



the cell Theatre Company Ltd.
338 W, 23rd street New York, NY 10011
Tax ID: 20-5899131

February 2, 2024

Nancy Manocherian's the cell theatre (Artistic Director, Kira Simring), founded in 2006, is a not-for-profit dedicated to the incubation and presentation of new works by emerging artists. We are thrilled to extend our efforts to artist-in-residence Matthew LaBanca for *Communion*, his solo show about a gay Catholic school teacher who is fired when the church discovers that he married a man.

Communion is based on Matthew's real-life story, whose controversial termination sparked a media frenzy, with stories in the NY Times, Daily News, 1010 WINS, Inside Edition, and more. An actor with multiple Broadway credits to his name, LaBanca states, "The most basic tenet of a spiritual life is that we are called to love one another. I wrote *Communion* as a response to the religious discrimination of LGBTQ+ people. We deserve to live and love fully, without condemnation by any faith that would indoctrinate us from childhood. Being spurned by your religion leaves scars that last a lifetime."

The cell produced a sold-out developmental production of *Communion* in September, 2023, which extended its run twice to keep up with audience demand. We are now seeking donations to produce a fully designed Off-Broadway production in 2024. The goals of this production of *Communion* are multiple:

- Foster greater awareness and healing of LGBTQ+ victims of religious discrimination
- Garner substantial press coverage
- Qualify for awards consideration
- Publish the piece with an established theatrical publisher
- Provide licensing opportunities for others to host their own productions
- Establish legitimacy for a touring production
- Conceive and shoot an on-set film for distribution on streaming platforms

Through the success of the initial production, we are proud to have begun our fundraising efforts for this project and have been slowly growing our list of dedicated patrons who are moved by this play. We need major donors in order to deliver the integrity and depth this story deserves. Through grants and private gifts, we hope to raise a minimum of \$30,000 by June 30, 2024. The cell will contribute over \$100,000 worth of space, administration, tech, directing, and publicity along with the venue.

The cell theatre is a 501(c)(3) non-profit and any donations made for this production are 100% tax deductible.

Thank you!

the cell

Nancy Manocherian Founding Artistic Director | **Kira Simring** Artistic Director
Brian Reager Associate Artistic Director | **Jonah Levy** General Manager
Julian Singer-Corbin Technical Director

Recent Press

"In *cryptochrome*, a New Way of Seeing" by Billy McEntee *The Brooklyn Rail*
"Matthew LaBanca's *Communion* Will Receive Developmental Premiere Off-Broadway at the cell" by Margaret Hall. *Playbill*
"Y2K Comedy for Fan Fiction Lovers *I'm Gonna Marry You Tobey Maguire* Opens Off-Broadway July 12" by Logan-Culwell-Block *Playbill*
"*I'm Gonna Marry You Tobey Maguire* takes a superstar hostage" by Tim Teeman *The Daily Beast*
"Calvin Hitchcock and Madeline Whitesell to Present *PROPHETS*" by David Salazar *OperaWire*