

Neil Carswell, Sea of Tranquility -- review 4 stars!

In the liner notes to Good Man's Journey, Neil Carswell writes that his music combines "a heavy-metal approach with a back-porch vibe." I couldn't have described the man's down-home sound better myself. He also explores plenty of barely repressed pain and remorse in these 10 songs that sound a lot like latter-day Lynyrd Skynyrd in a nostalgic mood. Via songs about his childhood ("The Cain Preacher"), sobering up ("Ruby Jane"), pining for times long gone ("Malibu Days"), unspoken love between he and his parents ("Never Been Born") and even his old band, Polygram recording artists Copperhead ("Righteous Side"), Carswell wears his heavy heart on his beefy biceps - melding classic rock and southern soul with admirable grit and honesty. Along the way, the singer/guitarist is joined by buddies like Barry Goudreau (Boston), Johnny Neel (The Allman Brothers Band) and Stu Kimball (Peter Wolf). This is one of those albums from which you won't expect much - just take a look at the unfortunate cover - but Carswell emerges from this good man's journey scarred and triumphant. So will listeners. - Michael Popke, Sea of Tranquility -- review 4 stars!