

Wavestage puts you in good ?Company?

By Brock Weir

Actress Traci Alexander jokes her boyfriend might be a little bit gleeful when he hears her rehearsing her motor-mouthed big number, but ?Not Getting Married? from Stephen Sondheim's musical Company is some serious business for any thespian.

The comedic song, which sees a bride-to-be start, as the song states, ?slipping down the drain? on the eve of her wedding, is a monumental vocal exercise executed by the likes of Beth Howland, Carol Burnett and Madeline Kahn, but the quirks of Amy is allowing the actress to hone some different acting chops.

Aurora's Wavestage Theatrical Company opens ?Company? next Thursday, November 19, at Newmarket Theatre. The show centres on Robert who, on his 35th birthday, starts contemplating his matrimonial prospects ? or lack thereof. Over the course of dinners, parties, a few drinks, and Amy's reluctant wedding, his friends take the opportunity to explain to the confirmed bachelor the pros and cons of walking down the aisle.

?I definitely love performing in a Sondheim show,? says Traci. ?The music is extremely intricate and it definitely holds a learning curve for any kind of performer. With company, it shows how different personalities all come together, people who probably wouldn't be friends otherwise, except for one mutual friend, Robert.?

The last time Ms. Alexander walked the boards in a Sondheim show for Wavestage, it was in Into The Woods, where her role as The Witch left her sitting for hours in the makeup chair. This time, her makeup is kept to a minimum, but whatever time she is saving by skipping a large portion of her makeup is made up for in the hair chair with her large mop of ?Shirley Temple curls.?

?Amy is all over the place and she almost has two personalities,? she explains. ?She is not sure what she wants, but she really sees something genuine and beautiful about her husband to be, Paul. It is really fun to act that fine line of quirky, crazy person while being a loving and sincere person towards Paul. The song has been quite a challenge, but it is all about the breath control. I had to make sure I am maintaining the character's state of mind. Luckily, she is kind of a crazy character so a little bit of a huff and puff during the song is completely appropriate. This has taught me how to work my breath control and work with my diaphragm. It really helps my memorization skills and breath control for future performances.

?I don't think I will ever have to sing a song this fast again, but if I do, I'll be ready!?

Company runs through November 21. For more information, visit wavestagetheatre.com.