

WHY NOT ME?

EMMA WILSON

When you meet Emma Wilson, you're not just speaking to a blues singer - you're talking to someone whose life and spirit have been transformed by the music she loves. As I sat down to chat with her, it quickly became clear that her story is one of passion, resilience, and the fearless pursuit of authenticity. From humble beginnings to a career that now spans Memphis and Clarksdale, Emma's journey is proof that sometimes the only thing standing between you and success is the simple belief: why not me?

 Stephen Harrison  Fishy Snapper

From the very first hello, Emma Wilson's energy lights up the room. We catch up like old friends, immediately falling into easy conversation. Emma's been busy-settling in with a new PC, navigating tech struggles-and it makes me laugh to hear her so candid, a true reflection of her down-to-earth nature.

Naturally, we end up talking about last year's awards ceremony. I tell her how mortifying my speech was, but Emma, ever the encourager, reminds me that I added some much-needed "rock and roll" to the proceedings. "You livened it up!" she laughs. It's clear that Emma doesn't just understand music - she understands moments, and how to turn nerves or setbacks into something memorable.

We quickly move into deeper territory: the strange disconnection that sometimes exists between audiences and true blues legends. Emma recalls seeing John Mayall take the stage to a surprisingly muted reception. "You could feel the apathy," she says. We both agree-if you don't understand the history of the music, if you don't know the giants like Slim Harpo or Skip James, you're missing the very foundation of it all.

Emma's humility shines through when she talks about learning from others. "If I don't know something, I say so," she tells me. It's a refreshing attitude in an industry often

dominated by bravado, and it's a big part of why she has earned the respect of so many musicians, on both sides of the Atlantic.

The conversation inevitably turns to interviews-my own nerves when facing legends like Van Morrison, and Emma's experiences standing shoulder-to-shoulder with some of the greatest players in the blues world. We both agree that preparation is vital: "If Van thought I didn't know what I was talking about, he'd have just walked out," I tell her. She nods, completely understanding that level of pressure.

Then Emma's face lights up when she starts talking about her life-changing trip to Memphis. "I just felt drawn there," she says. She was invited by her US distributors to attend the American Blues Awards, and from the moment she arrived, she was immersed in a whirlwind of music, energy, and community.

She tells me about standing just a few feet from Kingfish as he performed live, about the buzzing atmosphere on Beale Street, where every bar was packed with the best blues musicians America has to offer. And it wasn't just about watching-it was about belonging.

That sense of belonging took a major step forward when Emma made the spontaneous decision to travel to Clarks-

dale for the Pinetop Perkins Crawfish Boil at Ground Zero Blues Club. She messaged the event curator, Steve Kolbus, and simply asked: could she jump on stage?

"He said yes," Emma beams. "He said he'd get me a real cool band."

Emma's stories from that day are nothing short of electric. She describes walking backstage into a group of young, ferociously talented musicians - including Wyly Bigger and Harrell Davenport-and finding herself embraced with open arms.

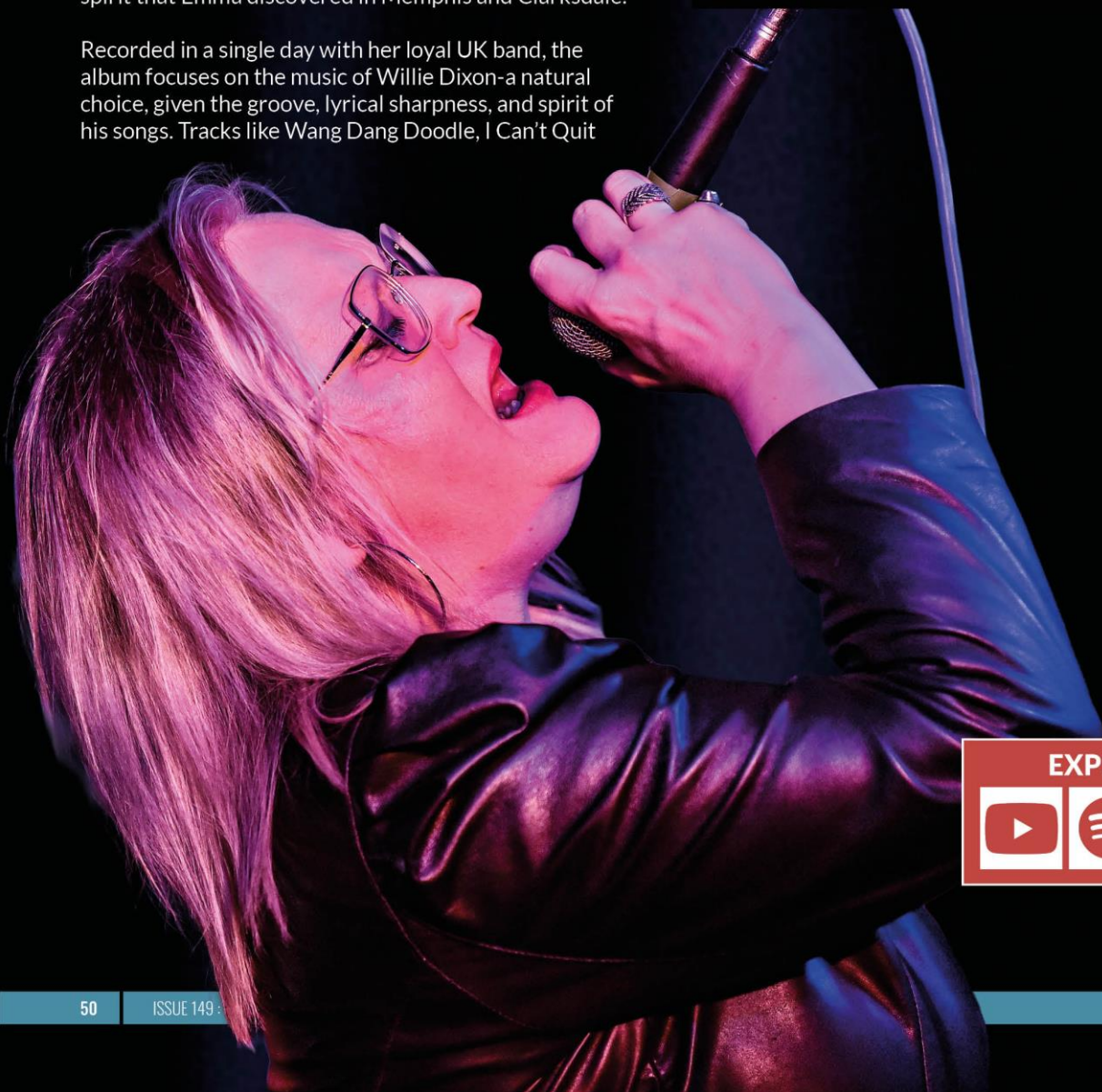
Originally, she thought she might do one song. Instead, she and the band ended up performing a full five-song set-and the reaction was nothing short of magical. "It changed my DNA as a musician," she says, and I don't doubt her for a second.

Standing on that stage, in Clarksdale of all places-the home of the blues-Emma found the affirmation she had long sought she belonged.

It was this energy and self-belief that led Emma to record her new blues album. Unlike the more produced feel of her earlier work, this album captures the raw, live spirit that Emma discovered in Memphis and Clarksdale.

Recorded in a single day with her loyal UK band, the album focuses on the music of Willie Dixon-a natural choice, given the groove, lyrical sharpness, and spirit of his songs. Tracks like Wang Dang Doodle, I Can't Quit

"You can't fake it in Memphis"



EXPLORE



You Baby, and I Want to Be Loved form the backbone of a record that feels immediate, honest, and gloriously alive.

I ask her why she chose Willie Dixon specifically.

“His songs just fit me,” she explains. “The rhythms, the lyrics, the feel—it’s all there. And my band just clicked with it straight away.”

She’s keen to point out that while songs like I Can’t Quit You Baby have traditionally been sung from a male perspective, she’s made them her own without losing any of their emotional power. “You take those lyrics, and you sing them your way,” she says. “You find your voice in them.”

As we talk, an idea emerges—a live album combining the Memphis soul sound of Memphis Calling with the raw blues power of her new Willie Dixon project. Emma’s face lights up. “That would be amazing,” she says. “We could bring in a horn section, guest artists, do something really special.”

She talks passionately about the Memphis music community—the radio stations that have welcomed her, the musicians who have embraced her, the genuine friendships she’s built. Despite being a Brit abroad, Emma has earned her place in a world where respect must be earned, not given.

“You can’t fake it in Memphis,” she says. “You have to prove yourself, and you have to mean it.”

Listening to her, it’s obvious why she’s been welcomed into such a storied scene. Her respect for the music, her willingness to learn, and her sheer joy in performing are infectious.

Towards the end of our conversation, we circle back to a phrase I once said to her during a moment of self-doubt: “Why not you?”

It became a turning point for Emma—a reminder that dreams are not reserved for someone else. They are there for those brave enough to seize them.

Today, Emma Wilson is no longer asking why not her. She’s standing proudly as one of the most exciting voices in contemporary blues—one shaped by Middlesbrough’s grit, Memphis’s soul, and the heart of Clarksdale’s deep traditions.

And as she looks towards the next chapter—perhaps a live album, perhaps something even bigger—you can feel it in every word she says: Why not me, indeed. Emma’s New Album “A Spoonful Of Willie Dixon” Out 2nd May 2025.



**“His songs
just fit me”**

