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A TIME CAPSULE OF ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

**Prepared on the Occasion of the release of their
ninth album,
CORNERSTONE.**

Throughout the Nineteen Seventies, a rock and roll band called Styx has established itself as one of the era's premier musical attractions. Their tours have produced strings of sold-out appearances in major venues all over the world and Styx' records have regularly been awarded multi-platinum recognition. What was and is unique about the band is that all of this has been accomplished without massive media manipulation. Styx is the people's band. Their music like their audience taps into the mainline artery of dynamic musical energy. Its power is derived from an intuitive communication with the audience that is unequalled in the decade.

Styx' history begins in Chicago in 1963 when twin brothers Chuck and John Panozzo learned to play bass guitar and drums, respectively, and were joined by neighbor Dennis de Young on accordion. By 1968, the trio had added two guitarists, John Curulewski and James Young (J.Y.) and played in the Chicago area under the name The Tradewinds. In 1970, they signed with Wooden Nickle Records, an RCA subsidiary, and took the name Styx. "It was one of the hundred names we tried," remembers J.Y., "and it turned out to be the only one that none of us hated."

Four albums, *Styx I*, *Styx II*, *The Serpent is Rising* and *Man of Miracles*, were recorded and released at yearly intervals. Sales were minimal but the band kept itself alive gigging continuously. The crucial element for recognition, airplay, remained missing until WLS in Chicago began getting an unusual number of requests for a tune from *Styx II*, "Lady." When the song was played the station's switchboard lit up with requests to hear it again. "Lady" went on to be Styx' first national hit single and pushed the album from which it was culled to gold status.

A label switch brought Styx to A&M where the band and the company capitalized on the strong core of fans Styx had won for themselves. John Curulewski dropped out days before their first tour in support of *Equinox* was to begin. A frantic search for a replacement yielded Tommy Shaw, a youngster from Alabama with a mane of golden hair and a deft melodic touch on the guitar that was to provide the perfect counterpoint to J.Y.'s explosive rock and roll.

(over please)

1976 saw the release of *Crystal Ball*, the album on which Tommy Shaw made his recording debut with Styx. His writing and singing were to become as important to the band as his guitar playing proved to be on that first tour. A 200-date tour supported the album and honed the band to razor sharpness for its next studio effort, *The Grand Illusion*. Styx' seventh album, released on 7/7/77, was a landmark and on it the band began to realize its potential. Self-produced, the album is a carousel of kaleidoscopic images and produced the Top Ten single, "Come Sail Away." *The Grand Illusion* stayed on the charts almost two years and sold over 3 million copies. Canada proved to be the first market where Styx stepped up to the plateau of major concert headliners. *Equinox* had gone platinum there first and the band headlined its first major auditorium at the Forum in Montreal. For a band seemingly entrenched in the world of support acts, that night in 1977 was pure magic.

Pieces of Eight followed the next year. This album reflected a growing maturity and sophistication and was supported by Styx' first fully produced show, *The Main Event*, which because of the tour's length and intensity became known as "The Hurt Yourself Tour." Sales were spurred by the hit singles "Blue Collar Man" and "Renegade" to equal the continuing sales of *The Grand Illusion*. The audience acceptance of *Pieces of Eight* conclusively proved Styx superstar stature.

Cornerstone, Styx' ninth and newest album, demonstrates continuing growth. New styles and song configurations are incorporated into their expanding sound. The album was recorded in a small Chicago studio where no other major album has ever been cut. *Cornerstone* offers all the excitement and craft legions of fans have come to expect. From the tumbling fanfares that open the album on its first song, "Lights," through the gentle, folk-tinged "Boat on the River" to the raging rock of "Borrowed Time," Styx leaves no doubt of their prowess and professionalism. Supported for the first time by strings and horns, the band explores new textures. Their signature vocal sound soars out on the long tether of their supple musicianship. The moods range from explosive to plaintive, from raunchy to winsome. One radical departure from the past is "Babe," Dennis De Young's powerfully emotional song and Styx first-ever ballad.

Even before the release of *Cornerstone*, Styx had returned to the road bringing their music to the people. Although the show is precisely designed and rehearsed, each performer is given the incentive to stretch his creativity within the framework. Styx never fails to satisfy its audience. There are nights when it is magic but never nights when it is anything less than good. Styx have earned their success the hard way and they feel they owe a debt of excellence to the millions who have supported them. It is a debt they happily pay every time they hit the stage.

Without fanfare or hoopla, Styx have laid a rock-solid foundation during the last decade. Through hard work, unflagging enthusiasm and unvarnished talent, they have built an impressive edifice. And now they have delivered its *Cornerstone*.