

ON RECORD

Wilburys: Unassuming and fun

VOLUME ONE

The Traveling Wilburys — Wilbury Records (WB)

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Sun staff writer

This mostly-acoustic, styles-be-damned set of silly love songs is the result of collaboration between five famous rock musicians who've essentially never worked together — seriously together — before.

And yet it's as far from *serious* as it could be; that's what makes it a success.

Here's the essential breakdown: The Traveling Wilburys began when Bob Dylan introduced Tom Petty to George Harrison and Jeff Lynne at a concert in England last year, and they all got along famously.



Tom, George

Lynne spent the early part of 1988 in California, producing Petty's solo album (as yet unreleased), with contributions from Harrison and Roy Orbison. Dylan came along, too, and the idea for this ad hoc supergroup was born out of huddled late-night Chinese restaurant dinners and post-recording jam sessions. Strictly for the fun of it.

"Volume One" is refreshingly unpolished a group of songs as one is likely to find by a band of novices, much less by five seasoned veterans.

It is a playful record and yet is well thought out, with no pointless indulgences like jams, solos or instrumental tracks.

Unassuming and unpretentious, the Traveling Wilburys' album is the kind of record the overhyped and overrated "supergroups" of the past would have given their best press clippings to record.

The five artists' real names do not appear anywhere on the record jacket — only those of the fictitious Wilbury brothers.

The album's ten songs are credited as group compositions, and the lead vocals are shared evenly. Harrison is featured singing lead on three tracks (splitting the duties with Orbison on occasion). Dylan sings four songs (with assist from Petty), and the others take the spotlight one or two times.

The album is like that through and through — there are no stars, only tradeoffs on the lead vocals and a lot of group harmonizing.

The album has a communal, if-it-works-use-it feel, and is quite unlike the dueling ego trips one might expect from such a union.

In fact, it's impossible to tell just who the individual song writers might be — no songs are overly Dylan, overly Harrison, etc.

Harrison's slide guitar has never sounded as sweetly melodious as on "Handle with Care" and "Heading for the Light." Petty is in fine form with his tongue-in-cheek vocals on "Last Night" and on the verses of "End of the Line."

Orbison sings with his patented melodrama and falsetto on "Not Alone Any More."

Dylan, sounding the best he has in a long, long time, is ragged and endearing on "Dirty World" and "Tweeter and the Monkey Man."

The only sour note is struck with Lynne's production — he makes several of the arrangements sound like outtakes from his own Electric Light Orchestra, with loping rhythms and unnecessary sound effects that hinder the material. In fact, two of the songs here are greatly reminiscent of Lynne's production on Harrison's "Cloud Nine" album of last year — probably no accident; as that album was a smash hit.

But that's a small point, because the Traveling Wilburys' album is obviously not meant to be taken very seriously, and as such, it's easygoing and quite enjoyable.

GATOR GALLOP '88



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PARADE SECURITY



Oct. 28th
12:00
Noon

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