

NDG connections for Mainline's production of 'night, Mother'

Marsha Norman's play an unsentimental look at suicide



by **Toula Foscolos**

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When Carolyn-Fe Trinidad, a longtime NDG resident, decided to launch a brand new indie theatre company (Alteravita Productions, after the Latin "Spes Altera Vitae" for 'Hoping for a Different Life'), she decided to go with a play on suicide for her inaugural show. Right off the bat, Trinidad seems to be telling us that pertinent will always win over perky. "night, Mother' has been in my system since it came out in the 80's," Trinidad explains. "My hope is that when audiences leave the room, they realize how each relationship is so time-sensitive. We never know when we're talking to someone, if we'll see them again. Today, with high tech invading our lives, it's too easy to send emails, emotions/intents get lost in cyberspace."

Written by Pulitzer Prize winner, Marsha Norman, 'night, Mother' follows Jessie as she prepares to die, wrapping up her affairs as she throws her mother's life into turmoil. It's a heart-wrenching look at the 'could-have-beens' and 'if-onlys' that get in the way when what one should be doing most is listening.

Director Jessie Corbeil, who grew up in NDG, has also worked as a dresser and costume tech on the Montreal West Operatic Society's productions of *The Sorcerer* and *The Pirates of Penzance*, where, according to him, "half the cast of 48 had swords, the other half had hoop skirts – and nobody lost an eye."

Corbeil believes that 'night, Mother' is, at its essence, a story about disconnection. "What happens when we don't really hear one another, because we're too busy pretending to listen."

With Quebec's present suicide rate one of the top five in the world, the play certainly remains topical. The new Montreal production company also aims to engage and serve the community. With each new production, they will partner with a charitable organization whose mandate is similar to the themes in the play and pledge a donation from the production's profits. For 'night, Mother', Alteravita will support FSOS (Family Survivors of Suicide).

The production will showcase the talented Alexandra Valassis as Jessie the daughter, last seen in the hilarious 'Sex and the City' spoof, 'Sex and La Cite, part 1 & 2', which Valassis co-wrote and also starred in as Samantha Jones. Stage veteran Sandy Ferguson will play Mama Thelma. Original music will be composed specifically for the production by local bands Daniel Iorio, Dush and DD Swank (who also happens to be Trinidad's band).

'night, Mother' will be performed from March 19 to March 30, at Mainline Theatre (3997 St. Laurent Blvd). For more information and/or reservations, you can call 514-823-8823 or email them at askus@alteravita.com. For information on FSOS, you can log on www.suicideaftermath.com



Alexandra Valassis and Sandy Ferguson in character for 'night, Mother'