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“Heard the Word. Spoke in tongues. Kissed a boy.
This is the life of Matthew Francis.”



**MATTHEW FRANCIS' NEW PLAY, *THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW*,
GETS WORLD PREMIERE AT SOHO PLAYHOUSE AS PART OF FRINGENYC 2007**

**OBIE WINNER DAVID DRAKE DIRECTS THIS TOUCHING AND HILARIOUS SHOW
ABOUT COMING OUT, OPRAH, AND THE LOVE OF JESUS**

Constyabul Productions is proud to present *The Gospel According to Matthew*, written by and starring Matthew Francis, as part of the 11th annual New York International Fringe Festival (FringeNYC). Under the direction of David Drake, Francis' revelatory 90-minute show will play at off-Broadway's Soho Playhouse on the following dates:

Sunday, August 12 @ 2:15pm
Friday, August 17 @ 7:00pm
Sunday, August 19 @ 10:00pm
Monday, August 20 @ 3:00pm
Friday, August 24 @ 5:00pm

In *The Gospel According to Matthew*, Matthew gives his testimony and performs verbatim stories of sinners, teachers, and preachers. Sometimes cathartic, always provocative, this one-man play will inspire and transform the conversation between the Christian Fundamentalist and gay communities. Francis brings to life over 20 characters—from Fred Phelps, the founder of Godhatesfags.com, to Mel White, the former right-hand to Jerry Falwell who is now a gay activist.

Francis' show was developed over 12 years combining the interview, research and performance techniques of critically-acclaimed playwright and performer Anna Deavere Smith, as well as anecdotes from his own fascinating life story, which together create a truly unique and moving theatrical event about coming out, Oprah, and the love of Jesus. After receiving accolades for a workshop at Virginia Tech last year and subsequent readings at Manhattan Theatre Club and New York Theatre Workshop, Francis' play receives its world premiere at FringeNYC.

“My play, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, is both my story of sexual awakening from within Christian fundamentalism and my performance of interviews I have conducted over the last 12 years on both sides of the Christian/homosexual divide,” Francis says. “This is the first time that autobiographical story telling in the style of Spalding Gray has been combined with docudrama in the style of Anna Deavere Smith. I'm creating my very own genre of 'docu-Matthew-graphy!'”



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The New York International Fringe Festival – Fringe NYC runs from August 10 to August 26, 2007 and is a production of The Present Company. Tickets are \$15. For tickets visit www.FringeNYC.org or call (212) 279-4488 or 1-888-FringeNYC.

For more information on *The Gospel According to Matthew*, please visit www.matthewfrancis.net or myspace.com/thegospelaccordingtomatthew. Sound clips and video are available.

BIO FOR PLAYWRIGHT & PERFORMER MATTHEW FRANCIS

Matthew Francis' acting work includes: (at the American Repertory Theater and IATT) Cleomenes in *The Winter's Tale*, George in Scott Zigler's production of *All My Sons*, and Boodkin in Yuri Yeremin's *Ivanov*. Other credits include: the international tour of Julie Taymor's *The King Stag*, a leading role in *Holes Before Bedtime*, a rock musical, and involvement in the development of *Gone Missing* by The Civilians.

He is a graduate of Stanford University, where he developed a one-man show under the tutelage of Anna Deavere Smith entitled *She Just Stopped Breathing*, which concerns the loss of his mother at age 13. He was subsequently awarded a Golden Grant from Stanford to create a one-person docudrama about twins and Twinsburg, Ohio (he is an identical twin himself). For *House Arrest*, Ms. Smith's docudrama exploring the relationship between the press and the presidency, Mr. Francis traveled with Ms. Smith through the South to conduct interviews about black church burnings and with the Christian Right at the Republican National Convention and is featured in her books, *Talk to Me: Travels in Media and Politics* and *Letters to a Young Artist*. He was also Ms. Smith's first teaching apprentice at New York University.

He has worked and taught in theaters and institutions across the country including: Arena Stage, the A.D. Players, the American Repertory Theater, and the Institute for the Arts and Civic Dialogue at Harvard University. A classically trained singer, Mr. Francis studied at the Schola Cantorum in Paris, France. He also holds an M.F.A. in acting from the Institute for Advanced Theater Training at Harvard University/Moscow Art Theater School.

BIO FOR DIRECTOR DAVID DRAKE

David Drake is New York-based actor, writer and director. His most recent work as a director includes the solo shows of Sherie Rene Scott at the Zipper last spring and Taylor Mac in the 2007 Under-the-Radar Festival at the Public and at London's Soho Theatre. (The latter is now on an extensive international tour.) David's production of "2 Boys in a Bed on a Cold Winter's Night" is currently enjoying a summer run at the Lorraine Hansberry Theatre in San Francisco. Other directing projects includes developing Edmund White's "Terre Haute" at the Sundance Theater Lab, Anne Bobby's "That Woman: Rebecca West Remembers" at Manhattan Theatre Source, as well as staging new plays at NY's Theatre for the New City, Rattlestick Theatre, NY Fringe Festival, and regionally at Provincetown Rep, Baltimore Theatre Project and Out North Contemporary Art House in Anchorage.

On stage, David is most widely known as the playwright/performer of one of the longest-running solo shows in New York theater history, "The Night Larry Kramer Kissed Me," for which he won an Obie Award. His latest autobiographical monologue, "Son of Drakula," premiered at Dance Theater Workshop, where he was an artist-in-residence in 2002-03, and was praised by *The New York Times* as "A dazzling, inventive... terrific new one-man show" before making its European debut in Zagreb, Croatia. Among his numerous movie appearances (including his critically acclaimed work in the performance film of "Larry Kramer"), David co-stars in Roland Tec's upcoming feature "We Pedal Uphill."
