

From that time on, Johnny was a regular in the Houston and Beaumont recording studios, cutting dozens of tunes as both a leader and sideman. When he wasn't in the studio he was barnstorming the Deep South club circuit, playing everything from hard blues to cocktail jazz and Top 40 tunes. His singles, cut for dozens of little labels, were often leased to majors like MGM and Atlantic. They earned plenty of local radio play but didn't break nationally.

Finally, in 1968, Winter committed himself to playing the blues, forming a trio with Tommy Shannon on base and Uncle John Turner on drums. Discouraged with performing around Texas, he was investigating the music scene in England when a cover story in Rolling Stone made him a celebrity overnight. After a furious bidding war, he was signed to Columbia and proceeded to unleash a series of classic blues rock LPs.

Johnny Winter and Second Winter were cut with his original blues trio plus brother Edgar, while Johnny Winter And and Johnny Winter And Live (the latter his best-selling LP) featured Rick Derringer on second guitar. In 1973 he returned to a more direct blues sound with Still Alive and Well, followed by Saint and Sinners in '74

In 1977 Winter fulfilled a lifelong dream by producing Muddy Waters for his new label, the CBS distributed Blue Sky Records. Hard Again was a comeback album for Muddy, an album that returned him to his Chicago blues band roots. Both Hard Again and the following Waters LP I'm Ready won Grammy Awards. "Working with Muddy made me feel people were finally

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