

ALBUM CHARTS

Popular

1. **Vanilla Ice**
To The Extreme
2. **M.C. Hammer**
Please Hammer Don't Hurt 'em
3. **Mariah Carey**
Mariah Carey
4. **AC/DC**
The Razor's Edge
5. **Paul Simon**
Rhythm Of The Saints
6. **ZZ Top**
Recycler
7. **Wilson Phillips**
Wilson Phillips
8. **INXS**
X
9. **Vaughan Brothers**
Family Style
10. **George Michael**
Listen Without Prejudice Vol. 1

Rhythm & Blues

1. **M.C. Hammer**
Please Hammer Don't Hurt 'em
2. **L. L. Cool J**
Mama Said Knock You Out
3. **Too Short**
Short Dogs In The House
4. **Keith Sweat**
Keith Sweat
5. **Mariah Carey**
Mariah Carey
6. **Vanilla Ice**
To The Extreme
7. **Tony! Toni! Tone!**
The Revival
8. **Whispers**
More Of The Night
9. **Johnny Gill**
Johnny Gill
10. **Bell Biv DeVoe**
Poison

— Billboard

THE RATINGS

- — miserable, boring
- — mediocre, bland
- — enjoyable
- — insightful, laudable
- — exhilarating, divine

Using abilities to their advantage

Traveling Wilburys

Vol. 3

Warner Bros./Wilbury Records

●●● 1/2

Superstar musicians have formed bands and released pointless, mediocre records just too many times — look to Asia for a shining example. That's one reason the Traveling Wilburys' outstanding 1988 release, Vol. 1, was such a breath of fresh air. With their latest, Vol. 3 (don't ask what happened to Vol. 2), the Wilburys have beaten the rap not once, but twice.

While many expected the Wilburys to go the way of the Sex Pistols in the wake of Roy Orbison's (a.k.a. Lefty Wilbury, to whom Vol. 3 is dedicated) death, rock giants Bob Dylan, Tom Petty, Jeff Lynne and George Harrison have gone on to make an even more cohesive album than their debut.

The downfall of most superstar bands is that individual egos get in the way — the "I'm-a-star-so-I'm-godlike" attitude. But, forgetting their star identities behind Wilbury aliases (by the way, not the same Wilbury names as on Vol. 1), the members have unleashed another set of undeniably fun tunes that uses their collective abilities to full advantage.

Though each of the Wilburys makes strong contributions to the album, Vol. 3 seems to be more Boo Wilbury/Bob Dylan's record. Dylan spends more time on lead vocals than the rest, and many of the tunes have that classic Dylanesque feel. Notice that Boo/Bob is the only member on the cover not wearing sunglasses. Maybe he's making up for his lame last album.

The supporting cast for the new album remains largely intact from Vol. 1. Drummer Jim Keltner, saxophonist Jim Horn and percussionist Ray Cooper are back to lend a hand. And, as before, Harrison and Lynne (Spike



Spike Wilbury/George Harrison, Boo Wilbury/Bob Dylan, Muddy Wilbury/Tom Petty, Clayton Wilbury/Jeff Lynne

and Clayton Wilbury, respectively) take on production chores. The new songs are in much the same vein of those on Vol. 1, but the scope of the musical influences looks a bit more towards the late '50s and early '60s for inspiration, a musical journey *a la* Billy Joel's *An Innocent Man*.

Vol. 3 leads off with the chug of the barroom stomp "She's My Baby," the first single. The Wilburys are loose and ready-for-fun here, one reason the album works so well. For the sizzling guitar leads, the band recruits axeman Gary Moore. A hoot and a holler are vital on the album's first listen, with lyrics like "She's got a body for business/ Got a head for sin/ She knocks me over like a bowling pin" (sung by Harrison).

The tearjerker on Vol. 3 comes with "You Took My Breath Away," a tribute to Orbison. In tribute to the man said to have the greatest voice ever, the Wilburys have crafted an

Orbison-type tune, though an octave down from Orbison's near-operatic range. Lefty is missed on Vol. 3, but the rest of the band has managed to overcome and move on.

For "Wilbury Twist," everyone is invited, but be advised to check your brains at the door. Since the first few B-52's albums (long before *Cosmic Thing* made the band an AOR staple), few bands have managed to have this much fun on a record. Each member takes a turn at the mic while this house-rocking, piano-laden song rumbles along. Lines like "Put your hand on your head/ Put your foot in the air/ Then you hop around the room/ In your underwear" will inspire the Tom Cruise in all of us. If you can't get the footwork down, check the liner notes for pictorial directions.

Picture the Traveling Wilburys on an open freight car, jamming away on the tracks, and you've got a good first impression of "Poor House." While

the song steals a key guitar line from Paul McCartney's "Uncle Albert," its country'n'western, foot-stomping frolic will have you singing along.

"If You Belonged to Me" finds the Wilburys in a folkish mood, utilizing Dylan's rough voice and harmonica for authenticity. "Inside Out" sounds a bit like Vol. 1's "Handle With Care," though with strong E.L.O. tendencies. The best moments here find Dylan and Petty (Muddy Wilbury) trading wry lines in their distinctively reedy voices.

The Traveling Wilburys firmly establish their identity as a musical force over Vol. 3's 11 cuts. Dylan, Petty, Harrison and Lynne have managed to avoid not only the superstar jinx, but also the sophomore jinx. If you liked Vol. 1, you'll get a thrill out of Vol. 3. Have Wilbury, will Travel. Destination: the Top 40 and a place in rock history.

— Brian Springer

They're growing up — but still keeping it simple

The Buck Pets

Mercurotones

Island Records

●●● 1/2

With their eponymous debut, The Buck Pets redefined the garage-band sound. The Buck Pets was chock-full of songs that were chock-full of distortion and unique lyrics. Although it sometimes bordered on metal, this straight-ahead rock album took the garage-band sound to new heights.

Well, it's 1990, The Buck Pets are back, and they have grown up. A little.

MIKE LONG

Albums

The band's new album, entitled *Mercurotones* (the CD itself is labeled *Mercurochrome*. Get it?), shows that getting out of the garage exposed the band to a new style of music. The straight-ahead rock attitude is still there, but new elements have been added.

The album displays influences by other former garage bands like The Replacements and Soul Asylum. The "wall of distortion" sound is now backed by melodies, although the same-down-to-earth, homey lyrics are there.

The foursome of Chris Savage (guitar), Andy Thompson (vocals and guitar), Tony Alba (drums) and Ian Beach (bass) has taken its original sound and improved it. Sort of.

The album opens with "Moon Goddess," a rockin' little number that grabs the listener's attention. "Some Hesitation" has an acoustic riff obviously influenced by Jane's Addiction. "Libertine" adds horns to the guitar-play and really stands out, and "Brother" has a psychedelic feel that may give the listener a severe headache.

But the best song on the album is "Five O'Clock or Thursday," a slow song that carries on the same grunge-guitar sound as the rest of the album. The Buck Pets are the masters of the "power ballad." The best songs off The

Buck Pets were the slow ones, and the same goes for the group's latest album. "Shameless" and "Hey Sunshine" are two other nice slow songs on *Mercurotones*, but they can't touch "Five O'Clock." The music is great and the lyrics are even better: "I checked my horoscope/ I double-cross my words/ I held my head in my hands/ And I tried to sleep/ I held my head in my hands/ Just to sleep in your lap like a cat/ Now it's up to you."

As mentioned earlier, The Buck Pets produce unique lyrics. The words are pictures from everyday life that almost anyone can relate to. The love songs have simple, elegant words that work great on unsuspecting women. Other songs relate things that have happened to the band members; one great example from the song "Ave. F

Blues:" "I walked through the door/ My friend Chris was watching/ A TV show about some small town/ Where the dancers get cancer/ Just from drinking the water/ He turned it off and we walked out."

I love fiery, politically and socially relevant lyrics, but the simple lyrics of The Buck Pets display a whimsically apt change of pace.

Yet *Mercurotones* is not as good as the band's first album. The spirit is there, but it doesn't work. I don't know if it was outside influences or the new producer that did it, but the band doesn't live up to its potential. This is by no means a bad album, it just isn't the group's best work. It is, nevertheless, straight ahead rock'n'roll sure to please the discerning listener.