

# CARCASS: 'MELODIC DEATH METAL' SHOCK!

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SICK AGAIN...

EVERY WEDNESDAY!

ROB HALFORD'S  
**FIGHT!**

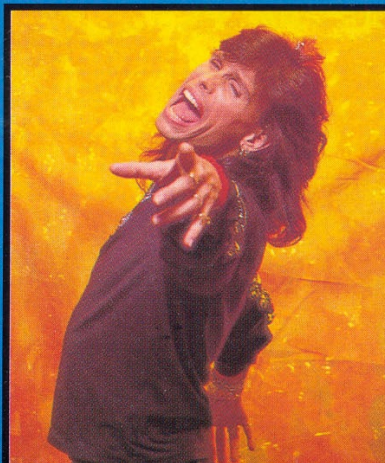
OL' LEATHER  
LUNGS IS BACK!



**BLIND  
MELON!**  
JUICE ON  
THE LOOSE!



**AEROSMITH!**  
GRIPPIN' 8-PAGE  
PULL-OUT!



SEX! DEATH! BETRAYAL!

# LED ZEPPELIN

PAGE & PLANT ON THE BAND  
THAT WOULDN'T DIE!



# AMERICA'S MOST

**Guns N' Roses video cameos! MTV hit singles! Support slots with Neil Young, Soundgarden and Pearl Jam! Things have happened big-time for BLIND MELON since the release of their debut album a year ago! Lead crooner SHANNON HOON describes the trials and tribulations of being in one of the US's hottest new bands to DON KAYE!**

**S**HANNON HOON sits in a Massachusetts hotel room, watching cartoons on TV and apparently undisturbed by the fact that he has one of the hottest albums in the country. He's happier talking about the rain that fell on the band he sings for - Blind Melon - during a recent performance at Long Island's Jones Beach Theatre, where he gleefully splashed and slid at the front of the stage.

Pix Ross/Hallin

"Rain brings out the kid in me," he enthuses. "I was wishing it was raining as hard as when Soundgarden went on - it started comin' down when they were playing! But I thought that was fine..."

"Rain" is the operative word here. "No Rain", the recent single from Blind Melon's self-titled debut album, has captured radio and especially MTV with its homespun sound and simple affirmation of individualism.

The result is that Blind Melon (Shannon on vocals, Glen Graham on drums, Brad Smith on bass and guitarists Chris Thorn

and Rogers Stevens) are opening for Neil Young, sharing a stage with the likes of Soundgarden and Pearl Jam, and watching their album streak to Number Three on the Billboard Album Chart.

**IT'S FLATTERING,"** sighs

Shannon, about the ascension of the nearly year-old album. "But at the same time, realistically, it can be gone just as easily as it came, so we don't let it affect a lot of what we do. It's a pat on the back that you have to keep an arm's length away."

But surely, you're seeing tangible results at your shows, in your lives?

"My day is congested with a lot of things that I really don't care

to do," Shannon replies. "It's like gaining weight, in a sense. You're around yourself every day, so you don't really see what's going on. You don't see that you're eating too many donuts, or something like that."

"Our daily schedule now is filled with more activities than ever before," he continues, tiredly. "I mean, that gets old - but I just don't let it matter."

"I don't know how everybody else in the band feels about it,

but I do know that everybody realises that we all have another life. This is a happy time, for now."

"We all enjoy the band and what we're doing, but we all realistically know that this isn't going to last forever. So to base the rest of our lives on us being

**"My defences are up pretty much most of the time to a lot of what happens. I never think that life is gonna be a tiptoe through the tulips..."**

**- SHANNON HOON**

**BLIND MELON (Shannon Hoon, centre): avoiding becoming a corporate machine**





# WANTED?

Number Four, or whatever, would only be setting ourselves up for a fall.

"I mean, I want to have a family at some point, and my communication with my family right now is good – and that matters.

"What goes on with the band is only a small part of the big picture, so you can't let that take precedence over the things that are important."

Certainly that is a sober, mature point of view – especially coming from a relatively young Rock band that's suddenly hitting heights that most musicians only dream about. Is Shannon implying that he never saw music as a long-term career?

"Everybody will be involved musically in this band," he insists, "probably for their entire lives. But as far as having the band be a *major* part of our lives, right now we've neglected the most important parts of our lives to do what we're doing; to travel around the world and play music

for people, meet people.

"But you always have to keep the other part of your life that's important. I wanna be a normal guy as well, with a family and home and all that.

"But I mean, I *am* enjoying myself," he adds, intelligent enough to realise that perhaps he's sounding a tad ungrateful. "I've met a lot of beautiful people over the course of the past few years. Right now, just because a statistic in a magazine says that things have taken off, it's not going to make my smile get any wider than it was last year."

**S**HANNON DOES acknowledge one darker side of success: "It changes people's perceptions of us. A lot of people, once you start selling records, say that you've sold out, and you have to deal with that whole frame of ignorance. Things actually get more complicated.

"You know, I believe completely that the more you have, the more you have to lose," he says, on a roll now. "So my defences are up pretty much most of the time to a lot of what happens; what some people would say are great things. I never think that life is gonna be a tiptoe through the tulips."

No one could accuse Blind Melon of tiptoeing. They've worked hard and stayed on the road, while it took nearly a year for an audience to find them. Originally given a strong boost by Shannon's appearance in Guns N' Roses' 'Don't Cry' video, Blind Melon were cautiously banded about by early believers as the proverbial Next Big Thing.

The group's rootsy Rock, a combination of Southern drawl, folkie vibes and subtle Hard Rock licks, didn't quite click initially. Then came 'No Rain'. The accompanying video, with its peculiar, poignant Bee Girl, went into overdrive on MTV, and suddenly the record label (Capitol) took notice.

Next thing you know, the little Bee Girl in her fluffy tutu was dancing madly at the MTV Video Music Awards...



**SHANNON HOON: happier playing music than dealing with the everyday congestion**

**A** LOT OF people are quick to think that it's turned into a big corporate machine," says Shannon, defiantly. "But there's a lot of ways that a person listening to a band can read between the lines.

"I'm never going to let what we're doing, and the way we write songs, be affected by our label or any kind of industry decision. It's never going to affect the way I write a song and why I've written it.

"If some Bee Girl goes dancing down through the middle of some all-American mall somewhere, promoting Blind Melon, obviously I'd hope that

our fans are not so ignorant to believe that it was an idea that came from us."

Shannon is all too aware of the crass lengths to which a label may go to ensure sales.

"We have a lot to do with a lot of things that go on with us, artistically," he says. "But as far as a lot of the

other things that go on once a band starts selling records go, hopefully our fans will be able to tell what we have had something to do with and what we have not.

"Once you sign with a major label, there are a lot of things that happen that you have no control over. That sucks, it really does. But you can't waste your energy and time worrying about it. We write songs, that's pretty much all that matters – everything else is irrelevant. I enjoy writing songs and playing them for people, and talking to people."

So far, with perhaps a little help from a dancing Bee Girl, that plan seems to be working...

## BREAKING THE MELON!

**DON KAYE gets the industry opinion on the success of Blind Melon!**

DENISE SKINNER, senior director of marketing for Capitol Records, gives Blind Melon all the kudos possible for achieving their amazing Stateside success.

"I have to say that the band get a lot of credit for their stamina and being out there to tour so constantly," she says.

"Even with radio and MTV's support on 'No Rain', which is our second track that we've taken to radio, I don't think things would've happened as large as they have now if the band hadn't been out there since last year.

"There's been a lot of support from the retail and press communities all along, and with the band out there every time they hit a city, the next time they come through the crowd is always a little bigger and the word of mouth has spread."

Staying on the road and making it pay off harkens back to the '70s; the days before MTV and all the other high-tech media that's available to promote 'product'. Does this teach a lesson to an industry that is now dependent on mostly media alone?

"To a certain degree, yeah," admits Denise. "Again, I think it depends on the calibre of the act, because if it's not something that people can relate to, you can tour for 10 years and still not build up a decent following.

"But exposure is everything, and because radio and MTV playlists are so tight, we've really got to look at doing regional and local marketing. A lot of what we've done behind Blind Melon, on their club tours, is go in and work retail and press prior to their coming through, and making sure everything's in place when they leave.

"You know, you turn on two more people to the band, then they go to the store and find the record."

And what does Denise see as the primary appeal of Blind Melon?

"There's no pretence with this band," she replies. "They enjoy what they're doing, and I think that's what the kids are getting off on. Here's a band that really enjoys playing for people, and the audience sees that.

"They're sucked right into it. There's nothing that serious. The band is having a good time, they like the music, and they wanna share it with people!"





