

OBITUARIES

Blind Melon lead singer Hoon, 28, in New Orleans

By Eileen Loh
Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — Shannon Hoon, whose smooth, high-pitched vocals took the alternative rock group Blind Melon to the top of the charts, died Saturday. He was 28.

Hoon died on his tour bus about 1:30 p.m. His sound manager apparently couldn't wake him and called police, said New Orleans police Sgt. Marlon DeFillo. He said there was no sign of trauma, and the cause of death remains unclassified pending an autopsy.

The Coroner's Office in New Orleans confirmed receipt of a body of someone named Shannon Hoon, but would not comment further. A security guard at Capitol, the band's record company in Los Angeles, said no one was available to comment.

Blind Melon was in New Orleans to play at the famed Tipitina's music club. The tour bus was in a parking lot on the venerable St. Charles Avenue near where the group recorded its second album, "Soup," in the city's Warehouse District.

Blind Melon went to the top of the charts in 1993 with the song "No Rain" off their self-titled debut album.

The group's sound was sprinkled with such influences as the Allman Brothers and Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young and mixed some hard and alternative rock.

The band's name came from Mississippi neighbors of bassist Brad Smith: unemployed hippies who called each other "blind melons." The other band members are guitarists Christopher Thorn and Rogers Stevens and drummer Glen Graham.

The group's first album, released in September 1992, remained stagnant until MTV began airing the video for "No Rain" nine months later. The video, which featured a 10-year-old actress cavorting in a bee costume to Hoon's vocals, became the group's signature.

Soon after, the album was selling more than 100,000 copies per week and hit No. 3 on the Billboard album chart.

The follow-up release, "Soup," is a spicy mix of hard-edged guitar, jazzlike improvisation, and erratic rhythms.

Hoon, born Richard Shannon Hoon in Lafayette, Ind., experienced both personal and profession turmoil in 1994.

There were mixed reviews of Blind Melon's appearance at Woodstock '94, and Hoon was arrested for drunk and disorderly conduct in New Orleans during the recording of "Soup."

In an interview last month with the Associated Press, Hoon said he began going through a period of intense self-evaluation after learning his girlfriend was pregnant.

"I need to start caring about myself if I'm going to be the proper father," Hoon said. It was not immediately known who the child's mother was or when the baby was due.

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WHITTED

WILLIAM "

Age 82, a retired 1 years and resident of 25, 1912 in Los Angeles. He died October 20, 1995 at his home after a short illness. He was Canoga Park Elks #219.

Bill is survived by his daughters, Dolly Gunn, Wardee Anderson; eleven great-grandchildren.

Visitation will be Monday, October 23, Valley Oaks Chapel. Services will be held October 24, 1995, also with Reverend John. Interment will follow in Oaks Memorial Park.

Arrangements are by Pierce Brothers Westland (818) 889-0902

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