

## September 2008

*Anything Phonographic* – (In *The Groove* magazine)

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**An “oddball” DVD on “the greatest jazz pianist ever”** – Last month I covered a unique CD reissue recording by piano legend Art Tatum and I received some nice comments. Ironically, the day after I submitted that column a new DVD on Tatum arrived. Distributed by Music Video Distributors, which has an eclectic catalog, this was produced by a company called Screen Edge, whose videos cover Reggae music. In fact, the cover places it in their “Reggae Nashville” series! Despite this weird marketing the 52-minute film is quite good and worth seeking out. It’s actually the only documentary on Tatum. There is no date of production to be found on the package or the final credits but it certainly is from before 1995 since Les Paul – who is interviewed at Fat Tuesdays – ended his 11-year stint there in that year. Tatum is often compared with his contemporary, Fats Waller, as their stride piano playing was similar. Waller’s son, Maurice, is interviewed as well as bassist Milt Hinton and pianist Dick Hyman. There’s some grainy film of Tatum performing but even more time devoted to still photos of him, while recordings play in the background. Tatum dies at the young age of 46 in 1956 but this film captures his life the best, at least until someone takes the time to make another documentary on him.