***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

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**And the winners are…**

*Essential Theatre announces the winners*

*of the 2020 Essential Theatre Playwriting Award*

February 2020 – Essential Theatre is proud to announce the winners of the 2020 Essential Theatre Playwriting Award: *The Outrage Machine* by Daniel Carter Brown and *The Wishing Place* by Beverly Trader Austin. *The Outrage Machine* and *The Wishing Place* will each receive a full production in the 2020 Essential Theatre Festival this summer as well as a cash prize. Now in its twentieth year, the Essential Theatre Playwriting Competition is the only competition of its kind. The 2020 Award is sponsored in part by Corbin Real Estate Team.

**About Daniel Carter Brown and *The Outrage Machine***

Daniel Carter Brown is an actor, playwright, and director who moved to Atlanta from Chicago a decade ago. Since that time, his writings have seen regular production with companies such as Out of Box, New Origins, Onion Man and others. He also performs with several companies around town and works at Emory University School of Medicine, training actors to portray patients as part of the medical school curriculum.

*The Outrage Machine* is a semi-comedic exploration of internet journalism, social media, and the culture of outrage. This summer’s production will be directed by Essential’s founder and artistic director, Peter Hardy. “It’s a strong, timely script,” says Hardy, “a sharply-observed, fast-paced look at a real thing that’s happening in society today — the way social media and the internet have created an environment in which anger is fostered and manipulated to drive commerce. It’s also a compelling and believable story about a young woman looking for a way to make a living by helping people to be more well-informed, only to find that the truth isn’t always the surest way to generate clicks.”

“The first version of this play was written before the 2016 election, when I realized how many web journalists seemed to be intentionally provoking anger instead of presenting facts objectively,” shares Brown. “Then 2016 happened, and I practically had to rewrite the whole thing. The ideas I was trying to introduce were now mainstream, and the play became more of an exploration of how things got like this.”

**About Beverly Trader Austin and *The Wishing Place***

Beverly Trader Austin is a native Atlantan for generations back. “My great-grandfather had a yard full of chickens on Peachtree Street where the Bank of America building stands now. My uncle Glenn had his professorship threatened and crosses burned in his yard for attempting voter registration in the 1940's. I was reared, as were most of my generation, on school integration, women's rights, anti-war activism, and environmental protest. Those issues tend to haunt my plays, my journalism, and my time in the classroom,” Austin shares. Beginning in 1974, her work has been professionally performed and favorably reviewed in London, New York, Palm Beach, Los Angeles, and around the Southeast, with more than three dozen productions of her plays to her credit to date.

The play that won this award, *The Wishing Place,* looks at two families living in 1960s rural Georgia, one black and one white. It will be directed by long-time Essential collaborator Ellen McQueen. “While *The Outrage Machine* is a thought-provoking script with a driving urban pulse,” observes Hardy, “*The Wishing Place* is emotional and dreamy, full of the wonder of nature. It’s about people who feel deeply connected to the place where they grew up, where their families have lived for generations – and who yearn to escape it.” Director McQueen adds, “It’s about longing and belonging.” “*The Wishing Place* will, I think, make for a very nice balance and counterpoint to *The Outrage Machine,*” Hardy concludes.

The 2020 Essential Theatre Play Festival will take place from July 24 to August 23, 2020, at the West End Performing Arts Center in Atlanta’s Historic West End. **Join Essential Theatre on March 14, 2020, to meet this year’s playwriting award winners and get your festival pass at our annual Celebration of Georgia Playwrights!** The Celebration will take place from 4-6pm at Manuel’s Tavern. Admission is free but RSVP is requested.

**About the playwriting competition**

Now in its twentieth year, this is the only competition of its kind, exclusively dedicated to the work of Georgia playwrights, with the winner receiving both a cash prize and a full production. Playwrights must be residents of the State of Georgia. There are no restrictions as to style, length or subject matter, though previously unproduced plays that would run an hour or more in performance are preferred. The deadline for the 2021 Essential Theatre Playwriting Award competition is April 23, 2020. Past Essential Theatre Playwriting Award winners include Karen Wurl, Karla Jennings, Vynnie Meli, Lauren Gunderson, and Topher Payne. 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)*,* [*Twitter*](https://twitter.com/ATL_Essential) *or* [*Instagram*](https://www.instagram.com/essentialtheatrega/) *or check out our website at* [*www.EssentialTheatre.com*](http://www.essentialtheatre.com)*.*

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**For media inquires:**

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**Calendar Listings**

**Celebration of Georgia Playwrights**

**Hosted by Essential Theatre, Inc**

**March 14, 2020**

First Level Space, Manuel’s Tavern

602 North Highland Avenue NE

Atlanta, GA 30307

Tickets available soon at: EssentialTheatre.com

**The Essential Theatre Festival**

**July 24th – August 23rd**

The Essential Theatre

at West End Performing Arts Center

945 Ralph David Abernathy Blvd,

Atlanta, GA 30310

Festival Passes go on sale March 14 at www.EssentialTheatre.com