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## Buckhead resident portrays Tennessee Williams in play

By **Gloria Love**  
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Staff / Nathan Self

Dressed as Tennessee Williams, Sid Shier goes over lines from 'Confessions of a Nightingale,' his upcoming one-man play.

Tennessee Williams — mercurial, brilliant, tortured, shy — must be a character actor's dream to play, and in celebration of the author's 100th birthday, Buckhead resident Sid Shier set out to do exactly that.

In the one-man play "Confessions of a Nightingale," Shier portrays Williams through the high points of his career, as well as during personal tragedies.

"When I looked to see how many pages of dialogue there were, I said 'There's no way that's going to happen,'" he said. "Then, I started reading it in his voice, because I remember him, I remember seeing him on television, and I was hooked.

"It's about his understanding of the human condition. However, he could never take all that insight and use it himself."

"Confessions of a Nightingale" was adapted from the book "The Ultimate Seduction," by Charlotte Chandler, and based on interviews with Williams shortly before his death in 1983.

It explores Williams' rise to fame as the author of such plays as "A Streetcar Named Desire" and "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof," as well as his struggles with drugs and alcohol, issues of sexuality and a haunting family history of mental illness, culminating in his sister Rose's 1937 botched lobotomy.

Director Patrick McColery said because the play is derived from interviews with Williams, it offers attendees a unique opportunity.

"It's actually the words Tennessee Williams spoke. It's an opportunity to hear from the man behind the plays so many love," he said. "They're really personal stories about his childhood, his first experience of love and frank discussions from an older person looking back on what it takes to live an artist's life."

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Shier said he is able to sustain his portrayal of Williams by identifying with the author and respecting his work.

"I can only tell you he was a small man. He was not an overly masculine man. He was a very shy person, but if he knew the group he was in, he was totally outrageous. It's a full range of emotions," Shier said, "but everything he felt, I have felt in my life. It doesn't mean I've experienced it, but I've felt it.

"His writing is so magnificent — his language, the way he used language — as an actor, it's goose bumping for me. I love saying those words every night."

- If you go**
- o **What:** 'Confessions of a Nightingale'
  - o **When:** March 24 through April 24
  - o **Where:** 14th Street Playhouse, 173 14th St., Midtown
  - o **Cost:** \$23.50 through \$28
  - o **Information:** visit [www.14thstplayhouse.org](http://www.14thstplayhouse.org)

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