



MATTHEW WHITAKER

BIOGRAPHY

"Matthew Whitaker is music. To see and hear him play is to know that divine talent exists. Beyond his innate musical abilities is a sheer joy and passion to create music."

• *Monifa Brown, WBGO*

Born in 2001 in Hackensack, NJ, Matthew Whitaker grew up surrounded by music. His love for playing music first began at the young age of 3, after his grandfather gave him a small Yamaha keyboard.

At 9, Matthew began teaching himself how to play the Hammond B3 organ. Four years later, he became the youngest artist to be endorsed by Hammond in its 80+ year history. He was also named a Yamaha Artist at 15, becoming the youngest musician to join the stellar group of jazz pianists.

Matthew has had years of music instruction, currently studying classical piano and drums at The Filomen M. D'Agostino Greenberg Music School in NYC. It is the only community music school for the blind and visually impaired in the US. He also attended the Manhattan School of Music's Precollege Jazz Program.

He previously studied at The Harlem School of the Arts and was a member of both the Jazz House Big Band and the Organ Messengers at Jazz House Kids in Montclair, NJ.

Matthew has received the "Outstanding Soloist Award" from Jazz at Lincoln Center's Charles Mingus High School Competition & Festival and the Essentially Ellington High School Jazz Band Competition & Festival. He was also recognized by the Harlem International Film Festival, which named him "Most Remarkable Young Person on Screen."

He's already toured both here in the US and abroad, performing before The Youth Assembly at the United Nations headquarters in NYC, and on other world renowned stages, including: Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, the Apollo Theater, Carnegie Hall, and Jazz at Lincoln Center in NYC; SFJAZZ Center in San Francisco; the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC; The Raymond F. Kravis Center for the Performing Arts, Monterey Jazz Festival, Newport Jazz Festival and at international venues in France, Italy, Germany, Indonesia, UK, Australia, Switzerland, Portugal, Japan, Spain and Morocco.

Matthew has performed with an array of outstanding musicians: Ray Chew, Christian McBride, Dr. Lonnie Smith, Rhoda Scott, Cameron Carpenter, Regina Carter, Jason Moran, Jon Batiste, Cory Henry, Marc Cary, Arturo O'Farrill, James Carter, Roy Ayers, D.D. Jackson, The New York Pops Orchestra and with Hamiet Bluiett and his Bio-

Electric Ensemble.

In 2010, Matthew was a winning participant in the “Child Stars of Tomorrow” competition, as part of Amateur Night at the Apollo. A year later, at just 10 years old, he was invited to perform at Stevie Wonder’s induction into the Apollo Theater’s Hall of Fame. He returned to the Apollo for FOX TV’s revival of SHOWTIME AT THE APOLLO in 2016, where he won the audience over with his rendition of Stevie Wonder’s classic “I Wish.” Matthew has been on national and international radio and television, which includes the TODAY SHOW documentary series “Boys Changing The World,” Harry Connick Jr Show and an appearance on the syndicated TV talk show ELLEN!

Having composed several original compositions, Matthew names a list of stellar musicians, composers/arrangers as his artistic influences including: organists Dr. Lonnie Smith, Jimmy Smith, Jimmy McGriff, Rhoda Scott; pianists Stevie Wonder, Oscar Peterson, Art Tatum, Ahmad Jamal, Thelonious Monk, Bud Powell, Chick Corea, Jon Batiste, Cory Henry, Marc Cary, Jason Moran, D.D. Jackson, Chopin, Bach; and drummers Roy Haynes, T.S. Monk, Herlin Riley, Otis Brown III, Otis Brown Jr, and Johnathan Blake.

In 2017, he was named 1 of the 17 people to watch in New Jersey by The Record, one of New Jersey’s largest newspapers and add to Crain’s Business New York breakout list of 20 under 20 as a performing artist.

In 2018 The Root added Matthew to its list of 1 of 25 Young Futurist Leaders and was named as 1 of 7 rising stars for 2018 by USA Today network’s 201 Magazine. Receipt of The Harlem Stage Emerging Artist Award.

2019, The Herb Alpert Young Jazz Composers Award winner for his original song ‘Emotions!’

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