



Johnny Winter

Blues Guitar Sound of Johnny Winter Comes North

By MIKE JAHN

Johnny Winter has spent years playing bars and lounges in the South and now, with fingers that fly across his guitar like a Texas tornado, he is moving to New York.

Mr. Winter is a blues guitarist. Many blues musicians have emerged in the last year, and Mr. Winter is one of the best. He brings his music — crackling-fast, perfected blues—to the Fillmore East, 105 Second Avenue, this weekend.

Mr. Winter grew up in Beaumont, Tex. He has been playing professionally since he was 15 years old and has always had his own band. For several years he joined with his younger brother, Edgar, in a group called "Johnny Winter and the Black Plague."

His present group is called "Winter." It consists of Mr. Winter on guitar, John Turner on drums and Tommy Shannon on bass. Mr. Winter also sings and plays harmonica.

On guitar, he is a fountain of vintage blues. His moves are fast, and his playing is staccato and harsh. He captures the agony of the blues.

"I think we're more black and more into simple things than most blues bands," he says. "We don't want to make it more modern, we want to make it funkier."

Keeps It Moving

Mr. Winter is a charismatic performer. Pure blues can be terribly dull if authenticity is the only end the artist recognizes. Mr. Winter keeps it moving along. He is aware of the need to entertain.

He is not afraid to play chords to raise the excitement level. Often he lays down a firm base of chords, then peppers single notes in a fiery burst of electric blues.

Mr. Winter will share the bill at the Fillmore East this weekend with B.B. King, another top blues guitarist, and Terry Reid, a guitarist and vocalist from England.

Mr. Winter is an albino. He is tall and thin, with shoulder-length, fleecy white hair and an angular face.

His attitude about his appearance is very casual.

He says his physical appearance, which he once regarded as a detriment, no longer bothers him. "I think it's great," he said. "It was a hang-up when I was growing up. If something that's been a handicap before can help me now, groovy. I may as well get some good out of it."