

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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TOLEDO SON: THE LIFE AND MUSIC OF ART TATUM
A Centennial Tribute from WGTE Public Media
Saturdays at 8:00 p.m. in October on WGTE FM 91

Toledo, OH – WGTE Public Media celebrates the 100th birthday anniversary of Jazz icon and Toledo native Art Tatum in October 2009, with a series of special programs on WGTE FM 91. Hosted by Portraits in Swing's Larry Wagner and produced by FM 91 Program Director Tom Paine, TOLEDO SON: THE LIFE AND MUSIC OF ART TATUM follows the legendary pianist from his early appearances in Toledo clubs and on radio (where he was billed as “Arthur Tatum, Toledo's Blind Pianist”), through the height of his popularity (including rare audio from his appearances on The Tonight Show with Steve Allen during the early 1950s). The series culminates with a survey of Tatum's prolific musical legacy, including his final recordings from 1956—made less than a month before Tatum's premature death from kidney failure at age 47.

About Art Tatum

Born in Toledo, Ohio, October 13, 1909, Art Tatum overcame the infirmity of near-blindness to become one of the great Jazz pianists of all time. Tatum began playing in Toledo-area clubs at age 19, and soon developed a following that included luminaries like Duke Ellington and Louis Armstrong, both of whom would stop in to hear Tatum play while touring through the area. Tatum rose to national fame in the early 1930s, playing clubs in New York and making his first commercial recordings. With his highly-original improvisational style and lightning-fast piano technique, Tatum helped move Jazz into the modern era, influencing musicians from Charlie Parker and Thelonius Monk to George Gershwin and Sergei Rachmaninoff. Although Tatum's stature in the world of Jazz is undisputed, there exists only one published full-length biography of the pianist, and very little in the way of archival media until the last few years. For Toledo Son, WGTE draws on a large number of Tatum recordings which have been recently re-issued by the Denmark-based label Storyville Records, including a large number of live recordings from both his radio and television appearances.

SERIES SCHEDULE:

- October 3: “The Early Years: Radio, and the Clubs”
- October 10: “Coast to Coast Sessions: Los Angeles, Toronto, Washington, and New York in the Forties and Fifties”
- October 17: “Art Tatum Remembered on NPR's Jazz Profiles”
- October 24: “Jamming on the Tonight Show with Steve Allen”
- October 31: “The Legacy: His Last Recordings from October 1956”

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WGTE Public Media (The Public Broadcasting Foundation of Northwest Ohio) is a non-profit organization providing quality broadcasting and educational resources to Northwest and West Central Ohio and Southeast Michigan for 55 years. WGTE Public Media operates WGTE TV, Toledo; WGTE FM 91.3, Toledo; WGLE FM 90.7, Lima; WGBE FM 90.9, Bryan; WGDE FM 91.9, Defiance; wgte.org; The Educational Resource Center; and The Early Learning and Outreach Center.