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Lil' Ed showing some *Pride and Joy*. See Wed/10.

Record Label Has a Right to Sing the Blues

Alligator's Koko Taylor, Lonnie Brooks, Katie Webster and Elvin Bishop in documentary

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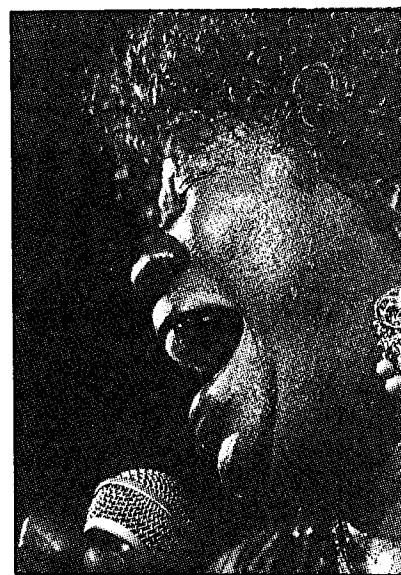
Fans of blues who wailed along with director Robert Mugge's incisive documentary "Deep Blues" in 1991 have a new blues treat to bite into with "Pride and Joy: The Story of Alligator Records," opening today at the Red Vic.

Chicago-based Alligator Records is a major independent label on the blues scene, founded in 1971 by Bruce Iglauer, a blues fan who got so wrapped up in his appreciation of the music that he started a cellar recording business.

Alligator netted \$10,000 in sales the first year; last year it hit the \$4 million mark.

Anniversary Concert

Film maker Mugge, whose previous documentaries have looked at Mississippi blues, Hawaiian music, salsa music and jazz artists Sun Ra and Sonny Rollins, uses a 20th anniversary concert of Alligator blues artists to focus on the label



Koko Taylor's Chestnut Cabaret performance helped to mark Alligator's 20th anniversary

and Iglauer, who runs his company with a mixture of down-home humor and hard-line business zeal.

It's really the music itself, however, that is the film's strong suit. Performers, filmed at Philadelphia's Chestnut Cabaret, included Koko Taylor and her Blues Machine, the Lonnie Brooks Blues Band, Elvin Bishop, Katie Webster and Lil' Ed and the Blues Imperials.

Personal Touch

Through interviews with Alligator artists, and by way of a tour through the label's Chicago offices, Mugge captures the flavor of a small business whose success in an industry dominated by corporate giants is owing to the personal touch as well as a fervent enthusiasm for the music.

Iglauer recalls his early days working as a stock clerk for Bob Kester at his famous Jazz Record Shop in Chicago, and talks about his hours logged in Southside nightclubs as well as his first year selling start-up Alligator record-

ings of Lonnie Brooks out of his car trunk, delivering them personally to DJs through the Midwest.

The name Alligator, says Iglauer, was given by a girlfriend who called the record company entrepreneur an alligator because Iglauer has a habit of clicking his teeth when he listens to music. He has developed the annoying habit into somewhat of an art, and can "play complete shuffles" with teeth clicks, which he does in one brief segment of the film.

Songs performed in the film include "Wife for Tonight," "I'd Rather Go Blind," "I Want All My Money Back," and a get-down jam rendition of "Sweet Home Chicago" that is certain to have viewers dancing in the aisles.

"Pride and Joy: The Story of Alligator Records" is scheduled to open at the UC Theatre in Berkeley on February 18.

the pride, the joy Robert Mugge's portrait of Alligator Records and its impressive roster of blues artists, *Pride and Joy*, tells the story of a little guy who made it to the top of the international blues heap and continues to thrive despite the hostile world of the recording industry.

The film is held together by inspiring live performances recorded in one night at Philadelphia's Chestnut Cabaret on the Alligator Records 20th anniversary tour. Koko Taylor and her Blues Machine, Lil' Ed and the Blues Imperials, Elvin Bishop, Katie Webster, and the Lonnie Brooks Blues Band tear up stage and screen with

wait-ing blues and true soul. Through Tues/16 at 7:30 and 9:25 p.m., with matinees Wed., Sat.-Sun. at 2:15 p.m. Red Vic Movie House, 1727 Haight, SF. (415) 668-8999. (Trisha Smith)