

The Phoenix, Rockin' Since 1968, Releasing Their 4th Tribute Album

Never Too Old To Rock 'n' Roll

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EINPresswire.com/ -- These days we have plenty of great older Rockers to remind us that we're never too old to Rock & Roll; Mick Jagger & Paul McCartney jump to mind. But sadly, there are also stark reminders that even those very young, or with youthful spirits, can leave us too soon; Hendrix, Morrison, Joplin, Jones & Cobain, all gone @ 27.

During an interview with The Phoenix, they spoke of a surreal feeling they had while recording their cover tribute to The Traveling Wilburys' End of The Line, "realizing Roy, George & Tom were there." The Phoenix knows, all too well, how fragile the life of a band and it's members can be. They lost their original drummer (Jim), had a guitarist (Rich) forced to quit due to health issues and recently the spouse (Dolores) of their guitarist and sound engineer (Don) passed away, leaving a palpable void in what they now refer to as their Phoenix Phamily.

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The guys have just completed their 4th album of tribute cover recordings. CD3 was dedicated to Dolores. She's featured on the inside cover and the last 3 tunes were planned, recorded and dedicated to honor and memorialize her sweetly joyful spirit.

Listening to them talk about their recording process, it's apparent they've been at this a long time and they clearly enjoy doing it together. The guys are mostly retired from professional



The Phoenix Phamily CD3 cover, insides & back - On the cover, clockwise from top left, that's Tom & Jan Staebell, Gene & JoAnn Fioretti, Dolores & Don Brown and Jimi & Nancy Hopewell

careers as business executives, engineers and even a MD cardiologist. They live all over, Chicago, Phoenix, Las Vegas and BC Canada, and yet, they manage to stay close and current through regular Zoom sessions. The band is not a money making endeavor for them, indeed they told me it's about constantly spending money and, more importantly, time doing what they love, making music together.

The fine print around the edge of their CD4 disc, like on CD3, says it well: "The Phoenix is a not-for-profit Rock & Roll Band established in Winona, Minnesota in 1968 and still recording their classic tribute performances for their own enjoyment and to share with Family, Friends & Fans..."

Btw, about the crazy graphic on the CD3 disc; it's an AI generated image of a rock band consisting of actual mythical flaming Phoenix birds. Apparently the guy that did it (Jimi) likes it, Don tolerates it, Tom doesn't care and Gene is embarrassed by "whatever it is." "A healthy consensus & resolution process," said Jimi, "that's a key element to keeping such a group of humans together for so long." The boys are still debating about another generative AI graphic for their CD4.

Having listened to all 3 of their CD's and after watching their videos on [their Facebook Fan Page](#) and [YouTube Channel](#), it's fair to say these guys are good. Some of the tunes they've covered are very demanding, especially the Moody Blues orchestrated pieces that they've meticulously reproduced,



AI Generated Graphic of Band of Flaming Phoenix Birds



Wall O'Pix in our Chicago Studio - The Phoenix band members, Tom, Don, Jimi & Gene + their mates, bottom right, Jan, Dolores, Nancy & JoAnn - also pictured with the Phoenix Phamily, is Rich Bauer, left middle and Ed Chabot, right middle

always with a spin of their own. It's impressive how they've been able to produce a recorded sound & feeling as though they were all in the studio together playing live. Their performances can be checked out on Facebook and YouTube.

From the beginning in 1968: Don (guitar), Gene (keys, guitar), Tom (bass), Rich (guitar) and Jim (drums), friends from Saint Mary's College, in Winona, Minnesota, formed The Phoenix rock band in the Fall of 1967. These were booming years for (what we now call) Classic Rock and these guys were in the thick of it; playing covers of their favorite band's hits for enthusiastic college crowds.

After graduation, as often happens, everyone went their separate ways across the US & Canada; embarking on their careers, getting married and starting families. Through it all, they kept playing with a string of other bands. As fate would have it, some of those bands were in Chicago where Don & Jimi (current drummer) met and played together for years.

2014: The unfortunate passing of The Phoenix original drummer, Jim Rauer, was a tragic catalyst bringing the guys back together and igniting the idea for a reunion. Don tracked Jimi down in Vegas and they set a date for a week long reunion filled with catching up and a whole lot of playing & recording.

Since then annual reunions followed in 2017, 2018 & 2019 (2020 was canceled. You know why). Each year the band recorded some of their old covers as well as some new work, including an original written by a friend from St. Mary's, Ed Chabot.

In order to keep the music going between reunions, the guys developed a process for recording remotely. They Zoom for about an hour a couple times a month to discuss all the tunes in process and what they're going to cover next. They have 25+ tunes on their radar screen that they've all agreed (not an EZ process) they're going to learn & record for CD5 which should be good to go around this time next year.

They strive for a holistic sound as though they were playing live together. It was a bit of a learning curve, but each contributor has equipment and ability to digitally record their performance then send tracks to the Master Mixer/Producer Extraordinaire - Don Brown who tirelessly works to keep things on track while building their mixes. Friends of The Phoenix have contributed their talents to their recordings as well - Ed Chabot, vocals and slide; Dan Nelson, vocals; Michael Sullivan, pedal steel; Richard Schoen, Jim Gilbert, Lisa Lombardy & Hunter Hopewell on vocals, to name a few. The guys always enjoy & appreciate having these talented performers on board.

To date The Phoenix has 78+ tunes in the can and 16+ music videos, which you can see on their Facebook Fan Page and YouTube Channel, with many more to come...

It's cool realizing these guys have been playing together for 56+ years; they definitely have a

strong brotherly bond centered around music which lifts their spirits and keeps them young at heart - Rock On!

Hunter James

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