

Papa Mali – Do Your Thing (2007)

Written by bluesever

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01. *Do Your Thing* 02. *Honeybee* 03. *Early in the Morning* 04. *I Had The Dream* [play](#)
05. *Little Moses* 06. *Coffee* 07. *I'm Gettin' Over It*
[play](#)

08. *Girls In Bossier City* 09. *Sugarland* 10. *True Religion* 11. *Hallelujah I'm A Dreamer*
Performer: Malcolm "Papa Mali" Welbourne - Arranger, Bass, Composer, Guitar, Vocals
Chuck Prophet - Guitar (Electric), Percussion Dan Prothero - Engineer, Graphic Design,
Mixing, Photography, Producer, Programming George Sluppick – Chant Victoria Williams -
Vocals (Background) Kirk Joseph - Guest Appearance, Sousaphone

Malcolm Welbourne, AKA Papa Mali, can be forgiven for not having a handy identity to hang his MySpace tag on. Though he came to prominence in the 1980s on the Austin, Texas music scene with the legendary reggae band the Killer Bees, Welbourne is a Mississippi native who grew up in Shreveport and has deep ties to the New Orleans music community. Above all, he's known for his shredding slide guitar work, whether fronting his own band or sitting in with fellow travelers such as the Radiators, Galactic and other New Orleans bands. *Do Your Thing*, produced by Dan Prothero for Fog City, the San Francisco label central to Galactic's development, shows all of Mali's sides, from the Texas honky-tonk of "Honeybee" to the surreal head trip of "Girls In Bossier City." Mostly, though, this is a classic New Orleans session—all rhythmic nuance and deep, grainy textures. The basic tracks were recorded here at Truck Farm Studios with a core band consisting of Papa Mali, Robb Kidd on drums, Kirk Joseph on sousaphone, Henry Butler on piano and Big Chief Monk Boudreaux on vocals and percussion. Fellow Austinite Victoria Williams adds background vocals on a couple of tracks, but the moment of truth comes when the Golden Eagles Mardi Gras Indians with Reverend Goat Carson throw down on the out-of-this-world chant "Early In the Morning." This driving, echo-drenched polyrhythmic joy ride transforms the traditional Mardi Gras march into a contemporary slice of voodoo electronica.

Sometimes Prothero makes Mali's voice sound like he has fallen down a well ("Sugarland") and

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on other occasions he could be auditioning for the Gospel Tent (“True Religion”). The bonus track, a pretty acoustic song called “Hallelujah I’m a Dreamer” echoes the soulful chorus of “Save the Last Dance for Me” and suggests that Mali has even more identities lurking in his creative imagination. --- John Swenson, offbeat.com

These guys are so soulful and rife with slide guitar bayoo sound. If you get to New Orleans JazzFest in April/June (which I do every year), you'll hear a lot of this sound. But this band really stands out. Listen to it several times and you'll year different things every time. It's grown on me big time since I've owned it. First I liked it. Now I LOVE IT. The songs are all wonderful, but 'Early in the Morning' and 'Coffee' are the living best. Their other albums are JUST as good. --- Philly Kristin "MusicMeistress" (Philadelphia, PA United States)

Papa Mali's second album, Do Your Thing starts with the freaky psych-funk vibe of the spooky title track, which wouldn't sound out of place on Funkadelic's Maggot Brain. That druggy vibe continues on the Hendrixian "Early in the Morning," a veiled rewrite of "Hey Joe," and the grinding, fuzz bass-powered "I Had the Dream." Throughout the album, deep soul and blues elements like the Delta slide guitar on "Little Moses" and the playful shuffle beat of "I'm Getting over It" clash intriguingly with distorted vocals, jagged feedback explosions, oddball lyrics and other indie rock accoutrements. It makes for a more interesting and entertaining listen than the usual Chicago blues clichés from guys who think nothing of interest has happened in the blues since before Howlin' Wolf died: gems like the menacing, reverb-heavy instrumental "Girls in Bossier City" and the heavy, fuzz-drenched groove of "Sugarland" are too weird for the average fan of polite white-boy blooze, but they're also way closer to the roots of the Delta than the likes of Jon Spencer and Jack White. Do Your Thing is the meeting point between those two opposing sides, taking the best of both while ignoring most of the annoying bits. ---Stewart Mason

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