

The more distant concerts

By MIKE JAHN

Rock concerts have been getting larger for some time. As the Fillmores and similarly medium-sized halls closed, major concerts have tended to be held increasingly in large halls, indoor arenas, and baseball parks. Grand Funk Railroad and Three Dog Night both played ball parks last summer.

This makes more money in one shot for the performer, but what does it do for the man in the cheap seats? The cheap seats at Madison Square Garden, for example, are so far from the stage that if you hold up your little finger toward the stage, the performer will appear as about the size of the fingernail.

At a recent David Cassidy concert at Madison Square Garden, an outfit called Joshua Television was trying to solve this. "I'm the eyes for these kids," says Joshua White, 29. The head of Joshua Television and formerly of the Joshua Light Show, which inhabited the Fillmore East, was at the Garden supervising preparations for his firm's part in the concert; the projection, onto a 15x20-foot screen hung over the stage, of

a closed circuit color TV image of David Cassidy so all could see.

As concerts get bigger and more remote from the audience, Joshua White uses TV in an attempt to make it all more intimate. On stage are three cameras. Behind the stage is a huge, box-shaped projector called the MTS-360, aimed at the screen. Behind that is a large trailer truck which White leases for the occasion from the same New York TV production firm that does "Sesame Street." In the truck is a bank of six or seven monitors, lots of wires and dials.

All this is manipulated via a 20-station intercom system connecting truck, cameras, projector and the crew running the lights. It's a very complex system, one which costs any performer willing to give a good show—even for the people in the cheap seats—\$7,500 for one screen, \$10,000 for two; and \$20,000 for a videotape of the whole affair. Those who have paid the price include James Taylor, Steve Stills, Ten Years After and the Bill Graham Tanglewood (Mass.) rock concerts. The TV system was men-

tioned prominently in the rave reviews.