Superb memento of talented group

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Record Review

One of the very best album releases in recent months, if not THE best has been "Traveling Wilburys, Volume 1" by the Traveling Wilburys.

The Wilburys are a group of superstars who assembled for the fun of recording together and ended up producing a near masterpiece.

The quintet of ex-Beatle George Harrison, Electric Light Orchestra supremo Jeff Lynne, Bob Dylan, Tom Petty and the late Roy Orbison composed all ten songs, with Harrison and Lynne handling the production. Because they enjoyed making the album, and were encouraged by the media and public interest they named it "Volume One" with the intention of working together on further projects. However, the group was so shaken and disheartened by the death of Roy Orbison they decided to disband. The "Traveling Wilburys" album is therefore likely to stand and remain as a superb memento to a richly talented musical gathering on which every member excelled himself.

For example Bob Dylan has not sounded as good for years. His "Tweeter And The Monkey Man" is one of his best-ever numbers and certainly the strongest since "Hurricane" in 1976. It is a really catchy song with the Wilburys joining in with harmonies on the chorus.

George Harrison's songwriting is at its best level for nearly 20 years on numbers like "Handle With Care," "Not Alone Anymore" and "Heading For The Light." "Not Alone Anymore" is especially impressive, with Roy Orbison's vocals adding that special sparkle. I am only assuming that Harrison and Dylan composed these particular tracks, as all titles are credited to the fivesome, but having followed their musical styles so closely over the years it seems a safe bet!

Clever

Jeff Lynne's epic songwriting ability and distinctive production work is also very striking, but there are some numbers like "Last Night," "Margarita" and the latest 45 "End Of The Line" where the writing credits are less clear-cut and it seems likely that there was a great deal of collaboration on these fine songs.

Beggars Banquet have issued the last of the trio of Ivor Biggun comedy albums on Compact Disc, to complete the collection. The disc in question is "Partners In Grime" which was only released on the LP record and tape formats just over a year ago. Ivor is better known as Doc Cox who appears on "That's Life." He has a wicked way with words and is a clever tunesmith, but these songs are strictly for the adults. The guest list includes Captain Sensible, Judge Dread and Screaming Lord Sutch who is the leader of the Official Monster Raving Loony Party!!

Doc has been greatly influenced by the musical style of George Formby but the highlight here is a hilarious send-up of David Bowie's "Space Oddity." The disc has two bonus tracks which are "live" versions of earlier songs performed at "The Swan" on Fulham Broadway.

Donna Summer is deservedly back in the charts again with a great Stock-Aitken-Waterman number entitled "This Time It's For Real," while Madonna ends her long silence with "Like A Prayer" which is the title song for her new LP due out on March 20. It is also being used on a television soft-drinks advert.

The Traveling Wilburys

LP CHART

1. A New Flame (Simply Red).
2. Anything For You (Gloria Estefan).
3. Ancient Heart (Tanita Tikaram).
4. The Big Area (Then Jerico).
5. The Raw And The Cooked (Fine Young Cannibals).
6. Spike (Elvis Costello).
7. Hysteria (Def Leppard).
8. Mystery Girl (Roy Orbison).
9. Wanted (Yazz).
10. Remote (Hue And Cry).

Bob Woodhouse