

THE HOOTERS DANCE AGAIN

The '80s band, always busy, ^{3/2/08} is 'Alive' and kicking **BY MICHAEL GILTZ**

The first studio album in 14 years from the Hooters is called "Time Stand Still." For a moment, it sounds like time has done just that as the opening track, "I'm Alive," jolts listeners back to the group's heyday in 1985 when they had a multi-platinum album, top 40 hits like "And We Danced," songwriting success on the smash debut of Cyndi Lauper and the world at their feet.

"The way we play and sing, we call it 'Hooterization,'" says Rob Hyman, the band's driving force alongside Eric Bazilian. They co-wrote nine of the album's 11 songs, which also include an elegant cover of Don Henley's "The Boys of Summer" and a track they wrote with band member John Lilley. Unlike some artists who think staying relevant means running from what makes you unique, the Hooters weren't afraid to make use of what they do best. Within reason.

"There are times when we'll do something and say, 'That sounds too much like us. It sounds like us in 1986,'" laughs Bazilian. "It has to sound like us, but not sound like something we've done already."

To a casual observer, the Philadelphia-based band might seem a classic one-hit

wonder. They had just one top 20 hit and one breakthrough album that sold 2 million copies in the U.S. They cut several more albums, without charting big. Yet in fact, Hyman and Bazilian have cut a wide swath in pop music, and their group (which still contains the original five members save for a bassist who joined in 1989) had respect from their peers far greater than their chart success.

That's why the Hooters can list a string of accomplishments like playing Live Aid, performing Pink Floyd's "The Wall" in Berlin with fan Roger Waters, and doing an Amnesty International tour.

And then there's the collaboration with other artists. Together and on their own, Hyman and Bazilian have worked on music for Lauper (including her standard "Time After Time"), Joan Osborne ("One of Us"), Mick Jagger, Ricky Martin, Journey, the Scorpions, Patty Smyth, Bon Jovi, LeAnn Rimes and many others.

But, for a while, the one collaboration that didn't work was with each other: After a break, the group began touring again in 2003 in Europe to enthusiastic crowds. Eventually, after some stops and starts on a new release, something clicked.



"When Rob and I got together in June of '06 to take stock of songs we had done separately and together, it was pretty obvious whatever creative blocks the two of us had we had gotten over," says Bazilian, who, like Hyman, is married and the father of three.

"We have our — I wouldn't even call them battles, we have our struggles. But

it's so clear now we have the same goal, the same vision."

The first step in reaching that vision? Turning off the cell phones.

"We literally had to take the phone off the hook and commit to each other," says Hyman, because of the demand from other artists for their skills. "We wanted to get it right." ♦