

Styx & Cars drive through U.S.

by Mark Mehler

The differences between Styx and the Cars are more a matter of style than substance. Styx and their frontman, Dennis DeYoung, are flamboyant, classically-affected, almost effete (though they come from Chicago's South Side). The Cars and angular lead singer Ric Ocasek are diffident, un-theatrical and—dare we say it?—cool.

Substantively, however, they both lean toward rock & roll. Styx likes to flavor it with European classical forms, and the Cars with American R&B. So these two bands, the established and the up-and-comers, opened a two-month U.S. tour on October 20 at L.A.'s Forum (to a sold-out, 18,679-seat house).

The headliners, Styx, have added a new theatrical wrinkle: hydraulic lifts that hoist a piano onstage from beneath floor level. Following a show heavily dosed with material from their latest LP, *Pieces of Eight* (A&M), the label presented Styx with platinum awards at a party in the Forum Club.

The first few Styx-Cars dates have been uneventful. "You know," said a Styx spokesman. "Crowds of people goin' nuts, girls trying to get backstage, the usual."

The Cars, who will be taking time off the current U.S. tour for a European jaunt, recently had their debut LP certified gold. At a special performance for "friends" at L.A.'s Roxy on October 24, Stevie Nicks, Mick Fleetwood, Bruce Springsteen, and Leif Garrett were just a few of the rockers who helped the Cars celebrate.

Why the Styx-Cars duo? "The Cars were looking for the greatest possible visibility," says an Elektra/Asylum spokesman, "and they get it with Styx."



DeYoung and his fellow Styxers have had an "uneventful" tour so far: "Crowds goin' nuts, girls trying to get backstage."

Styx-ing it to 'em: John Panozzo, James Young, Tommy Shaw, frontman Dennis DeYoung and Chuck Panozzo in full blast.



Richard E. Aaron



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Styx' Young and Shaw: "The Cars were looking for the greatest possible visibility," says one observer. "They get it with *Styx*."



Jeffery Mayer/Rainbow

Songwriter Ric Ocasek exemplifies the Cars' decidedly new-wave visual stance—the perfect foil for *Styx*' neo-Brit approach.

Cars in overdrive: from left, Elliot Easton, Ben Orr, Ric Ocasek and drummer David Robinson, a former *Modern Lover*.

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