

# The **ANGLE**

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## BLIND MELON



*Locally:*

**INDIAN SUMMER  
THIRD DEGREE**

**BIG GROOVE • SILLY RABBIT  
ROMEO SUICIDE**

**CMJ**

**METAL MARATHON**  
*is coming to town—see p. 11*

**Industry Bullshit:**

**LOTS A ROCK CLUBS = BONANZA OR GLUT?**

**CLUB CALENDAR**



BLIND MELON vocalist Shannon Hoon. SEE page 9.

*ANGLE Photos By Steve Azzara.*



BLIND MELON: guitarist Christopher Thorn, drummer Glen Graham, vocalist Shannon Hoon, guitarist Rogers Stevens (standing) and bassist Brad Smith (squatting).

# BLIND MELON

By RICHARD JANNACCIO

*Blind Melon have created quite a buzz before recently releasing their self-titled debut on Capitol Records. They've already had a video on MTV and the band's lead vocalist Shannon Hoon, a friend of Axl Rose, appeared on Guns N Roses' video, "Don't Cry."*

*But their music has more in common with the Black Crowes than GNR. Theirs is a soul-piercing, earthy, bluesy sound, like the Crowes, but also showing influences as diverse as Jefferson Airplane, Led Zeppelin, The Allman Brothers, and even Pearl Jam.*

*In addition to Shannon, the band features guitarists Thomas Rogers Stevens and Christopher Thorn, bassist Brad Smith and drummer Glen Graham.*

*I spoke recently with Shannon, and found him to be very much like his music—down-to-earth and unpretentious; outreaching and very much aware of being part of something larger.*

*Tell us the story that led to getting signed to Capitol.*

We'd been together for a week, made a 4-track demo. Somehow a lawyer got a hold of it. He called us and wanted to represent us.

Within a month, we're having dinner with all these 10 or 12 record labels and we bullshitted, saying we had 30 songs. We really only had 5 or 6.

We had this list of demands and Capitol was the only one that was dumb enough to give it to us.

We wanted complete control. We co-produced the album, did the artwork, even designed T-shirts. We co-directed the last video.

*Your album sounds so much like a live recording. How did you work with your producer, Rick Parasher, to capture and preserve that quality?*

We basically recorded all the music live, in a room the size of a living room.

I think doing things live creates an invisible feeling. When you play off each other, you can hear a gelling sound that you can't get from modern technology.

We'd do three or four takes and pick out the best one. We did some vocals over, and went back and did very minimal overdubs.

As for Rick, he flew to North Carolina, and spent the weekend, and we got along well and knew he would allow us to get what we wanted. We co-produced the album. He's more into classical and weirder alternative, not much into rock.

*How does your live show compare to the album? What portion is acoustic?*

Every show is completely different. We do a lot of freak-out improvisational jams. We definitely put ourselves on a limb as far as that's concerned.

At this point, we haven't done acoustic, because we haven't had long sets or sound checks. But we could do any of our songs acoustically. But we weren't doing it on our last tour.

*Brad's father used the term "Blind Melon" to describe his underachieving hippie neighbors. Why did you think that was an appropriate name for the band?*

People perceive us as pot-smoking hippies, so we took on the name.

*But now you're a nationally known rock musician. And like it or not, you're going to become a role model for your fans, especially the younger ones. So tell me, Shannon, what are we going to be finding out about your personal philosophies, your politics, how you lead your life, and what you value most on a personal level?*

I'm 22 and just discovering those sorts of things. We don't know any more than anybody else. We're not very knowledgeable.

As far as materialism, sure we want to make money, but that's just a fringe benefit. We would be doing this anyway.

I'm now pointed toward an introspective lifestyle—truth and honesty in what you're doing.

But I would rather have them take a song as a role model than me. They'd be making a great mistake.

I don't have the answers.

*Do the songs have the answers?*

There's no concept to what we're doing. We're not going in any direction. The album is a 13 chapter book with no title.

It's not an album that you can slam to from beginning to end.

I have no big beliefs in what goes on in politics. I'm not a political person. We're not a political band.

*Did any of your songs stem from a personal experience with an interesting story behind it?*

"Paper Scratcher" is about a guy I met in L.A. After a year, I ran into him again and he did not remember me.

So I told him if he said "Hey Shannon" when I go to work, I'd give him a dollar. I saw him last week, he didn't remember, and he told me his name was James Taylor.

If you don't have any responsibility, it's hard to stay sane.

*What did you do before Blind Melon?*

Basically, I graduated high school and two weeks later moved to L.A. Me and the bass player Brad had a band in high school, playing cover tunes, learning how to hold a guitar and stand up.

*What's it like to go back to that small town in Indiana?*

I was considered to be an outcast back home. I'm proud to go back; kids in the community can see what's happened to me.

I've scarred myself a lot—the pain of growing up in a repressed environment.

You suppress a lot of feelings when you grow up in a community where you're supposed to fit in and you don't.

For someone extroverted in a small community, you become introverted and hold it inside.

*I get quite a variety of reactions to the stuff I write. How do you react to so-called "good press" and "bad press"?*

I've read some of that stuff. I read the bad reviews. Maybe we really were bad that night.

I personally enjoy seeing people come up with creative ways to shred. I don't like where they gush and goo over every band in the paper.

I talked to three good people today, including yourself. I know there's good ones and bad ones.

I get a kick out of ruthless writers.

*Now it's your turn to be ruthless to the press. What question do you get asked over and over again?*

People a lot of the time ask, "How did you meet the rest of the band?"

*And what's the stupidest question you've been asked?*

Somebody asked if I could put something into a time capsule, what would it be and what would people think...

*That's a winner! Any more?*

Well... "What's a Blind Melon?"