

## MATT SAVAGE: BIOGRAPHY

Matt Savage, age 23, has had a fourteen-year professional career as a jazz musician, bandleader and composer with ensembles of different size. He's played 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. Matt has performed (on stage and in jam sessions) with artists such as Chick Corea, the Ellington All Stars, Chaka Khan, Wynton Marsalis, Bobby Watson, Clark Terry, Jimmy Heath, Jason Moran, Arturo O'Farrill, John Pizzarelli, Joshua Redman, Terri Lyne Carrington, Jon Faddis, Jerry Bergonzi, Donny McCaslin and the Aardvark Jazz Orchestra. He's even performed with folk musicians such as Al Stewart and Shawn Colvin, and he opened for Neil Young, Stephen Stills and others at an Autism Speaks benefit concert in Hollywood this April.

Savage has toured worldwide, performing at such venues as The Kennedy Center, Carnegie Hall, Birdland, the Blue Note, Bohemian Caverns, Dizzy's Club *Coca-Cola*, Scullers, the Jazz Standard, the Iridium, the Berklee BeanTown Jazz Festival, the Monterey Jazz Festival, Heineken Jazzaldia (Spain), the Costa Rica International Jazz Festival, the International VSA Arts Festival, the Jacksonville Jazz Festival, the Ottawa International Jazz Festival, the New Orleans Jazz Festival, Japan, Curacao, Aruba and for the president of Singapore.

Media appearances have included Marian McPartland's "Piano Jazz," NPR's "All Things Considered," "Late Night with Conan O'Brien," "The Late Show with David Letterman," the "Today" Show, ABC's "20/20," the Discovery Channel, BBC, Telemundo TV, and news shows and documentaries worldwide (including the U.S., Germany, France, Japan and the U.K.) *The Wall Street Journal*, *JazzTimes*, *JAZZIZ*, *TIME*, *WIRED*, *Der Spiegel*, *The Jerusalem Report*, *People Magazine*, *TIME for Kids*, *American Way*, *The Globe and Mail*, *the Toronto Star*, *The Boston Globe*, the *New York Daily News*, and others have featured Matt in print.

As a composer, Matt has had great success. 2014 saw the release of a full-length documentary film scored by Matt, ***Sound of Redemption: The Frank Morgan Story***. The movie, directed by N.C. Heikin, chronicles the story of alto saxophonist Frank Morgan's troubled life and eventual redemption. Matt composed, arranged and recorded all the original music. The film was premiered at the 20<sup>th</sup> Los Angeles Film Festival on June 14, 2014. In September of 2014, Matt premiered two classical pieces *Piano Sonata No. 1* and *24 Preludes* at Caffe Vivaldi in New York. Almost all the songs on Matt's eleven albums are original compositions, several of which have been used in short documentaries, on web sites, in school music curricula and in government educational materials. Savage consistently garners recognition through ASCAP **Young Jazz Composer Awards** and tops the **International Songwriting Competition**. He scores music for ensembles of all size and instrumentation, including big band.

Matt Savage's tenth album, ***A Bigger Celebration***, was released on September 17, 2013. The studio album features Jerry Bergonzi on tenor saxophone, Bruce Gertz on bass, Richie Barshay on drums and Mark Zaleski on alto/soprano saxophone. It quickly earned a "Most Added" status from ***JazzWeek*** after its release. Ten-time Grammy-winner Tom Bates and Latin Grammy-nominated John Weston engineered the disc; Grammy-nominated Jonathan Wyner produced, mixed and mastered the work. The album captures the joy of being alive through upbeat, multicultural, surprising and diverse compositions. ***A Live Celebration: Kobe, Japan***, Matt's eleventh album, is a companion release to *A Bigger Celebration*. Released in January 2014, the live trio album features several new compositions alongside audience favorites from Matt's previous two studio albums. Recorded during Matt's first tour of Japan, it features Shota Ishikawa on bass and Tatsuhiko Takeda on drums. Both of these albums are available on Matt's website, Amazon, CDBaby and iTunes; the CD version of *A Live Celebration* is limited to 500 copies worldwide.

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Matt traveled at an astonishing pace from life on a farm to professional composer and musician and THEN experiencing college life and learning; a unique chronology for any musician. Matt debuted at the famed **Blue Note** (and was signed as an artist for **Bösendorfer** pianos) at the age of eleven. 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 played his first gig at the prestigious **Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola** at Jazz at Lincoln Center; the following year, Matt debuted in his then-new composition "Big Apple Suite," 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's ninth album, **Welcome Home** (2010), received critical acclaim upon its release. *All About Jazz* said "...this is Savage's album all the way, as he not only plays with a maturity well beyond his years but wrote and arranged every number..." *CADENCE Magazine* praised "...hints of Aaron Copland and Pat Metheny done in a piano trio setting that shows how hard-swinging a player Savage is." *Welcome Home* was a quintet collaboration with Bobby Watson on alto saxophone, Jeremy Pelt on trumpet, Joris Teepe on bass and Peter Retzlaff on drums; it also contained various trio configurations with John Funkhouser on bass and Yoron Israel on drums. The album reached #18 on the **JazzWeek** radio charts, #9 on Roots Music Report and #3 on CMJ.

The past decade has been filled with awards and countless moments in the media spotlight. As a composer, Matt's media appearances have included **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 in Boston* 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 difficult to imagine, but 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 sounds in general. At the age of three, Matt was diagnosed with Pervasive Developmental Disorder, a high-functioning type of autism. For the next four years, his parents immersed him in intensive intervention therapies. At age 6 ½, Matt completed auditory integration therapy, which drastically reduced his sensitivity to sound. With re-tuned sensory and social perceptions, Matt immersed himself in all things musical. His abilities flourished at a hyper-accelerated pace. Matt taught himself to read music and play piano literally overnight, although he immediately sought a teacher.

After a year of classical piano studies, Matt found himself drawn to the spontaneity of jazz. The next three years were spent at the **New England Conservatory** in Boston. In 2002, Matt's family moved to New Hampshire, where Matt lost access to formal instruction. For a year and a half, Matt self-taught; he pored through volumes of classical music and spent hours practicing with play-along jazz CDs. 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 jazz greats through CD liner notes and books. He intuitively absorbed and understood the theory of music. In late 2003, Matt became a private

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student with jazz guru Charlie Banacos. Charlie became one of the most influential people in Matt's world, teaching advanced concepts in music as well as life lessons. Matt studied with Charlie until 2009, the year Matt entered Berklee. At the age of seventeen, Matt had already written and recorded more than 70 songs.

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 music 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 the age of nine, Matt started a trio. This first iteration of the Matt Savage Trio included adult 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. Matt was invited to perform at NPR's "Jazz Piano Christmas" event at the **Kennedy Center**, alongside The Bad Plus (Ethan Iverson, Reid Anderson, Dave King), Arturo O'Farrill, Jason Moran, Stefon Harris, Karrin Allyson and Lynne Arriale.

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 3<sup>rd</sup> CD, *Chasing Your Tail*, was released in May of 2003. It was around that same time that Matt performed for the first time in concert with **Bobby Watson** in Kansas City. Matt Savage's **Birdland** debut in 2004 was marked by the release of the Trio's 4<sup>th</sup> 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. *Hot Ticket: Live in Boston* followed this success. *Hot Ticket* was Matt's first recording with different sidemen, Dave Robaire on bass and Joe Saylor on drums. It was released in 2008 and has been Matt's most successful live album to date. *Hot Ticket* captured a special moment in time; "Jazz prodigy makes 'Leap' to maturity," stated the *Boston Herald*. The recording revealed the on-going evolution of an exceptional artist, who continues to have vision and technique beyond his years as a composer and musician. It also garnered Matt appearances on late night television. Two years later, *Welcome Home* furthered Matt's experimentation, reflecting the cycles of country life and the day-to-night rhythms of a metropolitan city through trio, quartet and quintet combinations. With Bobby Watson, Jeremy Pelt, Joris Teepe, Peter Retzlaff, John Funkhouser and Yoron Israel on board, exploration of composition took center stage. It became the transition album for Matt in every way. Composed and recorded while Matt was in college, the album reflected Matt's rapidly changing world and musical knowledge.

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*A Bigger Celebration* was a musical representation of becoming a young adult, with its release not long after Matt's 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. Says Matt, "It's the kind of jazz album you can play in the car on the way to a party, with the volume turned up and the windows down."

A graduate of Manhattan School of Music and Berklee College of Music, Matt teaches at Applied Behavioral Learning Services, a school near Boston for children with autism and other developmental disabilities. He gives masterclasses and workshops domestically and internationally (in English and Spanish) as well as private piano lessons.

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