



# CYNDI LAUPER'S Time After Time

BY ROB HYMAN AS TOLD TO JON REGEN

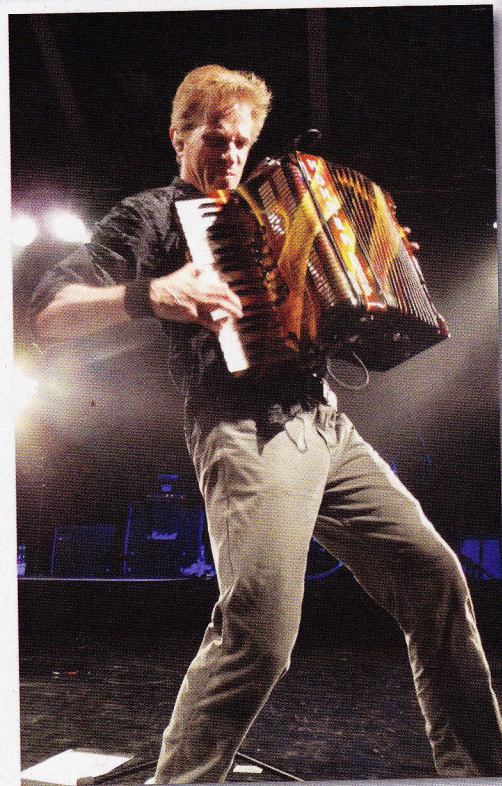
**WHO CAN FORGET 1984? APPLE INTRODUCED THE MACINTOSH, SONY AND Philips debuted the CD player, and a strikingly original singer and songwriter named Cyndi Lauper ruled the airwaves with "Time After Time." Nearly three decades and countless cover versions later, the song's co-writer Rob Hyman tells us how three words and a reggae riff would turn into a pop masterpiece.**

In the early '80s, I was playing clubs around Philadelphia with the Hooters, with an early sound influenced by the English "2 Tone" scene. I've always been a big reggae fan, and we borrowed a lot from bands like Madness, the Specials, the Police, and the English Beat. (We'd go on to play shows with many of those bands.) The '80s Philly scene was a thriving one, and after many failures, we were starting to achieve lift-off.

We took a break around 1982 to '83, and during that time, I got a call from my longtime friend and former college roommate Rick Chert-off, who had played drums with both Eric Bazilian and me. Rick had become a successful producer, first at Arista Records and then at Columbia,

where he was producing a new singer named Cyndi Lauper. Instead of hiring session cats, Rick wanted to create a band feeling around her to really dig in to the music. The Hooters were playing in New York at the late, great Bottom Line club, so Rick brought Cyndi and we met. Right from the beginning, we hit it off. At that time, we had a rehearsal space in the Manayunk section of Philly, and Cyndi was crashing on a friend's couch in the area. I'd pick her up everyday, and we jumped into creating her album. Eric, Rick, and I fleshed out demos with a LinnDrum for songs like "Girls Just Want To Have Fun" and "All Through the Night."

After months working in Philly, we moved to



**Rob Hyman co-founded the Hooters with Eric Bazilian and David Uosikkinen, and the band opened 1985's historic Live Aid concert. He built Elm Street Studios near Philadelphia in 2001, and continues to tour internationally with the Hooters. Find out more at [robhyman.com](http://robhyman.com).**

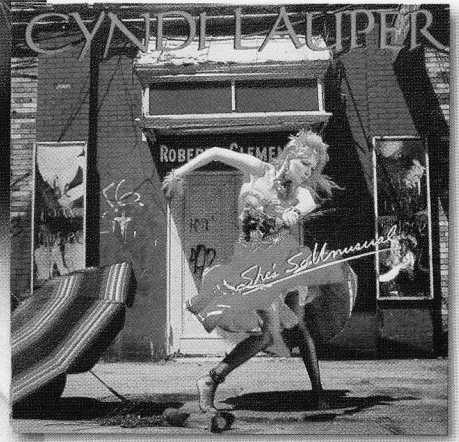


Ex. 1.

Ex. 2.

Ex. 3.

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New York City to do the big budget recording at the Record Plant, with Bill Wittman engineering and John Agnello assisting. Towards the end, we were pretty fried. We'd been working for months and felt like we were nearing both completion and exhaustion. Rick came in one day and said, "We could use one more song," at which point I was ready to shoot myself! [Laughs.] So a night or so after that, everyone went on a dinner break, and Cyndi and I, never having written together before, got to work.

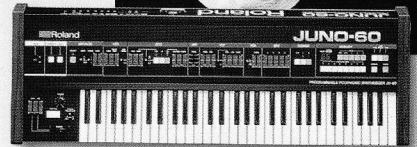
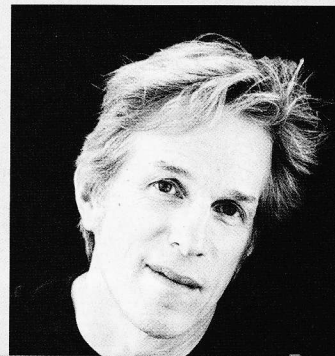
Cyndi had seen a listing in *TV Guide* for the 1979 Sci-Fi film *Time After Time*, which is what inspired the title. I started playing a bouncy reggae/ska feel on the piano around those three words. Her album had a lot of those influences on it, as did the Hooters, so that's what came to mind. **Ex. 1** is that first musical sketch, though it doesn't look much like the final song.

After that first idea, Cyndi and I started talking. We were each going through relationship turmoil at that point, and because we hadn't written together before, we were able to open up to each other in a way that you often can't with someone you know well. Soon, the song underwent a complete transformation—from a ska-like piece to something much deeper. The tempo slowed, and those moody verse chords and lyrics soon revealed themselves, with the melody following the chords. **Ex. 2** shows that slower feel, which I've recreated on the Roland Juno-60 with a pretty accurate version of the original synth patch. That pad served as the foundation for the entire track, along with Eric's lovely chorused guitar. It's a very minimal arrangement, which

served to showcase Cyndi's emotional vocal. The writing and recording of "Time After Time" were one and the same. We wrote everything in the studio at the 11th hour and then went straight to 24-track. The demo is the record.

The final musical element we needed was the bass line for the choruses. We had the verse, the bridge, the now-slower chorus, and all these lyrical images—everything was feeling great. We just needed to expand on the chorus. One thing that's interesting is that there's no bass on the track except on the choruses. I had the idea to add a reggae-ish bass line on the Juno in the choruses, which actually took the song back to where it began. **Ex. 3** is that bass line, played on the Juno-60. It really colored and supported the chorus in a strong way. Later, I added vocal harmonies alongside Cyndi. The blend of her sweet, soulful voice and my edgier, grainy tone created yet another interesting layer in the mix.

"Time After Time" was released on January 27, 1984 and went to number one on the *Billboard* Hot 100 chart. It was nominated for Song of the Year at the 1985 Grammys, with Cyndi winning the Grammy that year for Best New Artist. The funny thing is, I remember hearing the entire *She's So Unusual* album after we finished it and thinking, "This sounds so different than anything else. Where's it going to fit on the radio?" Goes to show how much I know! 🎵



## ROB ON THE JUNO

When I got the Roland Juno-60 around 1982, it was my new toy, but it's remained my favorite synth ever since. I'm not a big technical or MIDI guy, and the Juno was far easier to navigate than something like the Yamaha DX7, which involved menu pages and algorithms just to get a sound a little brighter. All I want is for a keyboard to sound good and be easy to use, and that's why I love the Juno. Its original memory only died a few weeks ago after all these years. Luckily, those programs are backed up on cassette . . . somewhere.

LISA SCHAEFER



Hear Rob play these examples on the same Roland Juno-60 he used on "Time After Time."

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