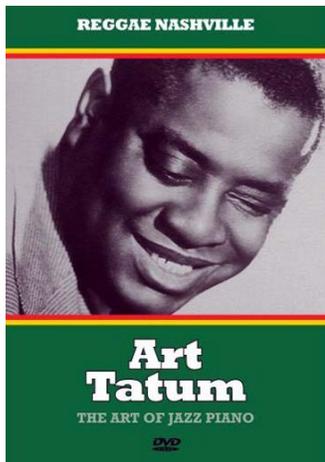


DVDs



ART TATUM The Art of Jazz Piano SCREEN EDGE DVD

The documentary, "The Art of Jazz Piano" opens with Art Tatum's recording of "St. Louis Blues" in the background as Les Paul recollected meeting Tatum in Chicago at the early 1930s. Paul was working at a radio station as well as played piano with Jackie Gleason when a friend brought him a record by Tatum.

After hearing Tatum for the first time, Paul recalls that he could not play piano anymore and turned to the guitar. It was not simply Paul, but also pianists everywhere who were in awe of Tatum. Fats Waller's son recalled the mutual admiration that his dad and Tatum had for each other and reflected by Waller's famous quote when Tatum entered a club Waller was playing at, "God is in the House."

The DVD offers the few video clips existing of Tatum (one with the Dorsey Brothers) along with photographs of Tatum, vinyl album covers and video interview clips of those who knew him, including Paul, his brother Hank Tatum, Hank Jones, Milt Hinton, Maurice Waller and Eddie Barefield. There are also clips with those who admired him, such as Dick Hyman, who, like Jones, is seen playing some music to illustrate various musical points and elements of Tatum's style, along with portions of such celebrated recordings by him as "Tiger Rag," "Ain't Misbehavin'," "Sweet Lorraine," "I Got Rhythm," and "Rosetta."

This documentary traces his life as well as the evolution of his music from early influences like Fats Waller and Earl Hines as he emerged in Toledo. His break came when he accompanied vocalist Adelaide Hall, and the jazz world was awakened to his singular talent with his unpredictable rhythmic sense, dazzling musical embellishments and amazing harmonic originality.

As Maurice Waller noted, Tatum could play a song for 30 to 45 minutes with fresh open improvisations without repeating himself. Paul Machlin observed that his greatness was, in part, in creating "improvisations that were limitless in their inventiveness." And not only were

his contemporaries astonished and humbled by him, but the admiration extended to many 'serious' pianists as this video makes clear.

At over 50 minutes, this a marvelous tribute to one of the most brilliant musicians jazz has known. The production credits are very sparse. I would speculate this was likely a show on an educational or public television station from the late seventies or early eighties based on the use of grainy photos and old vinyl album covers from that period in time that are used to help illustrate this film, and there does not seem to have been any great effort made of digitally restoring the original film. Still this is a fascinating look back of one of the 20th Century's truly compelling musical artists. **Ron Weinstock**

Aluminum Guitar Hits Market, Captures NAMM's Best of Show

SALEM ORE – An Oregon-based guitar company has hit the market with the world's first production aluminum archtop guitar. Introduced in July in Nashville, Normandy Guitars instantly gained international acclaim and captured best of show honors at NAMM, the largest music trade show in the world.

Much like the transition from wood to metal in the tennis industry, the buzz in the music industry is that this could be the advent of a new era in the guitar market. "Our response at this show was phenomenal," said Jim Normandy, CEO of Normandy Guitars. "The guitar's distinctive craftsmanship and design gained recognition from artists, manufacturers and media. The world does not need another Stratocaster copy," said Normandy.

Maximum News presented the "Best of Show" honors for Summer NAMM 2008, where they recognized the ATG-SB Aluminum-Body Guitar by Normandy Guitars as one of the hottest products at the show, "...seek out what you want and hold on to your strap when you hear the monster tone of Normandy Guitars," they say. "Turn heads with your sound, but cause whiplash with a Normandy."

The Normandy guitar is made out of specially selected aluminum, resulting in sustain qualities that are better and have been touted as far superior to the traditional wooden-bodied guitars. "The purity and length of time a single, plucked note can ring out clean and true are far superior... this is important to guitar players, especially those who play lead guitar," says Normandy. "A headlining act at one of the NAMM after-show concerts loved our guitar. They played the Normandy throughout their entire performance!"

The guitar features a body with classic archtop curves, a vintage Bigsby-vibrato tailpiece and distinctive rivets on the front and back. The Normandy guitar is available in nine colors and three different finishes: chrome, several powder-coated colors and Candy Apple Metal Flake finishes. The chrome finish is triple electroplated. In that process, the body is initially buffed, electrically charged in a hot bath with Zincate, then dipped in copper, covered with nickel and completed with a flashy chrome finish.

For more information on Normandy Guitars, visit www.normandyguitars.com.