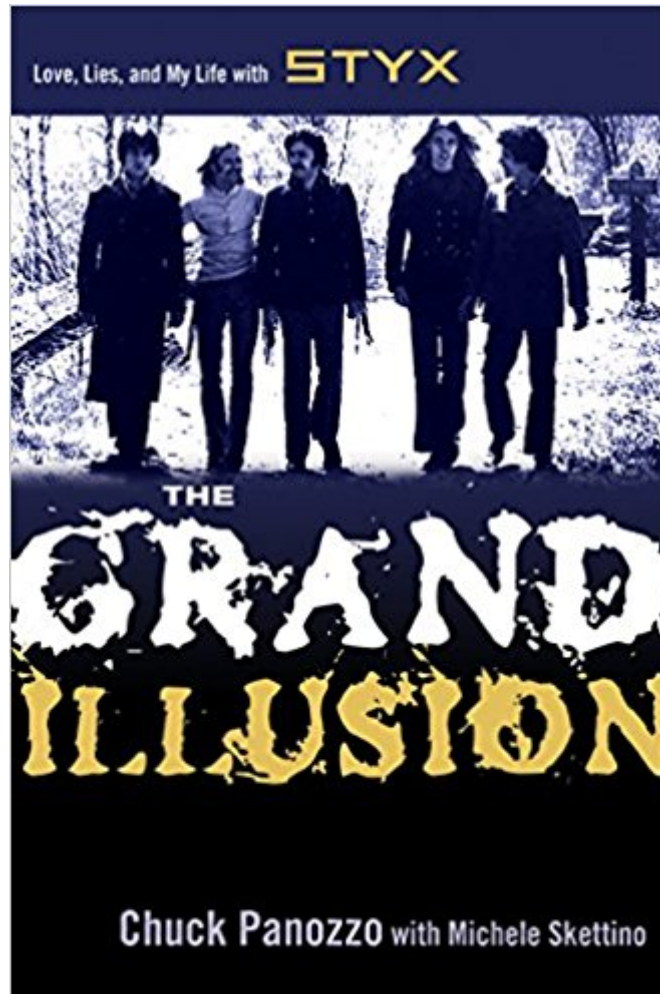




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The Grand Illusion: Love, Lies, And My Life With Styx



Synopsis

They are still one of the biggest rock bands of the last three decades. With four consecutive triple-platinum albums and 54 million records sold, their tours continue to sell out and classic songs like 'Lady,' 'Renegade,' 'Come Sail Away,' and 'The Grand Illusion' have earned them a whole new generation of fans. At the height of their fame, they were living the ultimate rock 'n' roll fantasy - an odyssey of groupies, drugs, and music that most musicians only dream of. As a band, Styx seemed invincible. But their founding member and bass player, Chuck Panozzo, was about to hit rock bottom. His seemingly debauched life as the ultimate rocker was a lie - and the truth was about to catch up with him. "The Grand Illusion" is a no-holds-barred, backstage pass to the journey of one of the world's most revered bands, and the true story of Chuck Panozzo's 50-year struggle to reconcile his public life as a rock star with his private life as a gay man. Beginning with the birth of Styx in Chicago and their meteoric rise, "The Grand Illusion" is a revealing look at the triumphs and tragedies that surrounded Panozzo's life. He chronicles life on the road, the break-up of the band, his struggle to help his twin brother and bandmate John Panozzo battle addiction, as well as his split with Dennis De Young, and finally coming to terms with his HIV positive status. Illuminating and unflinching, "The Grand Illusion" will captivate the band's legions of devoted fans, as well as music lovers everywhere.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Panozzo was the bass player in Styx, whose mid-'70s hits such as "Mr. Roboto," and "Lady" are staples of classic rock radio, and he is rightfully proud of Styx's accomplishments. "The first

rock band ever to sell four consecutive triple platinum albums." Styx's fans will enjoy Panozzo's detailed look at the band's internal conflicts as they rise from small Chicago bars to sold-out arenas. But the heart of Panozzo's autobiography is a sensitive and insightful look at "one gay man's struggle to come to terms with himself" while performing in a rock world where "the things that would make the other guys laugh—•a female fan lifting up her skirt, a pair of panties thrown on stage—just didn't do it" for him. The most fascinating sections are accounts of Panozzo's conflicted youthful feelings in his sheltered Catholic neighborhood; his adolescent trips to gay theaters where "skin flicks validated the fact that there were other people out there like me

"... A sensitive and insightful look at one gay man's struggle to come to terms with himself." —Publisher's Weekly "His [Panozzo's] story is as compelling as it is unexpected." —Instinct Magazine "Styx fans will enjoy Panozzo's detailed look at the band's internal conflicts as they rise from small Chicago bars to sold-out arenas. But the heart of the Panozzo's autobiography is a sensitive and insightful look at one gay man's struggle to come to terms with himself." —Publisher's Weekly

This book is a detailed look into various worlds: Growing up in another time and not fitting in. Who couldn't relate to that? The crazy world of Rock & Roll in it's 70's glory days. The aids crisis before and after, and the various incarnations of homophobia as experienced throughout an entire lifetime. The excess and tragedy of addiction and depression. Thanks Chuck for sharing your multifaceted life with us all. Growing up in the 70's, gay and listening to rock, defined who I was and why I could not fit in anywhere. It's so nice to know now that I was not the only one. That you now have a platform to encourage others to live life a little bit better than you could is the best we can do as humans. I hope this book continues to fall into the right hands.

Chuck Panozzo is an anomaly. A popular musician who is gay and plays rock and roll. Ask most pop music fans about homosexual rockers and you'll be lucky if they can name one (and no, The Village People don't count). During the late seventies and though most of the 80's, Chuck was the bassist and a founding member of multi-platinum rockers, Styx. And like so many teens in the seventies, I was a Styx fan. There was a "Grand Illusion" poster in my room (an album cover that Chuck, also an art teacher, designed). But Chuck had a big secret. He was a gay man in one of the biggest bands in America."The Grand Illusion" is about Chuck Panozzo's journey. Like many gay

men in the seventies, he was terrified that being outed would cost him his career, but then also that of his bandmates. While the band was onstage in front of thousands of fans, with groupies, drugs, and an awful lot of money, Chuck was either hanging out in his hotel room or sneaking off to clubs and bars while hoping his bandmates and fans didn't spot him. It's a double life that almost kills him. Like Chuck as a gay rocker, I can empathize with the plight as a gay rock fan. Chuck bemoans that, as he goes to clubs, no-one recognizes him because none of the patrons would likely be fans of Styx, but would certainly know Donna Summer or Sylvester. (He also sees this as a good thing, as it preserves his anonymity.) He finds it hard to locate any cultural touchstones in the gay world, becoming almost as much an outsider there as he was in the world of arena rock. When Styx disbands in 1984, he gets an extended break and finds life to be pretty sweet. That's about half of the book. If you're expecting a long history about Styx, this isn't it (although there's plenty of good stories to be found). It's a book about Chuck, who, when Styx reunites in 1990 for "End Of The Century," falls ill. He discovers he has AIDS. For the remainder of the book, Chuck struggles with life and death issues, his own psyche, and just surviving each day. It can be a pretty tough read, as Chuck not only is fighting to stay alive, but he also watches his twin brother (and Styx drummer) John destroy his own life, loses his mother and tries to control his own destiny. Granted, there is something of a happy ending in that Chuck lives to find love and health, but his coming to grips with the closet and his illness is a compelling and moving story. I admire his courage in finally making the decision to live openly and to tell the story of "The Grand Illusion." And it makes me proud to pull that CD of "Pieces of Eight" out and blast "Renegade" again with the memories of being that 18 year old Styx fan still in my memory.

Although I purchased this book to learn more about Styx (because I'm a Styx junkie), this is not a book about Styx. This is a book about a gay man's struggle in a straight world. I had no idea how much I take for granted as a straight male. His book is about someone who took 50 years before he felt the courage to come out safely. I hold him up as a hero who has looked back on his life so honestly and put it out there for the world to see. To those reviewers who have condemned the book because of his sexual preference, you are entitled to your opinion. However, nothing he's doing is hurting you just because you think gay people are icky (traditional Biblical marriage can be legally killing your wife and marrying 700 women if you actually read the Bible). In reading the book, I can tell that he still believes strongly in God, even after his strict Catholic upbringing that condemned him. Agreeing to be a Godparent after all he's been through is a true testament to his faith in knowing that God loves us all. A beautiful book.

Just saw them in concert this month. Chuck made an appearance on stage and played a few tunes. Very interesting story.

I heard about this book when i listened to an interview with Tommy Shaw. He was talking about how great it was. So i bought it and it was an amazing book. Gave me a whole new perspective on Chucks life growing up gay and being in a rock band. What he was going thru at the time and how he is now. He does not play much with them but now and again. Which i think is still awesome. Great book!!

It was more about his closet homosexuality than about Styx. I prefer to know more about the band . It was good but it could have been Better .

I have been a fan of Styx for years. I have read other books about the band and picked this one up mostly because of my interest in the band. It was not what I expected- in a good way! Chuck is open about his life in a way few people are with close friends, let alone in a book. He tells about the band, for sure, but it is more about his life and his coming to terms with being a gay rocker at a time when coming out could ruin a career. It is at times poignant and tender. I came away from the book have a lot of respect for this man. As a straight man, it gave me understanding I never had.

I haven't even finished reading this book and I already can highly recommend it. I'm learning so much about this band that I had absolutely no idea about. Just the way they formed is a fascinating story in itself. Do yourself a favor, if you are a fan of this band, read this book! :)

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