Willie Nelson - Remember Me Vol.1 (2011)

01. Remember Me play 02. Sixteen Tons 03. Why Baby Why 04. Today I Started Loving You Again 05. Movin' On 06. That Just About Does It 07. This Old House 08. Sunday Mornin' Comin' Down 09. Smoke Smoke Smoke That Cigarette 10. Slowly 11. Satisfied Mind 12. Roly Poly play 13. Release Me 14. Ramblin' Fever

Willie Nelson wraps his unmistakable vocal cords around 14 country hits spanning 1946 to 1989, serving up mainstream yang to last year's collector yin, the T Bone Burnett-produced "Country Music" album. In that outing, equally dedicated to high points from country music's past, the Red Headed Stranger focused on more obscure gems that he and Burnett plucked from the country archives.

This time around, producer James Stroud envelops Nelson's elastic voice in tasty, staunchly traditional arrangements of George Jones' first hit ("Why Baby Why"), Tennessee Ernie Ford's signature No. 1 single ("Sixteen Tons") and Hank Snow's theme song ("I'm Movin' On"). Nelson and Stroud take a surprisingly jaunty stroll through Kris Kristofferson's "Sunday Morning Coming Down," then get things hot and swinging in Tex Williams' classic condemnation of the evils of nicotine, "Smoke! Smoke! Smoke! (That Cigarette)."

Nelson reaches deepest, however, when the tempo slows for Webb Pierce's "Slowly," Vern Gosdin's aching "That Just About Does It" and Merle Haggard's exquisite essay on the wounds love can leave, "Today I Started Loving You Again." At 78, Nelson reminds us that his deceptively effortless vocal style can still touch the heart. Volume II is due next year. --- Randy Lewis, latimesblogs.latimes.com

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