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## Havens and Rush were good despite the occasional flaws

By STEVE GELLER

Ritchie Havens is not a folksinger. Rather he is an interpreter of contemporary musical literature.

"When I sing, my mind is busy looking at the pictures the writer created. My body has something to do, which is to play the guitar. And my spirit is feeling the song's sensation all over again. I sing from what I see. It goes out and then comes back to me."

Havens performed last Friday with this empathetic attitude for his music. Eyes closed, his left foot keeping time to the rhythm of his guitar, he spread his distinct, raspy voice throughout Massey Hall.

He sang some of his older tunes (Maggie's Farm) and more recent ones (Rocky Racoon) but all his songs seemed to offer the element of hope that Havens apparently sees in his music. Accordingly, the number he chose for his encore was Let It Be.

The only flaw in Haven's delivery rested not in his music but his between songs monologue which consisted of plastic-sounding speeches on brotherhood and the infinity of yesterday, today and tomorrow.

Aside from being too long, the language was repetitious and cliché-ridden. However, the quality of his singing more than made up for it.

Preceding Havens was Tom Rush, no stranger to Toronto folk fans.

His makeup was country rock with a folk orientation. Accompanied by Trevor Veitch on guitar and bass player Duke Bardwell, Rush placed a greater emphasis on an electric sound and greater country inflections than in past performances. For every serious ballad, Rush answered with a humorous or satirical song. Not a particularly exciting



Ritchie Havens

performer, Rush relied on his cool, even voice and musical arrangements to win his audience. Highlights of his 45-minute performance were his versions of Joni Mitchell's Urge For Going, and the moving merger of Who Who Do

You Love and Hey, Bo Diddley. Toronto owes its thanks to Martin Onrot who not only arranged this successful concert but who has brought a continuously excellent flow of talent into town all winter.

### Argent's retch rock lousy

## Mayall gave fine concert

By THE KID

The O'Keefe Centre last week began its Sound of the Seventies series of concerts with a fine performance by John Mayall.

With his peculiar style of basic, down-to-earth traditional blues, Mayall is considered by many to be the best white blues man in the pop scene today.

He was accompanied by John Almond on saxophone, John Mark on acoustic guitar and Alex Molski, who displayed some fine bass guitar work.

After sauntering onto the sprawling O'Keefe stage and setting up their own equipment, Mayall and company executed two numbers in which the master blues artist played lead guitar and sang.

The most exciting portions of Mayall's short appearance occurred when he delivered his fantastic harmonica solos. After that, Mayall introduced Duster Bennett and sat by the side of the stage and watched.

Duster Bennett, as Mayall had proclaimed, was the best one man blues band to ever come out of England. To say that he was an amazing musician would be an understatement.

He played guitar, harmonica, bass drum and cymbal as well as singing. Bennett held the attention of his audience — merely 1,000 ardent blues fans — for his entire solo performance and was rewarded with heavy applause.

As Mayall returned to center stage, Bennett remained to complete the show, actually a series of jams with everyone exercising his right to execute and interpretive solo.

As good as these jams were, in the long run they detracted from the concert as Mayall was left in the background for too long. He did

not carry the concert the way a top-billed headliner should.

The first half of the show was butchered by a British rock group known as Argent. They are a unique group. I have witnessed light rock, hard rock and acid rock but never have I come across the retch rock spewed out by this musically-offensive entourage.

Their numbers were too long and repetitious. The structure and lyrics of their music were built around one factor — simplicity.

With the exception of drummer Bob Herit, the group lacked stage presence as well as ability. In fact, it appeared that Herit was actually too good to be kicking around with the other hackers on stage as he delivered a drum solo in which he used not only sticks, but also hands, feet and leather belt.

The dissatisfaction of the audience was summed up when one fan proclaimed: "I think anybody off the street can put out a record these days."

\* \* \*

Jefferson Airplane will be at the O'Keefe on March 29.

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