

Genesis baptizes Smith Center in light and sound

In the beginning, God created the heavens, the earth, and — in the eyes of the thousands at the Dean Dome Saturday night — Phil Collins.

Fans poured in like the Biblical flood to witness the baptism of the Dome as a major concert arena. Forget Lionel Richie and the Monkees: it took a musical force like Genesis to set a proper precedent for the inclusion of Chapel Hill on major tours.

And a rockin' baptism it was. The capacity crowd, throwing frisbees and beach balls, was primed and ready to see the famed drummer and his talented sidemen. Mercifully, there was no warm-up act to sit through. Around 7:25, keyboard player Tony Banks and guitarist Mike Rutherford slipped onstage amid a shower of orange and green lights. What the crowd really wanted to see was Collins himself, and the man appeared directly to lead the group in the eerie "Mama" off the band's self-titled album. Bathed in a yellow glow, Collins looked properly demonic.

Genesis then slipped into their great hit "ABACAB" before Collins welcomed the fans and thanked them for camping out in ticket lines. His patter turned a bit grim as he began an explanation of the domino principle which he said will inevitably lead to destruction. "It's just a matter of time before someone hits that little button," he said. He followed this jolly pronouncement with a demonstration of the principle in which he involved the audience in a section-by-section cheering contest. The point to all of this was to lead in to an excellent performance of the two-part song "Domino" off the "Invisible Touch" album.

Next came "That's All," featuring Collins banging a tambourine on his head, and the quirky instrumental "The Brazilian," featuring one of the evening's most incredible light displays. An oldie, "In the Cage" off the "Three Sides Live" album, was a refreshing change from newer material.

The audience came to life for current hits "Land of Confusion" and "Tonight, Tonight, Tonight." Genesis freshened the airplay-stale "Confusion" nicely, and "Tonight" was great simply because it seemed to be the right song for such a momentous occasion as the band's

Elizabeth Ellen Concert

first SAC concert.

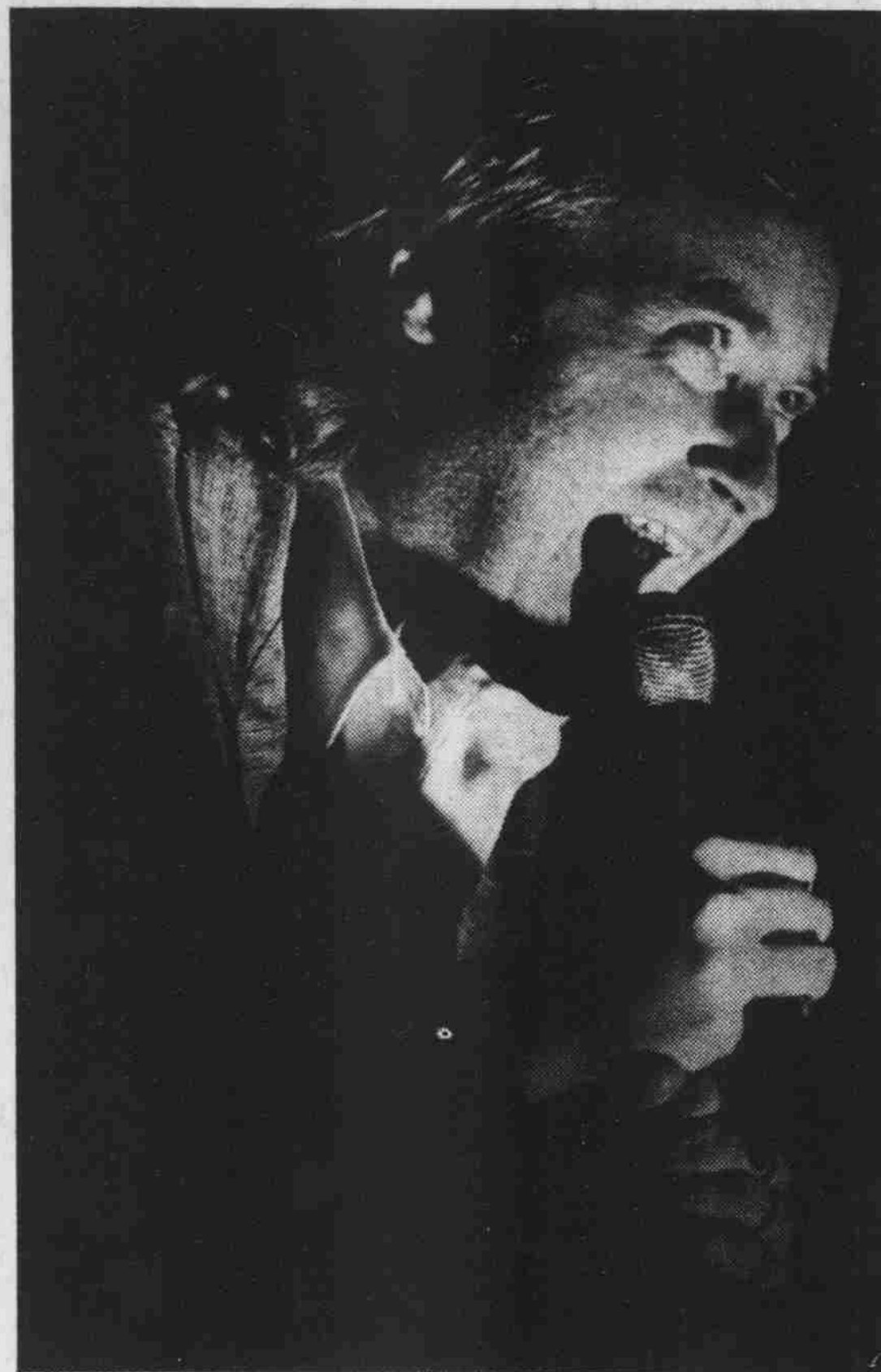
Before "Throwing It All Away," Collins led the audience in an odd yodel-like introduction. Afterwards, he challenged the fans to help him communicate with "the other world" by waving their hands in the air. He promised to levitate the arena, and his failure to do so was disappointing. With a light show of that magnitude, one would expect a special effects miracle, but none came.

What did come after this pseudo-seance was perhaps the best song of the concert — a musical miracle — the enigmatic "Home by the Sea." After "Invisible Touch," Collins and Chester Thompson launched into a masterful drum duet. Not content to merely make a big noise, the two created an intricate sound design of both rhythm and quasi-melodic pitch.

Another long instrumental stretch closed the concert proper. Banks, Rutherford, and guitarist Daryl Stuermer came back to tease the audience by playing something reminiscent of "Misunderstanding," but promises that this hit might be next on the program went unfulfilled.

Called back for an encore by the twinkle of cigarette lighters and chants of "We want Phil," Genesis returned for an encore featuring "Turn It On Again" and a medley of non-Genesis songs as diverse as "Pinball Wizard," "I'll Be There," "Satisfaction," and "Twist and Shout." Somehow this encore was a bit unsatisfying. It wasn't bad, but Genesis left a huge wealth of its own material unexplored. A rocker like "Paperlate" coupled with one of their neglected ballads such as "Taking It All Too Hard" would have been better.

A rather sad phenomenon is the personality cult fans have created for Collins. True, he has produced some good solo music, and his impish presence onstage is important to Genesis live. Fans adore him, as evidenced Saturday night by the many banners wishing the drummer/singer a happy 36th



DTH/Charlotte Cannon

Hah — hah — Heh . . . Phil Collins opens the show with "Mama"

birthday.

But instrumental, not vocal, excellence is what finally distinguishes Genesis. Banks, Rutherford and the supplementary musicians deserve much more credit than they usually receive for making Genesis what it is. Collins is an excellent drummer, but instrumental works are not made by drums alone. And what would "Home by the Sea" be without the intricacies of the voiceless "Second Home by the Sea"?

Collins would have been well-adviced to avoid overkill in the

Chapel Hill concert. He tended to go on a bit too long, with his domino tirade, his cheerleading, and even his drum duet. This is a fairly miniscule complaint, though.

The concert approached greatness without really achieving it. The light show was fantastic, the quality of the playing was high, and the selection of songs was imperfect but good. The crowd was well-behaved and enthusiastic. Though they witnessed a baptism, there was no pentecost: the band did not really catch fire.

Purdy's transports Chapel Hill through the Comedy Zone

It's no secret that Chapel Hill boasts a wide range of ways to relax and unwind including a veritable barrage of theater, movie and concert events. But it may surprise some to learn that comedy has only recently crowded its way into the town's Thursday night lineup. No longer must those who seek the jocular vein travel to New York, Atlanta, or even to Charlie Goodnight's in Raleigh.

Purdy's has recently begun a weekly venture into the "Comedy Zone." Each Thursday night the intrepid will find "laughter at a bargain price," according to Purdy's assistant manager Jeff Pierce.

Last Thursday night, the place was packed as opening act Ken Phillips, featured act Hap Cole, and headliner Jeff Brannan traded barbs with the audience and even found time to perform some material.

Opener Phillips had some difficulty setting the pace for the night, and the audience was restless by the time he introduced Cole. This talented young comedian from Florida had no problem whipping the crowd into the proverbial frenzy. Cole jerked about the stage like Talking Head David Byrne, his eyes popping as he cracked on such wholesome institutions as girches, Disney world, and "good ole boys" and their Southern women.

The pace never lagged as he asked such thought-provoking questions as "What is it that makes couples risk their marriage on the Newlywed Game for a dryer?" Cole finished his act with a satire on several Beatles songs, including the infamous "We All Live in a Yellow Coup de Ville." He was welcomed back at the

Marty Michaels Comedy

beginning of headliner Brannan's set as he joined in a rousing sing-along rendition of a slightly mutated "My Girl."

Brannan has appeared at Manhattan's venerable comedy club Catch a Rising Star and has opened for concert acts such as The Fixx, Steppenwolf, and Juice Newton. His delivery was easy-going compared to Cole's more aggressive Eddie Murphy style. His guitar was an indispensable prop, allowing him to sing such pop ditties as "My Girlfriend Don't Like Vegetables," a heart-rending ode to squash and peas. When not singing, Brannan performed various jokes and shadow figures on the back wall which were, to say the least, outrageous.

The audience seemed to enjoy their night in the Comedy Zone, despite the interference of some very inebriated patrons. Though these hecklers provided a great wall for the comedians' jokes to bounce off of (as in Brannan's question to a table of four "Are you guys sharing a brain tonight?"), they were an annoyance to the rest of the crowd. Purdy's management recognized the problem, and said the staff will be better prepared to deal with such disturbances in the future.

For the most part, however, the evening provided first-rate comedy made even better by the fact that it was found in the environs of downtown Chapel Hill.



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