

1995

Bring the noise

Shannon Hoon's homecoming is marred by Blind Melon's loud, soupy sound

By DAVE BANGERT
Journal and Courier

INDIANAPOLIS—“Tonight's my daughter's first rock 'n' roll event,” said proud papa Shannon Hoon, lead singer of rock band Blind Melon and Lafayette native.

As far as rock 'n' roll events go, little Nico Blue Hoon proba-

CONCERT REVIEW

bly won't hear too many more deafening than her dear old dad's show Monday in the Egyptian Room at the Murat.

Even Hoon—in his first Hoosier homecoming since Blind Melon's MTV-fueled heyday two years ago—seemed to understand that, ordering his mates to lay off as he toled his 11-week-old daughter on stage.

After the appropriate cooing from the several hundred in the crowd, the doting father tucked in Nico Blue backstage.

“Get her out of here,” he said. “These guys are way too loud.”

Smart move. Blind Melon played the kind of loud and large show that left adult ear drums, let alone those

of an infant, ringing well into the morning. Noise for noise's sake is fine in rock music, as long as the songs come through. But with arena-sized sound pumped into an acoustically tenuous ballroom, too many of the songs in the 17-song set were unrecognizable to anyone but hard-core fans.

Lost was any of the subtlety that made incredible hits out of “No Rain” and “Tones of Home” from the band's earthier, self-titled debut and the spacy trips of the recent release, *Soup*. Christopher Thorn's lead guitar turns were among the highlight's of Blind Melon's terrific show at Nick's in October 1992. His guitar was completely hidden Monday night in the muddy

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The Indianapolis crowd didn't seem to mind that they couldn't understand Blind Melon's Shannon Hoon, just as long as it could see his animated moves on Monday night.

Talk

Getting some cooperation

There's paint all over the floor and an adult might say, “What slob is responsible for this mess on the floor?” Instead, try one of the following:

- 1 Describe the problem.
- 2 Give information. “It's easier to...”
- 3 Offer a choice. “You can clean it...”
- 4 Say it with a word or gesture.

Taking

Hoon

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mix. He pulled out a banjo and mandolin a few times, but they were inconsequential.

All of it was drowned by the overwhelming sonic booms of the Glen Graham's bass drum and a beat so dominant that it literally shook pant legs. The band's hippier grooves were there, but only if you dug deep into the din.

Even Hoon, who appeared to be screaming into the microphone, couldn't be heard at times. But with Hoon, what you hear isn't always as important as what you see. Make no bones about it, he is wildly entertaining.

Between quick exchanges with family and friends who crowded the stage, the hairshirted Hoon was a manic Jim Morrison in perpetual motion. It was hard not to get caught up in the flailing gyrations, the pogging,

the contorted skipping, the hand gestures taken directly from the referees in that Australian-rules football you see late nights on ESPN.

With the way Hoon unwraps emotionally on stage, Blind Melon shouldn't have to crank their amps to 11 to overpower an audience.

Monday night also was an Indiana homecoming for Mike Kelsey, if you can consider leaving Lafayette three weeks ago and returning much of a homecoming. The guitar wizard is touring with Blind Melon for the next three months. Accompanied by Lafayette drummer Dennis Leas and singer Tami Tarler, Kelsey played a short opening set on Monday.

It's tough to gauge how far Kelsey's appeal goes, based on the Lafayette-heavy crowd at the Egyptian Room. But his aggressive/percussive guitar dropped jaws room-wide.

No question, the audience would have ditched the regular opening act and taken more of Kelsey's high-wire guitar aerobics.

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