

WHO'S NEXT



Andrew Zahra

MATT WHITE

HOMETOWN: New York City
INFLUENCES: Elton John, Led Zeppelin, Bruce Springsteen
ALBUM: *It's the Good Crazy*, out now
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ON HIS 2007 DEBUT ALBUM, *BEST DAYS*, MATT WHITE built his sound around piano and guitar equally. On the follow-up, it's all about the ivories. "This is really my first record," he says. "*Best Days* was essentially chasing a time, and I experimented with a lot of nuances, like playing the guitar on half the record. But playing the piano has always been my one true love. My parents constantly took me to concerts, including the Rolling Stones, Bruce Springsteen and Elton John, and it was those outings that gave me the itch to start playing piano."

It's the Good Crazy was recorded in a Woodstock, N.Y., church with producers David Baron and Henry Hirsch (Lenny Kravitz), recording direct to analog tape. "All of the albums I love were done that way," White explains. "With tape, there's a depth in the sound wave that you can't capture digitally. There were no computers,

no Pro Tools and no room for error. If I screwed up, it's on there." His commitment to going digital-free was encouraged by Hirsch in particular. "We were in that church, and Henry really got in my head and helped me evolve," says Matt. "He said, 'If you can deliver on a performance level, something happens when you play a song live and it's recorded onto a tangible piece of equipment. There's nothing like it.'"

The album title is apropos for an artist who is the son of a psychiatrist, and whose song "Therapy" draws on his own experiences in psychoanalysis. "I connect with the Larry Davids of the world," says White, who will be touring the U.S. through December. "I love the *Annie Hall* approach. I like things that are not perfect. I like art made from instinct. I'm definitely crazy—I'm up until 6 in the morning obsessing over everything. But I think I'm the good crazy."