

WILL WILDE TALKING BLUES

- assuming you are about to turn 30, how is it possible to be turned on to the blues while all your peers were into new metal oder boy bands?

I don't think any of my friends were in to boy bands... I was was in to punk and metal as a teen, I have a very broad range of influences, not just blues. My father is a big blues fan so I grew up hearing the likes of Muddy Waters, John Lee Hooker and Sonny Boy Williamson on the stereo. Sonny Boy's song "Help Me" was the reason I started playing harmonica, I have always loved that song.

15 years ago? that house party where you picked up the harmonica must have been a real boring one.

I don't know, I can't remember much about it. All I know is that I got very drunk and came home with a harmonica in my pocket, so I think it was a pretty good night.

- tell me a bit about your musical upbringing. as your sister dani is a respected musician, too, how about your family in general? how important was your father in this case?

As I said, our father is a big fan of the blues so we grew up hearing a lot of blues music and going to a lot of gigs and festivals. Dani and I have played in various bands together since we were in school, I used to play drums with her before I started playing harmonica. She signed to Ruf Records in 2009 and I played harp on her first couple of records and toured with her band for a couple of years, before leaving to pursue my own career. We still tour together occasionally as an acoustic duo "The Wilde's".

- in general: starting so early, weren't you afraid at all chosing a career like this? how was the neptune blues band like?

No I wasn't afraid, I never really thought about it to be honest. I just wanted to keep playing music, I'm not qualified to do anything else. The Neptune Blues Band was a lot of fun, it was the first band I ever fronted. I think I was 18 when we started. It was a straight up, heavy hitting, harmonica driven blues rock band. Not too dissimilar to what I do now, we just got a lot better over the last 10 years! I still have the same drummer, Alan Taylor, who's been with me since the beginning.

- how was your first gig? did anything special happen?

It was good, it was at The Providence in my home town of Brighton. Nothing special happened, as far as I can remember, it was a good show though.

- when did you discover you had a niche with the combination guitar-harmonica? any role models which influenced you? besides muddy waters.

Harmonica is certainly my main instrument, my main influence on the harp is still Sonny Boy Williamson but I was influenced by loads of players: Charlie Musselwhite, Junior Wells, Paul Butterfield to name a few. These days I don't really listen to much harmonica though, my style is more inspired by rock guitarists. A lot of people have commented that the harp on the new record sounds more like lead guitar than a harmonica. I haven't been playing much guitar lately, in fact I didn't play any on the new album or on the last tour we did! My guitar style is very much inspired by Albert King, Paul Kossoff (Free) and Danny Kirwan (Fleetwood Mac).

- there is always a relatively long gap between your albums. why?

Money. I would like to put an album out every couple of years but unfortunately I have to fund everything myself.

- "live in hamburg". any special reason for recording that one in germany?

We have a very loyal fan base in Germany, it's always been a good territory for me. The Downtown Blues Club in Hamburg is one of my favourite venues, we always get a good crowd there and it's a good sounding room, it was the first place that came to mind when we decided to do a Live record.

- you newest effort is an album of covers (nice choices, btw). any specific reason for it? it's all british artists, right?

Yes. It's a tribute to the originators of British and Irish Rock. My previous releases have always been more rooted in Chicago style blues. I wanted to do something a bit different with the harmonica on this album and push the boundaries. Most of the songs are not what you would expect a harmonica artist to cover. I wanted to prove that in the right hands, the harp can hold it's own with any rock guitarist. I first got the idea for this album when we covered Gary Moore's "Parisienne Walkways", playing all of the lead guitar lines on the harp. The response we got was amazing and it went viral on Youtube and Facebook, so I started looking for other interesting cover ideas.

- what is your favourite cover and why?

My favourite cover is Deep Purple's "Lazy". There is harmonica on the original, but I played all of Ritchie Blackmore's guitar lines on the harp. Its a really high energy fast paced track with two key changes in it. When I was choosing covers for the album I was looking for songs with guitar hooks that would translate to harmonica, I think this song worked particularly well.

- "hendrix of the harmonica". do you like this kind of labeling? because IMHO your voice is overlooked big time.

No I don't mind. Considering Hendrix is often hailed as the worlds' greatest guitarist, I don't have a problem with that at all.

- any musician you want to play/record with in the future?
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