

## Four for the road

Albums for a long hot summer include the Parton/Ronstadt/Harris Trio and Timeless, featuring Diane Schurr.

BY DR. TANTALUS

Summer is a time for surfin' safaris, dancin' in the streets and walkin' on sunshine. Time to pull on your shorts and drop the "g" off your verbs. Forget the formal; roll down the top and cruise on into It's Better than Ever Street.

So let's talk about what keeps your car running five miles over the speed limit and

## Music

forget our troubles for awhile. As it happens there are some very classy women to help us with the task at hand.

*Trio* is the long awaited album from Dolly Parton, Linda Ronstadt and Emmylou Harris that lives up to, and occasionally exceeds, the high expectations that are raised by this combination of star-studded talent. Working in a mostly country vein, our heroines bring a light and restrained touch to their material, which ranges from the traditional to Phil Spector.

More remarkably, *Trio* is truly a collaborative effort, while each singer is allowed to display her own considerable abilities, a sense of harmony and unity is always maintained. In fact, despite the distinctiveness of their voices, the harmony on this album approaches the feeling of hearing a single voice.

Of particular note is Spector's "To Know Him Is to Love Him," Parton and Wagner's "The Pain of Loving You" and Linda Thompson's "Telling Me Lies." This is country without the corn and pop without the poop.

A slightly older release is Kate Bush's *The Whole Story*, a "greatest hits" collection from a performer who has not enjoyed the type of success in the United States that she deserves.

In comparison to other pop artists, Bush is rather *avante garde*. She is not constrained by the shackles of the verse/chorus dichotomy that dominates popular music as a whole. This makes the older songs on the album, some of which date back ten years, still sound fresh and new. If the strength of a record is the number of times you can play it without becoming violently ill, Bush wins hands down every time. Her music speaks to your heart; her lyrics to your head.

A more traditional popstylist is Whitney Houston, whose second outing, humbly



Illustration by E. Ann Hinds

titled "Whitney," has just arrived in your local store. Whitney's many fans will want to know whether this measures up to the zillion selling first album. Well, brothers and sisters, the diagnosis from this corner is that Ms. Houston will continue to get richer and richer after you discover that this album has enough hits to make Peté Rose jealous.

Of course, the Doctor remains suspicious of easy overnight success. However, Faithful Companion urged me to listen to this record and I must admit that she has her moments. (So does Faithful Companion, but that's another column.) One sour note: the liner credits are enough to make you gag.

Last, but not least, is Diane Schurr's 1986 release, *Timeless*. Although this record is older than the others reviewed in this month's column, Schurr was recently recommended by several wealthy patients after they caught her bravura performance at the Masonic Temple. Ah, the delights of the idle rich!

*Timeless* is an exploration of a particularly American musical past, from Gershwin to Porter to Ellington to Brubeck. And the result is not only a collection of songs whose legacy is timeless, but a performance as well by a singer of incredible range and sense of style, song and self. In Cole Porter's "Easy to Love" Schurr bounces around from one note to another, at apparently odd intervals, with an orchestra going a separate direction. So it appears that she also has an amazing sense of pitch as well. Jazz aficionados will be in pig heaven.

So let's crank up the sound — unless you are next door — and get those feet a' movin'. It's summer!



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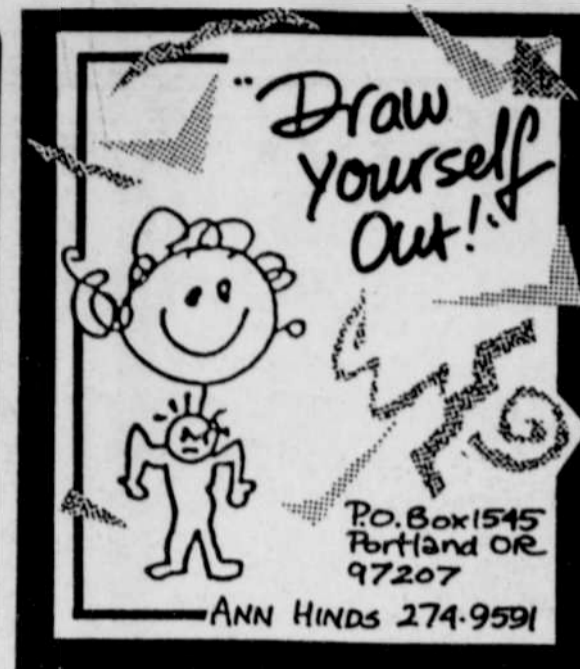
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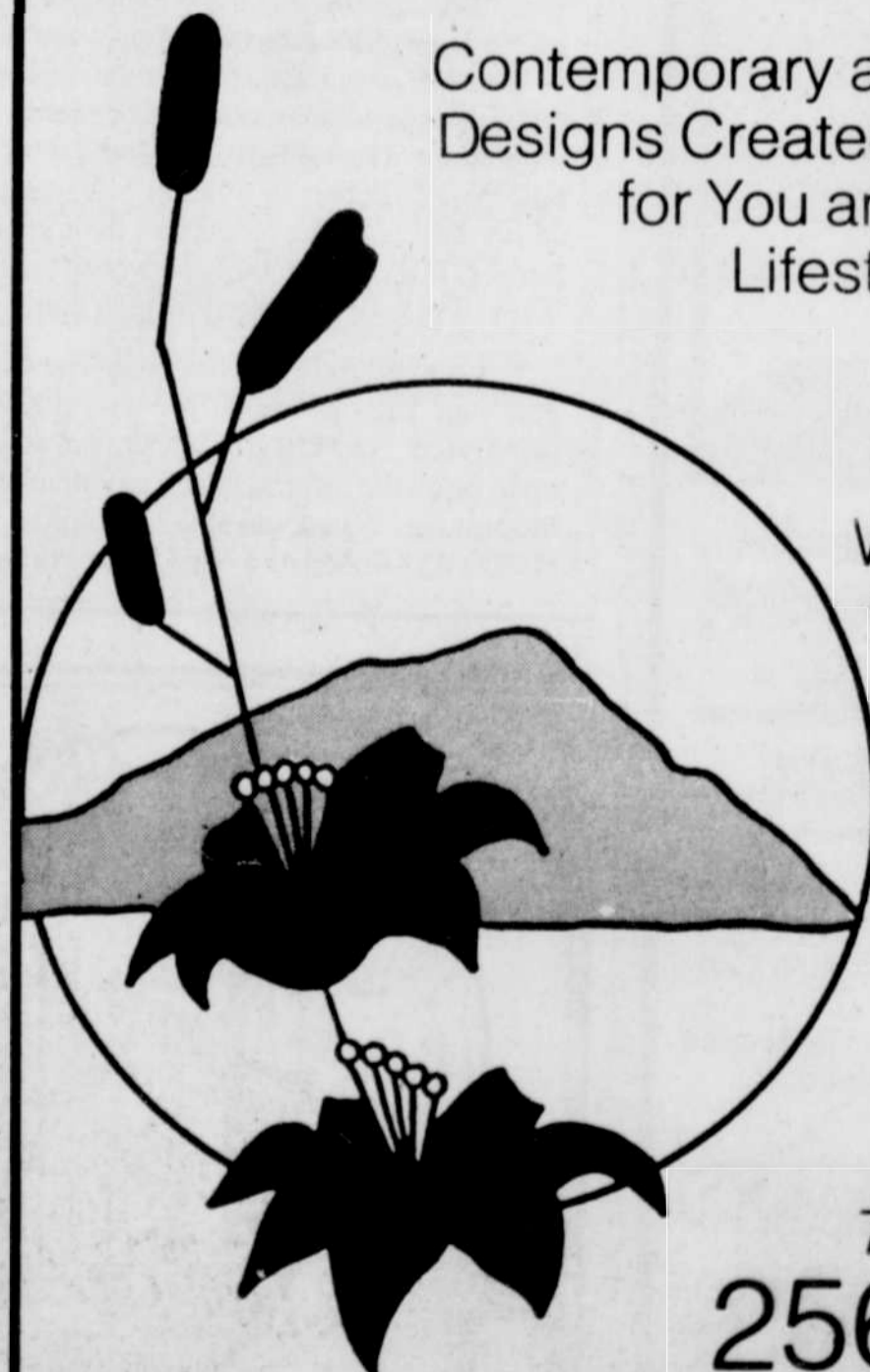


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