

Curtain goes up on Silverdome's Mini-Dome

The largest theatrical curtain in the world has been hoisted into place in the 80,500-seat Pontiac Silverdome.

The curtain, which hangs in 75-foot panels 30 feet wide from a cable-truss system stretching across the 50-yard line, will be used to reduce the size of the Silverdome for events such as professional basketball games, tennis matches and music concerts.

Some 5,000 square yards of polyester loop knit material were used to produce a royal blue curtain which cost \$72,000 installed, and which weighs a ton and a half.

When the curtain is in place, the reduced portion of the stadium will be called the Mini-Dome.

IT WILL BE used for the first time at rock concerts on Aug. 12-13 when the Electric Light Orchestra, currently in the midst of a world tour, plays on a bill that co-stars Heart.

Michael Tink II, vice president of Brass Ring Productions, which is putting on the ELO/Heart concert, called the giant curtain "awesome."

"This will permit us a completely new dimension in programming musical concerts," said Tink. "In the Mini-

Dome configuration we'll be able to sell up to 37,000 seats—all of them reserved and all of them with unobstructed view of the stage. And we've eliminated the 'festival seating' arrangement that has caused so many problems in the past.

"Because the distance from the stage to the farthest point of the audience is only about half of what it would be if you used the whole stadium, the acoustics will be considerably improved."

Gerry Baron, director of promotions and public relations at the stadium, said the curtain should allow securing more concerts for Pontiac.

"It allows us to create a setting that's much more intimate for concerts. And it will allow us to go out now and solicit musical events that we were not as well-equipped to handle in the past," he said.

Mike Micuda, who served as project engineer for the stadium, explained that hanging the 75-foot-high curtain had been easy if the Silverdome had a fixed roof. But because it has an inflatable fabric dome instead, the problem of hanging the curtain

became complex; there were no rafters.

"We had a very hard time finding material that was just right," Micuda said. "It couldn't be too heavy, but it had to have substance. We made an extensive search and did considerable experimentation before we found what we needed."

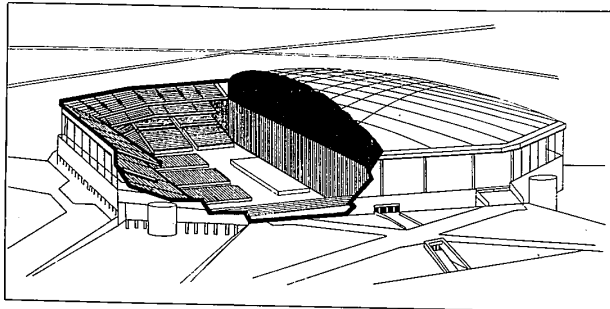
THE PANELS ARE hooked to the cables while the panels are on the ground, and then the cables are winched tight, lifting the curtain panels into place.

The curtain spans 402 feet. It cost \$72,000 and was raised in place Friday for the first time since being installed last April.

When the curtain is in place, it can cut the stadium exactly in half at the 50-yard line, or the winches can be moved at 28-foot intervals in either direction to allow still more flexibility in setting up the facility for a variety of sporting or musical events.

Public demand for seats at the ELO concert with special guest Heart in the Silverdome on Aug. 12 were so strong that an extra date was added.

Robert Fox, president of Brass Ring Productions, said, "ELO is having tre-



Seventy-five-foot-high curtain divides Pontiac Silverdome in half, reducing its football-field size to a mini-dome for other special events.

mendous successes wherever it goes on its current tour, and fans in the Detroit area are responding in such large numbers that we'll need two performances to satisfy them all."

Tickets for the Aug. 13 concert went on sale Monday at the Silverdome box office. All seats are reserved.

Both the Aug. 12 and 13 performances are scheduled for 8 p.m.

ELO IS PACKING in audiences wherever the British group appears. It has a \$300,000 stage especially built for this tour, and it features such mechanisms as smoke machines and lasers.

Four Tops return Home for shows

The Four Tops have brought their blend of harmony and rhythm home, through Saturday, for a six-day engagement in DB's Club at the Hyatt Regency Dearborn.

The Tops have repeatedly surpassed the million mark in record sales with their hits: "Baby I Need Your Lovin'," "Reach Out—I'll Be There," "Still Waters Run Deep" and "I Can't Help Myself." The Four Tops (Ronald "Obba" Benson, Duke Fakir, Lawrence Payton and Levi Stubbs) also write their own lyrics and music.

The international stars were discovered by Motown great Berry Gordy in their own Detroit and are received with great enthusiasm by fans throughout the world during numerous tours abroad.

Future plans for the Tops, according to member Duke Fakir, include a new

album release this fall on the ABC Records label and a major motion picture. The Tops will star in the film titled "The Fish That Saved Pittsburgh" and record the sound track produced by Tom Bell.

SHARING THE same production team of the box office smash "Car Wash," "The Fish That Saved Pittsburgh" is scheduled for release this winter.

The Four Tops will perform two shows nightly at 8 and 10:30 Monday-Thursday and 9 and 11:30 Friday and Saturday.

Upcoming acts in DB's Club include Marty Allen, Mary Macgregor, Billy Eckstine, and Marly McCoo and Billy Davis, Jr. For reservations and information call 593-1234, ext. 2311.

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Lounge adds disco sounds

Dancing has arrived at the Detroit Plaza's Celebration Lounge with the disco music of Celebrity, performing back-to-back with the show group, The Forum Delegation, through July 21.

Featuring Janice Franco as the lead singer, Celebrity's four-member band specializes in the keyboard, bass and drums. Appearing along with Celebrity, The Forum Delegation is a group whose musical repertoire ranges from

the Big Band era to popular ballads. The Celebration is open 5 p.m.-2 a.m. Monday-Friday and 7 p.m.-2 a.m. Saturdays. Drinks are half-price during the Celebration Hour, which is 5 p.m. Monday-Friday. There is no cover and no drink minimum.

The lounge is located at the base of the atrium on Promenade Level in the Detroit Plaza Hotel.

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