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Chicago's WTTW to Air Alligator Record's Sweet Home Chicago Anniversary Tribute

Concert Filmed at Governors State University Center for
Performing Arts



Chicago PBS station WTTW recently broadcast "Sweet Home Chicago—Celebrating 50 Years of Alligator Records," as part of the 25th anniversary celebration for Governors State University's Center for Performing Arts (the Center). The concert features roof-raising performances from label stars Billy Branch and the Sons of Blues, Grammy-nominated vocalist Shemekia Copeland, slide guitarist Lil' Ed Williams, and guitarist and songwriter Toronzo Cannon. Alligator Records president Bruce Iglauer appears as emcee.

Filed live in March before an empty 1,171 seat-house, Sweet Home was captured by GSU's award-winning Digital Learning and Media Design Department (DLMD). Production Coordinator Uriah Berryhill served as the director and GSU students Zhamarr Thompkins, Tiyen Simmons, and Jamin Sims operated cameras under the supervision of Program Director Joshua Young and Berryhill.

The seed of the concert sprouted pre-COVID when Center for Performing Arts' Director Lana Rogachevskaya and Alligator Records' Iglauer explored avenues to celebrate their upcoming institutional birthdays and share their passion for the blues with a larger Chicago community.

Rogachevskaya says, "Blues is a feeling. A musical genre with origins in American slavery and Jim Crow, its continued popularity is in its universal appeal. Communally held and lived through, blues uplifts, nourishes, and sustains the human soul. Sweet Home Chicago Blues participants will feel the healing power of blues sounds and stories while being together."



Alligator

Records, founded in 1971 by Iglauer, is home to some of the world's foremost blues and roots rock talent and is regarded by fans and the media alike as the top contemporary blues record label in the world. On June 18, 2021, Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot declared "Alligator Records Day" throughout the city via official proclamation. This is the same day Alligator Records--50 Years Of Genuine Houserockin' Music (a 2-LP or 3-CD set) was released.

Rolling Stone says, “Prestigious, scrappy independent blues label Alligator Records has reached dizzying heights in celebrating the blues.” From classic Windy City artists like Hound Dog Taylor and “Queen Of The Blues” Koko Taylor, to next generation legends Lil’ Ed Williams and Billy Branch to contemporary stars including Toronzo Cannon and Shemekia Copeland, Alligator’s discography reads like a who’s who in modern blues history. Legendary artists including Lonnie Brooks, Luther Allison, Johnny Winter, Albert Collins, James Cotton, Rick Estrin, Elvin Bishop, Charlie Musselwhite, Michael “Iron Man” Burks, The Holmes Brothers, Mavis Staples, Marcia Ball and rising stars Selwyn Birchwood and Christone “Kingfish” Ingram are just some of the blues immortals who have recorded groundbreaking music for the label. Now, at 50 years old, Alligator is still committed to discovering great new talent, proving that the passion, soul and redemptive power of blues and roots music is alive and well.

Throughout its 25-year history, the Center’s stage has hosted many blues artists such as Buddy Guy, B.B. King, Eddie Clearwater, Jimmy Burn, Eddie Shaw, Zora Young, Demetria Taylor, Jamiah Rogers, Tail Dragger, Billy Branch, Howard Levy, Sugar Blue, Corky Sigel, Melody Angel, Lurrie Bell, Chicago Ladies Sing the Blues collective, and more.

“Sweet Home Chicago—Celebrating 50 Years of Alligator Records” was co-produced by Governors State University’s Center for Performing Arts and Department of Digital Learning and Media Design with the generous support from the Illinois Arts Council, First Midwest Bank, and WDCB 90.9 —FM.

Find more information about the broadcasts [here](#).