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The Moody Blues play on (with AUDIO INTERVIEW)

Concert in Wabash a balance of music that spans almost 5 decades.

By James Grant of The News-Sentinel
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The Moody Blues, who'll perform Tuesday at the Honeywell Center in Wabash, are one of the few bands from the '60s that have been able to sustain a career for almost five decades in the turbulent world of popular music.

Originally formed in Birmingham, England, in 1964, the Moody Blues started out as an R&B/beat combo that included singer and guitarist Denny Laine (later a member of Paul McCartney's group, Wings), who sang lead on the group's first hit song, "Go Now."

This initial version of the Moody Blues lasted only a couple of years as the group found it difficult to sustain their early success.

With the addition of members John Lodge and Justin Hayward in 1966, the Moody Blues sound evolved from R&B-based pop into a mixture of rock music with a classical orchestra.

The new sound was showcased on the 1967 album "Days of Future Passed," which included the immortal song "Nights in White Satin," as well as "Tuesday Afternoon," both of which were written by Hayward.

The group went on to produce a string of classic albums, 14 of which went gold and platinum, that have sold more than 70 million copies worldwide.

Hayward, who wrote a good portion of the group's biggest hits, including "The Story in Your Eyes," "Question," "Your Wildest Dreams" and "I Know You're Out There Somewhere," says that, when the group goes out on tour, they try to play a wide selection of material from their various albums so there's something for every fan to enjoy.

"Well, I think it's to kind of make sure that we have a balance of things from most of the albums so that we're not sort of focusing on one incarnation of the Moodies in our recording history and to try and include the things that people really want to hear," Hayward said in a telephone interview.

"There's a few things that we really couldn't leave the stage without playing, so they take up quite a bit of time. I think the thing is so that ... there is something there for everybody."

Rabid fans of the group can also take a cruise with the Moody Blues in April.

This is the group's second cruise. The first one happened in March of this year, and Hayward says doing a cruise gives Moody Blues fans a chance to gather and celebrate the group and have some fun.

"It was something that we were asked to do a couple of years ago, and we resisted it for quite a while until we saw the kind of numbers of the fan community that were responding," Hayward said of the cruise.

"I must say, it goes back to the days when Moodies fans used to have big get-togethers in (Las) Vegas or in London," he added.

This year, the Moody Blues and Universal Music Enterprises released a massive 17-disc box set, also available in a condensed four-disc version, called "Timeless Flight" that celebrates the band's recorded legacy.

The 17-disc set includes a lot of unreleased live performances, alternate mixes and 5.1 surround mixes of the group's albums, as well as DVDs of rare Moody Blues television appearances and promotional videos.

While Hayward isn't that fond of the unreleased material on "Timeless Flight," he really enjoyed the 5.1 mixes. Listening to them gave him new appreciation for the group's talents.

"You can hear things really in their original state, with the original echoes, and my reaction was, 'How the hell did we do that?'" he said. "Seeing as, you know, we were smoking a lot of funny cigarettes and generally immersing ourselves in this stuff, and so I found it quite revealing."

With a such a long and varied recording career, Hayward said that for him, the most satisfying time in the recording studio with the Moody Blues was not in the



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Fans' 'Wildest Dreams'

What: The Moody Blues in concert.

When: 7:30 p.m. Tuesday

Where: Honeywell Center, 275 W. Market St. in Wabash

Cost: \$45, \$65, \$85, \$125. For tickets, call the Honeywell

Center box office at 1-260-563-1102 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

weekdays and two hours prior to the show, or buy at

www.honeywellcenter.org.

late '60s and early '70s but in the mid-'80s when the group experienced a second wind commercially and had hits on the charts again.

"I think it was that time in the '80s of 'Your Wildest Dreams' and 'I Know You're Out There Somewhere.' To have a hit the second time 'round in your life when you just got to your 40s ... is a wonderful thing and very rare and very precious."