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STYX

Styx, one of the most popular bands of the 70s and 80s, has returned with **Edge Of The Century**, their first studio album since 1983's **Kilroy Was Here**. While keeping true to the distinctive sound that won the band legions of fans, Styx have reemerged with some new ideas—injecting a fresh, vital note into their music. Styx is comprised of four original members, lead singer/keyboardist Dennis DeYoung, James ("JY") Young on guitar and vocals, John Panozzo on drums and Chuck Panozzo on bass, as well as new addition Glen Burtnik, a veteran musician, on guitar and vocals, replacing Tommy Shaw.

Styx has quite a formidable track record. Having made music together since they were kids in Chicago has paid off in terms of comradeship, success and viability. They have sold over 22 million records worldwide (**Grand Illusion** sold four million copies in the U.S. alone, three others have gone triple-platinum, two others are platinum and two are gold) and had seven Top 10 singles. Songs like "*Babe*," "*The Best Of Times*," "*Lady*" and "*Mr. Roboto*" have given Styx five Top 10 albums, and the music always had something important to say: **Kilroy Was Here** dealt with censorship and a Moral Majority-like zealot who bans rock music (things haven't changed much, have they?), and the band's 1981 release, **Paradise Theatre**, came under attack by fundamentalists who wrongfully accused Styx of incorporating backward-masked messages about Satan on the record; "Kilroy" was the rejoinder to that.

Following the release of **Kilroy Was Here**, the members of Styx went their separate ways. JY explains: "After all those years of success, we began to take what we had achieved together for granted. We each wanted to pursue a different musical direction, and we stayed in that mode until now. But," he continued, "the timing seems right to make music together again. Lord knows radio still plays our music a lot. In a sense, it's our fans who are responsible for this happening."

Chuck Panozzo states that "It's like coming back an extended family — something so many people try very hard to get. We're all good friends and we come from the same background — and we have something very special as a team."

Edge Of The Century, while not a concept album in the sense that **Paradise Theatre** and **Kilroy Was Here** are, nonetheless deals with themes that are germane to our inching toward the millenia. The title song, written by newest member, Glen Burtnik, captures the fears and apprehensions most of us face as we hurtle into the future in an era where events happen with incredible speed. "It just dawned on me that there's this big milestone we're approaching," says Burtnik of the song, "and like it or not, it's a time for reevaluation. There are a lot of things falling apart in the world, but I think there has to be a balance, a ray of hope. Life does go on, and for all the negatives, there are positives as well."

Dennis DeYoung, who produced **Edge Of The Century**, expands on his favorite themes, the loss of innocence and the search for something meaningful, in "*Show Me The Way*." Much of DeYoung's

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personal experience went into the song. "As you mature as a writer, I think you look back with a certain longing to recapture whatever it was that drove you in the first place, to be as excited about life and its possibilities as you were in your teens and twenties. '*Show Me The Way*' is a song about someone who has reached a point in his life where there's a certain amount of confusion as to what is and isn't valuable in life. He questions his own beliefs in myths and institutions."

Edge Of The Century also features the strong, driving sound that helped make Styx one of the biggest concert draws ever. Their live shows are legendary, and the band intends to continue that tradition. "Unlike recording in a studio," says John Panozzo, "you get immediate gratification after playing a song in concert. It's an incredible high to feel the audience respond to what we do." Recorded and mixed at the Chicago Recording Company in the band's hometown (they all still live in the Windy City), this is the first time that Dennis DeYoung has officially produced a Styx album, although, as JY notes, "Dennis has always been the band's creative leader and main songwriter. He's also our emotional leader and has the ability to get everyone charged up when we need it." JY also credits DeYoung for encouraging Burtnik, the newest member, to take a solid place in the foreground — **Edge Of The Century** features several Burtnik compositions and lead vocals.

How does it feel to be the new kid in town? "I enjoy working with these guys so much. Not to mention the fact that I feel pretty honored that my music's been embraced by them," says Burtnik. "This is a band that's made history with their music. I've only knocked on the door, and here I am working with these heavyweights — and they're not telling me to stand in the corner and play rhythm guitar. They're asking me to share of myself, and write songs and sing. That's a thrill."

Edge Of The Century reinforces what Styx fans have known all along — this is a great rock n' roll band with something to say. A lot of new listeners are about to discover that for the first time. Welcome to the **Edge Of The Century**.