

Sundate

THE SOUND PAGE

REVIEWS BY SAW TEK MENG

CASSETTES

POP/ROCK

□ **THE TRAVELING WILBURYS** — *Traveling Wilburys Vol 1* (WB): Though this is their debut recording, the Wilburys have been responsible for some of the most vital albums of the past 25 years either singly or with others. Who are they?

To any self-respecting rock fan, the cover is

Have Wilbury, will travel

a dead giveaway. Though the credits list their names as Lucky, Otis, Charlie T. Jnr, Lefty and Nelson, their faces reveal them to be Bob Dylan, Jeff Lynne, Tom Petty, Roy Orbison and George Harrison.

Some supergroups have failed to live up to the promise of the talents involved but this is happily not the case with the Wilburys. The album is truly enjoyable, with the keynote being fun.

The five were obviously in high spirits and good humour when they got together. All the songs are great, with some being send-ups and parodies, especially two of Dylan's compositions, *Dirty World*, a spoof of Prince with hilarious *double entendre* lyrics, and *Tweeter and the Monkey Man*, a captivating, if melodramatic, narrative with imagery and characters that could be a light-hearted poke at the New Jersey of Bruce Springsteen and Tom Waits.

Dylan's other song, *Congratulations*, is a ballad underlined with the sarcasm that only he can do so well. Lynne also has two wonderful contributions, the rockabilly *Rattled and Not Alone Any More*, which he wrote for Orbison as sort of a sequel to the latter's classic *Only The Lonely*, while *Heading for the Light* and *Handle with Care* are so Beatlish in tone, they could only have been the work of Harrison.

Can't wait for Vol. 2.

□ **ORCHESTRA MANHATTAN** — *Digital Chartbusters* (Manhattan): This is the third Orchestra Manhattan release, the first being *Broadway* and *Digital Christmas*. As indicated by the title, the orchestra has now turned

its attention to pop chartbusters, among them *Michelle*, *Lady*, *Just the Two of Us*, *Dancing on the Ceiling*, *That's What Friends are For*, *C'est La Vie*, *Sweet Caroline*, *All Night Long* and *Caught in the Rapture of Love*.

I can live without most of these songs in their original guise. To turn them into MOR instrumentals makes them even less attractive. But then a lot of people like such instrumentals. So you pay your money...

JAZZ

□ **STEVE MILLER** — *Born 2B Blue* (Capitol): Miller has always had a feeling for the blues, even when his music is as poppish as could be. Here, he tries his hand at jazz standards and comes up trumps.

Working with the likes of keyboardist Ben Sidran, bassist Billy Peterson, vibraphonist Milt Jackson, alto saxophonist Phil Woods and tenor saxophonist Bobby Malach, Miller has created piquant, if largely low-key, readings of tracks like the Disney classic *Zip-A-Dee-Doo-Dah*, Billie Holiday's *God Bless The Child*, Ray Charles' *Mary Ann*, Horace Silver's *Filthy McNasty* and Mel Torme's *Born to be Blue*.

In the liner notes, the singer-guitarist writes, "To me, blending jazz and pop is a natural progression." Maybe so, but few pop musicians have shown such an affinity for jazz and blues as Miller has in this very fine album.

□ **CHUCK MANGIONE** — *Eyes of the Veiled Temptress* (CBS): Great title, pity about the



music. Like so many fusionists, Mangione has "crossed over" so far into pop terrain that he couldn't find his way back to jazz-land even if you showed him the way.

The tame music here is filled with hackneyed pop melodies and just so you know where he's at, two tracks feature vocals in the tradition of pop-R&B-fusion.

□ **THE CRUSADERS** — *Life in the Modern World* (MCA): It can't be easy for this once-great band, a primary pioneer of jazz-funk, to try and come to terms with life in the modern world, especially since the longtime operating trio (they started out as a quartet) is now reduced to a duo with the departure of drummer Stix Hooper.

But pianist Joe Sample and saxophonist Wilton Felder are excellent musicians, even if Sample has been off-form of late, and together with various back-up men, they do well enough to make *Modern World* a competent, if uninspired, outing.

BEST SELLERS

THE Escape Club's *Wild Wild West* reached the top of the single pop record charts in the United States last week, kicking the Beach Boys' two-week-old spotlight star *Kokomo* to fourth place.

Bad Medicine by Bon Jovi moved up a notch to second place and U2's *Desire* hopped from fifth to third position on the Cash Box Magazine chart.

Fifth was *Kissing A Fool* by George Michael, advancing three points, and *Breathe's How Can I Fall* took sixth spot, also moving up three steps.