



## Local actress plays heart-wrenching role

by Sue Winslow-Spragge

Controversial, provocative and shocking is how some have described Altera Vitae's inaugural production, 'night, Mother. Directed by Jesse Corbeil, Marsha Norman's 1983 Pulitzer Prize winner will open at the Mainline Theatre on March 19.

In this one act, two-character play, well-known local actress Sandy Ferguson plays the heart-wrenching role of Mama in a fierce struggle between mother and daughter as she tries to find a way to stop her epileptic daughter Jessie (Alexandra Valassis) from committing suicide that very night. With it's realistic dialogue, this play is a poignant look at the 'could-have-beens' and 'if-onlys' that get in the way when what one should be doing most, is listening. While other productions of 'night, Mother have concentrated on daughter Jessie's plight, this production focuses on the turmoil of her mother, Thelma.

As this new Montreal theatre company's aim is to partner itself with charitable organizations whose mandates are similar to themes in the play, they will pledge a donation as well as assist these organizations in their public awareness strategies. As Quebec's present suicide rate is one of the top five in the world, this play is, therefore, especially profound and is the reason Altera Vitae will support Family Survivors of Suicide (FSOS).

Director Jesse Corbeil explains his take on the story, "At the center of the play, there's a real sense of disconnection, like what happens when we don't really hear one another. It's hard to reach out to someone who's not 'doing' so well, often because we haven't even noticed there's a problem."

Corbeil wants to stress however that Altera Vitae has succeeded in keeping the production from being depressing, with both characters offering something hopeful, in hopelessness.

'night, Mother is playing at the Mainline Theatre, 3997 Blvd. St. Laurent, Montréal March 19th to 30th. Doors open at 7:15 p.m., Showtime: 7:55 p.m. Sharp. '2 for 1' Matinees on March 22nd & 23rd. Doors open at 1:15 p.m., Showtime: 1:55 p.m. Sharp. March 25th is "Charity Nite" and \$10 of every ticket sold will be donated to FSOS. Reservations: (514) 823-8823 or [tickets@alteravitae.com](mailto:tickets@alteravitae.com) \$18 adult/\$15 students and seniors