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The British Bluesman will be appearing at La Belle Angele on Friday 18th November.

Twenty-five years. Politically, socially, culturally, it's a lifetime. Ample time for a million bands to ignite and burn out, for a thousand fashions to blossom and wither. There aren't many constants since 1991, but Ian Siegal's mission statement has barely changed in that period. Songs that are real. Shows that resonate. Vocals served raw. Such are the old-fashioned values behind an award-winning career that, even now, feels like it's just getting started.

As an artist in constant motion, Siegal has never been a man for backslaps and laps of honour. But in 2016, the British bluesman will toast that milestone anniversary with a trademark burst of hyperactivity. In Autumn, the *2WENTY5IVE* Tour will take him to 11 venues across the UK and 13 dates in mainland Europe. There'll also be a 38-song retrospective release and a 72-page lyric book curating some of his finest moments to date – before a new studio album in 2017 forges headlong into the future.

There may also be a moment of reflection. If you had told the 20-year-old Siegal, on the night of his first professional band gig in 1991, of the acclaim to come, he'd have dryly laughed it off. Likewise, with the blues genre then in desperate straits, it was unthinkable that he would one day

take this music overground in 45 countries, or preside over a trophy haul that includes nine British Blues Awards, three European Blues Awards, two *Mojo* Blues Albums Of The Year (not to mention three US Blues Music Awards nominations – an unprecedented nod for a non-American).

From roots near Portsmouth, Siegal pinballed through his early life. A child of the '70s and an art-college drop-out in the '80s, he learnt his craft as a busker in Berlin before the motherland lured him back. Even then, as a nascent performer, he already had his calling-cards, shaking up the influences of rock 'n' roll pioneers like Little Richard, blues titans like Muddy Waters and Howlin' Wolf, and leftfield artists like Tom Waits – then adding his inimitable rasped vocal and questing songcraft.

Through the '90s, Siegal – then based in Nottingham – was the best-kept secret on the Midlands circuit. Back-to-back tours in 2003 and 2004 as support to Bill Wyman's Rhythm Kings proved a shop window, and the exposure soon saw him command headline shows in Holland, Belgium, Austria, Hungary (and more), while casting his net beyond the blues genre to draw a pan-generation crowd of both sexes.

In the studio, Siegal opened his account on the Cadiz/Universal distributed Nugene label with 2005's *Meat & Potatoes*, before 2007's *Swagger* saw *Mojo* dub him "one of the most innovative, gifted and engaging blues performers on the planet today". *The Dust* and *Broadside* were similarly acclaimed, the UK rock press noting the newcomer's scholarly appreciation for – but irreverent twisting of – the blues template.

But Siegal's quarter-century rise is more than a European success story. He'd made America's acquaintance as early as 2006, visiting major clubs and lighting up the Waterfront Festival. By 2010, this life-long fan of Mississippi hill country blues was drinking deep from the source, striking up a

working friendship with Luther and Cody Dickinson of the North Mississippi Allstars, and taking up semi-residence at their Zebra Ranch studio in Coldwater, MS.

The two resulting albums (2011's *The Skinny* and 2012's *Candy Store Kid*), were Siegal's most vital yet, sparking successive BMA nominations for Best Contemporary Blues Album, induction into the British Blues Hall Of Fame, and the memorable Classic Rock soundbite "Mississippi has a new adopted son and Britain a national treasure."

His visits to the US and in particular to the North Mississippi Hill Country Picnic also resulted in 2014's impromptu, campfire-style and critically applauded collaboration *The Picnic Sessions*, teaming Siegal with friends on the local music scene.

Since then, demand has seen Siegal pulled across the planet, with the performer shedding his skin as he plays countless shows in shifting formats – many of them preserved as live albums. In 2014, the BBC-recorded *Man & Guitar* bottled a solo acoustic performance from the Royal Albert Hall (no doubt a factor in his third BMA nomination for Best Acoustic Artist). The following year's *One Night In Amsterdam* found him amped and dangerous with a full-throttle electric band; while in 2016, *Wayward Sons* showcased his fizzing joint tour with Squirrel Nut Zippers man Jimbo Mathus, a partnership so compelling that the pair teamed up again for 37 more shows this Spring.

Twenty-five years. A thousand highlights. And yet, for all the dizzying achievements in the rear-view mirror, the most important part of any Siegal chronology is always the blank canvas that lies ahead. In a music industry built on nostalgia, past glories and diminishing returns, this is one artist with his eye on the future and a hunger for new horizons. A quarter-century later, Ian Siegal is only just getting started.

UK SHOWS IN THE "2WENTY5IVE" TOUR

08/11 Southampton, Talking Heads

09/11 Stockton on Tees, ARC

10/11 Southport, The Atkinson

11/11 Stroud, The Convent (*with simulcast*)

12/11 Bury, The Met

13/11 Tenby Blues Festival

15/11 London, Under The Bridge

16/11 Nottingham, Rescue Rooms

17/11 Newcastle, The Cluny

18/11 Edinburgh, La Belle Angele

19/11 Lichfield, The Guildhall_

For more information and the latest news dates, please visit

<http://iansiegal.com/> <http://www.nugenerecords.com/>