

**Record: 1****Title:** Rhiannon Giddens' Old-Time Religion.**Authors:** FRICKE, DAVID (AUTHOR)**Source:** Rolling Stone. 3/12/2015, Issue 1230, p20-20. 5/8p. 1 Color Photograph.**Document Type:** Music Review**Reviews & Products:** TOMORROW Is My Turn (Music)**People:** GIDDENS, Rhiannon**Full Text Word Count:** 471**ISSN:** 0035-791X**Accession Number:** 101143891**Database:** Academic Search Complete**Rhiannon Giddens' Old-Time Religion****Carolina Chocolate Drops singer gives roots music a shot in the arm on solo debut**

On the last day of work for *Lost on the River*, the 2014 album based on newly unearthed Bob Dylan lyrics, Rhiannon Giddens sang her own ballad “Angel City” for the rest of the cast, including Elvis Costello and My Morning Jacket's Jim James. Giddens had written the tune as raw gratitude – the sessions were her first collaboration with that sort of rock-star company. “This was my gift,” she says, telling them, “ ‘You were all so good to me.’ ”

“Angel City” is the climax of *Tomorrow Is My Turn*, Giddens' solo debut after a decade in the string band the Carolina Chocolate Drops. The rest of the record, produced by T Bone Burnett, is a spiritual archaeology of American racial and economic struggle via sublime covers of songs identified with Nina Simone, Patsy Cline and Elizabeth Cotten, among others. “Angel City” is now a thanks to “these women who came before,” Giddens says. “I'm standing on their shoulders.”

Giddens, 37, first shot to wider fame in 2013 with her regal vocal electricity in *Another Day, Another Time*, a Burnett-curated revue at New York's Town Hall celebrating the Sixties folk revival. “Great actresses have a quality where they get into a room and they're just into it, doing the scene without *doing* the scene – she had that,” Burnett says of Giddens, who studied opera at Oberlin Conservatory. He claims he first proposed doing a solo LP with her at rehearsals for that show.

Married and a mother of two, Giddens grew up in Greensboro, North Carolina, born into the kind of stories she tells on *Tomorrow* and her four albums with the Drops. A great-grandfather was a rum runner. When her white father and black mother wed, “it was a huge deal, even for Greensboro,” Giddens notes grimly. “They had to go to another town to get a license.”

Founded in 2005, the Carolina Chocolate Drops were a dance band with a mission, excavating the personal histories and historical narratives, black and white, in folk music. Giddens, still a member of the group, recalls talking with choreographer Twyla Tharp about a dance Tharp based on the Drops' version

of “Ruby, Are You Mad at Your Man?” by the old-timey singer Cousin Emmy: “She said, ‘I want to know, who's Ruby?’ I realized Ruby represents these women like Emmy who have done so much amazing music before me. So when T Bone asked me, ‘What is the record of your dreams?’ I said, ‘Finding Ruby.’ That's what I want to do.”

**T Bone Burnett, who produced Giddens' LP, compares her to a “great actress.”**

PHOTO (COLOR): TANGLED ROOTS Giddens onstage in 2014

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