

British band entranced audience

Genesis makes concert more than a catalogue of hits

By PETER MATILAINEN
Last year, Toronto had more superstar concerts than it has had in

any previous year, and probably more than we will see for some time to come, as ticket prices soar and top

stars are favoured over the new less established performers.

This trend might suggest that the quality of music will increasingly suffer. However, the Genesis concert, held December 16 at the Gardens Concert Bowl, bodes well for music's future if it is any indication of the directions in which progressive rock is taking its listeners.

Genesis, a British group which has been riding on the crest of the new European "invasion", has set the guidelines for a new form of presenting its music, linking its music and its message by intricate vocal and instrumental pieces and a visual experience for the audience.

With over 3,000 slides shown upon screens in the background, Genesis performed its latest release, The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway. This

is something which few of the established superstars attempt. In public concerts, the latter stick to playing their 'hits' and rarely stray to more recent, untried material.

It is to their credit that the members of Genesis were able to keep their audience entranced for two nonstop hours before playing an encore of earlier favourites.

The story found in the double album is by Peter Gabriel, lead vocalist and theatrical performer for the group. The album, conceived as a totality, is meant to be performed as such much like the Who's Tommy. It concerns the struggle of a young New York City Puerto Rican gang leader, Rael, who finds himself alienated, repressed and sexually frustrated by his surroundings and his life.

In the December concert, slides,

quick costume changes and spectacular props visually depicted the journey of Rael (performed by Gabriel himself) through a nightmarish surreal world, where he is able to liberate himself, and symbolically mankind as well. His castration and subsequent struggle back from the netherworld leave him a new and aware human, who sees the world for what 'it really is'.

Some critics might well suggest that groups who do this type of performance may be attempting to cover up a less than satisfactory sound. For Genesis this is clearly not the case. Their musical capabilities and tightness were well demonstrated by their excellence in combining effectively various media to mold a new form of expression. The album can give some of the excitement of the performance itself, as it was recorded 'live' before the present British and North American tour began.

Genesis has been able to develop a devoted following in North America over the past two years, while being virtually limited in airplay to FM 'underground' rock stations.

It is unfortunate that the group has given the album rights in Canada to Atco, who are not especially known for their good quality pressings. Such albums as Lamb Lies Down on Broadway point increasingly to the need for pressure to be brought to bear on the North American corporations to squeeze some of their superprofits into better pressings. The European import is the best bet for those who can afford excellence; the price for excellence is well worth it for Genesis.



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