

Lil' Magic Sam – *Tired Out*

Album Review by Garard Haarhuis

Lil' Magic Sam? Absolutely! But wait — isn't there also a *Magic Sam*? Indeed there is. *The Magic Sam*, a true bluesman through and through, was born **Samuel Gene Maghett**. His nickname came courtesy of his bassist and good friend **Mack Thompson**, who suggested a new name when Samuel's previous alias, *Good Rocking Sam*, turned out to be already taken. Thus, *Magic Sam* was born — and the rest is Chicago blues history.

The *Lil' Magic Sam* we're talking about here, however, hails from **France**, born in **1971**, and the "Lil'" tag nods to him being a sort of "second generation" Magic Sam — younger, but sharing that same deep blues spirit. His real name remains something of a mystery, but his music certainly speaks for itself.

Lil' Magic Sam's self-produced album *Tired Out* is a gem — raw, vibrant, and full of energy. It's available both independently and digitally via **Bandcamp**, featuring **13 tracks** that blend classic blues grit with modern drive.

The Line-Up

- **Lil' Magic Sam** – vocals, guitar, harmonica
- **Jimmy Montout** – drums
- **Didier Théry** – bass (except tracks 8, 10, 11, 13)
- **Laurian Daire** – Hammond B3, clavinet, Rhodes, piano
- **Vincent Martinez** – rhythm guitar (8, 10, 11, 13), guitar solo on (4)
- **Antonella Mazza** – bass (8, 10, 11, 13)
- **Vivien Verdier** – guitar solos on (1 and 3)

Track Highlights

“**Leaving Town**” kicks things off at full throttle — fast, fiery, and irresistibly swinging. Sam's vocals are dark and powerful, his guitar solo ferocious. For a Frenchman singing the blues in English, he nails it. The whole band grooves as one, setting the tone perfectly.

Next, “**I'm Coming Back**” keeps the momentum rolling. The harmonica initially battles the storm of instruments but gradually rises to the forefront. It's a gutsy, tight blues-rocker with another blistering guitar solo closing things in style.

“**Looking So Fine**” opens with punchy drums and a driving rhythm. Sparkling piano and harmonica accents set the mood — she's “looking so fine,” indeed. Vivien Verdier delivers a stunning guitar solo while Sam sings, “*Sugar, can't you see what you're doin' to me? You turn me upside down, pretty girl, you're looking so fine.*” There's barely a moment to catch your breath — not that you'd want to.

The intensity remains high with **“Action Lady.”** Vincent Martinez steps up with a gritty, varied guitar solo, underscoring Sam’s passion for this mysterious “lady.” The track is powered by pounding drums and vibrant keyboards — blues energy at its best.

A slight change of pace comes with **“We Gonna Make It.”** Here, Sam preaches unity: together we’re stronger, *we gonna make it*. The harmonica weaves throughout like a companion voice, and Sam’s own guitar shines in a tasteful solo toward the end.

The title track, **“Tired Out,”** opens with snarling guitar, crisp drumming, and subtle piano touches. Ironically, there’s nothing tired about it — Sam’s energy seems limitless. It’s a song about resilience: when life wears you down, music lifts you back up.

“Before It’s Getting Too Late” urges us to seize opportunities before they slip away — “wanna make a change in your life”? Then do it now. Sam’s raw delivery and rugged groove drive the point home, ending abruptly but decisively.

“Let Me Talk To You Mama” brings back a swinging, foot-stomping groove with stellar keyboard work. After each vocal line, the guitar answers in call-and-response style — classic blues interplay done right.

“What We Gotta Lose” (yes, it should be “lose,” but who’s counting?) rides a tight rhythm and plenty of harmonica, alternating between solo and support. The drums keep the pace lively, and Lil’ Magic Sam delivers yet another standout guitar solo.

“All Alone” slows things down beautifully — soft drums, clear piano, plaintive harmonica, and guitar telling stories of everyday sorrow. A textbook harmonica blues number, heartfelt and soulful.

“How Long Will It Last” asks the eternal question — but with a sunny, almost Santana-like vibe. The guitar soars with sharp, melodic phrasing, the Hammond B3 swirls underneath, and the whole thing glows with warmth and optimism.

“On Your Own” opens with funky harmonica licks. It’s about separation and self-reliance — being back on your own again. The harmonica plays a perfect “second voice,” mirroring the emotion of the lyrics. Smooth keys wrap it up beautifully.

Finally, **“No More Time To Waste”** closes the album with the same intensity it began. Screaming guitars, tight rhythms, and a full-band groove drive home the urgency of the message — there’s no time to waste! Midway, a powerful guitar solo gives way to a lush keyboard solo, the drums never letting up. It’s a thrilling finale that ends, fittingly, with one last soaring guitar.

Final Thoughts

Tired Out is anything but tired. It’s a powerhouse of energy, spirit, and craftsmanship — a modern blues record that honors tradition while keeping things fresh. The musicianship is top-tier, the production clean yet raw, and the performances full of life. There isn’t a weak track in sight.

Standout tracks: *Leaving Town, Looking So Fine, Let Me Talk To You Mama, How Long Will It Last,* and *No More Time To Waste.*

Lil’ Magic Sam may call himself “Lil’,” but there’s nothing small about his sound. This is big, bold blues at its finest — pure joy from start to finish.