

No.3
vol.8

MARCH 1993

FINLAND 000-295-52-3

EUROPE'S BIGGEST SELLING
HARD ROCK MAGAZINE

METAL HAMMER

£2.50
Nkr 42.00
Fmk 30.00
Dkr 58.00
Skr 47.50
A.\$ 4.95

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Shannon Hoon is not a happy man. Why? Well, he's just called up to talk about his band, Blind Melon, and their new, self-titled album, and the first thing yours truly asks him is about how he came to sing a duet with W Axl Rose on GN'R's massive world-wide hit, 'Don't Cry'. It's obviously not really something he wants to talk about... much! Sighing deeply, Shannon pauses momentarily whilst drawing breath and builds up the enthusiasm to answer.

"I don't really want to talk about that any more. It seems like such a long time ago to me now, but that's all everyone seems to think about. It's not something I feel is relevant to what I'm doing now."

Well, that may indeed be the case, Mr Hoon, particularly from your side of things. However, I put it to him that the people reading this interview may well be aware of his new band but, like it or not, he did come to our attention through *that* song and *that* video, so I have to prompt him to elaborate a bit further. Still hesitant, but realising that I'm not going to drop it, he reluctantly continues.

"The thing is, I know Axl. I grew up with him. We're from the same home-town, Lafayette, Indiana. I got to know the rest of the band through him, and that day I just happened to be in the studio and they asked me if I wanted to sing on that one track. It's no big deal really, but it annoys me that, so long after it, people think it is the most important fact about me, or my band!"

Would Shannon agree that if he hadn't done the song, his band might not be getting so much attention? Was it a launch-pad for Blind Melon?

"I actually think it has worked against the band because people only seem to want to talk about that. As far as I'm concerned, it's all in the past. That was just me helping out some friends. It has nothing to do with Blind Melon. It isn't connected to this band in any way."

That's the end of that story!

Blind Melon, to bring things up-to-date, released their debut album in the States in September 1992. Visually resembling a cross between current raves Pearl Jam and older, Southern Boogie Rock bands like Lynyrd Skynyrd, this five-piece (drummer

Glen Graham, bassist Brad Smith and guitarists Rogers Stevens and Christopher Thorn make up the rest of the band) have found themselves appealing to both the 'hip' Alternative crowds and radio stations in the States, as well as the mainstream Rock crowd. Their particular brand of Rock'n'Roll combines an

contributing to why we sound like some of the older bands. The best records are made that way. We try not to use any overdubs, so that when we play live, it sounds like the record. I do like live shows to sound slightly looser than an album, but I absolutely hate it when a band makes a great album, and they can't reproduce it live, or it sounds nothing like it." Although they don't come from Seattle, the band enlisted the services of

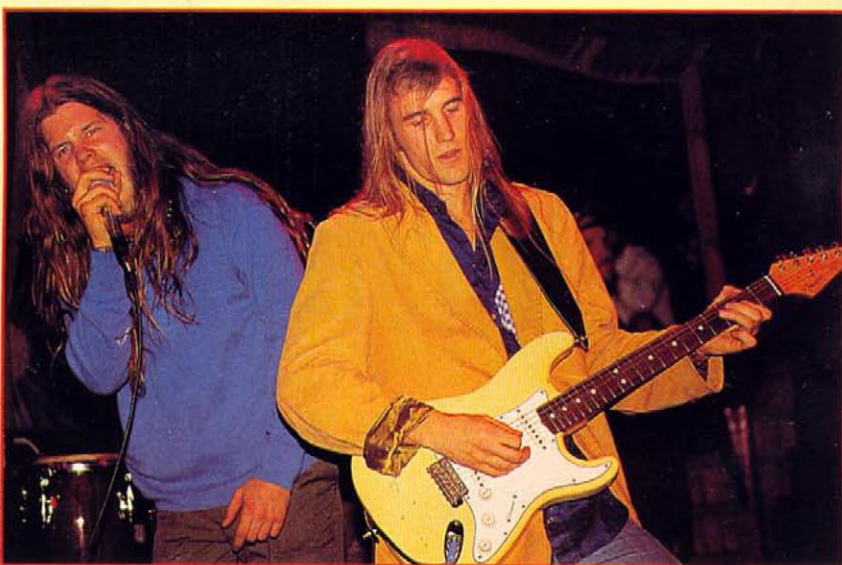


BLIND FAITH

Vocalist SHANNON HOON is sick of talking about his contribution to GN'R's 'Don't Cry'. After all he's got his own band, BLIND MELON, to

hype. NICK DOUGLAS gets the bit between his teeth!

Pic: DENIS O'REGAN.



PICS: DENIS O'REGAN

acoustic, Folk feel with electric riffs, topped off with loads of melodies and vocal harmonies. The band have been accused of being very retro and it is no coincidence that their album sounds similar to a lot of the sounds of the late Sixties and early Seventies.

"Our rhythm section, especially Glen, is very groove-orientated. Our sound is actually the result of all of us listening to and liking many different kinds of music. We just play what comes together. When we recorded the album we did it virtually live, so that's probably a big factor in

Rick Parasher (Pearl Jam, Temple Of The Dog) to co-produce with them, and recorded in Parasher's home territory, London Bridge Studios in Washington. "Seattle is a beautiful place," comments Shannon of his adopted home. "We did the record here, and really liked it so we moved up here. It's a good place to hang out, rehearse and write. I found LA too much of a distraction. We lived there for a while and liked it, but I can only take it for a short time. Eventually, though, I want to move back to Indiana, to be near my family." ■