

SAN FRANCISCO PLAYHOUSE PRESENTS WORLD PREMIERE OF  
CUTTING EDGE COMMENTARY ON CAPITALISM AND TECH

## **R.O.I. (Return on Investment)**

By Aaron Loeb

Directed by Jonathan Moscone

Rolling World Premiere

August 6 – September 5, 2026 (opening night: August 13)

CREATIVITY THEATER

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (17 June 2026) — **San Francisco Playhouse** begins its 2026-27 season with the rolling World Premiere of **R.O.I. (Return on Investment)**. Commissioned by the Playhouse and written by Playhouse resident playwright **Aaron Loeb** (*First Person Shooter; Ideation; Abraham Lincoln's Big, Gay Dance Party*), this darkly comedic, eerily prescient drama follows Silicon Valley venture capitalist May, fresh off a Forbes 40 under 40 inclusion and on the hunt for a unicorn startup with a \$1 billion valuation. She meets visionary scientist Dr. Willa McGovern, who is on the precipice of a biotech breakthrough destined to change the world. As innovation hurtles forward at an alarming pace, science fiction becomes reality and May and her boss Paul grapple with thorny questions of ethics, power, and greed. Helmed by acclaimed theatre director **Jonathan Moscone**, this future-focused psychological thriller features **Sharon Shao, Anthony Fusco, Lauren English, and Bonnie Akimoto**. The production initiates an era of expansion for **San Francisco Playhouse**, launching the company's first seven-play subscription season with productions on two stages. This rolling World Premiere will be presented at the Creativity Theater, six blocks away from the Playhouse's historic home in the heart of Union Square. **R.O.I. (Return on Investment)** will perform **August 6 – September 5, 2026** (opening night: August 13) at Creativity Theater, 221 4th Street, San Francisco. Single tickets (\$41-\$57, pricing inclusive of fees) and subscriptions for the 2026-27 season are now available. For more information, the public may visit [sfplayhouse.org](https://sfplayhouse.org) or call the box office at **415-677-9596**.

The United Kingdom engagement of the rolling World Premiere of **R.O.I. (Return on Investment)** was seen at London's Hampstead Theatre in March 2026. *The Guardian* called the play "Ambitious. Zings with quickfire patter." *The Financial Times* deemed it "A highly entertaining, ethically knotty and disturbing new play about money, morality and medical research." *The London Standard* said, "It's thrilling to see a play that engages in big, contemporary themes, and that really goes for it."

"At San Francisco Playhouse, we believe theatre must confront the most urgent questions of our time," said San Francisco Playhouse Artistic Director **Bill English**. "That is why we commissioned our resident playwright Aaron Loeb to write this play. In a world increasingly driven by metrics and profit, Aaron asks deeper questions: how do we measure the value of human life? With intelligence, humor, and compassion, **R.O.I. (Return on Investment)** explores the tensions between financial success and moral responsibility."

Recently starring as Mina Harker in *Dracula: A Feminist Revenge Fantasy, Really*, **Sharon**

**Shao** (she/her) returns to the Playhouse as May Lee, a driven venture capitalist. Other Playhouse productions include *Waitress*, *Chinglish*, and *The Paper Dreams of Harry Chin*. Shao has also acted with Berkeley Repertory Theatre, TheatreWorks Silicon Valley, and California Shakespeare Theater. She is a company member of Oakland Theatre Project, Shotgun Players, and 8th Best Legs Productions.

Seen in *The Christians* and *Born Yesterday*, Bay Area theatre titan **Anthony Fusco** (he/him) returns to the Playhouse as Paul Montrose, May's mentor and a managing partner at their venture capital firm. Fusco has been a mainstay of the Bay Area theatre for 25 years: he has performed more than 40 productions for American Conservatory Theater, where he was a Core Company member, and 14 productions as an Associate Artist with California Shakespeare Theater (many directed by Jonathan Moscone), as well as shows at TheatreWorks Silicon Valley, Magic Theatre, Marin Theatre, and A Traveling Jewish Theatre. He performed in *The Real Thing* and *Man and Superman* on Broadway, and in productions Off-Broadway and at many of America's major regional theatres.

**Lauren English** (she/her) returns to the Playhouse as Dr. Willa McGovern, a rising star entrepreneur. She has worked extensively with San Francisco Playhouse where she is a founding company member and artistic associate. Her onstage credits at the Playhouse include *reasons to be pretty*, *Seminar*, *Grounded*, *The Glory of Living*, and *Our Town*. In the Bay Area, she has also performed with American Conservatory Theater, California Shakespeare Theater, Magic Theatre, Marin Theatre, and Aurora Theatre Company. In New York she worked with The Actors Company Theatre, The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey, The Public Theater, Ensemble Studio Theatre, The Lark Play Development Center, and The Playwrights Realm.

**Bonnie Akimoto** (she/her) makes her Playhouse debut as an elderly woman. Akimoto has performed with Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, TheatreWorks Silicon Valley, Marin Theatre, California Shakespeare Theater, Aurora Theatre Company, and San Jose Stage Company, among others.

#### **PRODUCTION TEAM:**

**R.O.I. (Return on Investment)** features direction by **Jonathan Moscone**; scenic design by **Bill English**; lighting design by **Charlie Mejia**; projections design by **Sarah Phykitt**; costume design by **Sharon Peng**; sound design by **James Ard**; properties design by **Justin Hammer**; and dramaturgy by **Wynne Chan**. **Jenna Stein-Corman** is the stage manager.

#### **CREATIVE TEAM:**

**Aaron Loeb's** (Playwright) work has been performed around the world. His full-length plays include *Ideation* (San Francisco Playhouse 2014, Off-Broadway 2016), *The Trials of Sam Houston*, *The Proud, Brown, First Person Shooter* (San Francisco Playhouse 2007), *Blastosphere* (with Geetha Reddy), and *Abraham Lincoln's Big, Gay Dance Party* (San Francisco Playhouse production 2008, Off-Broadway 2010). Loeb received the Will Glickman award for Best New Play in the Bay Area for *Ideation*. He is the resident playwright of San Francisco Playhouse and a member of the Dramatists Guild.

San Francisco native **Jonathan Moscone** (Director) is a veteran stage director and artistic leader.

His stage direction credits include the recent West Coast Premiere of *Pictures from Home* at Marin Theatre. A former artistic director of the California Shakespeare Theater, Jonathan also served as chief producer/chief of civic engagement of Yerba Buena Center for the Arts. He most recently served as a council member and executive director of the California Arts Council, the state's arts agency. He has sat on several local and national non-profit boards and currently serves as co-chair of the Chinese Culture Center. He is the first recipient of the Zelda Fichandler Award, given by the Stage Directors and Choreographers Foundation for "transforming the American Theater through his unique and creative work."

#### **SAN FRANCISCO PLAYHOUSE:**

Founded by Bill English and Susi Damilano in 2003, **San Francisco Playhouse** has been described by *The New York Times* as "a company that stages some of the most consistently high-quality work around" and deemed "ever adventurous" by *The Mercury News*. Located in the heart of the Union Square Theatre District, San Francisco Playhouse is the city's premier Off-Broadway company, an intimate alternative to the larger more traditional Union Square theatre fare. The Playhouse provides audiences the opportunity to experience professional theater with top-notch actors and world-class design in a setting where they are close to the action. The Playhouse also fosters the development of new work, including commissions and new play readings. *KQED/NPR* described the company as "one of the few theaters in the Bay Area that has a mission that actually shows up on stage. Artistic Director Bill English's commitment to empathy as a guiding philosophical and aesthetic force is admirable and by living that mission, fascinating things happen onstage." The Playhouse is committed to providing a creative home and inspiring environment where actors, directors, writers, designers, and theatre lovers converge to create and experience dramatic works that celebrate the human spirit.

#### **FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:**

**WHAT:** **San Francisco Playhouse** begins its 2026-27 season with the rolling World Premiere of *R.O.I. (Return on Investment)*. Commissioned by the Playhouse and written by Playhouse resident playwright **Aaron Loeb** (*First Person Shooter; Ideation; Abraham Lincoln's Big, Gay Dance Party*), this darkly comedic, eerily prescient drama follows Silicon Valley venture capitalist May, fresh off a Forbes 40 under 40 inclusion and on the hunt for a unicorn startup with a \$1 billion valuation. She meets visionary scientist Dr. Willa McGovern, who is on the precipice of a biotech breakthrough destined to change the world. As innovation hurtles forward at an alarming pace, science fiction becomes reality and May and her boss Paul grapple with thorny questions of ethics, power, and greed. Acclaimed theatre director **Jonathan Moscone** helms the Playhouse production with **Anthony Fusco, Sharon Shao, Lauren English, and Bonnie Akimoto** in the cast. This rolling World Premiere will be presented at the Creativity Theater, six blocks away from the Playhouse's historic home in the heart of Union Square.

- WHEN:** Previews: Thursday, August 6 – Wednesday, August 12, 2026  
*Opening: Thursday, August 13, 2026*  
Closes: Saturday, September 5, 2026
- SHOWS:** Tuesdays and Thursdays: 7pm  
Wednesdays: 2pm & 7pm  
Fridays: 8pm  
Saturdays: 3pm & 8pm  
Sundays: 2pm
- WHERE:** San Francisco Playhouse at Creativity Theater, 221 4th Street, San Francisco  
*(Note new location)*
- TICKETS:** Single tickets (\$41-\$57) and subscriptions for the 2026-27 season are now available. Pricing inclusive of fees and subject to change. For information, the public may visit <https://sfplayhouse.org/2026-2027-season/roi-return-on-investment/> or call the box office at 415-677-9596.
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- PRESS:** Contact Lauren Goldfarb, Carla Befera & Co. [lauren@cb-pr.com](mailto:lauren@cb-pr.com)
- PHOTOS:** Downloadable high-res photos are available: <http://cbpr.co/press/roi>