MATT SAVAGE: BIOGRAPHY

Matt Savage, age 24, has had a remarkable fifteen-year professional career as a jazz musician, bandleader and composer, performing with ensembles of different size and as a solo pianist. He’s played with some of the biggest names in jazz since first labeled a “jazz prodigy” at age 8 – the 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. Matt’s encounters with these jazz greats have always resulted in praise. Saxophonist Bobby Watson said it well after he first performed with Matt (age 11) in Kansas City. “It’s not so much that he was a virtuoso; he had chops, but he also had direction and he had language. Where did that come from? . . . I knew it wasn’t a pretend thing, that he was the real thing and he’d be in music for the rest of his life.”

Along the way, Matt’s talent has taken him beyond the jazz world. In 2015 alone, he performed with Stephen Stills, Neil Young and Shawn Colvin at a benefit concert at the Pantages Theatre in Hollywood. He ended that year performing with Steve Earle and Jackson Browne in New York City.

Savage was just 11 when he debuted at New York City’s famed Blue Note. The following year he debuted at Birdland. Since then, Matt has toured worldwide, performing at such additional venues as The Kennedy Center, Carnegie Hall, Bohemian Caverns, The Town Hall, Dizzy’s Club Coca-Cola, Scullers, the Jazz Standard, Smalls Jazz Club, 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, the Earshot Jazz Festival, Japan, Curacao, Aruba and for the president of Singapore. As of 2016, Matt has performed at popular venues throughout North America, with locations ranging from Los Angeles, Albuquerque, and Vancouver to Canada’s Yukon, where he recently did a major interview with CBC Radio, Canada’s national public radio broadcaster.

As a composer, Savage has had great success. In 2014, Matt scored, arranged and recorded the music for a full-length documentary film entitled Sound of Redemption: The Frank Morgan Story. The movie chronicles the story of the late alto saxophonist Frank Morgan’s troubled life and eventual redemption. In addition to jazz, Matt writes and performs classical music. In 2014, he premiered in New York his own Piano Sonata No. 1 and 24 Preludes. Almost all the songs on Matt’s 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, ASCAP Plus Awards and the International Songwriting Competition. He scores music for ensembles of all size and instrumentation, including big band.

Matt’s twelfth and newest recording project is a solo piano album, Matt Savage: Piano Voyages, which was released on October 14, 2016. Matt describes the album as a reflection on maturity. “This collection of tunes is about the first trip that one must take in a new chapter of life,” says Matt. “And it’s a solo album, as many of these journeys are individual.” The album is primarily original compositions, with a few cover songs including Herbie Hancock’s jazz standard, “Maiden Voyage.”

Most of Matt’s 2016 performances have been solo piano, in coordination with the release of Piano Voyages. The CD release tour included dates on both the East and West Coasts. The festivities began with a hometown performance on October 19 at the Regattabar in Cambridge, MA- one of the Boston area’s finest jazz clubs. Two guest saxophonists (Erena Terakubo and Mark Zaleski) were also featured during the tour.

Matt has eleven previous albums to his name. A Bigger Celebration, Matt’s tenth album (2013) and A Live Celebration: Kobe, Japan, his eleventh album (2014) are companion releases. A studio album, A Bigger Celebration features Jerry Bergonzi on tenor saxophone, Bruce Gertz on bass, Richie Barshay on drums and Mark Zaleski on alto/soprano saxophone. Ten-time Grammy-winner Tom Bates and Grammy winning John Weston engineered the disc; Grammy-nominated Jonathan Wyner produced, mixed and mastered the work. A Live Celebration: Kobe, Japan is a trio album, featuring 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. It’s My Request: Live at Bar Request (January 2016) is another project with bassist Shota Ishikawa, this time under Shota’s direction and recorded by Ishikawa and Savage in Kobe, Japan. The album is predominantly jazz standards, evoking the compact and “classic” feel of 1950s and ’60s albums from artists such as Bill Evans.

Welcome Home (2010), Savage’s ninth album, received critical acclaim upon its release. This CD 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. 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.

Leading up to Welcome Home were two albums of note: Quantum Leap (2006) and Hot Ticket: Live in Boston (2008). An acclaimed studio album, Quantum Leap, marked the Matt Savage Trio’s 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. Hot Ticket: Live in Boston followed this success and has been Matt’s most successful live album to date. His first recording with different sidemen, Dave Robaire on bass and Joe Saylor on drums, Hot Ticket captured a special moment in time, "Jazz prodigy makes 'Leap' to maturity," stated the Boston Herald. The recording revealed the ongoing evolution of an exceptional artist, who continues to have vision and technique beyond his years as a composer and musician.

Matt has traveled at an astonishing pace from life on a farm to professional composer and musician. His early years brought a unique set of challenges. At the age of three, Matt could not tolerate music or sounds in general, resulting in a diagnosis of Pervasive Development 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 emerged from therapy and completely involved himself in all things musical. Flourishing at a hyper-accelerated pace, he taught himself to read music and play piano, literally overnight.

From his emergence as a child prodigy to his continuance as a mature and respected artist, Matt has been the focus of media attention. He has appeared/performed on 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) Numerous print outlets have featured stories on Matt and reviews of his music and performances including 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 and the New York Daily News.

Piano Voyages is a timely album for Matt Savage, who graduated from Berklee College of Music and earned his Master’s from Manhattan School of Music. As his journey continues, Matt enjoys the creative evolution of his professional music career and the opportunity to perform in as many locations as possible. Back in the Boston area, Matt teaches at Community Music Center of Boston, Note-worthy Experiences, and Applied Behavioral Learning Services (an organization for children and adults with autism and other developmental disabilities). He also gives masterclasses and workshops domestically and internationally (in English and Spanish) as well as private piano lessons. Matt’s downtime may be infrequent, but when he is not touring or teaching, he might be found at his family’s cabin in Maine – a perfect backdrop for relaxation, rejuvenation and the inspiration to write an occasional song.

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For more information, please visit: www.savagerecords.com

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