

## Review: Hayes Carll tackles serious topics with droll humor

By STEVEN WINE    October 26, 2021



“You Get It All,” Hayes Carll (Dualtone Music)

The 6-foot-3 singer-songwriter Hayes Carll isn’t the only wry man in Nashville, or even the tallest. But his eighth album, “You Get It All,” shows why Carll is built to last.

His humor wears well, and droll observations fill the 11-song set as a counterweight to the serious topics he tackles.

The opener, “Nice Things,” says as much about the vexing state of the human condition as any nightly newscast, and does so from the perspective of a hitchhiking God. “Any Other Way” is a stoner’s foot-stomper that offers a philosophy for life and a shoutout for naps.

The big picture is also the subject of the bluesy “Different Boats.” “We’re all headed to the same sea,” Carll sings from the song’s bridge.

Co-producers Allison Moorer – Carll’s wife – and guitarist Kenny Greenberg help give the arrangements an appealing variety. Lovely acoustic guitar frames a poignant tune about Alzheimer’s disease, and Carll goes pure country mulling matters of the heart on a waltz duet with Brandy Clark, the song’s ambiguity underscored by the title: “In the Mean Time.”

Southern boogie and jazzy bass serve as launchpads for other explorations of domestic discord, and there's no happy ending. On the closing piano ballad, "If It Was Up To Me," Carll wistfully considers a wish list, his pitch-imperfect tenor somehow enhancing perhaps the prettiest melody he has ever written. He's funny that way.