

## Carolina Chocolate Drops - Genuine Negro Jig (2010)

Written by bluesever

Thursday, 04 December 2014 17:20 - Last Updated Thursday, 04 December 2014 17:28

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1. *Peace Behind The Bridge* 2:34 2. *Trouble In Your Mind* 2:56 3. *Your Baby Ain't Sweet Like Mine* 3:00 4. *Hit 'Em Up Style* 3:57 5. *Cornbread And Butterbeans* 3:10 6. *Snowden's Jig (Genuine Negro Jig)* 3:52 7. *Why Don't You Do Right?* 3:37 8. *Cindy Gal* 2:28 9. *Kissin' And Cussin'* 3:21 10. *Sandy Boys* 2:25 11. *Reynadine* 2:37 12. *Trampled Rose* 4:37 Dom Flemons - 4-String Banjo, Drums (Bass), Foot Percussion, Guitar, Jug, Throat Singing, Vocals Rhiannon Giddens - 5-string Banjo, Fiddle, Kazoo, Vocals Justin Robinson - Autoharp, Beat Box, Fiddle, Foot Percussion, Handclapping, Vocals Sule Greg Wilson - Frame Drum, Percussion, Tambourine

The problem with flirting with old music styles in the digital speedway of the 21st century is the curse of revivalism, a tendency to reduce contemporary stresses and pressures to a perceived better time in the safe and distant past when things were simpler, clearer, and, well, more pure. But of course it's always now -- it's never then or when -- and musical revivalism can suffer from a kind of strictly enforced and ultimately empty artifice. A facsimile is still a facsimile -- it can never, by definition, be the thing itself. This is the dilemma for the Carolina Chocolate Drops, a contemporary string band trio who, under the watchful eye of mentor Joe Thompson, re-create the look, feel, and sound of a 19th century black North Carolina fiddle and banjo band. Oh, and they do it well, with passion and integrity. But the problem is that it's not that hard to find the original recordings of the old black string bands, so why re-create them? There's the crack in the ice of music revivals. The original stuff -- this is the 21st century, after all, and the whole history of recorded music is readily available -- is still out there. *Genuine Negro Jig* doesn't rise above this conundrum, but with Joe Henry's clear, open-spaced and sparse production, it has a wonderful warmth and immediacy. The classic "Trouble in Your Mind," even with the flashback approach and instrumentation, sounds relevant to today's troubles. The gentle street ragtime of "Your Baby Ain't Sweet Like Mine" would sound just fine in any era, as would the delightful romp of "Cindy Gal," or the easy, natural blues of "Why Don't You Do Right?" *Genuine Negro Jig* is perfectly recorded, balanced between the best sound this century can deliver and the rustic, throwback feel of an old-time string band in action at a picnic, dance or rent party in the '30s. That's the accomplishment here. The next step, if the Carolina Chocolate Drops are willing to go there, is to stretch things from being a great facsimile to being a natural extension of an ongoing

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tradition. That's when revival changes into evolution. ---Steve Leggett, Rovi

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