***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

Jennifer Kimball, Managing Director

[jennifer@essentialtheatre.com](mailto:jennifer@essentialtheatre.com)

(404) 587-3853



**Essential Theatre’s 20th Festival opens July 27 with Rachel Graf Evans’ *Built to Float***

Atlanta, July 2018 – Essential Theatre is presenting its 20th Festivals with two world premieres including Rachel Graf Evans’ Built to Float. Evans is one of the 2018 Essential Theatre Playwriting Award winners and debuts her haunting family drama July 27.

“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,” said playwright Rachel Graf Evans. “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.”

About the 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.

Cast:

Rachel Wansker - Tess

Heather Schroeder - Roz

Alex Van - William

Suzanne Roush - Marjorie

Performances:

Thursday July 26, 8pm (preview)

Friday July 27, 8pm (opening night)

Saturday July 28, 8pm (Neighborhood Night)

Saturday August 4, 8pm

Sunday August 5, 2pm

Friday August 10, 8pm

Sunday August 12, 7pm

Monday August 13, 8pm (Industry Night)

Sunday August 19, 7pm

Monday August 20, 8pm (Industry Night)

Saturday August 25, 8pm

About the playwright:

Rachel Graf Evans is a writer and theatre artist most interested in silenced and forgotten

stories. Her play PHEROMONE was recently workshopped and presented as part of the

Working Title Playwrights Ethel Woolson Lab. Additional Atlanta Playwriting Credits

Include: SUIT YOURSELF (WTP Courtroom Drama CLE @ AE); INCH BY INCH

(Synchronicity’s Stripped Bare program); PEACH COBBLER (The Weird Sisters’

Dangerous Women); THE RIGHT KIND OF MARIGOLD (WTP 24 Hour Plays); [IF YOU

DON’T KNOW] THE PLEDGE (1MPF); THE HANDMAID RHIANNON; NEWFOUND

MASCOT; HER NAME IS HUNTER (Horizon Theatre Apprentice Showcase). RGE

currently serves as the Dramatists Guild Young Ambassador for Atlanta, the Alliance

Theatre’s Literary Intern, and is a proud member of both Working Title Playwrights and

the Dramatists Guild. 2016-2017 Horizon Theatre Playwright Apprentice. B.A. with High

Honors in Theatre/Gender, Sexuality, & Feminist Studies: Oberlin College. This autumn,

RGE will be pursuing her MFA as a member of Temple University’s inaugural cohort for

Musical Theatre Collaboration in Philadelphia. For all updates RGE, stay tuned at

www.rachelgrafevans.com

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.