

Omar & The Howlers - Boogie Man (2004)

Written by bluesever

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1. *Boogie Man* 5:03
 2. *Bamboozled* 4:27
 3. *Stone Cold Blues* 5:26
 4. *White Crosses* 4:53
 5. *Drowning In Love* 3:46
 6. *Shakin'* 5:53
 7. *Right There In the Rain* 4:10
 8. *Bad In A Good Way* 5:21
 9. *That's Just My Life* 4:36
 10. *Mississippi Mud* 4:36
 11. *All the Love We Can Stand* 6:26
- Personnel: Omar Kent Dykes (vocals, guitar); Alejandro Escovedo (vocals); Malcolm "Papa Mali" Welbourne (guitar, slide guitar); Chris Duarte, Jon Dee Graham (guitar); Chris Layton, George Rains, Terry Bozzio (drums); James Fenner (percussion).

With his gravelly vocals that fall between Wolfman Jack and Howlin' Wolf, along with an ever-changing band of Howlers, Kent "Omar" Dykes charges through more rootsy boogie, blues, and rock & roll. For his first album of original material in four years, Dykes invited professional songwriters Darden Smith, Ray Wylie Hubbard, Stephen Bruton, and Alejandro Escovedo to co-write these 11 tunes. That not only elevates the quality of the tracks -- especially lyrically -- but also adds dashes of country and folk-rock to the mix. It diversifies but does not diminish Omar's gritty sound, and makes this one of his most accomplished and exciting recordings. Guest Howlers like guitarists Chris Duarte, Jon Dee Graham, and Malcolm "Papa Mali" Welbourne, along with Stevie Ray Vaughan's old Double Trouble rhythm section, and Zappa/Jeff Beck drummer Terry Bozzio all contribute to the bone-shaking proceedings. Dykes is fiery throughout, especially on the thumping Bo Diddley-inspired "Shakin'," and the Canned Heat/John Lee Hooker punch of the title cut. Even road songs "That's Just My Life" and "Mississippi Mud" resonate, despite their clichéd subject matter. Omar includes social commentary on "White Crosses" -- one of two Darden Smith co-writes he croons instead of howls with his usual bluster. The relatively subtle shuffle of "Drowning in Love" and the slow blues of the six-minute closing "All the Love We Can Stand" also alter the mood, giving the

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album some much-needed relief from the energized swamp stomp that dominates its attack. Boogie Man provides a perfect entry point for those new to the Omar experience, and a rollicking addition to those already entranced by his mighty mojo. ---Hal Horowitz, Rovi

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