

SHOOTING STARS

BLIND MELON

What the hell is a Blind Melon? Kinda sounds like one of those old black bluesmen who so many current rock stars list under the column "most influenced by." But in the case of the Blind Melon in question, the unusual name has more to do with what band bassist Brad Smith calls "a bunch of not-likely-to-be-successful people." That seems to be an unlikely fate for Smith and bandmates Shannon Hoon (vocals), Thomas Rogers (guitar), Christopher Thorn (guitar) and Glen Graham (drums). Already this eclectic hard rock act has attracted national attention by touring with the likes of Soundgarden and PLL, as well as by having Indiana-native Hoon pop up in Guns N' Roses' *Don't Cry* video singing backup to fellow Hoosier, Axl Rose. Certainly it's been an interesting career start for a very interesting rock and roll band.

"People keep coming at us with different words to describe us and different categories to put us in," Hoon said. "That keeps us right where we want to be, which is between everything."

Formed in 1989 when Mississippi natives Rogers and Smith emigrated to Los Angeles, Blind Melon got off to a rocky start as the duo struggled to find musicians who shared their particular philosophies. After a year of searching, however, they encountered Hoon, a free spirit whose songwriting abilities fit in perfectly with the material Rogers and Smith had already begun. With the addition of Pennsylvania native Thorn and fellow Mississippian Graham, Blind Melon's lineup was set, and the group quickly moved to record a four song demo tape that attracted immediate major label response and eventual garnered the group a recording contract. The band recently finished recording the debut album with producer Rick Parasher (of Pearl Jam notoriety) and



will be returning to the road early in 1993.

"What we want most is for people to just listen to our music with an open mind," Rogers said. "There are a lot of different musical backgrounds at work here. Different people are going to derive different things from each song. But that's the way it should be."

THE BEAUTIES

Any band that says their musical influences range from Muddy Waters to The Beatles to John Coltrane are obviously not your normal thrash-and-bash unit. Let it be said loud and clear that The Beauties will *never* be mistaken for anything normal. Guitarist Jason Nesmith (son of ex-Monkee Mike Nesmith), vocalist Steven McNeil, drummer Matthew Steer and bassist Ralf Jacobs are a multi-talented, multi-national, multi-racial unit that seems at home in virtually any musical element. Their music is catchy, yet probing, philosophical, yet amusing. Everything about these guys is just a little different from what one might expect.

"I guess we are a little different," Nesmith said. "Even our name is a little different. We were listening to the radio one day and the DJ announced, 'That was the greatest band in the world, The Beauties. She screwed up, she meant to say The Beatles. So we said, 'Let's call this The Beauties for now'."

On their debut album, The Beauties have brought together all of their diverse backgrounds and influences to create as fresh a sounding album as one is likely to confront on today's rock scene. *Mother's Finest Son* deals with McNeil's absent father, while *Battlegrounds* deals with such diverse subjects as the recent L.A. riots and unrest in the Middle East.

"We want our music to touch on everything," Steer said. "Politics, religion, love, sex...the diversity in our backgrounds and our tastes makes it all the more fun to be around each other, listen to music together and experiment."

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