

**1996 PULLOUT ROCK CALENDAR!**  
**KURT & COURTNEY, FOO FIGHTERS, EDDIE VEDDER, LIVE & MORE!**

AMERICA'S ROCK MAGAZINE

# CIRCUITS

VOL 26 #8

**SPECIAL  
CALENDAR  
ISSUE!**

## SILVERCHAIR

A NUMBER ONE CD & A RED HOT TOUR. BUT WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THEY GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL?

## URGE OVERKILL

## LIVE

Who is Ed Kowalczyk?



## BLIND MELON Out Of The Soup

**PLUS:** The Presidents of The United States Of America, Gee Gee Bells, Lenny Kravitz, Lisa Loeb, Rancid



## RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS Wild And Wacky as Ever

## CANDLEBOX THE LOW DOWN ON LUCY

CALENDAR PINUPS: Kurt Cobain Courtney Love Foo Fighters  
Sonic Youth Eddie Vedder Blind Melon Live White Zombie NIN  
Green Day Silverchair Red Hot Chili Peppers

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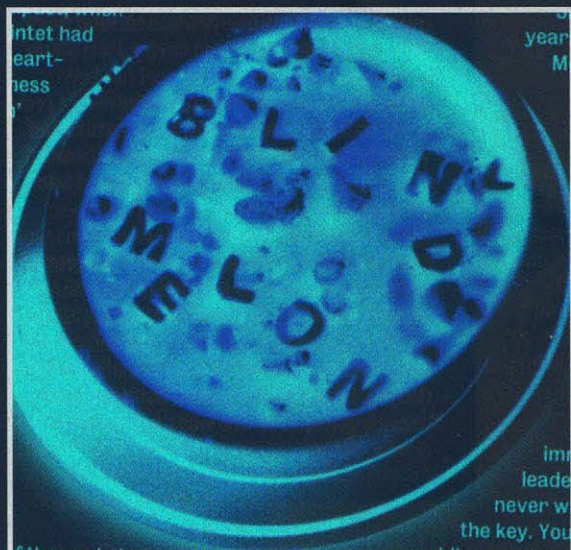
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# My lunch with Blind Melon!





I have to admit, 2 weeks ago all I knew about Blind Melon was they had a big single on MTV starring a little kid that looked very much like my younger sister, Janine. In fact several members of my family have been known to call her the "Bee Girl." I read all the

left wondering at Hoon's perspectives. "I know sometimes they're ambiguous and you can't always tell what is said. But it's more about creating a feeling," says Christopher Thorn, guitarist.

Coming from various areas of the country, this quintet formed over five years ago in Los Angeles. They recorded a demo within a week after coming off a successful and exhausting tour with Soundgarden. Blind Melon is definitely a band to see live, which helped them to gain more notoriety throughout their tours. The popularity of the single, "No Rain" catapulted the band into the mainstream and allowed them to get such plum spots as an opening gig for the Rolling Stones and Woodstock '94. With rave reviews from Billboard to Mademoiselle, Blind Melon is about to get tossed back into the stardom stew.

I talked to Christopher Thorn and Rogers

C: Are you guys touring by yourself?

RS: Europe we are going to be doing festivals with larger bands and here in the States we are doing a club tour.

C: How do you like the club tours as opposed to large stadium tours?

RS: Well it depends if you can squeeze all the things on stage that you need (laugh), but I think it's nice to have a balance between the two. I mean there's obviously a better link up between you and whoever may be listening in a club. I mean sometimes you feel completely removed in a larger show from what the crowd is doing and they could really give a rat's ass what you are doing. That's what it feels like.

C: Right.

RS: We're not the most athletic bunch of guys (laugh), so it's hard to pull off, ya know?

C: You guys got popular pretty quickly with the first album, so was it a big change

People seem to have this misconception that our lives were so dramatically altered, but it's a myth. I am living out in suburban obscurity right now, so I don't really pay attention to that lifestyle. I think you can play up on that to a certain extent but we are pretty far removed from it. We couldn't care less.

press and bio that Capitol sent, but wasn't very interested until I caught their sold out show at the Troubadour in Hollywood. Lucky for the club they don't have any chairs (or tables for that matter) because there was a sea of nonstop writhing bodies for all of their 2 hour set. Definitely not the mellow guys I expected. Pure energy and great music is the only way to describe it. Shannon Hoon is a whirling dervish whose vocal styling leave you torn between giving him a hug or helping him to throw gasoline on the fire.

Following their multi-platinum self titled debut, many lesser musicians would cave under the pressure of expectations. "I think we work best when we're in the midst of total chaos, when things are flying around the room, both figuratively and literally. Tension can be a very exhilarating thing," quips lead singer, Shannon Hoon. However, the new album, SOUP, manages to cover everything from acoustic grooves to moody melodies delving the darkside of human nature. Although the lyrics often leave one confused, there are very powerful emotions evoked and an ambiance created. Even the band is often

Stevens, the guitarists of Blind Melon, on the phone during lunch one day about the turns their lives have taken in Blind Melon and what they think about life, happiness and the a good bowl of SOUP.

(Operator: Ms. La Hart, Rogers is on the line for you.....)

Circus: Where are you now?

Rogers Stevens: I am in Seattle, rehearsing, preparing to go on tour.

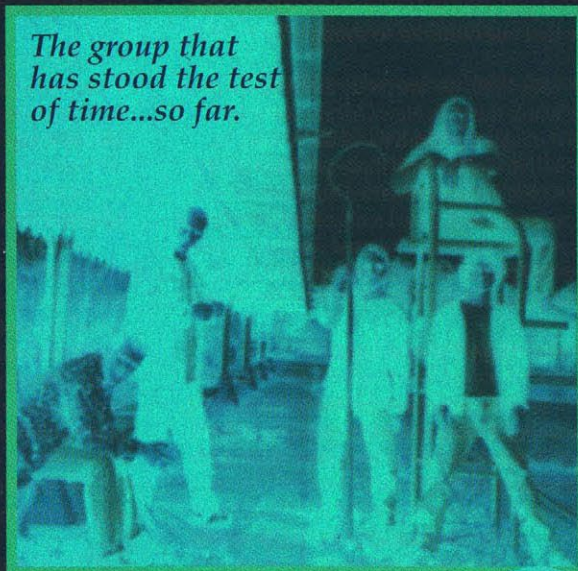
C: Oh, how long is the tour?

RS: Well, it depends on the view, considering there's breaks in between. We're going to Europe at the end of this month for about 3 weeks, coming back, have a week off and then going out on a US tour.

for you? I mean you started getting more publicity and started doing the larger tours. Did you do a lot of club touring before that?

RS: Yeah, we toured for a year in a van

The group that has stood the test of time...so far.



before this record before anything happened and actually played some larger shows as well. People seem to have this misconception that our lives were so dramatically altered, but it's a myth. I am living out in suburban obscurity right now, so I don't really pay attention to that lifestyle. I think you can play up on that to a certain extent but we are pretty far removed from it. We couldn't care less.

**C: So where are you from originally?**

RS: Mississippi. But now I am living in Seattle. I moved here from New Orleans where we recorded 'Soup', but I lived there for a couple of years before we made the record.

**C: How did it influence your music recording somewhere like New Orleans?**

RS: It's that sticky sweet air down there (laugh.) the culture is very substantially meaty, I think. I was going out and hanging in bars and seeing brass bands all hours of the night. This whole brass scene that's going on there completely bowled me over. It was one of those musical experiences that come so rarely. Ya know, I wrote some horn parts and got a brass band on this record.

**C: Oh right and that was Kermit Ruffin with the Little Rascals?**

RS: He was in a band called The Rebirth of Brass Band, they have some records out. You can see them at Jazz Fest and things like that. Now he's doing his own thing. And then the Little Rascals Brass Band, those guys do a lot of street gigs so.....

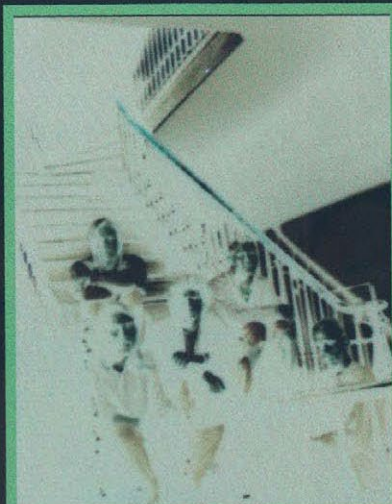
**C: So you must have felt some pressure when you went in to record this album, since the first one came out so strongly?**

RS: Well, we are pretty far removed from the whole thing. In New Orleans we were 2,000 miles away from the closet weasel, ya know. No contact with those people at all and we weren't really concerned with it at all. I suppose the only time I realized it was after the record was done and I started reading reviews of it and people were just completely, maliciously destroying it.

**C: 'Soup?' You're kidding?**

RS: No! Actually I am pretty confident in the record. I think that some people just don't really understand what we are trying to do or not trying to do.

**C: So do you think 'Soup' is a lot different from the first album?**



**C: The song 'Car Seat' is a reference to Susan Smith, she was sentenced to life in prison recently. Any comments on the sentence?**

RS: Well, there is a tremendous amount of gray area there. I don't necessarily feel capable, because I don't know her or all the facts or whatever horrible things she went through, to decide her fate. I mean obviously she was a disturbed person....

**C: The first record, those were the first 13 songs we wrote when we got together. And this album is ...we've had the benefit of playing 3 years worth of shows and seeing all sorts of different things. So it is inevitable that we are going to improve somewhat. It sounds to me like we got a little better at doing our sound. Honing it down a bit.**

**C: Well you guys spent a considerable amount of time apart between albums.**

RS: There were a few months there where we were writing individually, but off and on we would always get together. There were always things to do.

**C: So all of the music is basically a collaborative effort.**

RS: Yeah. Everyone has a song on this record and I am pleased. Whereas what happened the first time around, it was all of us together screaming at each other trying to get it done. This time we tried to get something really complete and then force it on them. It's definitely a sort of terse situation.

**C: On a more personal level, how did you get interested in music?**

RS: (Laugh.) I have cassette tapes of

myself as a child, a five year old reciting the 'The Billy Goats Gruff' and saying I am going to be a great musician. If the goal has been achieved, I think that remains to be seen. I pretty much focused on it when I was a child, but when I started getting more into comics and doing comic art and things like that and into art work and I was really into superheroes, comics and stuff. Then when I was a teenager I saw Van Halen, I think, and sort of transferred my fixation from men in tights to Rockstars (laugh). I saw David Lee Roth jumping around on the stage and I found that impressive. I really wanted to move to NYC and be a Superhero (laugh). But I guess I realized that was not a realistic goal and so this was the next step down.

**C: So you are one step down from a Superhero.....(laugh)**

RS: Well then as I got older I realized it was all a bunch of hogwash and I didn't actually care about it anyway.

**C: Being a Superhero or a Rockstar?**

RS: Yeah!

**C: Which comics were you into?**

RS: As a kid, I was into things like X-Men and Spiderman and then I got into things like Robert Crumb and things like that as I got older and the testosterone started flowing (laugh).

**C: Have you ever read any of Neil Gaiman's work? The Sandman series is very good.**

RS: I've seen his stuff and it is really amazing, but now I've moved into doing paintings and large stuff, so I am not as up on the comic scene as I was. But it really seems to have grown exponentially from when I was into it.

**C: How long have you been playing the guitar?**

RS: I started playing the guitar when I was about 15 or 16 years old. I don't really find it necessary in a rock format to take guitar lessons because you can always pick up any record from any great rock master and learn it. Best lesson there is. But I am more interested in jazz music now than I was.

**C: Really. So who do you look to for inspiration Jazz-wise?**

RS: I listen to a lot of Thelonius Monk, Art

Blakey, John Coltrane and then Jake O'Reinhart, especially for guitar.

**C: The song 'Car Seat' is a reference to Susan Smith, she was sentenced to life in prison recently. Any comments on the sentence?**

RS: Well, there is a tremendous amount of gray area there. I don't necessarily feel capable, because I don't know her or all the facts or whatever horrible things she went through, to decide her fate. I mean obviously she was a disturbed person. But I think it is a bit bold for me to sit here and say she should die or whatever. I don't feel as if I have the capability to be god on this situation...you can't justify what she did, but there's obviously some psychological problems there.

**C: Do you think anyone has the right to decide who dies?**

RS: Honestly, I flip flop on this issue. I am 25 years old and my opinions aren't set in stone about the death penalty. My dad is a lawyer, so I grew up with all this. I think it is one of those things that has to be carefully thought out. But on the other hand, I think if they want to give someone the death penalty, they ought to put the switch in the hands of the victim's family. If they are able to kill them, then let them do it. If not put them in prison for life. It's a hard thing. It won't solve the problem, but it might appease the family's of the victims more than anything else. Which is a valid argument.

**C: I noticed you guys have an Internet address, are you involved in that?**

RS: None of us are very computer literate. I have one here and I could go on if I wanted to. Something about the Internet freaks me out. I think the last thing this world needs is to keep people at home in front of another TV screen, rather than going out and having actual human interaction. But I think it's good for information and research and that sort of thing. I think, as with anything, people overdue it. You hear all these crazy stories about people checking into the hospital because they've been in front of the screen for hours.

**C: (Laugh) I've never heard that one. However many people are concerned about the intrusiveness the Internet proposes, in comparison to the unintrusiveness of a TV.**

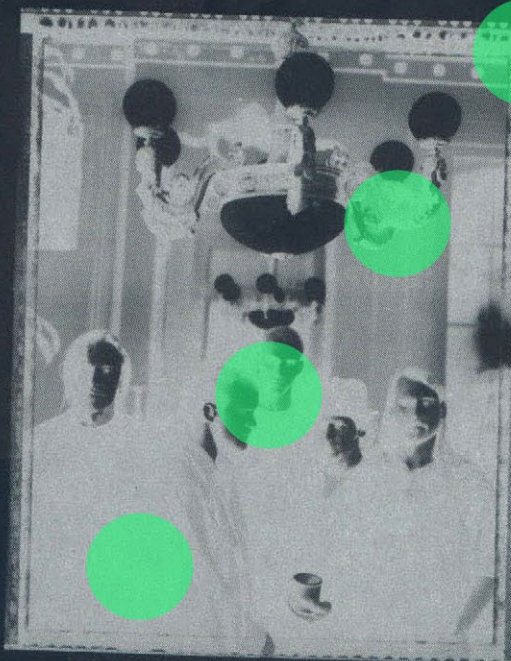
RS: Well I think that TV is just evil. So at least with a computer you have some sort of interaction in your brain. You could possibly do some work in the process. With a TV you are completely at the mercy of whoever wants to pummel you with whatever stupidity they chose. But with a computer you can sort of find your own way, which I think is better.

**C: So are you happy with the way things are going with you and the band?**

RS: I think the word happiness is a very elusive and hollow term. I don't necessarily think it has to be all or nothing, just so long as I have a certain amount of creative output. It is life sustaining, the only thing that keeps you around. It's your existence. And for now this is doing it. So yeah I am pretty happy. We're getting an opportunity to record and make music and do all these things and travel. I mean you can't complain about that lifestyle.

**C: Do you see yourself taking your painting further?**

RS: Oh definitely. Definitely. That's sort



of the plan to move out of this into that at some point.

**C: What are your subjects?**

RS: It's pretty altered versions of people that I meet and see and sort of inconsequential things. Just people that I see walking around the streets that I find aspects of interesting. I am one of these people that doesn't have a great goal or anything. I am sort of meandering about aimlessly.

**C: Can you explain the song 'Mouthful of Cavities'?**

RS: It's probably about the convoluted nooks and crannies of Shannon's brain. I am not really sure what that one's about to be honest with you (laugh.)

(The phone rings, it is Christopher. So I

say Adios to Rogers and tell him how lovely he has been. He corrects me on his name. Apparently I kept calling him 'Roger'. He is very forgiving though.)

**Circus: Hi Christopher! How are you?**

Christopher Thorn: all right. What sort of a name do you have there?

**C: Nickname. So do you find that the geographical distance makes for better communication in the band?**

CT: Well, we spend a lot of time together on the road and in the studio the quarters are so tight. When you have time off it's nice to have a little space and not necessarily have to rehearse every night. I think it's fresher when we get together. You sort of miss people if you are not around them but then again you start to hate them if you are around them all the time. Space works well for us.

**C: Did you find recording this album that you felt pressure to live up to the success of the first album?**

CT: Actually I found the opposite with this record. On the first record we had no idea how we were going to be received and if we didn't do well then we'd probably be selling shoes at the mall right now! The fact that we have had some success has been really nice and if we never had that again, that's all right because we at least had it once. As far as performance and recording, the entire process, was much easier this time around because we had been recording and felt more comfortable. It seemed to flow faster and is seemed to be less hassled. I don't think that anyone felt any pressure on this record at all. We just wanted to make a great record and not repeat what we had already done. It was fun after being on the road for so long.

**C: So did you have a break after the tour?**

CT: A little bit. Not a whole lot because we kept getting offers to do things like the Rolling Stones or whatever and we'd go right back out again.

**C: Do you feel the sound and direction has changed with Blind Melon?**

CT: Well I don't know about the whole direction, it's still the five of us making music together, so it's still Blind Melon. But we made the first record over 3 years ago, so we've grown a whole lot. We toured for over two year and I would think, hopefully our playing is better. I think we've grown as song writers. The record is very different, it's more eclectic. But we are all really

proud of it, it feels really good.

**C:** Rogers was just telling me that he had read some not too great reviews.

**CT:** Really? Well I'll have to talk to him (laugh.) Because I haven't heard that! But then again, so did the first one. Some people just really get it. Some people just don't get it at all. Some people never got it and they're never gonna get it (laugh.) So there is no use in trying to convert them and that's just fine (laugh.)

**C:** There are a lot of really nice acoustic parts on this one. I think I read somewhere that you guys were influenced a lot by the Grateful Dead.

**CT:** I would say that was mainly my influence. I don't think Rogers would claim them (laugh) as an influence. When I was in High School all my friends and I did was smoke pot and go to Dead shows and listen to the Grateful Dead. they are definitely a part of my upbringing. And Jerry dying, ya know, it bummed me out, it really sort of freaked me out. I was in Canada, we were doing some interviews up there and we found out at a radio station. I couldn't believe it. Then later on that night, just watching like Ted Koppel and watching all these clueless sort of people talk about him. It was just crazy to realize how big of an impact he had on people. And I am really bummed that I didn't get a chance to meet him because he influenced me in a lot of ways. It would have been nice to hang out with him and talk.

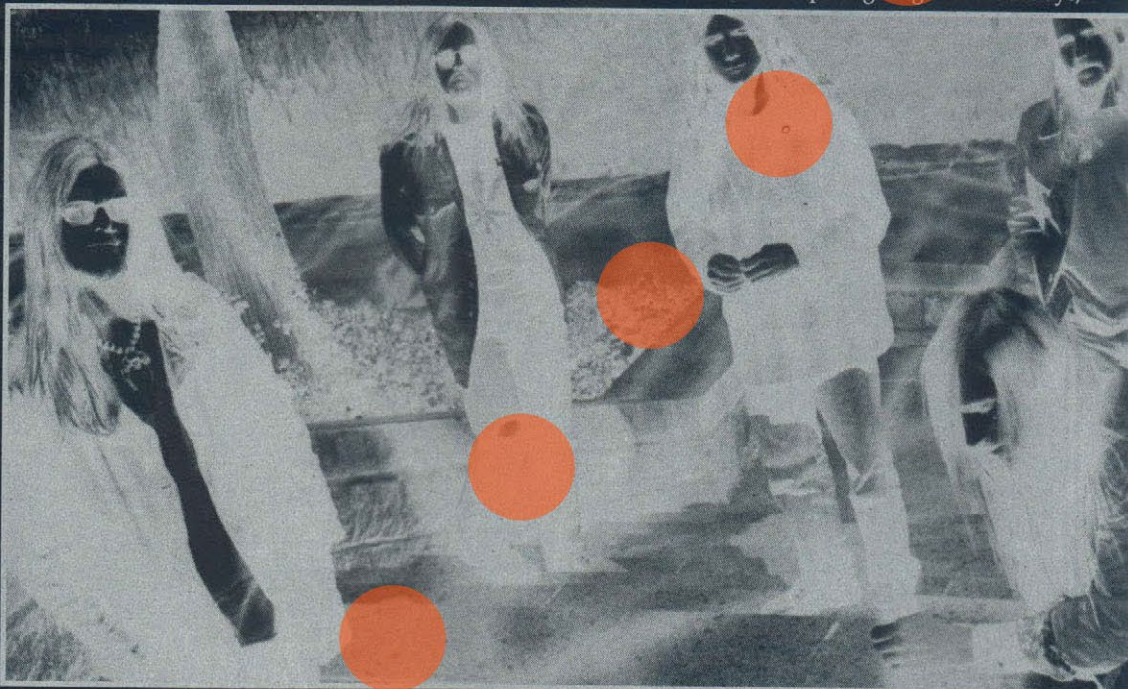
**C:** It really makes you think about life. Ernest Hemingway use to say 'People are dying that have never died before.' I think that really speaks for when you are younger you just don't even consider death, but then these people, these heroes in your life die and it is almost unbelievable. I think we saw this same mass reaction last year with the death of Kurt Cobain.

**CT:** And Jerry was a very big hero to so many people. It seems like they were the last link to that whole sixties movement, like the final link. And now that's broken and its time to move on. The sixties were such an interesting period of time and people are still intrigued by them. But now you won't even be able to go to a show and feel some of that. It just down-right sucks.

**C:** So who would you count as

your other influences? What made you pick up the guitar?

**CT:** At a really early age my mom was playing Jim Croce songs and John Denver songs to me, he was in a Blue Grass band, so I was influenced by that a very young age. As I got older and decided that I actually wanted to play the guitar, I would say that Jimmy Page and the Beatles, Dylan, all those people.....Jimmy Page made me want to be a



guitar player and Dylan and the Beatles made me want to write songs and be in a great band.

**C:** Did you take lessons?

**CT:** I took lessons for awhile, it was a good starting point for me. But I don't think you really learn until you sit by yourself and start coming up with your own things. I was never that good at figuring out. I didn't sit around and figure out other people's songs, I was always sort of creating my own, whether it sucked or not. I was probably more into that for lack of ability (laugh.) It's easier to play my own thing than to try to copy Jimmy Page or something. Everyone in the band writes songs, so you have a lot of different flavors. Ya know, songs like 'Car Seat,' which was written by Glen.

**C:** That's an interesting song.

**CT:** Yeah and that's something I never would have written. I mean I am envious of that song, I think it's so brilliant. I wish I could write something like that but that's not something that would come from me. Thank god we have Glen to throw that at us!

**C:** So do you guys sort of bounce ideas off each other and build on each other's ideas?

**CT:** We did that more on the first record, that still happens somewhat. This time we had a little more time off and away from each other, so a lot of people started and finished some songs themselves. When we got together in New Orleans to put the record together we spent about a month just writing and pulling it all together.

**C:** The opening song 'Hello Goodbye,'

where did that come from? It reminded me of Tom Waits. It was so bluesy New Orleans...

**CT:** That was the idea right there! The whole thing was recorded one of the last days in the studio. So after two months of crazy New Orleans, Shannon's throat was sounding as if he was eating nails for breakfast. It was just perfect! It just sounds so nasty, like he just got out of bed. And ya know, Rogers was living down there for awhile and he was just checking out a lot of different music and he ran into those guys and asked them to be on the record. They were really cool guys. They came over and drank beer all day with us and recorded. It was fun.

*(Our phone call is interrupted and I am told 'Excuse me, you have five more minutes left.')*

**C:** Oh, just one more question. Are you happy with the way your life is going?

**CT:** Well, I love what I am doing! What I struggle with more than anything is I want to always do more! I mean if I made six records this year, I would wish that I made 10 this year. So I'm always, sort of, running around, crazy and wishing I never had to sleep so I could create more. I haven't learned to relax yet.