

DENNIS DEYOUNG



Dennis DeYoung is one of the founding members of the rock group Styx. He wrote and sang lead on Styx hits “Lady,” “Come Sail Away,” “Best of Times,” “Mr.Roboto.” “Don’t Let It End,” “Show Me The Way,” and their only number one song “Babe.” “Babe” also won The People’s Choice Award in 1980 for best song. During his solo career he also wrote the top ten hit “Desert Moon” giving him 8 Billboard top ten hits spanning three decades. He produced Styx’s last two gold albums Edge of the Century and Return to Paradise. The Styx nucleus was formed in 1961 by Dennis and his neighbors John and Chuck Panozzo in Dennis’s parent’s basement in Roseland on Chicago’s south side. He and the Panozzo’s would play together until John’s death in 1996. Dennis would like to thank the Panozzo’s and his bandmates John Curulewski, James Young and Tommy Shaw who lent their talents to Styx’s success. Originally an accordionist, Dennis switched to organ, synth, and piano in the late 70’s. While in Styx, the band sold over 30 million albums scoring 4 triple platinum albums consecutively. Dennis has always believed first and foremost in the power of the song, something he learned from his love of the Beatles. The Styx catalogue is a testament to that philosophy by having hits as disparate as “Babe,” “Renegade,” “Mr.Roboto,” “Come Sail Away,” “Boat on the River,” and “The Best of Times.” During the 80’s, Dennis recorded two solo albums for A&M records and one for MCA. His first solo album, Desert Moon went gold in Canada. After a hiatus from 1984 to 1990 Styx returned and recorded Edge of the Century album which included his top 3 hit “Show Me The Way.” Following the tour in support of the album, DeYoung was offered the role of Pontius Pilate in the Jesus Christ Superstar 20th Anniversary Tour. This tour reunited the two stars from the 1973 movie Teddy Neely and Carl Anderson. Irene Cara played Mary Magdalene. He performed in 268 performances across North America culminating in New York at the Theater at Madison Square Garden. While touring in Chicago he was nominated for a Joseph Jefferson Award for best performance by an actor in a supporting role in a touring company. After seeing Dennis in the Pilate role in Los Angeles, Danny Goldberg signed him to record a Broadway album for Atlantic Records titled 10 On Broadway. While on the Superstar tour he also began work on a musical version of Victor Hugo’s classic “The Hunchback of Notre Dame”. He would write the book, music, and lyrics for the show. It had its world premiere in 1997 by the Tennessee Repertory Theater and would be staged two other times. Once in Chicago at the Bailiwick Theater in 2008 where it won the Joseph Jefferson Award for best musical in a medium sized theater and, most recently, in 2022 at Milwaukee’s Skylight Music Theater directed by Michael Unger. In 2001 DeYoung was asked to film the pilot show for the reboot of the PBS Television Soundstage series. For this program he replicated his Dennis DeYoung and the Music of Styx Live with Symphony Orchestra concert from 2000. The DVD from this TV show was used to raise over 2 million dollars in pledges at PBS affiliates across America. In 2007 DEP Records of Canada released DeYoung’s 7th solo album from this show in Canada which went on to achieve platinum status. DEP also released his DVD “The Rock Symphonic Music of Styx” which garnered triple platinum album sales. In addition, he appeared on the TV reality show “Star Academy” and “Canadian Idol”. In 2007 at age 60 Dennis recorded an album of new material for DEP which spawned a number one single in Quebec at three formats Pop, AC and Rock. The song – “One Hundred Years From Now” – was a duet in French and English with Canadian rock singer Eric LaPointe. The album’s title was also One Hundred Years From Now. In 2009 this album was reissued in the United States with two new songs on the Rounder label. Also that year Dennis was honored in his home state with the Great Performers of Illinois Award. He was its second recipient, the first was Blues legend Buddy Guy. DeYoung’s tenure with Styx ended in 1999 after a 27-year stint. He then formed his own band and toured under the banner of Dennis DeYoung and the Music of Styx. He did so from 2000 until 2020 when the pandemic caused him to cancel a 60-city tour in support of his new album on Frontiers Records 26 East Volume I. This album featured a duet with Julian Lennon on a DeYoung penned tune called “To The Good Old Days.” In 2021 Frontiers released 26 East Volume II which included an appearance by Rock and Roll Hall Fame musician Tom Morello who lent his guitar to a song called “The Last Guitar Hero.” The song was co-written by Dennis and his writing partner Jim Peterik of Survivor fame who collaborated on both Volume I and Volume II. Dennis announced in 2021 that these two albums would be his last. In 2022 Dennis was inducted into the Illinois Rock Hall of Fame as a member of Styx. He was also inducted as a songwriter. He is planning a return to touring in 2024. Dennis married his high school sweetheart Suzanne in 1970 and have remained married for 53 years. She has been the inspiration for many of his songs including “Babe” and “Lady.” Suzanne and Dennis have raised two great children, CarrieAnn and Matthew. The DeYoung’s still reside in the Chicagoland area.