish." He'd like to tar and feather the Music Man.

See 'Music,' page A4

GETTING READY FOR A MUSICAL NIGHT



Morgan Jones/The News

Steve Barton Musical Theater Project of Nederland ISD Summer Rec's Cole Howerton, back, Shay Ashworth, Ryan Sherer, and Victoria Frost rehearse for the Music Man at Nederland High School.

Music

Continued from A1

"If it wasn't for my 18-year-old wife, I wouldn't have a clue about the dance steps," Rogers said.

Christine Couron plays Eulalie M. Shinn, the mayor's wife who's proud of her place in society. Couron constructed her own costume hat featuring a pile of white feathers on a red base, with a blue peacock taking center stage atop her head. She said her 'husband's' will be adorned similarly in patriotic col-

ors.

Community spirit is what Williams said drives the cast and crew. Gretchen Kloes, a volunteer and trombone player, a soccer coach in the Houston area, said she's happy to spend some summer time back home.

"It's a lot of fun to be back and involved in the community again," she said in a rehearsal hall full of piano play, costumes and set construction.

Wynnelle Guidry, a former Nederland choir director, will play Marion's meddling Irish mother Mrs. Paroo. The Music Man fea-

tures hit songs such as "Goodnight My Someone," "Til There Was You," "Shipooopi," and the show stopping "Seventy-Six Trombones."

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