

# Rockin' and Reminiscin'

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Maybe it's when Shannon Hoon isn't about ready to jump right out of his skin that he is most effective. Barely containing his boundless energy all night, the Lafayette native capped a perfect ending onto an already good concert Monday night when a little dance floor scuffle broke out in front of the Nick's stage.

Hoon, surprisingly unflappable and in charge of his band, Blind Melon, stood slowly repeating the opening acoustic chords of his encore, "Change," letting his blank stare follow the perpetrator as he was escorted out the back door.

There might have been a time when a little action on the dance floor would have doused the unpredictable Hoon's fire. But Monday night, distraction dispatched, he continued in earnest and delivered a technical knockout punch.

The sold-out, old home week audience of about 700 friends and family- many who lined up a full five hours before Blind Melon started playing- applauded Hoon. Hoon applauded friends and family.

And the homecoming came full circle. For Blind Melon, out on a headlining club tour in support of its self-titled debut on Capitol Records, it was the first stop in Lafayette since their lead singer from McCutcheon High School left home three years ago. Hoon showed it, too, seemingly unable or unwilling to hide his excitement of bringing his band home for the first time.

He came on stage with hairshirt scratchiness, pounding his chest and tipping his body nearly into the physical throng at the stage edge. Hoon used his solar plexus length blond dreadlocks as a stage prop, swinging

them to accent his overpowering vocals like some creation of Joe Cocker-meets-Bob Marley.

Even with his irresistible and domineering stage presence, Blind Melon was nothing near a Shannon Hoon festival. The band-guitarist Rogers Stevens, Christopher Thorn, drummer Glen Graham and bassist Brad Smith- effectively reined enough of their lead singer's hyperactive enthusiasm to make Blind Melon a cohesive unit.

And instead of walking out like a bunch of guys in the middle of some record company bidding war and a flurry of industry buzz-as they were two years ago- Blind Melon was a hungry band ready to rip. Nothing flashy. Just ready to rip through nearly all of the 13 songs on the Blind Melon record.

Of note was the buzzy sweetness of Thorn's unassuming lead and the taut rhythm work of Graham, Smith and Stevens.

But back to Hoon-as it was much of Monday night. His homecoming seemed to be a sweet one.

"I got a lot of friends and family here," he said at one point in the show, sponsored by WKHY 93.5 FM. "You can see I'm totally grown up and out of my mind."

He talked from the stage about his old days of playing around town with heavy metal cover band Stiff Kytten and about how the night clubs had changed - some for the better, others for the worse. For the most part, Hoon pointed to friends he remembered and reminisced that no matter how bad Lafayette seemed to him as a teen, it didn't look so bad now.

Seems people and times can change.