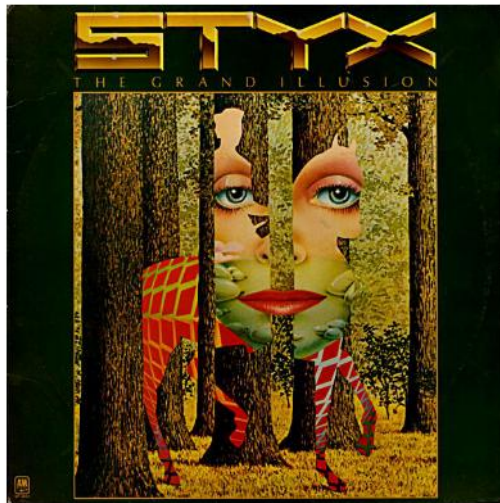


New Music On A&M Records



STYX — GRAND ILLUSION — Chicago's hard-driving quintet offers an adventurous musical opus for its 7th album, the third for A&M — **THE GRAND ILLUSION**. Composed and arranged around the general themes of identities lost and found, **THE GRAND ILLUSION** offers a more mature Styx performing lyrics and music which are by turns, symphonic, romantic, ironic and hard rock & roll. The album opens with Dennis DeYoung's majestic title track with its Medieval fanfares, which eventually becomes a strong rock & roll song concerning identity. This is followed by the first of the album's ballads — Tommy Shaw's *Feeling Yourself*, highlighted by the group's tight trademark vocal harmonies, which leads into a rousing rock & roll tribute to both the performer and the audience — *Superstars*. The side closes in spectacular fashion with the haunting ballad/rock opus *Come Sail Away*, which spotlights the keyboard stylings and vocals of Dennis DeYoung, against the dazzling ensemble work of the band. Side 2 opens with an ironic slashing rock number entitled *Miss America* by James Young — with its commentary on the popularity myth. This segues into Shaw's strong ballad

Man In The Wilderness. DeYoung's multi-mooded *Castle Walls* follows highlighted by some strong instrumental ensemble work, and a stunning blues guitar turn by guitarist Shaw. The album closes in grand fashion with the *Grand Finale*, a restatement of all the album's musical themes including the title track, *Come Sail Away*, and *Superstar*. **THE GRAND ILLUSION** sound encompasses the distinct but related styles of the group's trio of writers: Dennis DeYoung (keyboards, vocals and synthesizers); James Young (guitar and vocals); Tommy Shaw (acoustic, electric guitars and vocals); and drummer John Panozzo, and his bass-playing brother Chuck.

Produced by: Styx

Production Assistant: Barry Mraz

SP-4637—\$6.98 BT-4637—\$7.98 CS-4637—\$7.98

Styx can also be heard on A&M albums:
SP-4604 BT/CS *Crystal Ball*
SP-4559 BT/CS *Equinox*

Sound, fury: Rock music bursts forth

By JOHN WENDEBORN
of The Oregonian staff

Two elements of rock music burst full bore on the near-sellout audience of 3,000 Friday night in the Paramount Theater with headliner Styx providing the fury and Ambrosia the sound.

Styx, named after the River Styx in Dante's Inferno, chose an apt name for the band, its music a fiery, driving flow of high volume energy.

After some graphics displayed on a backdrop and a taped orchestral version of "Rhapsody in Blue," Styx leaped in and the show was off and running. It was sharply etched rock and roll, to be sure — booming music that had the crowd on its feet much of the time.

It's a five-piece with twin guitar lead backed by organ, bass and drums. While the rhythm section is a powerful unit, the guitars of Tom Shaw and James Young provided the fireworks out front. There seemed to be a surfeit of prancing around (in ultra-tight costumes) from the guitarists, but the searing solo and ensemble lines they played made up for that.

The group was steeped in tough rock and roll, but much of it had a progressive bent that left room for exploration with head music. Vocals were put together nicely, and the stage show was a treat to the eyes. Although no laser beams streaked across the Paramount ceiling, Styx did bring the ol' fog bit to life, covering the stage with dry ice fog for effect. Oh yes, a crystal ball, in deference to its latest A&M Records release, "Crystal Ball," was also part of the program.

OREGON JOURNAL, Portland, Ore. March 19, 1977

Styx has English flavor

By HOWARD JAFFE
Special Journal Writer

Ambrosia opened up an evening of rock and glitter before a capacity crowd at the Paramount Friday night. Sitting halfway into the balcony failed to absorb the trebly shrill of it all. Although the group professes to absorb diverse input into their music, including the classical influence of John Cage and the poetic illusion of Lewis Carroll and Kurt Vonnegut Jr., the wall of sound Ambrosia creates demands a Star Trek scanner for any meaningful analysis.

The highlight of the performance was a tune written by keyboard man Christopher North, "Time Waits For No One," colored by ominous synthetic overtones of imminent overloading, and choreographed prancing by guitarist David Pack and bassist Joe Puerta. The hit single, "Holding On To Yesterday," with B.B. King style guitar leads by Pack had the crowd screaming for an encore, the Beatles' "Magical Mystery Tour," showcasing frenetic organist North.

Styx entered against a backdrop of

urban skylines and themes from West Side Story. The group which took its name from Dante's River of Death, is noted for powerful, if somewhat histrionic vocals, while strutting around the stage with the sassiness of roller derby tarts. Guitarists Young and Shaw and Dennis DeYoung on keyboards are all strong vocalists who can handle lead work with little difficulty. Shaw and Young entwine lead instrumentals with the grace of vocal harmonies.

For a band borne and tempered in South Side Chicago, Styx has adopted the flavor of many English rock groups. "Celebration," in particular, is reminiscent in pace and melody to the Who's rock opera "Tommy." Many of the selections, including recent hits "Mademoiselle" and "Crystal Ball," bear the lilt and harmonies of English ballads.

Styx distinguishes itself from other hard rock groups with polished instrumentation and sensitive lyrics. The band's energy and showmanship is exhilarating without being overbearing. The River of Death is overflowing the AM cHarts.

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creem

February 1977



STYX
Crystal Ball
(A&M)

Nope, I won't deny it, I've liked Styx since I first heard their "Lady" single. The ferocious chords of that tune crashed out with a benign pomposity suggestive of Lucifer's Friend and other krautrockers of the day, and it was fine to hear music from the Old Country in my own Midwestern backyard. Then I saw Styx live, in support of Blue Oyster Cult, and the two groups seemed like respective editions of the same darkmetal professionals, before and after exposure to rock critics in the know.

Then, just last week, some jazzbo punched out "Lady" on the ol' juke while I was supping at a local pizzeria, and I got a double dose of Italiano sensuality—the Rockola-supercharged bass swoops of "Lady" merged with the boiling mozzarella/tomato sauce in my shaking viscera. Primasalsa, indeed.

So Styx was a rock 'n' roll legend in my own time long before I received *Crystal Ball*, and this reinforces my belief in Styx's mastery of the long-lost art of AM authenticity. Matter of fact, this set's "Mademoiselle" is starting to break hereabouts, and could be Styx's biggest since "Lady"—welcome to a new generation of the anonymous

fans of this most unknown band.

Styx are prime practitioners of pomporock: heavy on Dennis DeYoung's keyboards, strong but mannered vocals ("sweet mad-mwah-zelle"), Wagnerian guitar, "classical" overtones around every corner, and that's made \$\$\$\$ for ELO and Queen, hasn't it? But Styx are merely from Chicago, and can't attract those snobby pomporock fans, who require an organic British background to assuage their own insecurities.

Besides "Mademoiselle", the two side-openers of *Crystal Ball* are its strongest cuts: "Put Me On" sound & furies Deep Purple's "Smoke On The Water" one better, killermetalizing not just the mere recording of the song, but rather the humble consumer's audition thereof in the privacy of his own home; while "Shooz" is a straightforward rocker with hotshot guitar licks (lix?).

C'mon consumers, let's turn things around and make Styx the foremost rock reps of their native Chicago! Impeach those namesake jerks who've hid their ever-more-flaccid rock behind Columbia's gem-of-the-ocean respectability for too many years—Chicago would've been lucky to make it to *III* or even *II* if they'd had to struggle upstairs on labels like Wooden Nickel (don't take any more).

Richard Riegel

Styx Heats Up City Audience

PAIR MAGAZINE

Dallas, Texas

March, 1977

LUNCHING WITH STYX



Joe Abell

Cat Sundeen & Styx guitarist James Young

by CAT SUNDEEN

By the late Sixties the days of recording companies relegating artists to little more than indentured servant status had, for the most part, passed. Tales of horror about manager ripoffs and record royalties that never materialized were no longer the norm, as recording companies started taking an active interest in the welfare of their artists.

One group that suffered a bad "burn" and lived to talk about it is Styx. Happily, they are now signed to a first class label, and if sales on their much heralded *Crystal Ball* LP are any indication of their future, it's going to be 24 karat all the way.

"When our previous album went gold, we found ourselves in the position of being able to choose the label we wanted," explained Styx co-guitarist James Young, over well-mannered bites of the Fairmont's steak sandwich. To put it mildly, there was no love lost between the versatile Chicago showmen and their former management/label, Wooden Nickel.

Through the efforts of Kip Cohen, one-time manager of the Fillmore East, Styx came to the attention of A&M Records. "We received less front money and a lower royalty rate with A&M," Young continued, "but we wanted personal attention and an independent distributor. It was worth it."

Styx has wowed audiences everywhere they've played, with Dallas being no exception. All competent musicians, the double-lead group concentrate on their vocals.

"They're our strong point," Young acknowledged. "I think 'Lady' and 'Mademoiselle' combine the guitar work and vocals perfectly, though."

No longer a second-billed act, Styx now plays such houses as the Palladium and the Toronto Forum, where they headlined. The fame hasn't gone to their heads, however. Like any civilian music lovers, they do attend other performers' concerts (i.e., Queen. To quote Young, "They demand attention and they get it!").

More impressive, though, is their still-obvious humility. Said the blond guitarist, "I've eaten many a Thanksgiving dinner out of a paper box."

By Gene Triplett

Styx lived up to its name in concert Saturday night at the Civic Center Music Hall with a flaming river of original songs and white hot individual performances.

Named for the river of fire separating the Greek Purgatory from hell in Dante's "Inferno," this Chicago-based rock group has never set the album sales charts aflame but they are adept at heating up a live audience with tightly orchestrated, near-flawless renditions.

The two standouts were keyboardist-singer Dennis DeYoung and young newcomer Tommy Shaw on guitar and vocals.

The 22-year-old Shaw, a small, blond, boyish figure clad in yellow jumpsuit, bounced around the stage releasing incredible stores of energy in sudden bursts through the instrumental breaks. On "Loralie," Shaw rendered some buzz-saw slide guitar that churned relentlessly to a fever pitch, and then he tossed the metal slide-tube into the audience which caused a near dog-pile in the front section as spectators scrambled to catch the prize.

DeYoung proved a master on the Oberheim organ and a battery of synthesizer and acoustic keyboards, carrying the songs through lilting, velvety passages and the uptempo parts with rich musical color. DeYoung is also the strongest charismatic personality of the group, sometimes strolling out from behind his fortress of keyboard machinery to lead the vocals.

He has all the savoir-faire of a long-haired, rock and roll Sinatra, attired in natty, pale pink leisure suit and neckerchief, one hand tucked in jacket pocket while the other gesticulates to accent his phrasing.

He introduced "Mademoiselle" as a song "about some French Canddian ladies we happened to meet once on a tour," and the song began with an exhilarating cascade of dual guitars (by Shaw and the other guitarist

James Young) and vocal harmonies, which graduated to a frenzied and climactic finish.

Most of Styx' songs are marked by a flowing, melancholy instrumental introduction, then slam into upbeat, celebrative electric rock and roll.

"Crystall Ball," the title tune of their recent album, started off with a beautiful acoustic guitar solo (marred by hoots and whistles from those hyperactive members of the audience who can't sit still for some occasional mellow music) which built into a full-band rock jam with Shaw switching quickly to electric guitar for the finish.

They also played a similar song, "Come Sail Away," from their forthcoming album to be released in July, with DeYoung performing impressively on acoustic piano.

But "Midnight Drive" was an exception to the formula. Guitarist James Young's rough-edged voice was perfectly suited to this number, which was pile-driving rock and roll from start to finish.

And, of course, the latter part of the performance featured "Lady," with DeYoung belting out the familiar lyrics in a dynamic performance that brought a standing ovation.

The group preceding Styx, Angel, is a Washington D.C. based quintet with a penchant for glitter. They could be compared to Kiss in musical attitude, but their ability and imagination outdistances that group by a couple of country miles.

Clad in white satin, skin-tight suits, with hairdos that would put even Farah Fawcett in the shadows, they played a hard-strutting set of rock tunes without utilizing the myriad of other gimmicks.

Singer Frank DiMino was kind of like a highly amplified, raunchier version of Burton Cummings (of Guess Who fame) in his sound and delivery, and guitarist Punky Meadows, who could pass for a tall, glamorous female fashion model but for his heavy macho stance, played an impressive free-handed style of lead guitar.

FEB 18 1977

Styx: They're No Overnight Success Story

By DAVID McCORMICK

At 6 p.m. just two hours before showtime, four of the five members of Styx were snoozing peacefully in the sound-proofed calm of the Holiday Inn, far away from the ringing clamor of the Florida Gym, where the road crew was setting up. They all had good reason to be asleep, having gotten up at 3:30 a.m. for their flight from Chicago, but Tommy Shaw, the group's newest member, didn't look tired at all. He was pacing from one corner of the band's dressing room to another, blasting his new custom-made guitar through a pair of tiny Fender Champs standing on a table.

"I guess I should be asleep too, but I just got this thing yesterday and I can't stop playing it." Like any other guitarist, he could have talked all night about the particular merits of his axe, so it was hard to steer the conversation around to the subject of Styx.

Despite having joined little more than a year ago, Shaw was able to run through a quick history of the band. That history is an extraordinarily long one for a rock group. It began back in 1960 in the dingy steel mill district of Chicago with two twin brothers, John and Chuck Panozzo.

"They were the original members. They had this three-piece band going with another guy (Tom Nardin). Dennis DeYoung (the group's pianist and one of its three lead vocalists) heard them practicing right after he moved in next door, so he went over and auditioned and started playing with them.

"They played weddings and parties and that sort of thing as kids and teenagers all the way through the Sixties."

By 1969, the band, known then as TW4, had distinguished itself from the horde of dance bands in the Chicago area. John, Chuck and Dennis were enrolled at Chicago State University, where they found guitarist John Curulewski. Singer-guitarist James Young was added in 1970.

That was a big year for the group, in which they changed their name to Styx and signed a recording contract with Wooden Nickel Records.

"That's it in a nutshell. The group remained the same from then until December of 1975, when John Curulewski left and I joined."

In 1972, the group released "Lady," a song that was to be their first hit, but not until almost three years later.

"The first time it was released, it just didn't go anywhere. The record company said it couldn't be a hit, and our old manager said it couldn't be a hit. Then, about two years later, Jim Smith, at WLS in Chicago, started getting requests for it. He thought it could be a hit, so he put it on oldies rotation. Under the station's regulations, he could put it on rotation even though it had never really made it that big.

"As time went on, he kept getting more and more requests for it. All these smaller stations in the area kept hearing WLS playing it, so they figured 'We should be playing it too.' From then on it just snowballed.

"It was a totally unorthodox way for a song to become a hit. I'd hate to have to depend on another song becoming a hit through that process."

More singles followed: "Light Up," "Madame Blue," "Sweet Mademoiselle" and "Jennifer." While none sold as well as the more commercial "Lady," they did achieve widespread airplay and broadened the group's following.

"Our manager used to have to run his ass off and talk his brains out to different agents to get us gigs. Now they're calling him. Our career is definitely building. We're getting more and more accepted and well-known across the country.

"The group has been steadily building a following in the U.S. and Canada. This way, when we do break big, we won't be like that "Disco Duck" guy (Dick Dees) that just appeared all of a sudden out of nowhere. When you do that, you're gone as fast as you came. I think our group will have much more lasting quality because we have taken time to build a following."

Shaw feels the group is ready to make their move into the big leagues.

"I see us being a headline group within the next year, although there are still some places where it wouldn't hurt to show our face more. Of course, it wouldn't hurt to have another Top 20 single, but I don't think our career depends on having hit singles. In some ways it's a drag to have one of those songs that everybody hates because they've heard it played into the ground."

He likened Styx to Kansas, who was sharing the bill that night.

"In a lot of ways, Kansas is right around where we are. They're an American band that isn't your basic rock 'n' roll boogie band. They're doing basically the same thing as us, they're just playing as much as they can and showing their faces in as many markets as they can, and it's paying off. I really think they deserve to be a super-big act, and it looks like they're on their way."

Shaw forecast a shift in the group's style on their next album, Grand Illusion, which is scheduled for release in July.

"We just finished laying down the first three tracks. It's more progressive. It should be a lot heavier album than Crystal Ball. We're playing around more with the different sounds you can get in the studio.

"But I don't think we'll ever get so far above everybody's head that they'll need a slide rule to figure out what we're doing. At least I hope not. We'd like to keep things on a fairly understandable level. I think Yes fell into the trap of too much self-indulgence, to the point where people finally just couldn't understand them anymore. I'd hate to have people ever say 'Hey, that sounds like old Styx,' the way so many people talk about the old Yes. The old Yes was the more understandable, the more available."

So after 16 years in the business, the group feels they're finally going to make it. How does it feel?

"You know, it's funny. When we finally get the song or whatever it takes to really boost us, everybody's going to say we're an overnight success."

Styx—Rolling Stones Gathering Green

GREENSBORO DAILY NEWS
GREENSBORO, N. C.

FEB 20 1977

For Dennis DeYoung, key board man for the rock group Styx (pronounced like sticks), it was either being a "baseball player or musician."

He opted for the latter.

"Girls had a great deal to do with the decision," he said half-serious, half-kidding. Then came the more serious reason. "The Beatles were the reason I started playing. They made it legitimate for white kids to play in bands. There were a lot of black groups. Most performers, then, were either singers or just players. When the Beatles came, every kid on the block said 'hey, let's get a band together.'"

"I don't suppose there'll ever be anything like that again, not of that magnitude," DeYoung said.

So, DeYoung and the Panozzo brothers (John and Chuck) formed a band on the South Side of Chicago with another friend, who is no longer with the group, and set out to make a name for themselves.

DeYoung and the Panozzo brothers have always been a part of Styx. In fact, they've played together 15 years. The other members of the five-man group are James Young and Tommy Shaw, who joined the group in 1970 and 1975 respectively.

Styx, then called TW4, played clubs, high schools and colleges throughout the Midwest and signed with Wooden Nickel Records, distributed by RCA in 1970.

"Wooden Nickel Records was as bogus as the day is long," DeYoung said, but they "learned a lot of the things we shouldn't do in the future. The success and failure of a band is the business organization." Styx had no management.

After four albums, a lot of local success but little nationwide airplay, a Top-40 Chicago station decided to play a cut from the Styx II album. It was "Lady" and it became the group's top song to date. They signed with A&M Records. "The A&M industry turned it around for us," said DeYoung.



They recorded the "Equinox" album which was almost gold, followed with "Crystal Ball" and will release an album in June, "The Grand Illusion." Their current tour will end in April. "We spend 80 per cent of a year, seven days a week recording or touring," said DeYoung. "10 per cent is sleep and the other 10 per cent is waking up and figuring out what I just did." You get the impression that DeYoung is joshing by the smile that relays an apparent fun-loving attitude.

A young man, one of the many people who overcrowded the Friendly Shopping Center Record Bar, asked "What's your favorite group besides Styx?"

"Styx," answered DeYoung in a serious-like manner. Then the real answer—"Genesis."

DeYoung calls the music that Styx plays "good music. Most of it is," he said. "Even Henry Aaron didn't hit a homerun everytime at bat. As far as categories, I don't like them."

"Music fills a gap. It's my life, been my life for as long as I can remember," DeYoung declared. "It's fortunate that I do for a living what I want to do. I'm lucky to do what I like for a living."

After 15 years of rocking and rolling with Styx, being one of the top five groups in Canada today, DeYoung speculated on Styx' future on his future.

"The band will be together for another three years. This year will be our year," he proclaimed. "Then maybe I'll go on my own. I won't be rocking and rolling. I'll do another kind of music."

"There's a void in music for people 25 to 40, there's no real personality that appeals to that age group. I've worked my whole life, 15 years (he's older than

that), to make this band something...and that's the most important thing," DeYoung remarked with a very serious expression on his face.

Then grinning, he said "I don't know what I am going to do. I may o.d. on rhubarb pop." It's hard to be serious all of the time, especially when you're Dennis DeYoung.



THE LEGEND: *The sacred river Styx circled Hades seven times. The gods swore their most solemn oaths by the Styx—those perjuring themselves were rendered senseless and banished from all divine gatherings—and the only vessel that could contain the waters of the Styx without dissolving was one made of a horse's hoof. The souls of the dead were ferried across the river by the boatman Charon, and after being judged, either remained forever in Pluto's Hades or shipped out for the happy Elysian Fields.*

THE STORY: In the garage of a south side Chicago home, three young high school boys formed a band. Little did anyone realize at that time that Dennis DeYoung and twins John and Chuck Panozzo would become the foundation for the personification of Dante's mystical river of Styx.

In those early days, the band was known as TW4. James Young (J.Y.) parted from a rival band and joined TW4, completing the line-up through those skiffing days. A fan of the hard, progressive rock and rollers, J.Y. brought his guitar and his sound to the band. "He was the best guitar player we had ever heard," bassist Chuck Panozzo comments.

"When we were appearing locally," Dennis explains, "audiences only cared about the easily recognizable music of already successful artists. The real test was to perform original material and have it accepted."

The next test was to get on record. Signed to Chicago-based Wooden Nickel Records in 1970, the group changed its name to Styx.

The group's first album was introduced in the summer of 1971. *Styx I* received critical raves but little nationwide airplay. Their next album, *Styx II*, showed their musical progression and refinement of their raw talents. *The Serpent Is Rising* and *Man Of Miracles*, their third and fourth ventures for Wooden Nickel, each fell into its own rueful realm of radio oblivion. The best of the material was performed throughout the northern Midwest at high school and college gigs, the only way Styx had of publicizing their talents.

Suddenly, "Lady," a cut from *Styx II*, started getting a phenomenal number of requests at WLS in Chicago, breaking all previous request records. The program director began playing the song once a night. The unexpected response sparked the official re-release of the single. It blossomed into a national hit and thrust *Styx II* into certified gold status.

"It was summertime when I wrote 'Lady'" Dennis recalls. "I was sitting in my garage, playing a tune on my little Wurlitzer and searching for a subject that meant something to me. Since love is the common denominator of my life, I tried to capture the relationship of two people and how they can work together."

Whatever formula Dennis arrived at still seems to be working, because even now, five years later, audiences scream for the song. But the success of "Lady" did not propel the band to stardom. So the group decided to change their approach. They went "label shopping" and were signed by A & M. *Equinox*, the band's first self-produced album, soon followed.