

By VAUGHN PALMER

Music was simple then. You got out the fiddle, rosined the bow and had yourself a jubilee. Light years away is Genesis, a five-man British band that played the Coliseum Saturday. Their act is more like a moon landing than a concert.

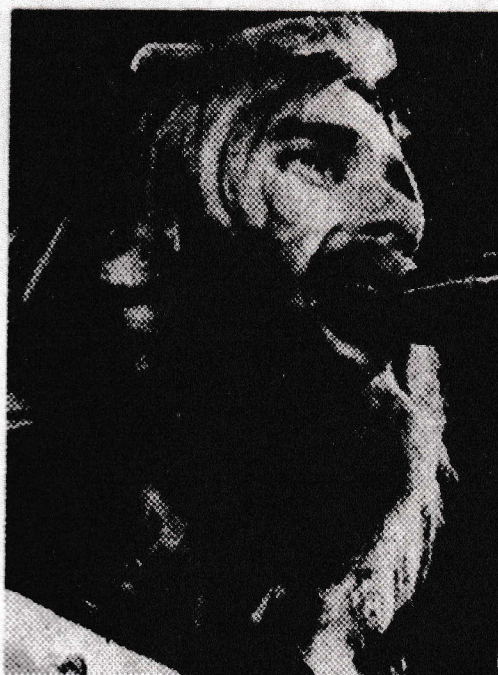
The group travels with five truckloads of equipment, all of it rented at \$8,000 a night from Showco, a Dallas firm that caters to the electric fantasies of rock's premier acts. The semi trailers make for a note of irony — in an era of jet travel, a 21st-century band bases its touring schedule on the 55 m.p.h. speed of a fleet of trucks. Getting the equipment packed, on the road to the next show and set up again is such a complicated task that the group has a truck manager in its 25-man entourage.

There is also a portable generator, juice to power the thousand-watt amplifiers, the 100 searing white Boeing 747 landing lights and the argon and krypton lasers that slice through the smoky air during one of the songs.

The effect of the Genesis battery of sound and light is like a supercharger for the outerspace music performed by Steve Hackett and Mike Rutherford on guitars, Tony Banks and his synthesizers and keyboards, and Chester Thompson, who was imported to pound the drums while the resident drummer, Phil Collins, does the vocals. Musically Genesis is a wash of sound, surging and sifting chords. Impressive yet more melodious than the apocalyptic German bands such as Tangerine Dream who attempt the same thing.

The lyrics, which are a mix of myths, parables, fantasies and romances, tend to get lost amid all the musical to do, even though Collins has a fine storyteller's

Blasting into orbit aboard Genesis' module



Phil Collins

voice. Collins was thrust into the role of lead vocalist when Peter Gabriel quit two years ago, and seems a bit out of place without the security of his drum kit in front of him. He hasn't developed a consistent singing manner and bounces and dips about at the mike like the Artful Dodger, a character he says he once played on the London Stage. Genesis' material though, has not suffered from Gabriel's departure. Most of the music Saturday was from their latest release, the excellent *Wind and Wuthering*, with the

rest largely from *Trick of the Tail*, the other post-Gabriel album.

Collins claims that Genesis' mountain of sound equipment has been designed to take into account the acoustics of a cavern like the Coliseum, which swallows more sound than some groups put out. That was not in evidence Saturday night when it was found that as usual, the only place anything was distinguishable was in direct line with the speakers at the back of the hall. Everywhere else was mud to the ears. In fairness, Collins did warn the reviewer that the Vancouver show would not have optimum sound because Genesis' equipment is designed to take advantage of the dampening effect of a hall full of bodies.

Setting up the Genesis show is a day-long affair, beginning in the early hours of the morning with the stringing of the wiring to support the tons of lights, speakers and special-effects equipment. By 8 a.m. Saturday they were hosting the equipment in place and a few hours later the assembly of the stage began. Then in early afternoon the roadies, guardians of the instruments, began plugging in the monitors, amplifiers and arranging the microphones, the guitars, and the twin drumkits. At 5:30 the group itself was on stage, running through a few songs to see if the music would work. At 7 they let the audience in.