

Music Review: Trio of singer-songwriter-guitarists creates plenty of chemistry as Headliners



Big Yellow Dog Music/Associated Press - This CD cover image released by Big Yellow Dog Music shows the self-titled release for the World Famous Headliners.

By Associated Press, Updated: Monday, August 20, 9:41 AM

World Famous Headliners, "World Famous Headliners" (Big Yellow Dog Music)

Three singers. Three songwriters. Three guitarists. That should be three strikes against the World Famous Headliners.

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Instead, the chemistry created in this collaboration is captivating. Big Al Anderson, Shawn Camp and Pat McLaughlin — with plenty of help from bassist Michael Rhodes and drummer Greg Morrow — have made an album that justifies the band’s hyperbolic, tongue-in-cheek name.

The group, Anderson’s first since NRBQ, employs an unusual approach to song arrangements: Anderson, Camp and McLaughlin often sing in unison. That may have helped avert a clash of egos, and it definitely gives the record a distinctive stamp. And when the trio transitions from unison to three-part harmony, it’s goose-bump good.

There’s tasty guitar throughout, and the composer cooperative — with every song credited as a three-way effort — produces first-rate material with plenty of variety. “Give Your Love To Me” is loose, ZZ Top-style boogie, “Can I” soars over a Tom Petty-esque guitar bed, the slow waltz “Take Me Back” recalls The Everly Brothers and the closer “Ding Dong” is ‘50s rock worthy of Leiber and Stoller.

These Headliners deserve boldface type.

CHECK THIS TRACK OUT: The swampy country blues “Too Fast For You” benefits from scooped vocals and ragged but joyous three-part harmony, which give way to a couple of LOL guitar solos.

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