

America. Styx became known for their high-energy performances (in Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Iowa, Arkansas and, of course, Illinois) and built a huge following in towns most groups just pass by between "major markets". (They drew over 11,000 people to a 1975 Little Rock concert) But the great tastemaker audiences of the East and West coasts were denied them -- a reinforcement of the "you can't break a band out Chicago" syndrome.

A third album, The Serpent Is Rising, received little more than a promotional shove and ended up as another artistic success-commercially ignored venture. "The Serpent" and all its creativity moved into nationwide oblivion, again in total disregard to heavy mid-America support. Using live performances to take their music to the public, Styx rarely failed to make many new fans, so the reluctance on the part of the radio community was a source of constant frustration to the band.

Man of Miracles, the fourth Wooden Nickel album, was treated as the last shot for Styx. It was recorded in under 10 days following months of rehearsals, and contained the most commercial package of songs yet. Given more promotion than any other Styx release, Man of Miracles got off well and was moving nicely six weeks after a September '74 launching. Suddenly, a strange turn of events changed the course of the group's career.

In an unprecedented move, Chicago Top 40 powerhouse