

STYX

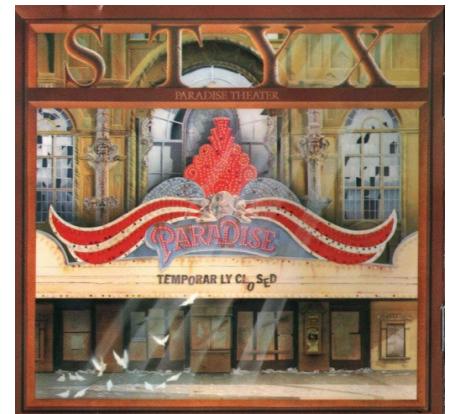
Paradise Theatre

Review by Kalum.S

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- A.D. 1928 / Rockin' the Paradise
- Too Much Time On My Hands
- The Best Of Times
- Lonely People
- Snowblind
- Half Penny, Two Penny / A.D. 1958



Styx was formed in Chicago, IL in 1972, consisting of Dennis De Young, James Young, John Curulewski, and Chuck and John Panozzo. Debuting with their first album "Styx" in '72'. They have 17 studio albums and have had many lineup changes over the years, including a couple break ups in 1983 and 1996, additions of Tommy Shaw in 1975 and Lawrence Gowan as the new lead singer in 1999. They have been touring since their first album and continue to put on a really great show every time.

The Paradise Theatre album was perceived very well by critics, peaking at #1 for a couple weeks in the U.S. while getting to #2 in Argentina. The album also scored triple-platinum in the U.S. and platinum in Canada. Only selling about 60,000 in the U.K.

Dennis stated this in an interview asking what the album was about: "one of hope and renewal in the spirit of the American people to understand the problems that confront the world and this country and find solutions themselves to those problems. Don't depend on heroes to do what you must do for yourself. If you hate your job but you have a dream, then pursue it. Just don't sit around and complain about it."

Time of release lineup:

Dennis De Young, Tommy Shaw, James Young, Chuck Panozzo, John Panozzo

- Dennis did lead vocals and keyboard (middle left)
- Tommy did vocals and lead guitar (bottom right)
- James did vocals and rhythm guitar (top)
- Chuck was the bass guitar player (bottom left)
- John was the drum player (middle right)



Along with the theme of the album, some of the songs have their own themes including the ones shown here, still tying in to the main theme of the album.

- “Lonely People” is a contemporary rewrite to The Beatles “Eleanor Rigby”.
 - “Too Much Time On My Hands” is about a man who is unemployed and given up in life.
 - “Snowblind” is about a helpless cocaine addiction with the lyrics going from soft and slow to hard and rough showing the highs and lows of the drug (in perspective).
 - “Rockin’ The Paradise” is the foreground of the album, sharing its theme with the album's theme.
 - “Half Penny Two Penny” was about the US and the financial problems they were having in the late 1970s.
 - “The Best Of Time” was written to be the centerpiece of ‘Paradise Theater’ having a twisted theme from the title, most lyrics in the song state these are “the worst of times”.
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“A.D. 1928 / Rockin’ The Paradise”

These songs go hand in hand with a seamless transition. “A.D. 1928” starts with the theater opening and kinda just prepares you for what's to come. The transition between these two songs are incredible, just sounds so smooth and natural like it's one song. “Rockin’ The Paradise” is what styx is all about. Heavy guitars, Classic pianos, That funky jazz/rock sound. It's a masterpiece of styx creation. I personally really like the drums in this song and the guitar solo is really well done. There's a couple lines right at the start that go like this- **“Young**

Americans listen when I say! There’s people puttin’ us down. I know they’re saying that we’ve gone lazy. To tell you the truth, we’ve all seen better days”. I think these lyrics are a direct nod toward the album's theme of America's changing times through the end of the 70's into the 80's and really portrays what Dennis said about America from the quote. Personally I'd give this song a 8.5/10. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u19p8KbMHNQ>

“Too Much Time On My Hands”

What a song. This song is what introduced me to Styx and it is still one of my favorite songs by them. Starting off with an electric keyboard and a very simple drum beat. This song is one of the only two that Tommy Shaw is the lead vocals in. Tommy Shaw being my Idol and I love it when he takes over vocals in a song for Dennis. The chorus flows so smoothly and rhythms very nicely. The solo in this song is a little bland in my opinion but very much fits with the song. At the end of the song you can hear a watch ticking and it ends with what sounds like a clock or watch going too fast or faster than it's supposed to. The theme of this song is about a man who is unemployed and has given up on life. Really portating the theme of this album and showing how Americans change is possibly for the worst? If I had to rank this song I'd give it a 10/10 but that's just because it was the first Styx song I ever listened to. If I actually took into account the sound and vocals and flow like I'm supposed to, I'd give it a solid 8/10. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5XcKBmdfpWs>



“The Best Of Times”

I used to not really like this song. I'd always skip it on spotify or just deal with it when on vinyl but it's actually really grown on me and I find it to be a really good rock ballad. The synchronized vocals sound really nice and the switch up half way through gives the song a story element from saying “the best of time” to “the worst of times”. Eventually coming back to “the best of times” at the end of the song. This song has the same flow as the two A.D. songs starting the album and ending it. Not much else to say about this song. It's alright. 7.5/10.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fzJGxpcenc>

“Lonely People”

This song starts off with a rainy day and someone playing the saxophone. Who is I'm assuming their next door neighbor or some that lives across the hall, starts getting mad and yelling “Hey! Hey out there knock it off will ya? Hey give it a rest will ya? I'm tryin' to get some sleep! Want me to call the cops?” The next thing this guy says really shows that since we're on side two now, we're telling the second half of the theater's story up until close. He says “I tell you erma I can't wait till next week when they start to tear that damn old theater down”. Right after that the song starts and by god is it a masterpiece. Starts off with a killer saxophone solo. “The movie house stood in silence as I said my last good-byes”, even more about the theater closing down. A simple bass line accompanies the first part of this song and then starts to pick up. It was deemed that this song is a “contemporary re-write” to The Beatles ‘Eleanor Rigby! I didn't even know that until I started researching more about this song. I really like the lyrics in this song and just every part of music and instrument. I really enjoy the saxophone the most. I've definitely talked about it the most. There is a guitar and keyboard solo right around the end and fit together perfectly. At the end, Dennis holds the last syllable of the word “despair” and it's crazy sounding and I love it. Easy 9/10 song. Almost perfect.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kX_7hv1TFjk

“Snowblind”

This song is like a love-hate relationship for me. It's really good sometimes and then mediocre at best sometimes. It starts off with a play-like element with the mythical tale “mirror, mirror, on the wall”. Personally I don't think there is much to say about this song. The opening keyboard is nice. Some of the lyrics are cool and written well. The chorus is actually very good and probably my favorite part other than the guitar solo. A couple times in the song, James Young takes over vocals for Shaw and they filtered his voice to make it lowered and slightly staticy which goes well with the mood of the song. Not much else is going for this song. Not in a bad way of course, it is a very good addition and fits with the album but it's just not my favorite. 7/10.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m2n-GYBXqPU>



“Half Penny Two Penny / A.D. 1958”

Hardest song on the album in terms of rock and by far, my favorite. It starts with one of the best sounding guitars I've heard. This song definitely strays a bit from the usual Styx sound but I think it makes a very good addition to the album and follows the theme of changing times with its lyrics. There is dialogue in the middle of the song between two guys named Angleo and Stosh as Angleo is a construction guy tearing down the theater. They're talking about how as kids they would see cartoons and plays there. They also talk about “what's she lost to” as Angelo answers “Politicians, taxes... it's a disgrace” More about

America's changing times right there. Saying they don't make theaters like this anymore and what not. There is a line in the song... “we all know it's the American way” that repeats in the song, really shows how much they were going with the theme. The song goes from rock to kind of a mellow flow around the end with a minute or so being mainly guitar then saxophone before leading into the concluding track, but not the last. A.D. 1958 is pretty much the same as A.D. 1928 at the start but with the lyrics saying how we can keep alive the memories of paradise and how time has claimed its price. The theater has finally shut down and the song ends with a very nice piano. Really makes you feel and know it's the end. 9/10

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r4WyffZxAU>

***”State Street Sadie”**

Final track that's just a piano solo spanning a whole 26 seconds. Really nothing to this track but I thought I would add it because I like the solo and it's the proper ending to the album instead of A.D. 1958. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JH3cu0zfG1I>

Overall I very much enjoy this album. It was a big part of my childhood and still a big part in the music scene of my life. This album is packed full of upbeat songs that you feel like you're in an actual theater listening to and there are songs that make you feel and understand the concept of the album really well. Each song has a different tone and style and there is something for everyone. The concept itself is such a cool idea and I would love to see more albums like this in the future. I give it a solid 9/10 album for me.

