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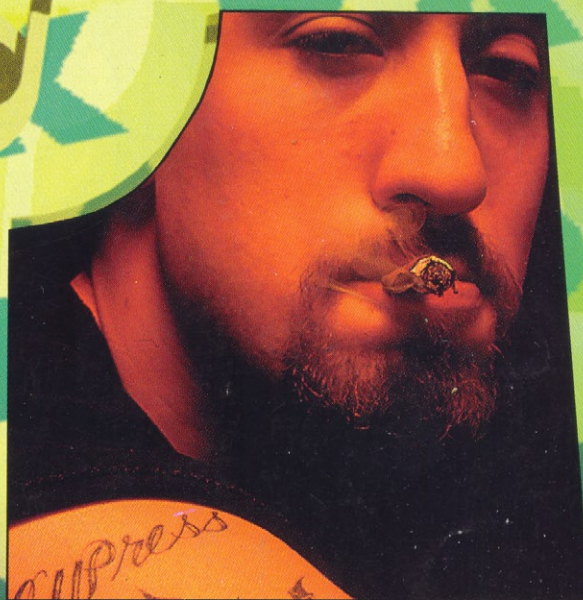
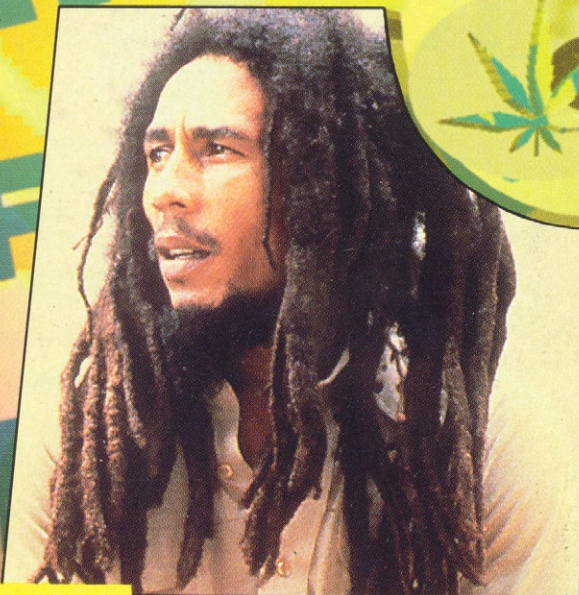
# DOPE MUSIC SPECIAL

THE BEST OF

VOL. 14

# HIGH TIMES

JIMI HENDRIX, BLACK CROWES, BOB MARLEY & CYPRESS HILL



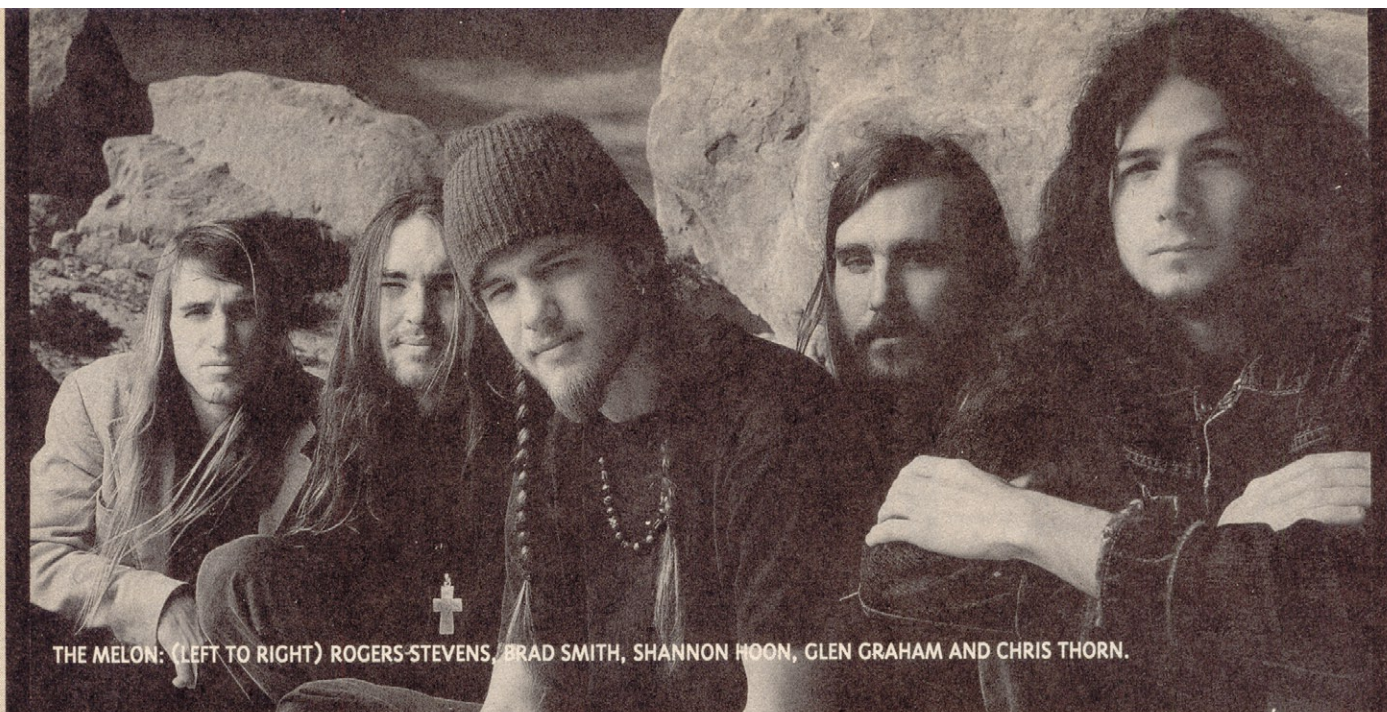
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THE MELON: (LEFT TO RIGHT) ROGERS-STEVENS, BRAD SMITH, SHANNON HOON, GLEN GRAHAM AND CHRIS THORN.

**"HIGH TIMES**—I really like that magazine," Shannon Hoon exclaims rather loudly. "I've always wanted to be the pot reviewer!"

We're standing in the lobby of New York's St. Moritz Hotel. A stiff, Republican-looking woman directly behind Hoon turns pale and gives us a look like, *I'm a personal friend of Nancy Reagan's and you'll rot in hell, hippie scum*. Hoon, the longhaired lead singer of Blind Melon, seems oblivious.

Blind Melon are fast getting a reputation as the next big stoner band. Just a few issues ago, their publicist sent a pot photo for *HIGH TIMES* use only. The back of their debut album features artwork that, given the right perspective, reveals itself as hemp seeds and a pipe screen imbedded in wax. At live shows, fans have been throwing joints on stage.

"Fatties," says bassist Brad Smith.

"Not even joints," says drummer Glen Graham. "Just buds wrapped up in twisted pieces of paper."

"Sometimes, if I smell pot in the crowd, I'll get on the mike and ask people to share it," says Smith. "Sometimes we'll get stoned on stage. If the show is going well and it's getting crazy, it's fun to get a good head, kick back and watch it all. You don't even feel like you're playing at that point."

Blind Melon expect a "kind" reception this evening at New York's hip-pie hangout, Wetlands. The band has been busily touring behind their self-titled debut album, released last fall by Capitol. After this club tour ends, they join up with Guns N'Roses for a short stint in the US and Mexico. G N'R and the Melon? Hmmm. How to describe Blind Melon? Like Spin Doctors and Pearl Jam, but different. Like Jane's Addiction on pot and 'shrooms, not smack. Upbeat and psychedelic, but with a raw edge.

# ARE BLIND MELON

THE NEW DOOBIE BROTHERS?

So how did they hook up with G N' R? "They asked us," smirks guitarist Chris Thorn.

Blind Melon are actually handled by Guns N'Roses' management company, Big FD Entertainment. But the connection between the two bands runs even deeper: Shannon Hoon and Axl Rose both hail from the same city—Lafayette, Indiana. Hoon, who at 25 is five years younger than the Guns N'Roses' front man, grew up with Rose's kid brother and sister.

"I was into sports all through high school," Hoon says. "I was brought up in a competitive athletic environment and I didn't realize until I was eighteen years old that I was living my life for my parents. That's when I started dabbling with LSD. I was more into tripping than smoking pot. I like hallucinogens. I would listen to Pink Floyd for hours. It helped me get a fix on what was really important to me."

In 1990, Hoon moved to Los Angeles to chase the dream of becoming a rock star. So did guitarist Rogers Stevens (22 years old) and Brad Smith (23), straight outta West Point, Mississippi, as well as guitarist Chris Thorn (23), an Easterner from Dover, Pennsylvania. Stevens and Smith met Thorn first. The latter two, folkies at heart, soon became disenchanted with the LA music scene and swore off rock. Then they all met Hoon, who inspired a burst of serious songwriting. Needing a drummer, Stevens called his friend Glen Graham (24) in Mississippi. Within five months, the band was signed.

"We were recording on a four-track," Smith recalls. "The tape fell in the hands of a lawyer who knew record people. He dug us and believed in us. It just kept going from there."

Once signed, Blind Melon bolted from LA. (Hoon would return, however, to add backup vocals to G N'R's *Use Your Illusion* albums. That's him in the video for "Don't Cry.") "We didn't belong there," Hoon says. "We're all from small towns." They ended up in Durham, North Carolina, living and recording together in the now-legendary "Sleepy House" immortalized on their album.

"Most of the time we stayed up all night and slept during the day," Graham says. "We had an analog eight-track. We convened down in the den and jammed at night. And got stoned."

"My lungs are still recuperating," Hoon says. "We were in a part of the country where there was a lot of dirtweed, so it took a lot of smoking to enhance my mood. The better the brand, the less damage to your lungs, because you don't have to smoke so much. Lately, I've been smoking the better brands."

"Pot completely opened me up to music," Graham adds. "When I started smoking, I was a big Kiss fan. Then I got into REM and U2, and all of the '60s bands. The enhancing quality that pot has on listening to music is just wonderful."

Spoken like a true stoner band. ✱

BY PHILIP H. FARBER