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**in the listening room**

# Rogers Stevens & Christopher Thorn

# Blind Melon

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Spin Doctors, Col. Bruce Hampton and Phish. The newest addition to this fold is Blind Melon with their hit "No Rain." Guitarist Thomas Rogers (he goes by just Rogers) Stevens describes the band's recording technique as "everybody just setting up and playing."

William Hanrahan

"All the music is played live on the record," he says. "We're not concerned with getting everything just so perfect that you can't get a shoehorn in any gap of music." With their influences seemingly so obvious, a trip into the Listening Room for Rogers and fellow Melon guitarist Christopher Thorn was quite the opposite of what you might expect.

**by**

**john**

**stix**

## "Babe I'm Gonna Leave You"

*Sons of Mercury/Quicksilver Messenger Service (1969-1975)*  
(Rhino)

**CHRISTOPHER:** Moby Grape? This is one of those bands we've never heard of that people

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**ROGERS:** There's a Pete Townshendism at the end. I'm not as into the clean sound as I am that fuzzy thing at the end. It sounds like he poked holes in his speakers. This song goes on and on. There's plenty of room for them all to wank off if they want to. It didn't move me in any way. It's obviously a late '60s/early '70s band and there are much better ones than this.

**CHRISTOPHER:** The drums sounded terrible, too. It was a very thin production sound. Some of the guitar playing was pretty cool but I'm not doing backflips. I'm burnt out on classic rock. I've been listening to classic rock since I was 10 and I feel like I'm done with it. I know it's part of Blind Melon but I'm trying to move on and get into some different things. Right now I'm just in a phase that the thought of classic rock just makes me want to puke. I want to hear something new.

**ROGERS:** I've permanently written off that style of music. I heard that in a phase of my playing development [but] now I'm not interested in it at all. I'm more interested in writing concise songs. This was a sprawling, directionless song. We're victims of that ourselves. But, personally, I'm interested in sewing up all the frayed pieces rather than [letting] them fly all over the place.

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**ROGERS:** This is a song they sell on late-night TV. "Freedom rock."

**CHRISTOPHER:** This is pure shit. When I hear bands like this, which are obviously from the '60s, I don't know what drugs they were on but they were not the same ones The Beatles were on because that to me was definitely not head-drug-induced music. It's nearly obnoxious. The production is horrible, too. It sounds like a tin can.

**ROGERS:** They were sloppy players but they weren't sloppy players in a cool way—they were just shitty players.

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**GUITAR:** This time it was Moby Grape.

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#### "Medicated Goo"

*Last Exit*

Traffic

(Island)

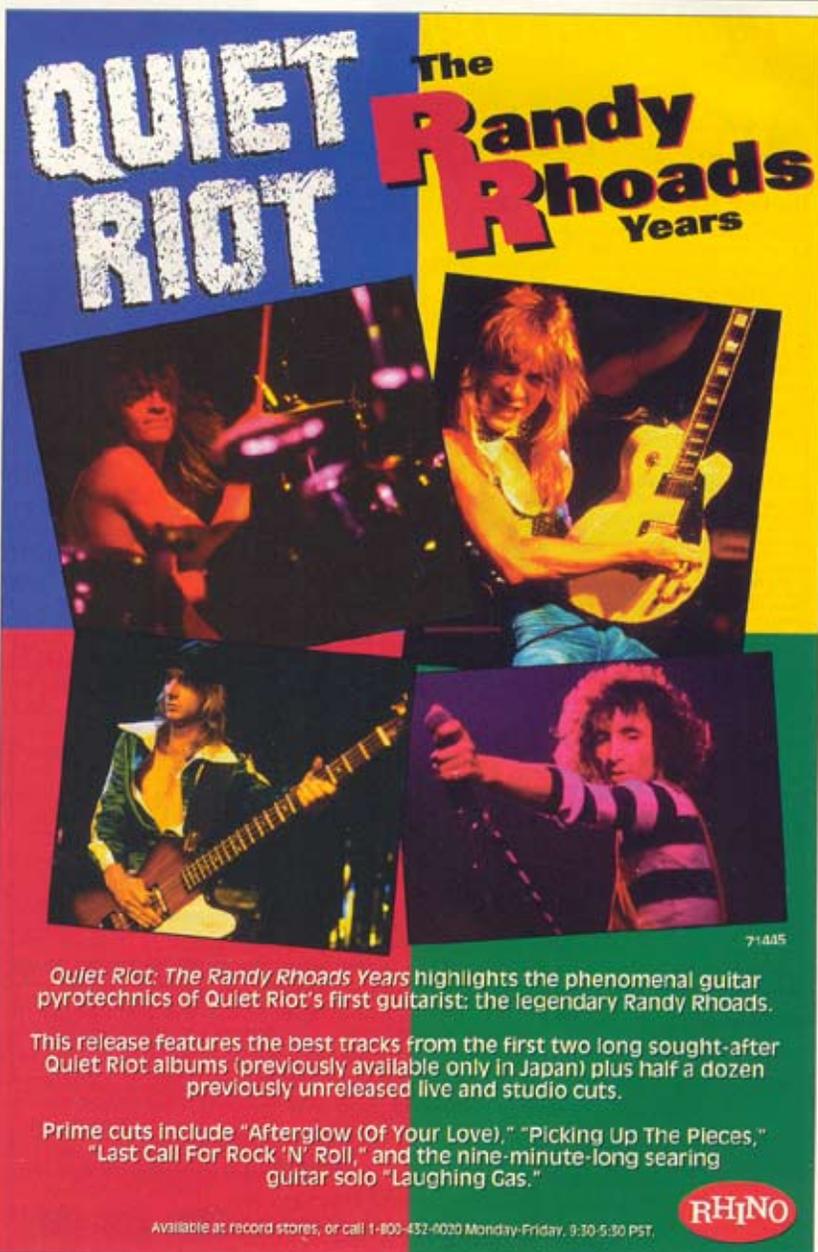
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**ROGERS:** Steve Winwood had a very distinctive voice, plus he was a great songwriter. That wasn't one of my favorite Traffic songs but the rhythm section are serious musicians. They are not hackers like the first couple of bands here. You can tell these guys have listened to a lot of jazz and serious groove things.

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## blind melon

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### "Midnight Rider"

*Club R&R: Epic Records Presents An Acoustic Evening with The Allman Brothers*

(Epic—radio promo only)

**ROGERS:** Of the jamming bands, The Allman Brothers Band was my favorite. I was more of a Dickey [Betts] fan than I was of Duane Allman. They had great songs, too, like this and "Blue Sky." "Jessica" is one of the only jam instrumental songs that I really got off on. I was never into any of the other Southern bands, but I really like the Allmans. They had the looseness and were almost jazzy a lot of times. Their melodies don't stick to straight-up blues scales. A lot of their melodies were in beautiful major scales or they will go out and do some weird things.

**CHRISTOPHER:** Out of all the jamming bands they are the best at it. I never got that deep into The Allman Brothers Band. I probably did [through] osmosis, being around these guys listening to it a lot. They are about songs and jamming and I like bands that are really concerned with songs. For me, regardless of playing, every single song by The Beatles was amazing. I don't get that from this band, but that was beautiful. I listen to a lot of acoustic music. That was a cool version. I never heard it before.

### "Pull Me Under"

*Images and Words*

Dream Theater

(Atco/East West)

**CHRISTOPHER:** This could be metal at any moment—I'm just warning everybody.

**ROGERS:** Either that or it could build up into a power ballad.

*Continued*

## blind melon

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**ROGERS:** Is this, like, Queensryche?

**CHRISTOPHER:** If it is, let's turn it off right away because I hate that band.

**ROGERS:** Hate it. This is the kind of music you listen to right when you start to get your pubic hairs.

**CHRISTOPHER:** I can't even be fair to this music I hate it so bad. I can't even sit through one song. I know I'm not being fair but I think it is complete garbage. That sort of guitar playing is just stupid.

**ROGERS:** If I want to hear a metal band I really like old Black Sabbath and Soundgarden; heavy bands with brains. If I were listening to an angry metal band I would be more into Rage Against The Machine or Sugar. I like that Sugar record a lot, I like Sonic Youth a lot. That's heavy, guitar-based music that I listen to.

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**CHRISTOPHER:** We'll remember not to buy that record. I bet they have really nice hair.... Now I'm being mean.

**ROGERS:** This is just our opinion. There's a lot of people that like Dream Theater and that's fine. They get off on it—good for them. They'll probably hate us, maybe they won't.

**CHRISTOPHER:** They probably do because we sound like we're playing sloppy. But that's alright, it's just a different thing. We're just coming from a different space.

**ROGERS:** In no way do we condemn this sort of music. These people have the right to exist.

**CHRISTOPHER:** Just keep it the hell away from us.

### "Little Miss Can't Be Wrong"

*Homebelly Groove*

Spin Doctors

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**CHRISTOPHER:** You played that song and I immediately saw the video. That is the one bad thing about MTV. Immediately I saw those happy-go-lucky faces jumpin' around for that song in the video and it just makes me sick. I don't like the

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band and I think their songs are kind of gay. They might be great players, I don't know. I haven't really given them a chance. This is a good example of a band that, for me, was really burned out from MTV.

**ROGERS:** I just don't like the music. It doesn't have any salt to it. There is no grit under their fingernails. It's one of those smiley bands again which starts to bother me.

**CHRISTOPHER:** I will say they have been really successful and I have no problem with that because that band has toured their ass off. I respect them for that. They have been working at it for a long time and I can appreciate that.

**ROGERS:** This is the band that rubs me completely the wrong way when I hear them. I have nothing against the guys personally, I just hate the music. I'm sure both them and Steve Miller are aware this song sounds like a Steve Miller tune. To me they are like Huey Lewis with this '90s hippies vibe.

**CHRISTOPHER:** Other people listening to us would pick out all the shit we ripped off and go, "Jesus, isn't that obvious?"

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# Tony Franklin

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# In the Listening Room

Guitar for the Practicing Musician  
January 1994

Rogers Stevens & Christopher Thorn  
Blind Melon

By John Stix

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