

## WATERMELON SLIM & SUPER CHICKAN - Okiesippi

A clear message that it is back to the blues. By Al Hensley.

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WATERMELON SLIM & SUPER CHICKAN\*

\*Okiesippi Blues\*

/Northern Blues/Only Blues Music/

This hillbilly blues meets Delta blues collaboration between Oklahoma musician William Homans (Watermelon Slim) and Mississippi bluesman James Johnson (Super Chickan) sends a clear message to fans of the former artist that he has returned to the blues after recent dalliances in country music.

A nephew of noted Delta blues musician Big Jack Johnson, Chickan shares with Slim a common background in truck driving, hence the opening track 'Trucking Blues'. Like so many cuts on this CD, it has potential enough to make you sit up and listen, but the meandering dialogue between the pair of singer/guitarists becomes tedious to the point where you're not tempted to hit the replay button. In 'I Don't Wear No Sunglasses', Slim declares "I don't take no five minute solos, but I still say what I've got to say", then proceeds to perform a seven-minute one chord duet with Chickan on 'Diddley-Bo Jam'.

It sounds like they're having fun but the workout doesn't go anywhere and soon wears thin on the listener. Original songs bearing cliché laden themes about jail houses, cotton fields, share-cropping, moonshine and getting mugged in Clarksdale, share space with Fred McDowell's 'Keep Your Lamp Trimmed And Burning'. In a creative piece, Slim plays George Harrison's 'Within You Without You' on kalimba segueing into his world music-flavoured 'Dinde'. Though Chickan has the down-home bluesier voice, Slim delivers some trenchant blues licks on harmonica and dobro.