

TA's "Lucy" examines a mother's love

By Brock Weir

A mother's love is usually held to be the ultimate symbol of strength above all else, but sometimes these relationships can be strained, or even non-existent.

But what about the relationship between a child raised by her father, unwanted by her mother, who finds herself thrust back into maternal care?

Theatre Aurora, and director Brian Moore, hopes to shed a light on this difficult dynamic in their upcoming production of the Canadian drama *Lucy*, starring Hayley Carr and Elene Stamatatos, which opens March 31 at the Henderson Drive theatre.

'It is an extremely challenging play because it deals with an autistic child and the relationship between the child and the mother who didn't want to have a child in the first place,' explains Mr. Moore, who is making his Theatre Aurora directorial debut after over 40 years of directing with the Richmond Hill Curtain Club. 'You get to know this [dynamic] very quickly. The father has been looking after Lucy for 13 years and now wants the mother to take over. He's met a lady and wants to get married again and concentrate on the marriage. Lucy is at the stage of puberty and she doesn't quite know how to deal with that.'

Mr. Moore's love for a good theatrical challenge came early as a student in a new kind of comprehensive school in England which, over the trades, emphasized the arts along with more 'practical' subjects. From there, he worked in community theatre and took every chance he could to get close to the boards.

'Initially I was drawn to acting, but I started to look at plays a little bit differently and thought I might want to have a little bit more control,' says Mr. Moore of his shift to directing. 'At the Curtain Club, I decided I would direct a short play every month for the general meetings just to establish myself and get used to directing.'

When he helmed a production of *The Glass Menagerie* it was clear, he said, he had made the right choice. His approach as director was to strip the play back to how it was originally staged in 1945 which, perhaps not coincidentally, was the year Mr. Moore himself made his debut in the world. This feeling continued through a production of *Shadowbox*, focusing on the five stages of death.

'At the play, there was a lady who came up to me one night and said, 'you know nothing about death and dying of cancer,' but I did,' he recalls. 'She said she didn't think she would watch the second act, which is about how you deal with what is going to happen. By the end of the night, she came backstage and said, 'I did go in and I want to thank you. You helped me deal with my husband's death.'

'For me, that is the beauty of the theatre, to make someone moved by it.'

That too is what he hopes theatre-goers coming out to see *Lucy* leave with, he says.

'You have to try and understand the issues and find a way to work with the issues,' says Mr. Moore. 'If I think about *Lucy*, Vivian, the mother, does not want to deal with this autistic child, but as she is an anthropological person, she starts to believe this is the next evolution of humans and autism is the future.'

'There is a school of thought that you just accept and help them deal with life, and there is another school of thought where you try and mold their behaviour to fit in. What we deal with in the play is one person wanting to do that and help them fit in, and one person who accepts them for who they are.'

Lucy opens at Theatre Aurora next Thursday, March 31, running on select dates and times through April 9. For tickets and more information, visit www.theatreaurora.com.