

MUSIC CONNECTION

THE WEST COAST MUSIC TRADE MAGAZINE™

INSIDER TIPS ON HOW TO
CHOOSE A MUSIC
ATTORNEY

EDDIE
MURPHY

W & C
R
Charlie Watts
Wood Signed
INUUM
RDS

A & B
BU
Report:
OPPA (ZOO's VP/A&R)

Fi
tists:
BLIND MELON (CAPITOL)

Publisher Profile:
RONDA ESPY (BOB-A-LEW MUSIC)





Blind Melon

Label: Capitol

Manager/contact: Big FD Entertainment/
Chris Jones, Doug Goldstein

Address: 901 Dove St. Suite 260, Newport Beach, CA 92660

Phone: (714) 955-9129

Booking: ICM

Legal Rep: David Rudich

Band members: Shannon Hoon, Christopher Thorn, Rogers Stevens, Brad Smith, Glen Graham

Type of music: Diverse

Date Signed: March, 1991

A&R Rep: Simon Potts/Tim Devine

By Pat Lewis

Whe rip off everybody evenly," is how Blind Melon vocalist Shannon Hoon describes the style of music that he creates alongside bandmates Brad Smith, bassist, drummer Glen Graham and guitarists Christopher Thorn and Rogers Stevens. And considering that the band's self-titled debut album has already garnered comparisons ranging anywhere from the Allman Brothers to Jane's Addiction, it seems Hoon has hit the proverbial nail square on the head.

Presently, the band is on a short hiatus, and so Hoon has high-tailed it home to Lafayette, Indiana, for some vacationing. But while coming home to Lafayette rejuvenates Hoon's easily frazzled spirits, ironically, it is this same town that he ran away from three years ago. Not surprisingly, he wound up in L.A. "I got tired of watching CNN to see what the world was about," he confesses. "It's pretty repressed here, and I just wanted to go out while I was young and see what all the young people saw in L.A. But I wasn't going in search of a rock band."

But a rock band is exactly what he found.

Within a month of his arrival in L.A., Hoon hooked up with Stevens and Smith, who were both originally from West Point, Mississippi and had arrived in Tinseltown only a year prior. Soon thereafter, they recruited Thorn, who had just gotten off the bus from Dover, Pennsylvania. After an exhaustive search for a drummer, Stevens and Smith called Graham, who was an old buddy from Mississippi, and invited him to join the band. "It was just a group of small town guys in a big city," recalls Hoon. "When I was around these guys, it was easy to be happy and to kind of laugh at things even when they were a bitch to get through."

After only a week or two of rehearsing, the band recorded a four-track demo, a few copies of which were given to friends in L.A. Somehow, a dub of a dub fell into the hands of a music attorney, who called the band and asked if he could legally represent them. "It was funny," recalls Hoon, "because there wasn't much to legally represent."

Since the band wasn't ready to showcase its wares to the public yet, their attorney opted to bring several record company executives to rehearsals. And from that point on, there was a fury of industry interest. It was Capitol, however, that jumped in with a firm offer. But the band wasn't in a hurry to sign on the dotted-line until they could be assured of complete creative control. "We didn't want to jump into the game just to play the game, you know," says Hoon. After a year and a half of haggling over details, Blind Melon (who were still manager-less at the time) finally put their John Hancocks on a contract.

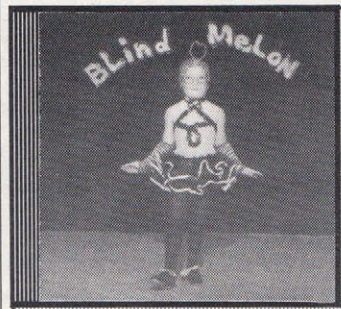
Interestingly, during this entire "negotiation" period, Blind Melon never once played a live date in L.A.

However, Hoon did hook up with fellow Hoosier Axl Rose and provided backup harmonies on a number of tracks on the Guns N' Roses *Use Your Illusion* albums. He also appeared in the "Don't Cry" video, which brought a slew of media attention that was further fueled by record company hype.

Unfortunately, the attention proved too distracting for the band, who were unable to muster up the creative juices necessary to write the remaining material for their debut album. So, they rented a house in Durham, North Carolina, and hibernated there for the next several months. "We slept all day and practiced all night," recalls Hoon. "We hardly ever left the house because it was just fun living there. What I liked about it was that the music wasn't the main thing going on there, you know? It was a lot more relaxed and there was a lot more freedom mentally for me there."

But even after they had written plenty of tunes, Blind Melon still wasn't ready to enter the studio. "We wanted to tour before we made the record because we didn't do it in L.A.," says Hoon. "We wanted to get a grass-roots crowd and meet people, you know?"

So, with the aid of their newly acquired major management's muscle, Blind Melon landed the opening-slot on a Soundgarden club tour and a spot on the MTV 120 Minute tour, after which they entered the studio in Seattle, Washington with Rick Parasher (Pearl Jam, Temple Of The Dog) and recorded their long-awaited debut album a year after signing their record contract. "We did it completely ass backwards," concludes Hoon. "It's something that could've easily not worked. Fortunately, it did."



Blind Melon

Blind Melon

Capitol

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ★ ⑩

□ **Producer:** Rick Parasher and Blind Melon

□ **Top Cuts:** "Tones Of Home," "Wonder," "Holyman."

□ **Material:** Not surprisingly, due to all of the hype that has followed Blind Melon around since its courtship with Capitol first began, the expectation level for this album was way out of proportion. "I'm a dude feeling his way through the dark the same way as everybody else is," confesses vocalist Shannon Hoon, "and hype makes you look like you aren't that person." Nevertheless, this is a stunning album from a band that has longevity written all over it. And frankly, Blind Melon lives up to the massive advance hype...and then some!

□ **Musicianship:** There's definitely something to be said for a band that spends several months living together in communal style. There's a real sense of synchronicity between the players and a joyousness that comes from musicians who truly enjoy what they are creating together. Vocalist Hoon delivers one power-packed, emotion-drenched performance after the next. His guttural, rootsy vocals are, at times, reminiscent of Janis Joplin with a little Perry Farrell thrown in for good measure.

□ **Production:** The tracks have a homespun warmth to them and the performances are delivered from the soul. Nothing feels rushed, and in fact, nothing was rushed during the two-month recording period. "We kind of made the album very laid back," says Hoon. "We never really had a schedule and sometimes we would record late at night, while other times we won't record at all on a day that we were paying for the studio. We were very relaxed about it, which made everything easier for everybody."

□ **Summary:** Hoon best sums things up as he describes the Blind Melon philosophy: "Whatever happened, it didn't have 'trying to get a record deal' involved in it. If you concentrate on making your music and it's good, then things are going to happen. But if you're trying to write your music for someone else's ears, that's just not the way." Amen!

—Pat Lewis