



Recent Grammy winner and versatile performer Harley presents a compilation of 12 songs sure to have listeners grooving and giggling. The tender “You’ve Got to Ask” puts a sweet sound to the embarrassing things that can happen if one doesn’t ask “stupid” questions. “To the South Pole” is a traveling cowboy song—acoustic, guitar, yodels and all—that serves as a kid’s note to his mother explaining why he’s run so far away from home—something to do with a glue gun and a drill: “I didn’t know about the carpet/ I didn’t know about the sink/ I didn’t know that the cat would do that/ I didn’t know that the paint was pink.” And of course, “Barbie’s Head Is Missing,” chronicling a brother’s torture of his sister’s dolls, and “You Save My Life,” about the best kind of best friend, contain the laugh-out-loud humor school-age kids crave. Throughout, Harley is accompanied by solid musicians that help him easily shift from blues to rock to a reggae/Caribbean sound and back again and is also backed by the polished sounding Rhode Island’s Children’s Chorus.

Booklist

In this pleasing album, Bill Harley performs 12 original songs, including "Barbie's Head Is Missing," "Bella Bella Tula Monga," and "You've Got to Ask," which wittily addresses pressing kid situations that make it more embarrassing not to ask. Other tunes include "To the South Pole" (the metaphorical destination of an exiled mischief maker), "Sleep the Whole Day Through" (the mystery of the ever-slumbering teen sibling), the hilarious "You Saved My Life," and the library-friendly "At Your Library." Harley and friends (including a children's choir and blues guitarist Duke Robillard) move expertly through the diverse musical styles, ranging from Caribbean and Cajun to country and western and rock. The blend of music and lyrics is enormously appealing in this splendid CD, worthy of repeated listening. —*Paul Shackman*