

## Roy Orbison – Mystery Girl (1989)

Written by bluelover

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01. *You Got It* 02. *In the Real World* 03. *(All I Can Do Is) Dream You* 04. *A Love So Beautiful* [play](#) 05. *California Blue* 06. *She's a Mystery to Me* 07. *The Comedians* [play](#) 08. *The Only One* 09. *Windsurfer* 10. *Careless Heart*

Roy Orbison's comeback started in 1986, when David Lynch used "In Dreams" for a pivotal sequence in his masterwork *Blue Velvet*. So mesmerizing was Dean Stockwell's pantomime of the 1963 hit that Orbison soon became in demand. He re-recorded his hits for a collection naturally called *In Dreams*, he gave a star-studded concert called *Black & White Night*, and then he began work with ELO leader Jeff Lynne on a comeback album. The duo tabled the album to join the supergroup the Traveling Wilburys, a collaboration with Tom Petty, George Harrison, and Bob Dylan that turned into a surprise smash in 1988. Once that record began its run up the charts, Lynne and Orbison completed the album that became *Mystery Girl*, but the record didn't come out until February 1989, a few months after Roy's tragic death. His passing colored the reception of the record, helping turn it into a genuine hit -- it peaked at five on Billboard's 200 and two in the U.K. and went platinum in both countries -- and while his death may have helped boost sales, it's likely *Mystery Girl* would've been a success anyway. Orbison, unlike any of his '60s peers, was an actual hot property at the end of the '80s, and he surrounded himself with collaborators who cared enough to showcase him at his best. Lynne is the best known of these and his contributions are strong, although perhaps a bit too redolent of the Baroque pop that became his trademark at the turn of the '80s: they're big, bright, and bold, slathered in harmonies and guitars, their over-production obscuring the songs' simple charms. "You Got It," the hit from the record, perfectly captures this characteristic, but so do the other Lynne contributions "A Love So Beautiful" and "California Blue," the latter in particular a very nice evocation of Roy's early-'60s balladry. "In the Real World," a song co-written by Will Jennings and co-produced by Heartbreaker Mike Campbell along with Orbison and his wife Barbara, is in the same vein, acting as an explicit sequel to "In Dreams," while "Windsurfer" touches upon a California pop Roy rarely attempted, and "The Only One," co-written by his son Wesley, evokes a nice southern soul groove. The two showy collaborations with U2 ("She's a Mystery to Me") and Elvis Costello ("The Comedians") garnered headlines at the time but are a shade florid -- Costello's melodrama edges out Bono & the Edge, because it respects pacing -- but T-Bone

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Burnett's "(All I Can Do Is) Dream You" is the real surprise, a nifty resuscitation of Roy's early rockabilly sides for Sun. The fact that all involved found a way to get a bit of swing into this attractive, overwrought pop illustrates just how handsome the whole endeavor is: it's designed as a graceful coda to a legendary career and, amazingly enough, it succeeds. ---Stephen Thomas Erlewine, AllMusic Review

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