

Beat: Miscellaneous

U.S. blues legend Johnny Winter dead at 70

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USPA News - American musician Johnny Winter, who was one of the most highly-acclaimed guitarists in both blues and rock, was found dead late on Wednesday in a hotel room in the Swiss city of Zurich, local police said on Thursday. He was 70 years old.

Winter was found deceased on Wednesday evening in a hotel room in Bülach district, one of the 12 districts of Zurich Canton, said police spokeswoman Cornelia Schuoler. The musician's publicist, Carla Parisi, confirmed Winter's death in a brief statement but provided no other details. "The cause of death is currently unclear and is being clarified. The prosecutor has ordered an autopsy," Schuoler said. "A medical event is suspected. There is currently no evidence of foul play." Winter had been on an extensive tour this year, with a series of shows in Europe in May and several in Austria this month. His most recent show was at the Cahors Blues Festival in France, after which he was expected to return to the United States in preparation of a series of concerts in the United States in August. "His wife, family and bandmates are all saddened by the loss of their loved one and one of the world's finest guitarists," Parisi said in a brief statement. Fellow bandmates Paul Nelson and Scott Spray also expressed their sadness, with Spray writing on Facebook that he had lost his "long time friend and musical boss." Born in Beaumont, Texas, Winter first signed with Columbia Records in 1969 and immediately laid out the blueprint for his fresh take on classic blues with a powerful combination of authentic Texas funk and his own high energy interpretation. He quickly became one of the most respected singers and influential guitar players of the 1970s. Winter, who was voted one of the world's top 100 guitarists in Rolling Stone Magazine, recorded some 40 albums of classic rock and blues since his self-titled debut in 1969. In the late 1970s, he produced and played on a series of Grammy-winning albums with his childhood hero Muddy Waters, who affectionately referred to Winter as his "son."

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