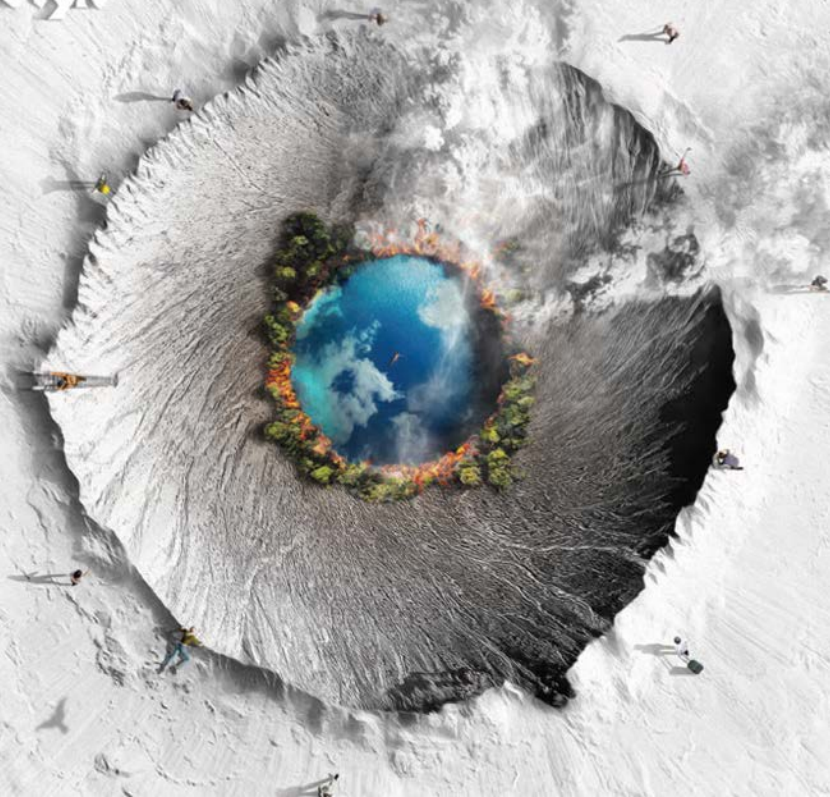


Styx

CRASH OF THE CROWN



SOUND THE ALARM

A NEW ERA OF HOPE, SURVIVAL, AND PROSPERITY COMES CALLING ON STYX'S MAGNUM OPUS, *CRASH OF THE CROWN*

By Mike Mettler, Resident Styxologist

"Why did we fight? . . . Assume for a moment that 'having,'
however it is defined, might be the crux of the problem."

—T.H. White, *The Once and Future King*

Music is a prism. It both reflects and refracts the times we live in. Though our musical tastes sometimes scatter in divergent directions, certain songs are embedded with that elusive, ethereal sonic elixir we innately respond to every time we hear it. Knowing that, is it any wonder the 15-song album you now hold within your hands — STYX's superbly majestic 17th studio album, *Crash of the Crown* — has the power to bring us all together in ways only the most transcendent music can?

Whether it's the heady rush of the groundwork-laying opening track "The Fight of Our Lives," the wistfully observational treatise of "Reveries," the cautionary extended hand of comfort and redemption that frames "Hold Back the Darkness," the undeniable uplift of "Our Wonderful Lives" (a beautiful sentiment further

embellished by a most welcome, first-ever appearance by a banjo on a STYX album!), or the elegiac clarion call for shared grace in "To Those," *Crash of the Crown* is music that is both concurrently of its time and truly timeless all at once. Although the official release date for this landmark album may be time-stamped as 2021, the omnisciently observational content of *Crash of the Crown* readily brings to mind an amalgamation of historical events that occurred in 1066, 1455, 1775, 1861, 1941, and even 2001 without citing any of them by name — Winston Churchill's prescient war-time observations that permeate the pervasive pleas of "Save Us From Ourselves" notwithstanding. In essence, *Crash of the Crown* (or COTC, for short) is a modern-day sonic chronograph of the endless regenerative cycle of the rise and fall — and rise again — of our shared human experience.

"We've never been a protest band. We're more like a gospel caravan trying to send out positive messages wherever we go," observes *Crash of the Crown* co-creator and overall visionary Tommy Shaw, who joined STYX in December

1975 as a guitarist/vocalist and instantly became one of the band's most important songwriters. "In order to share those positive messages, you have to look at what the problems are first to figure out all the ways you can help make sure everything's going to be alright. That's a very important part of how we do what we do."

Though COTC takes a hard look at some inherently dark subjects, the prevalent light at the end of the tunnel eventually becomes each song's focal point — a persistent fervor to keep moving forward and achieve the greater good. And that prime directive is no accident either. How so? Well, the album's perpetually positive throughline can be traced directly back to the core values instilled in the Alabama born-and-bred Tommy from a very young age by his mother, Mildred Uline Shaw (1927-2012), who was forever encouraging her renegade son to look toward the brighter side of life. "She would always tell me, 'Next year is going to be better. Everything is going to be alright.' In fact, she would say that to me *every single year*," reveals Tommy.

"At first, I would be like, 'How could that even be? You don't know that!' But as time went on, she was proven right. I learned from her that you just have to stick with it, and don't give up. I figured out how to work my way through any problem I faced to get to a point where I could say, 'Hey, we're *all* gonna get through this together.'"

Will Evankovich, the producer of COTC who has been one of Tommy's closest songwriting associates since 2007 when he became a key onstage foil for Shaw Blades (an equitably harmonious alliance between Tommy and his onetime Damn Yankees bandmate, Jack Blades), gets to the root of his tacit collaborator's central intentions. "What I love about Tommy is he focuses his heart and soul on hope and positivity," admits Will, who also produced STYX's June 2017 masterstroke concept album, *The Mission*. "I come from that punk rock era where you just say whatever you feel, whether it's good or bad — and he's totally ok with that. Whenever we're writing together, Tommy's always able to rein things back in. At the end of the day, he'll say, 'Now,

now, children — if we don't have hope, we don't have *anything*.”

A score of COTC-bound riffs and creative ideas soon emerged by way of promising, in-progress demos heard by yours truly behind closed doors in dressing rooms all across North America while the band headlined numerous dates in support of *The Mission*. Efforts to record COTC began in earnest at Tommy's home studio in Nashville during the fall of 2019, with Lawrence Gowan — STYX's criminally minded showman extraordinaire and keyboardist/vocalist since 1999 — in the room together with Tommy and Will as he conjured up the cosmetic flourishes that reign over the insistent, yearning call for togetherness, “Common Ground.” But the global pandemic that inevitably transformed the way we all wound up living in 2020 changed the course for how many of the band's home-and-away recording sessions ultimately had to set socially distanced sail. Safety precautions took precedent for all involved STYX bandmembers and production compatriots with much diligent quarantining and testing required before any one of them could travel to Tommy's tranquility homebase to spread the uniquely ingrained STYX stardust that's been duly sprinkled across the album's cosmically chosen 15 tracks.

Of all those who made the trek to Nashville, original STYX bassist Chuck Panozzo — who, along with his late twin brother, drummer John Panozzo, formed the initial nucleus of STYX when they began jamming together in their basement on the south side of Chicago in 1961 — is hands down the most effusive about the experience. “I'm constantly

amazed at how Tommy's songwriting continues to connect with the social consciousness that spans across generations,” marvels Chuck, who plays on “Our Wonderful Lives” and “Lost at Sea,” Lawrence's all-too-brief aquatic fever dream. “Both he and Will have been able to tap into the core elements of the human condition, which is something that's not going to change that much in 50 years — or even 500 years. That's why STYX remains relevant after all this time, because we're *part* of the human condition.”

Said human factor could not be better embodied than by way of the contributions of co-founding guitarist/vocalist James “JY” Young, whose inimitable whirlwind guitar stylings are the true cornerstone of the STYX sound. JY's time in Nashville not only bore the blistering solo that personifies the onomatopoeic eddy of a hoary behemoth literally chasing its own tail at the very end of “A Monster,” it also begat his expressive, Bowieque lead vocal on the first two verses of the epic title track. “I truly feel I was born with the right skillset at the right time and right place in history,” asserts JY, who was one of the original bandmembers on hand when STYX signed their first recording contract with Chicago-based Wooden Nickel Records on February 22, 1972. “And I really love how we've created a record that's so powerfully insistent about the state of the world without precisely mentioning any particular monarch or elected official.”

The song “Crash of the Crown” itself breaks some brave new world ground for STYX. Actually, it's the first cut in the band's storied canon to feature *three* lead vocalists, seeing how it has JY unleashed at the starting gate, Tommy

heading up the heroic stacked-vocal middle section, and Lawrence leading the vocal charge for the final verse. "I'm always looking for the one different thing we can do and still have it be STYX," the ever-ebullient Lawrence notes, "and that's the song I'm most proud of. The beauty of it is that it's the culmination of all our talents crammed together into one song, *Abbey Road*-style. I also got to use some gear I *never* thought I'd have the chance to play on a STYX record like Tommy's Hammond B3 organ, my Minimoog, and my Mellotron."

For his part, drummer Todd Sucherman found the exact right way to record his tracks remotely via Audiomovers Listento plug-in technology without compromising the quality of his master-class drumming in the least (witness the fierce breaks and clever percussive accents that garnish "Crash of the Crown," for starters). "I always tailor my playing to support the lyrics, because they're the literal point of each song," posits Todd, who's been the widely acclaimed rhythmic backbone of STYX since 1996. "You also get a nice mix of subtle, tricky bits and some seriously overt playing from me, because I wanted to approach this music from an honest and organic perspective."

Echoing his rhythm section partner's viewpoint is bassist Ricky Phillips, who joined STYX in 2003 to cover the band's fulltime daily bass duties — and is eternally thrilled to share the stage with fellow low-end superstar Chuck whenever he's able to come out on the road. "No band I've ever been in is as good as STYX is at playing together," Ricky acknowledges, "so whenever I'm ready to record

with these guys, my studio musician instincts and melodic sensibilities just take over. My goal is simple — what can I do to make it better?" (Cue up the middle break of "Long Live the King" for a genuinely grand example of what Tommy oh-so-reverently calls "The Ricky Phillips Thing.")

STYX's holy mission for cutting COTC was crystal-clear to its co-creator from the get-go. "Absolutely no obstacles were going to get in the way of how we approached creating this album," Tommy concludes about the herculean recording efforts of his fellow *Crown* makers. "And everything came out exactly the way we wanted to hear it."

Whether you're putting *Crash of the Crown* on for the very first time as your brand new record album or cuing it up as the centerpiece of your eight-hundredth spin (and counting), I think we can all agree on one thing — the substantive content of COTC will continue to resonate with listeners whether it's being played in 2021, 2074, or 2119. My sisters, my brothers, let's Sound the Alarm together: STYX's *Crash of the Crown* is a timeless album for the ages.

"Explicit liber regis quamdam regisque futuri . . . The Beginning."
—T.H. White, *The Once and Future King*

Mike Mettler is STYX's official biographer. His weekly Styxology column appears on the band's official website, Styxworld.com, and he's the author of the book One With Everything, which commemorates the first 50 years of STYX.

THE FIGHT OF OUR LIVES

Music and Lyrics: TOMMY SHAW / WILL EVANKOVICH

We will not give in
The game is ours to win
And we came here to take our prize

This is our moment now
This is the fight of our lives
There'll be no stopping us
Keep moving forward
No one can stand in our way today
We will not give in

This is our moment now
This is the fight of our lives
There'll be no stopping us
Keep moving forward
Nothing can stop us, no one can stop us now
We will not give in

A MONSTER

Music and Lyrics: TOMMY SHAW / WILL EVANKOVICH / LAWRENCE GOWAN

People grow taller, the planet gets smaller each day
Endless opinions, too many with so much to say

Here's to the know-it-alls who have all the answers
Here's to the amateurs missing their cues
Here's to the land that served our ancestors
Cheers to the ones with their own points of view

Welcome my friends
the fun never ends
a Monster chasing its tail

Where do we belong?
Where do we call home?
We'll find the peace from within
We are not alone

Kings in their castles look down
at the people below
They're so disconnected
How will he ever know?

Here's to the prisoners trapped in their cages
Led to believe there's everything to lose
Still they hold the keys to their future
Everything changes when you get to choose

Welcome my friends
the fun never ends
a Monster chasing its tail

What goes around will come around
a Monster chasing its...

a Monster chasing its tail...

REVERIES

Music and Lyrics: TOMMY SHAW / WILL EVANKOVICH

Here I'm running with the elephants
gathering the evidence of my life
Here I'm thinking I'm a rarity
craving popularity
just slow down

Love me, love me like you know me well
believe the stories I can tell about me
Help me, help me build my monument
don't worry where the money went
trust me

Reveries
Is that the very core of me?
Reveries
I'm giving it up, giving it out

Reveries
Is that the very heart of me?
Reveries
I'm giving it up, giving it out
every day

Here I'm running with the elephants
fighting all the elements in this crowd
Rare birds crashing into window panes
Lord I hope it rains before we spiral

Reveries
Is that the very core of me?
Reveries
I'm giving it up, giving it out

Reveries
Is that the very heart of me?
Reveries
I'm giving it up, giving it out
Giving it up, giving it out...

HOLD BACK THE DARKNESS

Music and Lyrics: TOMMY SHAW / WILL EVANKOVICH

People back home, wondering how have you been
It's been 29 days, have you gone out and made any friends?
Do you need any money, is there anything else we can send?
Please tell us you've stayed away from the darkness again

I wonder if you've ever known how it feels to be free
Well, one thing's for sure, you don't know what it's like to be me
I'm trying to break free from these chains, won't you give me a
break?
Now, you just got to give me a chance to make my own mistakes

And I feel no pain
Nothing can touch me, and I'm gonna win
And I'm not holding back, not reining it in
You hold back the darkness, and I'll see the sun rise again

And I feel no pain
Nothing can touch me, and I'm gonna win
And I'm not holding back, not reining it in
You hold back the darkness, and we'll all see the sun rise again

SAVE US FROM OURSELVES

Music: TOMMY SHAW / WILL EVANKOVICH / LAWRENCE GOWAN

Lyrics: TOMMY SHAW / WILL EVANKOVICH

Winston Churchill:

"The new world, with all its power and might
steps forth to the rescue and liberation of the old..."

It was the same day in another time
I felt your pain and you felt mine
And all that we tried and all of our tricks
Still couldn't help what couldn't be fixed
Who's gonna save us from ourselves this time?

One nation, indivisible, heads in the sand 'cause we weren't invisible
Say your prayers, we could all use a miracle now
to save us from ourselves

Demonstrations, appropriations, more frustrations, tugging at
your sleeve
Peace and love still has the power, don't wait until your final hour
to believe
I said, with all that we've tried and all of our tricks
Still could not help what couldn't be fixed
Can anyone save us from ourselves this time?
And the truth is...

One nation, indivisible, heads in the sand 'cause
we weren't invisible
Say your prayers, we could all use a miracle now
to save us from ourselves

Winston Churchill:

"We shall fight in the fields, and in the streets...
We shall never surrender"

Save us from ourselves...

CRASH OF THE CROWN

Music and Lyrics: TOMMY SHAW / WILL EVANKOVICH / LAWRENCE GOWAN

See the waypoint
on that distant blue horizon on the ocean
at that place of real tranquility's
devotion
Where I see my life one day with you

I'll be waiting
when you step toward the edge
I will protect you
The perils of the world will not affect you
I'll be there to take that dance with you

I know where I'm bound
It won't weigh me down
With the crash of the crown
when it falls to the ground

I know where I'm bound
It won't weigh me down
With the crash of the crown
when it falls to the ground

And now we know what must be done
We'll send a message out to everyone

All You Sinners
All You Saviors
All You Villains
All You Heroes

Are you ready?
Can't you see what lies before us tomorrow?

There's no denying
the truth will be the light
through the darkness tonight

Till the walls come tumbling down

OUR WONDERFUL LIVES

Music: TOMMY SHAW / WILL EVANKOVICH

Lyrics: TOMMY SHAW

It's a brand new day
and I'm tired of the uncertain
I'm throwing back the curtains for some sun
on my face

And now she's smiling
She's making up a song
Gonna sing it all day long and it's a happy place

Now the windows and doors
won't stay closed anymore
And it feels like beginning again

Now the days go by
and we laugh and cry
while the dark cloud hovers nearby
We won't give in yet
We shall not forget
We still have our wonderful lives

Monday morning
I'm sleeping in again
But I'm not giving in to those old feelings
Hunker down
Put it off until tomorrow
I've got no time for sorrow's
double dealings

Though the here and now
might get to me somehow
The truth is right here for believing

Now the days go by
and we laugh and cry
while the dark cloud hovers nearby
We won't give in yet
We shall not forget
We still have our wonderful lives

Now the days go by
and we laugh and cry
while the dark cloud hovers nearby
We won't give in yet
We shall not forget
We still have our wonderful lives
We still have our wonderful lives
We still have our wonderful life

COMMON GROUND

Music and Lyrics: TOMMY SHAW / WILL EVANKOVICH / LAWRENCE GOWAN

It was just a fleeting moment, on a long lost night
We both were so determined that our way was right
Now the days of our confusion have no end in sight
Can we ever find our way back
from that long lost night?

Once, we all believed
when we were young
That our dreams could rise
Were those all lies?
But it's just so hard to see
through each other's eyes

It was just a fleeting moment, did our dreams take flight?
Can we ever find our way back
from the long lost night?

It was just a fleeting moment, on a long lost night
We both were so determined that our way was right
Now the days of our confusion have no end in sight
Can we ever find our way back
from that long long long lost night?

When we get together on common ground
Then no one will ever come and take us down
When we get together
on common ground
Then no one will ever
come and take us down

When we get together
on common ground
No one will ever
come and take us down

on common ground...

SOUND THE ALARM

Music: TOMMY SHAW / WILL EVANKOVICH

Lyrics: TOMMY SHAW

Sound the alarm

Let the world around you know
the time has come for us to go
Is it too late to make amends?

Sound the alarm

Look at all that we've been through
and all the things we meant to do
But the time just flew by

Sound the alarm

Take shelter with the ones you love
Maybe someday we can rise above
and all be safe from harm

There's no future in the way it was
We may never know just what it was
But if tomorrow brings a better day
Sound the alarm
It's all clear!

Darkness is falling

A new way is calling
Hope is alive and
we have survived again

There's no future in the way it was

We may never know just what it was
But when tomorrow brings a better day
Sound the alarm
It's all clear!

LONG LIVE THE KING

Music and Lyrics: WILL EVANKOVICH

Locked in the tower of the castle wall, there's a stranger
waiting for his day
and things that he'd say
to bring down the old one

High above the ranks of greed and confusion
almost half asleep, in the belly of the beast
awaits a Monster

The King is dead
and the world is set on fire
And we all scream, Long live the King
Long live the King
Long live the King

There's an army of a million men at the gate
looking for a war to wage
like an actor with no stage
or someone to feed them

There is no beginning and there is no end

All just take the seat
stuck there on repeat
And they'll do it again and again and again and again
I said...

The King is dead
and the world is set on fire
And we all scream, Long live the King..

LOST AT SEA

Music and Lyrics: LAWRENCE GOWAN

I had a dream about the Ocean
I was somewhere lost at Sea
When I heard somebody calling
Come to Me

I assumed it must be Neptune
Luring me into the deep
When I woke to hear my own voice
Calling from my sleep
From my sleep

COMING OUT THE OTHER SIDE

Music: TOMMY SHAW / WILL EVANKOVICH / RICKY PHILLIPS

Lyrics: TOMMY SHAW

As the sun shines through the trees
and I feel that summer breeze
Gotta get up off my knees and seize the day

Sometimes it's hard to see
through the fogginess in me
But the truth lies far away and in between

I think we found our way
coming out the other side
Now it's just another day
coming out the other side...

TO THOSE

Music: TOMMY SHAW / WILL EVANKOVICH

Lyrics: TOMMY SHAW

To those who do survive
Find beauty in your lives
Don't be afraid of love
Stand up and rise above

If young men could send the old ones to war
there'd soon be peace forevermore
Take their mansions and seize their gold
What kind of criminal would be so bold?
Can't deny

To those who do survive
Find beauty in your lives
Don't be afraid of love
Stand up and rise above

Come in here with a message that's clear
and cuts through all of the clutter
We have faith in the human race
not a shadow who's mad as a hatter
And he's not fooling anyone anymore

To those who do survive
Find beauty in your lives
Don't be afraid of love
Stand up and rise above...

ANOTHER FAREWELL

Music: WILL EVANKOVICH

Instrumental

(a.k.a. "The Calm Before The Stream")

STREAM

Music and Lyrics: TOMMY SHAW

Strangers leaving footprints in the snow
The day is coming and everybody knows
Pressure's building, something's gonna blow
The sun is rising, the rooster's gonna crow

Please don't wake me from this sweet dream
floating on a stream
Sunshine beaming down on my face
staring into space...

Dedicated to the loving memory of **Jimmy Johnson**

All songs written by **Tommy Shaw, Will Evankovich, Lawrence Gowan, and Ricky Phillips**

Performing Rights Organization: **ASCAP**

—

Produced by **Will Evankovich**

Mixed by **Will Evankovich** at **Studio Amontillado**

Additional Mixing by **Alan Hertz**

— —

Engineered by **Alan Hertz, JR Taylor, Scott Rottler, Russ Mackay, Sean Badum, Devan Skaggs, and Will Evankovich**

. — — — — —

Recorded at **The Shop, Studio Amontillado, Blackbird Studios, Blue Sound and Music, and Todd's Studio**

—

Mastered by **Ted Jensen** at **Sterling Sound**

STYX IS:

Tommy Shaw: Acoustic and Electric Guitars, Mandolin,
Banjo, and Vocals

James Young: Electric Guitar and Vocals

Chuck Panozzo: Bass Guitar

Todd Sucherman: Drums and Percussion

Lawrence Gowan: Piano, B3 Organ, Synthesizers,
Mellotron, and Vocals

Ricky Phillips: Bass Guitar

Will Evankovich: Acoustic and Electric Guitars, Mandolin,
Synthesizers, Soundscapes, Percussion, and Vocals

Additional Performances:

Michael Bahan: Tablas on "Coming Out the Other Side"

Steve Patrick: Piccolo Trumpet on "Our Wonderful Lives"

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Booking Agent: **Rod Essig** // Creative Artists Agency

Art Direction, Design, and Illustration: **Todd Gallopo** at
Meat and Potatoes Inc.

Liner Notes: **Mike Mettler**

Band Photography: **Individual Self-Portraits** by STYX

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Production Manager: **Alex Sale**

Product Manager: **Ashley Harris**

Legal Clearances: **Andrew Labarrere**

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