

MUSIC MAKER

Top Music



Here are the weekly charts for the nation's best-selling recorded music as they appear in this week's issue of Billboard magazine

TOP SINGLES

- 1 "Dreamlover," Mariah Carey (Columbia)
- 2 "Can't Help Falling in Love," UB40 (Virgin) (Platinum)
- 3 "Whomp! (There It Is)," Tag Team (Life) (Platinum)
- 4 "If," Janet Jackson (Virgin)
- 5 "Runaway Train," Soul Asylum (Columbia) (Gold)

TOP ALBUMS

- 1 "River of Dreams," Billy Joel (Columbia)
- 2 "Sleepless in Seattle" Soundtrack, (Epic Soundtrax) (Platinum)
- 3 "Blind Melon," Blind Melon (Capitol) (Gold)
- 4 "Janet," Janet Jackson (Virgin) (Platinum)
- 5 "Black Sunday," Cypress Hill (Columbia)

COUNTRY SINGLES

- 1 "Thank God for You," Sawyer Brown (Curb)
- 2 "A Thousand Miles from Nowhere," Dwight Yoakam (Reprise)
- 3 "In the Heart of a Woman," Billy Ray Cyrus (Mercury)
- 4 "Holdin' Heaven," Tracy Byrd (MCA)
- 5 "Ain't Going Down 'Til the Sun Comes Up," Garth Brooks (Liberty)

Associated Press

Top Movies



Here are the box-office hits according to reports across the nation:

- 1 "The Fugitive," \$17.2 million.
- 2 "The Man Without a Face," \$5.5 million.

Blind Melon fans like homespun sound

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Once record companies got a hold of Blind Melon's demo tape, offers poured in. The quintet signed in 1990 with Capitol Records and recording sessions were set to begin in Los Angeles.

Five months later, the sessions still had not begun.

When you're a band that prides itself on roots, making music in LA can seem as contradictory as camping out by a swimming pool. Instead, the Melons retreated to Durham, N.C., rented a vintage five-bedroom house and recorded their self-titled debut album in splendid isolation.

"There's a new generation of music and a lot of expression coming from a lot of different walks of life," Blind Melon singer Shannon Hoon said in a telephone interview. "The labels are starting to realize that that's what people want to know about. They want to

'There's a new generation of music and a lot of expression coming from a lot of different walks of life.'

— Shannon Hoon

know about (stuff) that's real."

And the band is about as real as you can get, from its small-town roots to its warm, front porch sound. Their record takes the less-is-more approach, eschewing most modern studio effects for an intimate mix. Rogers Stevens and Christopher Thorn (guitars), Brad Smith's bass, Glen Graham's drums, and Hoon's raspy voice all share equal time.

Blind Melon's sound draws on such influences as the Allman Brothers; Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young; hard rock and alternative rock — all with a homespun, comfortable — OK, call it '70s — feel.

"People have stuck the retro label when they're describing our band," Hoon said, "and I think

what they're failing to realize is the thing we like is (when) it was just the music, (when) it wasn't saturated with a lot of modern effects.

"We all kind of liked the production that was on ... a lot of early Stones records, (where) whatever it is you're playing is what it's going to sound like. You kind of create an invisible sound from doing it that way."

Much of the natural quality and innocence of Blind Melon's music can be traced to each member's small-town upbringing. Hoon is from Lafayette, Ind.; Stevens, Smith and Graham are from West Point, Miss.; and Thorn is from Dover, Pa.

Even the band's name came

from Smith's next-door neighbors in Mississippi. They were unemployed hippies who called each other "blind melons."

Hoon says he didn't learn to appreciate his rural background until three years ago when he left Lafayette for Los Angeles. But he also said the narrow-mindedness and constricting atmosphere left him scarred.

"I think that I was raised in a community where there were the good group of people and the so-called bad group of people," he said. "Where I'm from, Purdue University is (in) our city — if you didn't graduate from high school and go to Purdue University, you were pretty much an outcast."

"I was in sports all through high

school and I had been raised in this competitive environment. ... I was 17 years old, and I couldn't find a way to remove myself from my body and look at the way I was living."

Once Hoon realized he was living his life by other people's expectations, he knew it was time to find his own way.

Hoon's lyrics are critical of some of the narrow traits he grew up with. "Holyman" decries those who insist their view of religion is the only way; "Dear Ol' Dad" is a sarcastic tale of an old girlfriend who ditched him because she found religion; and "Change" chides those who are afraid to do just that.

"I have to get the frustration out of me, but I don't ever direct it at anybody," he said. "I figure everything that has happened to me from where I come from to where I'm at now has just been a building block of who I am."

MOVIE REVIEWS

'Son of the Pink Panther' comes off as pale offspring

By Bob Strauss
Los Angeles Daily News

LOS ANGELES — Dead horses, cash cows and



DEIRDRE COAKLEY

Arts & Entertainment Notebook



American composers saluted in new ballets