

Dylan, Petty, Orbison, Lynne and Harrison team up

Wilburys: Year's best collaborative effort

By CHAZ REPAK

Cavalier Daily Associate Editor

What the hell is a Traveling Wilbury?

That's the question that has been on the minds of anyone who has scanned an album release sheet in the last few months. The answer is merely the most exciting project in popular music this year.

The Traveling Wilburys are, according to the record jacket, Otis, Nelson, Charlie T, Jr., Lefty and Lucky Wilbury, the last descendants of a "remarkable sophisticated musical culture, considering there were no managers or agents." More specifically, the perpetrators of such a silly project are Jeff Lynne, George Harrison, Tom Petty, Roy Orbison and Bob Dylan.

The results are anything but silly. The Wilburys' music is a thoroughly enjoyable mixture of the musical styles of Lynne and Dylan, the two main influences on the album. Out of the five Wilburys come plenty of effective, if not overly poetic, lyrics. The best thing about the Wilburys is that the only reason they made the record was to have fun, which is obvious on each of the album's 10 tracks.

The first song, "Handle With Care," is already getting airplay as the record's first single. Originally recorded as the final track for Harrison's new European EP, it features Harrison's lead vocals and, as is true on each song, copious backups by the other four. It has much the same sound as Harrison's solo work *Cloud Nine*, which was produced by Lynne.

"Dirty World," with lead vocals by Dylan, is as rollicking a song as any on Dylan's latest record, *Down in the Groove*. The song is filled with ridiculous double entendres such as, "Won't you let me drive my pickup truck/ And



Tom Petty, one of the superstar rock singers in The Traveling Wilburys quintet. Petty, Bob Dylan, George Harrison, Roy Orbison and Jeff Lynne create a fine LP

park it where the sun don't shine." The prevalence of rhythm guitar would be striking — except that every member of the band plays rhythm guitar.

"Rattled" features Lynne's vocals, and calls to mind Lynne's Electric Light Orchestra in the early 1980s. For all his usual studio pyrotechnics, he puts together a great rockabilly song. Those who question Lynne's place on the re-

cord will be answered.

Those who still wonder about Lynne holding his own should consider that he is producing the latest solo works for the lead singers of the next two songs. Tom Petty sings lead on "Last Night," a laid-back tune about the requisite girl in the bar. It's not Petty's strongest effort, but it leads in well to Orbison's tour de force, "Not Alone Any More."

While it emulates the sweeping style of Orbison's work in the 1960s, including the lilting strains of a harp and a piano, it avoids being grandiose. Instead, it showcases Orbison's still-remarkable voice. Were the single to be released, it would rightly serve to fuel Orbison's comeback in a big way.

The second side opens with "Congratulations," a glorious piece of garage rock. The vocals en masse are raw but polished, Dylan's nasal twang guiding the song. It is remarkable that even after the thousands of songs the five Wilburys have written in their respective careers, they still sound convincing when they sing about love, and especially about losing it: "And if I had the chance to win ya back again/ I'd do it differently but what's the use to pretend."

Dylan takes another turn at the mike for "Tweeter and the Monkeyman." Surely a Dylan composition, it is a story about two outlaws on the run, true to Dylan's proven belief that a song does not need a happy ending. The backup vocals of the other Wilburys give the song a more lyrical quality, and lighten the tone of an otherwise somber song.

"End of the Line" takes the opposite tack, bouncing from beginning to end. Each of the five trade lead vocals in a song which is essentially about the sheer pleasure of being alive.

The Traveling Wilburys is a sheer listening pleasure. It represents the work of five great musicians who enjoy their work together so much that a Wilbury movie is in the works. They truly deserve the moniker "supergroup." If the listener does not like one of the five members, rest assured the other four are just as prominent.

As the record jacket says, "Good listening, good night and thy Wilbury be done . . ."