

# March Of The Giant Hogwash

## Genesis And Peter Gabriel Milton Keynes

THIS WAS a reunion with specific objectives that succeeded despite everything the elements could hurl at it. Peter Gabriel got the money he wanted to save his WOMAD festival from financial embarrassment. Genesis were more than happy to help him raise it and 60,000 sodden and bedraggled punters got a nostalgia beanfeast that will comfort them as they cough and sneeze their way through the next week and leave a warm glow of remembrance for years to come.

Originally, Genesis had offered Gabriel the proceeds from one of the shows from their heavyweight tour of America and Europe they've just completed. Peter felt he couldn't accept and was then given an offer he couldn't refuse. All that remained was to fill up the Milton Keynes Bowl with the biggest rock audience its ever had.

Both sides were keen to play down any reunion ballyhoo — which is why you didn't see the word Genesis mentioned anywhere in the publicity — because getting together again made little career sense for either of them.

But if they couldn't trust the media to get the emphasis right they hoped their fans would

understand. They weren't wrong and the crowd's stoicism in the face of unrelenting steady rain throughout the day and evening was truly staggering to behold.

In the face of such devotion there was no alternative but to give the crowd exactly what they wanted, which is what Genesis and Gabriel did, making up for what they lacked in preparation (the only rehearsals they had were at the sound checks at Hammersmith Odeon earlier in the week) with an unswerving commitment that was evident from the moment Peter was brought on stage in a coffin borne by four undertakers.

Once disinterred he was immediately 'Back In New York City' and for nigh on two hours everyone revelled in the pre-1974 glories of Genesis brought up to date by the mammoth resources of the 1982 Genesis sound and light show.

So successful was this shameless cocoon that the flattest moment was when Genesis tried to back Peter on 'Solsbury Hill' and failed (mainly because the top sound was absent, either through technical hassles or because of difficulties in matching the current Genesis sound to Peter's voice) and followed it with a strangely subdued version of 'Turn It On Again'.

The high spots mostly came early on. After a delicate 'Dancing With The Moonlit Knight' Peter poured a fragile

passion all over 'Carpet Crawl' and with Phil's harmonies on the chorus produced the first spine-tingling moment of the evening.

Then, after the grandiose splendour of 'Firth Of Fifth' came a stunning version of 'The Musical Box' that defied the ten-year gap since it was last performed. The song ebbed and surged in the finest Genesis tradition, aided by Gabriel's flute solo and 'old man' mask which he'd dug out of his wardrobe.

Selections from 'The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway' betrayed a certain hesitancy and tended to creak at the joints but 'Supper's Ready' had no such inhibitions. Having performed it throughout their tour, Genesis flowed confidently and Gabriel gave it his own special imprint, despite the fact that his voice was beginning to crack under the strain.

The reunion was made complete for the encore when Steve Hackett unexpectedly appeared to lend his weight to 'I Know What I Like', having presumably listened to Daryl Stuermer putting his own gloss to his finest contribution to Genesis — the guitar solo on 'Firth Of Fifth'. The duet between Phil and Peter on 'I Know What I Like' was less successful, due to a reluctance by Peter to ham it up for the audience (who wouldn't have cared in the slightest) leaving Phil to try his tambourine routine on the crowd without first having had a chance to warm them up.

But an edited version of 'The Knife' set the perfect seal on the evening and by then it didn't matter what they sounded like.

Despite the fact the Genesis were more familiar with most (but by no means all) of the songs, Gabriel's ability to dominate the proceedings was quite astounding. He had remembered the words (which was just as well because the audience had too even though many of them can never have seen the two of them together before) and adopted the front-man role in the band with an ease and confidence that must have surprised even Genesis themselves. He'd even resurrected the flowermask for 'Supper's Ready' and taken time out to remember the story on the cover of the group's first live album as well.

And yet, there were always two separate identities on stage — Peter Gabriel and Genesis.

If this had been the opening night of a reunion tour the inquest would probably still be going on over how to improve things as it probably fell some way short of Genesis and Gabriel's standards of perfection.

But this was an unrepeatable bargain and the only way you'll get it to happen again is to boycott the next festival Peter Gabriel gets himself with — and don't you dare!

HUGH FIELDER



Is it Bill or is it Ben? No — it's Litt

Ellis