

MATT SAVAGE: BIOGRAPHY

Matt Savage's highly anticipated ninth album, ***Welcome Home***, celebrates his travels and the many places he calls "home." This is Matt's second album to be produced by Grammy-nominated Jonathan Wyner and engineered by nine time Grammy-winner Tom Bates, the same stellar team at the helm of the Matt Savage Trio's prior album, *Hot Ticket: Live in Boston* (2008). From the country to the city to concerts around the world, Matt continues his epic journey as an extraordinarily talented jazz composer, performer and pianist.

Composed and arranged entirely by Matt, ***Welcome Home*** features 13 new and original songs including the Manhattan-inspired first single, "Big Apple Blues," from the five-part song, "Big Apple Suite." It's no wonder Matt considers Manhattan a "second home," considering his landmark musical appearances in this city. At the age of 11, he debuted at the famed Blue Note (and was signed as an artist for Bösendorfer pianos). The following year, he appeared at Birdland with the legendary Clark Terry on trumpet, Jimmy Heath on sax, Jon Faddis on trumpet, Marcus McLaurine on bass and Kenny Washington on drums. In 2007, Matt made his first performance at the prestigious Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola at Jazz at Lincoln Center. The following year, Matt debuted "Big Apple Suite" at New York's Cachaça Jazz Club, earning praise from the *Wall Street Journal* as "a phenomenally talented pianist and composer who demands to be taken seriously on purely musical terms."

Matt returned to New York this summer to record ***Welcome Home*** at Systems Two Recording Studio in Brooklyn. "I could tell this was going to be a great-sounding recording right from the start," says Matt. "Not only is Systems Two a top studio, but I also got to play a specially restored Bösendorfer piano called the 'WunderKind.' This piano (which has 9 extra keys at the bottom and happens to be blue) is awesome. It's the best piano I've ever used for an album."

A stellar lineup of musicians joined Matt in the studio to record ***Welcome Home***. For the first time, a quintet is featured on the album, reuniting Matt with saxophone great Bobby Watson, with whom he performed seven years ago. In addition to Bobby Watson on alto sax, other quintet musicians include Jeremy Pelt on trumpet/flugelhorn, Joris Teepe on bass and Peter Retzlaff on drums. Several of Matt's new compositions appear as trio recordings with various configurations comprised of Joris Teepe and Peter Retzlaff as well as longtime bassist, John Funkhouser and drummer Yoron Israel.

Whether in the country (characterized by trio, duo and solo piano pieces) or in the city (all quintet pieces) each song on ***Welcome Home*** is unique and tells a story of its own. "The album is a musical journey through musicians as well as composition and tempo," says Matt. "It's also a journey from my country roots (with songs like 'On The Farm' and 'Seasons Change') to the energy of city life. It started with the composition of the track, 'Picturesque.' I live on an incredibly beautiful organic farm in New Hampshire, so the song became a sort of theme song for my family home. From there, I decided to write an entire album about the travels and destinations (such as New York) that became my 'homes away from home,' culminating with the biggest change in my life: my arrival at Berklee College of Music in Boston."

Presently a sophomore at Berklee College of Music, Matt used his college experience as inspiration for the title track as well as the song, "You Are Here." Matt manages to balance classes, studies and concert gigs while maintaining a GPA of 4.0 and achieving Dean's List status. The *Boston Globe* caught up with Matt last year and described just how well he is

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navigating college and career: “Savage demonstrates the power and fluidity of his maturing playing style as he launches into ‘Picturesque’ ... studious-looking but never stiff, he plays the piece in a lilting, expressive manner that lends its softer edges a big, impressive sound. After finishing Savage says what he loves most about jazz is its spontaneity, a quality embedded in every note he’s just played.”

Now 18, Matt has been connected with some of the biggest names in jazz since first labeled a “jazz prodigy” at age 8. That same year he met and played piano for Dave Brubeck (WGME-TV, Portland, Maine). In addition to the aforementioned legends, Matt has performed (on stage and in jam sessions) with Chick Corea, the Ellington All Stars, Chaka Khan, Wynton Marsalis, Jason Moran, Arturo O’Farrill, John Pizzarelli, Joshua Redman and The Bad Plus, just to name a few.

The last decade has also been filled with awards and countless moments in the media spotlight. Matt has received ASCAP’s Young Jazz Composers Award every year since 2005. Likewise, he has topped the International Songwriting Competition for the last five years.

Matt’s most recent appearances include *Late Night with Conan O’Brien*, Marian McPartland’s prestigious *Piano Jazz* series on NPR and *The Late Show with David Letterman*. Following his performance on *Letterman*, the Matt Savage Trio’s *Hot Ticket* live album hit #11 on the *JazzWeek* radio charts and garnered the #2 position in “Live Jazz” sales on Amazon.com (behind only Keith Jarrett).

JAZZIZ, *JazzTimes*, *All About Jazz* and other respected music publications have all praised Matt’s talent. *JAZZIZ* touts Matt as a “wildly inventive composer, interpreter and pianist no matter what his age.” NPR’s *Piano Jazz* concurs with Marian McPartland describing Matt as a “young man (who) plays with grace, energy and originality. Jazz savant indeed!”

It’s now hard to believe that a mere 6 years before taking the stage and wowing audiences at Birdland, Matt Savage did not play a musical instrument and could not tolerate listening to music. At the age of 3, he was diagnosed with Pervasive Developmental Disorder, a high-functioning type of autism. Matt could not withstand sounds of any kind and could not communicate easily. For the next 4 years, his parents immersed him in intensive early intervention therapies including a program for children with autism that involved patient training and a strict dietary/vitamin regime (The DAN Protocol). When Matt was 6 ½ he completed a special auditory integration therapy to retrain his ears and make them less sensitive to sound. This allowed him to retune both his sensory and social perceptions and his musical skills flourished at an accelerated pace. Matt taught himself to read and play piano music literally overnight. Following her son’s lead, Matt’s mother found him a proper piano teacher.

Matt studied for 3 years at the New England Conservatory and, in 2003, changed to private studies with jazz guru Charlie Banacos. Home schooled, Matt learned the language and art of music through recordings from masters of music of all genres, especially jazz and classical. He learned the history of the jazz greats through CD liner notes and jazz books. He intuitively understood theory, but Charlie Banacos filled in the pieces and became the most influential person in helping Matt master the advanced concepts of music. Matt had no other formal music education until he entered Berklee College of Music at 17. By this time, he had already written and recorded more than 70 songs.

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Matt recorded his first album in 1999 at the age of 7 ½. The album, entitled *One is Not Fun, but 20 is Plenty*, was a project to raise funds for autism research; however, it turned out to be the start of Matt's musical career. His early talent was recognized such that he immediately gained a fan base and was embraced by the media. In the next few years Matt's story would appear in numerous publications such as *People*, *Time* and *Wired*. Dozens of television appearances ensued including *The Today Show*, *The View* and *The Discovery Channel*.

Matt released his second CD (and first solo piano effort) titled *Live at the Olde Mill* in 2001. At age 9 he formed a trio with bassist John Funkhouser and drummer Steve Silverstein. Their first CD, entitled *All Jazzed Up*, was released in 2001 and was accompanied by appearances on *Lifetime Television* and ABC's *20/20*. The following year, National Public Radio (NPR)'s *All Things Considered* aired a detailed piece about Matt. The story became one of the most listened-to programs of the year, winning numerous broadcast and journalism awards.

Following a crowd-pleasing performance at the famed New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival, the Trio released their second CD, *Groovin' on Mount Everest*, in 2002. The Trio's 3rd CD, *Chasing Your Tail*, was released in May of 2003. It was around that same time that Matt first performed in concert with Bobby Watson in Kansas City. Matt Savage's Birdland debut in 2004 was marked by the release of the Trio's 4th album, *Cutting Loose*.

In July of 2006 the Matt Savage Trio released its acclaimed studio album, *Quantum Leap*, marking their first record to receive worldwide distribution via Palmetto Records (MRI/RED). The album reached the Top 25 on the *JazzWeek* charts and received airplay on Jazz stations throughout the country. *Quantum Leap* continued to gain popularity when it was added to Borders Books and Music Listening Stations nationwide throughout January/February of 2007.

Matt's musical momentum continues to flourish in leaps and bounds, combining styles and building and diversifying with each song. ***Welcome Home*** furthers the listener's experience, reflecting the cycles of country life and the day-to-night rhythms of a metropolitan city. "It's about changing homes incredibly quickly and still calling it home," says Matt. "It's about being suddenly bombarded with information and surrounded by people and then taking a break from that. It's about the fear of the inevitable ... and the thrill of promise. It's about returning home as much as it is about going away. And, more than anything, it's about enjoying every minute of it."

Jazz lovers will undoubtedly enjoy every minute of ***Welcome Home*** as Matt Savage revs up the pace of his creative evolution, captivating fans with his music and live performances and reflecting the synchronicity that emerges when exceptional music meets an exceptional musician.

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For more information please visit: www.savagerecords.com

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