



Various Chicago Blues Wailers

Blues And The Alligator: The First 20 Years of Alligator Records DVD

Gazell Film

www.gazell.net

By George W. Harris

Still the only label completely dedicated to blues, Alligator Records has been the love and passion of founder Bruce Iglauer since he signed his first slide guitarist back in 1971. This fun and sweaty 52 minute documentary goes through the history of the shoestring-budgeted label, which includes vintage performances by Sonny Boy Williamson and Hound Dog Taylor, as well as contemporary gigs (and the Star Spangled Banner!) by Chicago artists Koko Taylor and Lonnie Brooks.

The background material, as well as the social implications of the Chicago blues is a fascinating study, particularly when the documentary considers that the very environment that brews the music is ultimately the reason that the artists leave the area to go move into "better" neighborhoods, thereby changing the actual music sound and feel. The small club settings which have some of the local artists perform is smoky, sweaty and priceless. A great insight into true American music.