

realizing that I'm not faking and can really play the blues", Winter says. "I felt I'd established myself."

Winter's own music continued to explore the nuances of the blues in its varied forms. Signing with Alligator Records, he released a series of much praised LPs, including the Grammy nominated Guitar Slinger (1984) and Serious Business (1985). Third Degree (1986) completed his trio of Alligator albums.

In addition to recording and producing, Winter has maintained a heavy touring schedule over the past decade, appearing in arenas, roadhouses and everywhere in between. "For the last two or three years I've been on the road at least eight to nine months a year," he reports. "Besides the States, we've been to Europe, Australia and Canada. We go everywhere people want to see us, from festivals to college gigs, you name it."

"A lot of new people have been showing up," he continues. "I meet kids who are 15 and 16 years old, loyal fans who first heard our records from their older brothers and sisters and sometimes their parents. And, of course, I see the old fans who've never stopped being into the blues."

What Winter brings to old and young fans alike is his unequivocal passion for music. "The older I get, the more I seem to love it," he says. "It's like eating and sleeping -- it's a necessity for me. The blues may come in and out of fashion, but I just keep playing what I love and hope that others love it too."

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