



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
APRIL 2019

Media Contact:  
Shokai Sinclair  
Marketing and communications director  
[shokai@shotgunplayers.org](mailto:shokai@shotgunplayers.org) or 510.692.2354 (cell)

## Shotgun Players presents *Kings*, written by Sarah Burgess, directed by Joanie McBrien

**"It's like a swingers convention in that, right underneath the small talk, there's the obvious reason that everyone's there."**

—Sarah Burgess, *Kings* playwright

**Berkeley, CA** – New member of congress, Sydney Millsap, sees how money corrupts politics, and she's on a mission to do something about it. Just imagine how a career senator and two ambitious lobbyists react to her efforts! *Kings* is a whip-smart political satire that will inspire you to change the system. And vote. ***Kings* begins previews on Thursday, May 16; opens on Thursday, May 23; and runs through Sunday, June 16, 2019, at the Ashby Stage.**

With the mid-term elections, over 100 women were elected to Congress. There are women who defeated long-time incumbents, women like Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez who are willing to take a stand against inequities in the political system even if members of her party advise against it. Audiences will find many similarities with Sarah Burgess' play. **Director Joanie McBrien speaks to how this savvy political satire speaks to our times:** "*Kings* features four very nuanced characters that represent different perspectives on politics. Sydney Millsap is the new congresswoman trying to challenge the system. Senator McDowell is a long-time, popular incumbent who excels at working the system to his advantage. Lauren is a lobbyist at the top of her game who knows how to influence and manipulate both politicians and donors. Kate is a rising lobbyist who is hungry for more power—and clients. What makes *Kings* so intriguing is that each character has depth and heart. There are no villains in the play; rather, there are four characters who ultimately believe in the greater good, but have very different ideas about whether you should ever compromise your ideals."

**Recalling her inspiration for writing *Kings*, Sarah Burgess says in a 2018 issue of *Vogue*:** "I read about these fund-raising retreats that politicians do, and it just seemed incredibly funny to me—something about the powerful politicians and important lobbyists together for a weekend of organized fun. And that scenario made me curious about what kind of conversations happen there and how the business of politics gets negotiated. One of the tricky things about writing about this topic is that these aren't strictly bribes. No one's giving someone a \$1,000 check and saying, "You have to sponsor this legislation for me." It's like a swingers convention in that, right underneath the small talk, there's the obvious reason that everyone's there."

The cast of *Kings* features **Sam Jackson, Sarah Mitchell, Elissa Beth Stebbins, and Don Wood**. The creative team features set design by **Angrette McCloskey**, lighting design by **Chris Lundahl**, costume design by **Miyuki Bierlein**, stage management by **Heather Kelly-Laws**, props design by **Devon LaBelle**, sound design by **James Ard**, dialect coaching by **Rebecca Castelli**, and production assistance by **Lenny Adler**.

More at [shotgunplayers.org/online/article/kings](http://shotgunplayers.org/online/article/kings)

Shotgun Players  
[1901 Ashby Avenue](http://1901AshbyAvenue.com)  
Berkeley, CA 94703

Tel: 510.841.6500

Email: [info@shotgunplayers.org](mailto:info@shotgunplayers.org)  
Website: [shotgunplayers.org](http://shotgunplayers.org)



## Bios

### Sarah Burgess, Playwright

Sarah Burgess is a playwright and writer for *The Tenant* (Woodshed Collective) and *Naked Angels* podcast series, *Naked Radio*. She has been a writer-in-residence at SPACE on Ryder Farm and the Cape Cod Theatre Project. Burgess is a member of the WP Lab and is an Ars Nova Play Group alum. Her play *Dry Powder* was a recipient of the 2016 Laurents/Hatcher Foundation Award and a finalist for the Blackburn prize. Other plays include *Camdenside* and *FAIL: Failures*. She lives in Brooklyn.

### Joanie McBrien, Director

Joanie has been an artistic company member since 2001 and has served as Shotgun's director of development/dramaturg since 2004. Over the years, she has worked to significantly to increase contributed income, directed several productions including *Grand Concourse*, *The Three Musketeers*, and *Cyrano de Bergerac*, and delved deeply into many plays, such as *The Coast of Utopia* trilogy, as a dramaturg.

## Calendar Listing

**WHAT:** New member of congress, Sydney Millsap, sees how money corrupts politics, and she's on a mission to do something about it. Just imagine how a career senator and two ambitious lobbyists react to her efforts! *Kings* is a whip-smart political satire that will inspire you to change the system. And vote.

**WHEN:** Thursday, May 16–Sunday, June 16, 2019

**WHERE:** [The Ashby Stage, 1901 Ashby Avenue, Berkeley](#)

**TICKET PRICES:** Pay-what-you-can previews: May 16–22. Regular tickets: \$7–\$40. Advance reservations strongly advised. Shows will sell out!

For more information, go to [shotgunplayers.org/online/article/kings](http://shotgunplayers.org/online/article/kings).

## About Shotgun Players

Shotgun Players is a company of artists determined to create bold, relevant, affordable theatre that inspires and challenges audience and artist alike to re-examine our lives, our community, and the ever-changing world around us.

More at [shotgunplayers.org](http://shotgunplayers.org).