

Anything Phonographic – (In The Groove magazine)

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It's All American "Folk Music" – Two newly released DVDs should be in the collections of all those interested in American folk music. One is new, while the other is a reissue, which is still worth your consideration. ***Bill Monroe: The Father of Bluegrass Music*** (MVD visual) is a documentary on the well-known mandolin player produced in 1993 and previously available only on VHS. Filmmaker Steve Gebhardt spent three years filming Monroe and his Blue Grass Boys as they toured around the country. He also filmed some great interviews done with the late John Hartford as well as the late Jerry Garcia. Monroe started out in the 20s as a buck dancer (and he is shown dancing in his 80s!). He and his brother Charlie made some recordings for the Bluebird label in 1930 but went their separate ways in 1938. Monroe's band produced such important musicians as Flatt & Scruggs, Del McCoury and Chubby Wise. There are lots of full performances included along with one "bonus song". The quality of the image varies greatly based on the source material. Some are in soft focus while the interview with Monroe disciple Ricky Skaggs is very grainy. Still, it's a well-designed film and is recommended.