***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

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**Essential Theatre’s 20th Festival**

**Support Local Playwrights, Actors, and Directors**

Atlanta, July 2018 – Essential Theatre is presenting its 20th Festivals with the world premieres of three plays and three staged readings, all by Georgia playwrights.

“Since its first festival in 1999, the Essential Theatre has presented 31 new works by 26 different Georgia writers, all receiving productions of the highest artistic quality through Essential and many going on to receive future productions elsewhere in Atlanta and across the country, and we want to celebrate with you!”

About each play:

*Built to Float* by Rachel Graf Evans, premiering July 27, 2018 at 8pm.

Directed by Peter Hardy

This is the story of Tess, who quietly crusades to keep it together, working full time as a phlebotomist and caring for her ailing mother Marjorie, who likes to harp on Tess’s dormant dreams of becoming a doctor. Suddenly, her sister Roz shows back up from rehab, pledging high expectations and a clean slate. When stranger William, an echo of their deceased father, arrives in town with a tempting new offer of employment, Tess tries her best to keep everyone from going underwater. Everyone else, anyway.

*Woke* by Avery Sharpe, premiering August 3, 2018 at 8pm.

Directed by Ellen McQueen

Woke follows two friends from different backgrounds who are trying to navigate the already rocky transition from high school to college. When a calamitous event captures national attention, they are forced to wrestle with their different understandings of social awareness. Through family, romance, and their own friendship, they painstakingly and comically explore what it truly means to be woke.

*a bunch of different ways i'd like to die* by Tim McDonough

August 16 & 17, 2018 at 8pm

Written and performed by Tim McDonough, *a bunch of different ways i’d like to die* is an entertainment about death, a fantasy and meditation both comic and dead serious.

Bare Essentials Play Reading Series

Selected from Playwriting Competition entries, all readings in the Bare Essentials series are free and open to the public. Produced in partnership with Working Title Playwrights, Bare Essentials readings are an exciting way for Atlanta audiences to be meaningfully involved in Georgia playwrights' playwriting process.

**Tuesday, August 7, 7:30pm**

**Two short plays: FAITH by Lee Osorio and DAD by Ben Harris**

**Directed by Brenda Porter**

FAITH by Lee Osorio

A lonely woman finds someone she can believe in – and tries to hold onto that, no matter what.

DAD by Ben Harris

You can find a father in the most unlikely places – even in prison.

**Tuesday, August 14, 7:30pm**

**A POSTERIORI by Courtney Earl**

**Directed by**

A group of college students begin to suspect one of their professors may be a sexual predator.

**Wednesday, August 22, 7:30pm**

**BABY SHOWER FOR THE ANTI-CHRIST by Ben Thorpe**

**Directed by Natalie Fox**

What do you do when you’re trying to have a celebration for the birth of the Dark Lord, and someone invites the wrong person?

Now in its twentieth year, the Essential Theatre Playwriting Competition is the only contest exclusively dedicated to the work of Georgia playwrights. The winning play receives both a full production and a $600 cash prize. Playwrights must be current Georgia residents, and the plays must be previously unproduced. There are no restrictions as to style, length or subject matter. The deadline for the 2020 Essential Theatre Playwriting Award competition is April 23, 2019. For more information or to submit your play, visit EssentialTheatre.com/Playwriting-Competition.

*For more information and the latest updates, join our* [*newsletter*](http://www.essentialtheatre.com/EmailSignup.html)*, follow us on* [*Facebook*](https://www.facebook.com/NewPlays) *or* [*Twitter*](https://twitter.com/ATL_Essential)*, or check out our website at* [*www.EssentialTheatre.com*](http://www.essentialtheatre.com)*.*

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**About Essential Theatre:**

*Essential Theatre: Giving Georgia Playwrights a Voice since 1999*

The 2018 Essential Theatre Festival continues Essential’s tradition of premiering the latest and best new works by Georgia playwrights and bringing Atlanta what’s new this summer with this year’s contest winners, *Built to Float* by Rachel Graf Evans and *Woke* by Avery Sharpe, a two-night presentation of *a bunch of different ways i’d like to* die by Tim McDonough, and the Bare Essentials Play Reading Series.

The Festival runs July 27 through August 26 at the West End Performing Arts Center, 945 Ralph David Abernathy Blvd, Atlanta, GA.