

boards; Jerry Bergonzi, tenor saxophone; Bruce Gertz, bass; Richie Barshay, drums; Mark Zaleski, alto and soprano saxophone.

By Eric Harabadian

It's hard to believe that it's the tenth album, already, for young musical phenom Matt Savage! At 21 years old he breaks out here with a record that encapsulates personal life experience and a celebration of his place in the world and the sharing of his joy of music with others. This project is a coming-of-age statement for the young leader. It was recorded after a year of intense study and touring that culminated in graduation from Boston's esteemed Berklee School of Music.

The overall sentiment here is upbeat as Savage blends a dazzling array of styles and colors to reflect that. The title track ushers in a swinging celebration in every sense. There is outstanding interplay from the ensemble from the get go. Savage quickly establishes his flair for simple and effective melodies that register with the listener right away. "A Fast Car in Summer (Part 1)" begins a three part song cycle, with a light pop head that vividly displays one tooling down an open road. Jerry Bergonzi blows bright and bold staccato notes that deftly fall in line with Savage's strong electric piano backbeat. Bruce Gertz and Richie Barshay's swinging rock groove add to the tune's energy and drive. "Part 2" is a slow contrast, with more emphasis on grace and mid-tempo shifts. Savage glides effortlessly over his Bosendorfer grand and pro-



## Matt Savage

**A BIGGER CELEBRATION**—Savage Records SAV0010. *A Bigger Celebration; A Fast Car in Summer (Part 1); A Fast Car in Summer (Part 2); A Fast Car in Summer (Part 3); Some Beach Somewhere; The Dream of the East; Power Pop; 12:03 AM; Howler Monkey (Daylight/Siesta/Barrel of Monkeys); Power Pop (Acoustic).*

**PERSONNEL:** Matt Savage, piano and key-

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vides ample space for developing ideas. Again, Bergonzi plays a key role here, with mighty tone to spare. "Part 3" is even slower and stark; the concept of less is more figures prominently on this track. But it picks up the pace toward the tail end and redefines the songs cycle's original theme. Continuing with the album concept of fun and celebration the tune "Some Beach Somewhere" seems apropos. This has kind of a Chick Corea vibe, with its cross rhythms and melodies leaning toward classical harmonies and a Latin mood. Mark Zaleski makes an appearance here and complements Savage's work with his breath control and dynamic abilities. "Dream of the East" seems to be a tribute to Savage's touring of Asia. The exotic motifs and delicate rhythms are spot on. The piece has a slow arc that smolders, with subtle intensity. That is further fueled by Bergonzi's robust channeling of Joe Henderson and John Coltrane. The band pays special attention here to offering empathic support. "Power Pop" kind of comes across as the title suggests; heavy on rock rhythms but still tempered by swing. Again, Savage's penchant for memorable hooks abound as he employs a Jeff Lorber/Bob James electric piano approach to the tune's mid-section. "12:03 AM" is a brief respite from some of the previous fare, with a softer and tranquil acoustic piano piece. "Howler Monkey (Daylight/Siesta/Barrel of Monkeys)" is another three part suite, of sorts. It goes from Savage's initial folk-type melodies to Zaleski's soprano sax explorations, ending on a somber and contemplative note. "Power Pop (Acoustic)" is a reprise that concludes the album, with the spotlight on its leader. Savage seems to take on a Keith Jarrett persona as the record winds down to soft and delicate variations on a theme; That theme being a celebration of the simple pleasures of life.

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