

Samuel Parpet aka LIL' MAGIC SAM (°1971) is a self-taught singer/songwriter, producer and multi-instrumentalist (guitarist, harp, bass, etc.) from the Ile-de-France/FR region. From an early age he was influenced by, among others, Jimi Hendrix, Little Walter, Freddie King, B.B. King, Luther Allison, Otis Redding and Stevie Ray Vaughan. As a teenager he moved to Chicago, where he was “adopted” as a harmonica player by Big Time Sarah and played as a “14-year-old French child” with James Cotton, Lonnie Brooks, Jimmy Johnson, Buddy Guy & Junior Wells, among others. Sam mentions blues legend Luther Allison (°1939†1997) as his mentor and Bernard Allison, his “bro”. Sam worked for six years with the French singer, composer, film and theater actor and author, Jacques Higelin (°1940†2018) and shared the stage with JL Hooker, Willie Dixon and others. In the nineties Sam founded his band, the Chicago Real City Blues. His hybrid style includes blues, soul, rock, jazz and reggae.

After his studio debut, a 4-track EP, he debuted last year with a full-length studio album, 'TIRED OUT'. Whether he is really “tired” is not clear after listening to his new album. He wrote nine new songs for his debut full-length album and remixed the four he previously released on his 2023 EP. He went to the studio for the recordings with, among others, guitarists Vincent Martinez & Vivien Verdier, who delivered some solos, drummer Jimmy Montout, bassists Didier Théry & Antonella Mazza and keyboardist Laurian Daire (Hammond B3, clavinet, Rhodes, piano).

The album opens at full speed with “Leaving Town”, and then continues more quietly after the harmonica intro with “I'm Coming Back”, in fact returning from the city. “Looking So Fine” opens on the tight cue of drummer Jimmy Montout, with Laurian Daire's piano in the background. Sam continues in the same vein with “Action Lady”, this time it is Vincent Martinez who shines on guitar. “We Gonna Make It” starts quietly with a grooving harmonica, but this does not stay that way when Sam goes for “Together you are stronger!”. It's Sam's guitar solo at the end that closes the doors. The title song then opens with a guitar solo, tight drums and a piano in the background. “Before It's Getting too Late” is full of wise advice and “Let Me Talk to You Mama”, one of the four EP remakes, swings according to the guitar and the excellent keys, which seem to make a game of it among themselves.

“What We Gotta Loose” is a quieter song with again a lot of excellent harmonica. “All Alone” then pushes the tempo again to give room to the piano and even more harmonica. The funky “How Long Will It Last” remains an open question in itself. Forget everything, close your eyes and let yourself float on the warm melody with the guitar and the Hammond B3. “On Your Own” opens after a few drum beats with a funky harmonica, after which everything revolves around the separation. Make your plan now and find out everything yourself, that's the moral. There remains “No More Time to Waste”, the closing track and final “remix”. The quiet song summarizes all of Lil' Magic Sam's strengths as a guitarist/harpist (with what a great voice!).

Eric Schuurmans