

# entertainment

## Album review: Blues the best mood

Long Distance Voyager  
By Wilfred Langmaid  
Brunswick Staff

The Moody Blues are one of the top groups of the rock era. From their beginnings in 1964, this English group has achieved worldwide fame, culminating in 1972 when "Lighter Shade of Pale" enjoyed the success in North America that it earlier had in Britain.

However, many critics felt that the group's last studio album, *Octave* from 1978, would be their swan song. Such is not the case.

The group's latest album, *Long Distance Voyager*, seems certain to add to their legacy. All aspects of it are superb - the production, the orchestration and instrumentation, and the performance of the individual musicians.

This album was a year in the making, and it is easy to see why. There is a lot to it in every sense, and it is very evident that it is a concept album. It is historically rooted, as one can see at first glance from the album cover, which appears to be an eighteenth or nineteenth century British city scene.

The album opens with "The Voice" it has the tight sound which comes only from a

cohesive group, maintained by drummer Graeme Edge. The group's fine lead guitarist, Justin Hayward, who released a solo album entitled *Night Flight* last year, is also the lead vocalist. He is one of the group's biggest assets with his fine voice which neither overwhelms the background music nor is dominated by it, the mark of skilful production. In many respects, this is the album's finest track. It is now zooming up the AM charts, after enjoying FM success since July.

Side one continues with "Talking Out of Turn". This slow number even further showcases the richness of Hayward's voice and the control he has over it. Again, the group provides the ideal background for Hayward.

Hayward also distinguishes himself with a strong break on lead guitar. The backup vocals of bassist John Lodge and wind instrumentalist Jay Thomas are effective, aided by the fact that they are subtle and always leave Hayward's lead vocals in the forefront. This is not a song that will likely be an AM single release, largely due to its lengthiness (7:17), but that is not to say that it is not an excellent track.

The next song on side one is "Gemini Dream", which was the first single release from the album. It is an upbeat number, and probably the most commercial cut on the album. Both the vocals and instrumentation in this song are extremely reminiscent of the Electric Light Orchestra.

Mr. Brittain incorporates very long lines, almost stick figures when he creates scenes with several people. It tends to remind one of Picasso. He blends faces into the backgrounds of forest scenes, and paints skin with shades of red, green and orange, his most popular colours.

Brittain painted a few portraits, more realistic than a lot of his other work, but still very simplified. Lines are softened and rounded; easy to look at.

His abstract work still centred around the human body. Yet figures were distorted, almost grotesque. The women's breasts and men's mouths were largely focussed upon.

All of his oil paintings were composed in a thought pattern; no simple observations without overbearing interpretation. He was a very remorse painter. According to the Beaverbrook Art Gallery catalogue he composed, "Portraits of young urchins trying to earn a few pennies, people who had become derelict

"In My World" closes side one. It opens with Hayward singing and accompanying himself on acoustic guitar. Subtly and gradually, Lodge comes in on bass, Thomas on flutes, and Edge on drums. This song is beautiful in its simplicity. However, it will likely not be released as a single, as it lacks the commercialism of "Gemini Dream", and this is unfortunate, as it is really the better song. At the end of the song the band members have individual breaks, and this is really our first opportunity to hear newcomer Patrick Moraz, the group's keyboardist who keeps a low profile musically on this album, largely due in all likelihood to the skills of the other established band members.

Side two begins with "Meanwhile". The opening is very analogous to the manner in which Gerry Rafferty opens many of his numbers, in particular the keyboard work of MORAZ. This is a middle-of-the-road styled number which could conceivably be a very successful single.

"22,000 Days", which follows, involves Hayward, Lodge, and Thomas vocally. The depressing mood in this song is established not only by the lyrics, but also by the minor-chord-based stanzas. In a break in this song we hear the harmonica skills of Thomas.

The next cut is "Nervous", a slow one, which begins peacefully with acoustic guitar and flute, followed by Hayward's vocals. String ar-

through poverty and alcohol and the struggling working class . . ."

Miller Brittain is obviously trying to communicate a message. But is it a foreboding of the possible automation and void of the future-a-robot world? Or is it a condemnation of past historical mistakes? A few religious paintings of the crucifixion and the expulsion from the garden, as well as a painting called "Night Target, Germany" portraying a fierce air battle of clouds, streaks of fire and silhouette planes. Would suggest the latter. However, his design structure and fantasy images would suggest the former.

Whatever the case, future past or present, the message is a solemn one but the exhibit is uplifting in the degree of talent shown in attempting to communicate such a difficult thought. It is well worth the time to view such an exhibit where the eyes as well as the mind are to delve into outer corners.



rangements follow by The New World Philharmonic, which adds to several of the album's songs. The entire group comes in on the choruses, which are again very much life E.L.O.

"Painted Smile" sounds intentionally like a clown at a circus, both with its lyrics and its melody. It draws one once again to the album cover. At this point one begins to grasp the essence of the album.

It becomes clearer with the recitation of "Relective Smile", a brief poem that sets us up for "Veteran Cosmic Rocker", which shows us the comparison that The Moody Blues

are making. This song is similar vocally and instrumentally to Jethro Tull, and the similarity is so pronounced that it is likely intentional.

*Long Distance Voyager* is a special kind of album. The fact that it is indeed a good concept album automatically puts it into a special league with other quality groups. It is skilfully produced by Pip Williams, but a lot of the tightness of the album is likely due to the fact that the songs on the album are all penned by group members. All in all, these things make for a fine album.

### Miller Brittain

By NANCY KEMPTON  
Brunswick Staff

The first thing you may ask about Miller Brittain is whether or not he lived in New York City. But no, he is a local man from Saint John. He did study in New York, a city where the very strange and psychedelic appear to thrive. And that is where his influence seems to originate.

His purpose is not a total abstraction, but not pure illustration either. A woman in the Beaverbrook Art Gallery standing there at the same time I was said, "It must be abstract, but amazingly enough, I can understand it."

This same person also said "none of the pictures are happy." Noteworthy is the fact that figures look very solemn, almost blank, emotionless.



### Concert flutist

Flutist Claude Monteux will open the impressive 1981-82 season of the UNB-STU Creative Arts Concert Series on Thursday, September 24, at the Playhouse.

In Fredericton, Mr. Monteux will be accompanied by the young Japanese pianist Masanobu Ikemiya. Trained in the United States at Oberlin and Indiana University, Mr. Ikemiya now lives in Maine where he has founded a highly successful chamber concert series. He has appeared both as soloist and chamber music ensemble-player in the United States and Canada.

The program includes two sonatas, by J.S. Bach and Sergei Prokofieff, and smaller works by Enesco and Faure. Mr. Monteux will be joined by three members of the Brunswick String Quartet for Mozart's Quartet in D major for flute, violin, viola, and cello, K. 285.

### TNB youth

Theatre New Brunswick Young Company will be holding general auditions for the October to April school touring season on Saturday, September 26.

The Young Company annually tours the province of New Brunswick frequently using original scripts written and produced in New Brunswick. One show is developed for the elementary grades one to six, and the other show is developed for the grades seven to twelve.

For the first time, the elementary school production will be produced in both French and English.

Applicants for positions should be able to act in both French and English, and must be over 19 years of age. Auditions will be by appointment only. For information or appointments call Pam Cheriton at the Playhouse at 506-455-3080.

# Re

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### STRIPES

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Rating: 10