



# ON STAGE INTERVIEW

## Edgar Winter

### *He Only Comes Out at Night*

“Music is very spiritual. It has the power to bring people together from all different backgrounds and walks of life,” -Edgar Winter

By Glenn Swift

As one of rock and roll's most influential artists, Winter has achieved international success by combining a number of different musical genres: rock, jazz, blues and pop. An exceptional keyboard player, brilliant saxophonist, prolific bassist and highly-skilled percussionist, Winter has recorded 20 albums and CDs during a spectacular recording career that has spanned nearly four decades. His numerous and diverse talents have entertained audiences on television and the motion picture screen as well. In a nutshell, you could say that Edgar Winter has come as close as anyone in the modern era to “doing it all.”

“I came from a very musical family,” said Winter. “My father had a barber shop quartet and played the saxophone, mom played classical piano, my grandfather played the fiddle, and my great grandfather was a trumpet player.”

And then there's Johnny.

Considered by many to be one of the world's greatest blues guitar virtuosos, Edgar's older brother was respectfully referred to by the late blues icon, Muddy Waters, as “my adopted son.”

“Johnny and I grew up around music. In fact, one of my earliest memories is my brother and I each holding a ukulele as dad taught us some chords,” smiled Winter.

Needless to say, dad didn't wait very long to introduce his sons to the world of music.

“I was four and Johnny was seven,” laughed Winter. “Our hands were too small to play guitar.”



Photo Provided

When barely into their teens, Johnny began working with country guitarist, Luther Naley, and Edgar took piano instruction from Hazel Bergman.

“Hazel was very liberal in her approach and encouraged me to explore a number of different types of music. She also taught me music theory and how to write arrangements. Although my eyesight has always been very poor and has prevented me from being able to sight read, the musical foundation I received early on from Hazel has helped me enormously over the years.”

Both boys learned quickly, and while still in high school, the two brothers from Beaumont, Texas began playing at a number of local watering holes.

“Coming from southeastern Texas, we were exposed to all the great R&B artists of the 1950s, as well as the distinctive sound of nearby New Orleans. Like so many of the rock and rollers my age, I was heavily influenced by the

blues and would have to list Ray Charles as my greatest influence.”

After recording with a number of his brother's bands in the mid to late 1960s, Edgar was signed to his own Epic Records contract in 1970. His initial release, *Entrance*, unveiled Winter's uncanny ability to cross over traditional musical boundaries and to do the unexpected. His rendition of “Tobacco Road” was especially hailed by critics and garnered Winter considerable acclaim.

He followed up his groundbreaking album a year later with an extraordinary compilation of fellow musicians from Texas and Louisiana. The album, *White Trash* (named after the group) was a powerful, emotionally-charged rock masterpiece that immediately thrust Winter into the national spotlight. “I had been playing with most of the guys in *White Trash* since my high school days. We cut our teeth together on rock and roll.”

*White Trash* was immediately followed up with a live album, *Roadwork*, which enjoyed spectacular commercial success.

Building upon the momentum of his first three albums, Winter then formed a new group – The Edgar Winter Group, which included Dan Hartman, guitar player extraordinaire Ronnie Montrose and Chuck Ruff.

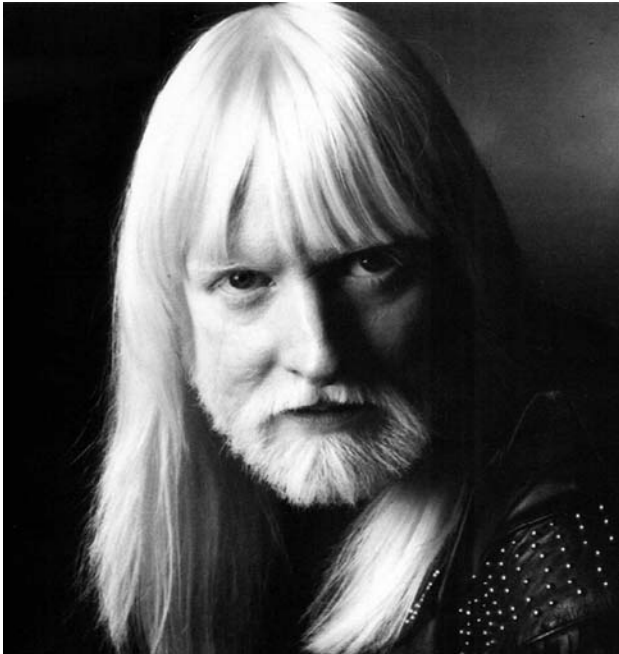
“Growing up and playing with Johnny in the early years spoiled me as far as great guitar players go, and I was blown away by Montrose the first time I heard him.”

The Edgar Winter Group produced a number of big-time hits of which the best known was the all-instrumental rock mantra, “Frankenstein.” The blockbuster song was the first to feature a synthesizer as the main instrument and eventually hit number one on the charts. It has remained a rock and roll anthem ever since.





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The Group's first album, *They Only Come Out at Night*, which includes the revolutionary tune, opened up a whole new world of possibilities with regard to experimentation in sound. Over three decades later, most Classic Rock gurus continue to regard it as one of the greatest rock albums of all time.

The amazing album also contains another rock mainstay, "Free Ride." The song was a Top 15 single and featured another high-powered master on lead guitar, Rick Derringer.

"I first heard Rick at Club Tarot in New York City. I was amazed at how much his style complimented mine. In fact, I was convinced he had to be from Texas or Louisiana," cracked Winter.

The two have practically formed a mutual admiration society ever since. "Rick is definitely one of the finest players ever to strap on a guitar," said Winter.

While the White Trash and Edgar Winter Group days may have been the peak for Winter with regard to commercial success and fame, the amazing musician continues to promote his music to audiences all over the world. Unsatisfied to simply ride the wave of popular music stardom, Winter continues to explore new opportunities for his boundless creativity. In fact, his music can be heard in no fewer than fifteen film and television projects. This past year, Winter also toured with the likes of Rod Argent and Billy Squire in Ringo Starr's highly-acclaimed All Star Band.

"It's hard for me to understand why some people only want to listen to one type of music...that's so limiting. One of music's great qualities is in its richness, its diversity."

Winter is currently working on a new album featuring a powerful new single, "Rebel Road." Apart from being a great, hard driving rock and roll song, "Rebel Road" has personal meaning for Winter and reflects his disdain of being labeled or categorized in any way. "I've always considered myself a bit of a rebel and this song symbolizes my passion to venture out and explore new horizons."

With regard to his upcoming concert at the Lyric Theatre in Stuart, Winter had this to say: "The Lyric is one of my top ten favorite places to play in the whole country. It's very intimate and the acoustics are great. I'm also very grateful for the appreciative audiences we get at the Lyric time and time again. The whole band feeds off their energy."

As for what you can expect, Winter summed things up this way...

"Get ready to rock and roll!"

**Don't miss out on the opportunity to hear one of rock music's most legendary performers, the one and only Edgar Winter. The concert is scheduled for 7pm on June 9th at the Lyric Theatre in historic downtown Stuart. For ticket information, call 772-286-7827 or visit [www.lyrictheatre.com](http://www.lyrictheatre.com).**



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