“Johnny the Blues” is John Emil’s most personal album to date—a collection born from real experience and creative evolution.

As a touring musician, Emil has accumulated stories that fuel this work: encounters with people who misjudged him, family betrayals that cut deep, and moments of genuine connection that surprised him. The title track “Johnny the Blues” uses a Howlin’ Wolf-inspired groove to confront the assumptions people make, built on improvisation and honesty.

The album spans nearly a decade of songwriting. “Wild Moon Shining,” the oldest track, is a modern blues rock song that waited two years for its chorus—until Emil picked up an unplugged electric guitar and the melody arrived fully formed. “Bad Influence” confronts family betrayal with unflinching honesty, while “The Sigil” transforms his wife’s playful claim of putting a spell on him into a tender love song.

Perhaps most intriguing are the four tracks that began as atmospheric instrumentals for a production library. When Emil reclaimed the rights to these songs, he faced an unusual challenge: writing melodies and lyrics over completed music with no predetermined storyline. “Si Silhouettes” took two months to complete. “South Side of the Sun” came easier. By “Weathered One,” he’d found his stride.

The album closes with “Hungry for a Hungarian Girl,” written during a UK tour and packed with vivid details—a free tube pass from a stranger, a Sainsbury’s bag carried across continents, the memory of a Hungarian flamenco guitarist in Fishguard, Wales.

Throughout, Emil brings swagger and confidence to his delivery while maintaining an uncompromising authenticity—refusing to sand down the sharp corners that make these songs matter.