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BLIND MELON SINGER FOUND DEAD
FULL TRIBUTE
INSIDE

ISSUE 570

PEARL JAM NEW SINGLE & UK DATES

KERRANG!

THE WILDHEARTS

THE LAST TOUR, THE LAST INTERVIEW
WHY WILL THEY MARK THE LAST LAUGH?



BLIND MELON SINGER FOUND DEAD
POLICE: A TRAGEDY

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BLIND MELON METALLICA PEARL JAM DEF LEPPARD

NEWS

SHANNON HOON 1967 - 1995

BLIND MELON singer dies of a suspected drug overdose in New Orleans

● BLIND MELON vocalist Shannon Hoon died of a suspected drug overdose on Saturday, October 21 in New Orleans. He was 28. Hoon was found slumped unconscious on the band's tour bus by their tour manager, who called the police when he couldn't wake the singer.

At the time of Hoon's death, the band were playing a club tour of the US. Their last gig was at Numbers in Houston, Texas, on Friday, October 20. An eyewitness at the show told Kerrang! that Hoon "stumbled around as if disoriented" during the set.

They left for New Orleans, where they were scheduled to play at Tipitina's, at 2am on October 21. They arrived in the city seven hours later, and stopped in a parking lot near the venue. Hoon was found dead at 1.30pm.

Hoon had been through a well-publicised battle against drug addiction during the past couple of years. The band's co-manager, Doug Goldstein, told the LA Times newspaper that he had entered drug rehabilitation centres at least twice in recent months. While Hoon's mother, Nel, told Rolling Stone magazine in October 1993: "When he got into drugs, I just gave up hope. He just turned 26, and there were times I didn't think he'd live that long."

Although the results of an autopsy on Hoon's body were incomplete at the time of going to press, they were expected to confirm that he had suffered a drug overdose.

Hoon had only become a father six months ago when his girlfriend, Lisa Crouse, gave birth to a baby daughter, Nico Blue.

"I really loved the guy and I just feel horrible for his baby," Goldstein told the LA Times.

Blind Melon's self-titled debut album, which was released in 1992, sold more than two million copies in the US. It was propelled by the 'No Rain' video, which featured the 'Bee Girl' with whom the band became synonymous, and which enjoyed saturation coverage on MTV.

Their second album, 'Soup', which was released earlier this year, had been less well received, and had slipped out of the Billboard Top 200 last week.

A private service for Hoon's close family and friends was held in his hometown, Lafayette, Indiana, last week. His bandmates - guitarist Rogers Stevens and Christopher Thorn, bassist Brad Smith and drummer Glen Graham - had reportedly initially congregated at Stevens' parents house in Mississippi. Their US tour has been cancelled, and all their future plans are on hold.

At the request of Hoon's family, an educational fund has been set up for his daughter. All donations should be sent to: Nico Blue Hoon, c/o SHAPIRO & CO, 9229 Sunset Boulevard, Suite 607, Los Angeles, California 90069, USA.

To read Shannon Hoon's final interview with Kerrang! turn to page 44.

HOON: Blind Melon's Singer Found Dead

SHANNON HOON was in New Orleans to play at the famed Tipitina's music club. The last time seen in a parking lot near the venue.



Blind Melon's Shannon Hoon was found dead in a parking lot near the venue.

Blind Melon's Shannon Hoon Found Dead

By IAN JAMES
KERRANG! TO THE TIMES

Shannon Hoon, whose high voice and good-vibes persona won the alternative rock group Blind Melon to the top of the charts.

Hoon was found dead on his side in a New Orleans parking lot at 1.30pm, by his tour manager, who vainly tried to revive him.

There was no sign of trauma, cause of death had not yet been ruled, police said.

In Los Angeles, Blind Melon co-manager Doug Goldstein, a close friend of Hoon, said the singer had entered rehabilitation centres at least recently.

"I really loved the guy and I feel horrible for his baby," Goldstein said.

Please see HOON.



SHANNON HOON's last UK appearance: London Mean Fiddler, September 8, 1995

HOW THE NEWS BROKE

- Monday, October 23 - 10 am: Stories filter through to Kerrang! that Blind Melon singer Shannon Hoon had died over the weekend.
- 10.30 am: Calls are made to Blind Melon's record label, Capitol, but no one is able to confirm the news.
- 11 am: Confirmation reaches Kerrang! that Shannon Hoon was found dead in New Orleans on Saturday, October 21. An official statement is due to be released later in the day.
- 5.30pm: Capitol Records issue an official statement, confirming the details of Shannon Hoon's death. Kerrang! sends condolences via the band's management company, Big FD.
- Wednesday, October 25 - 10 am: UK weekly music paper Melody Maker publish a story that wrongly claims that Guns N' Roses singer Axl Rose found Hoon's body.

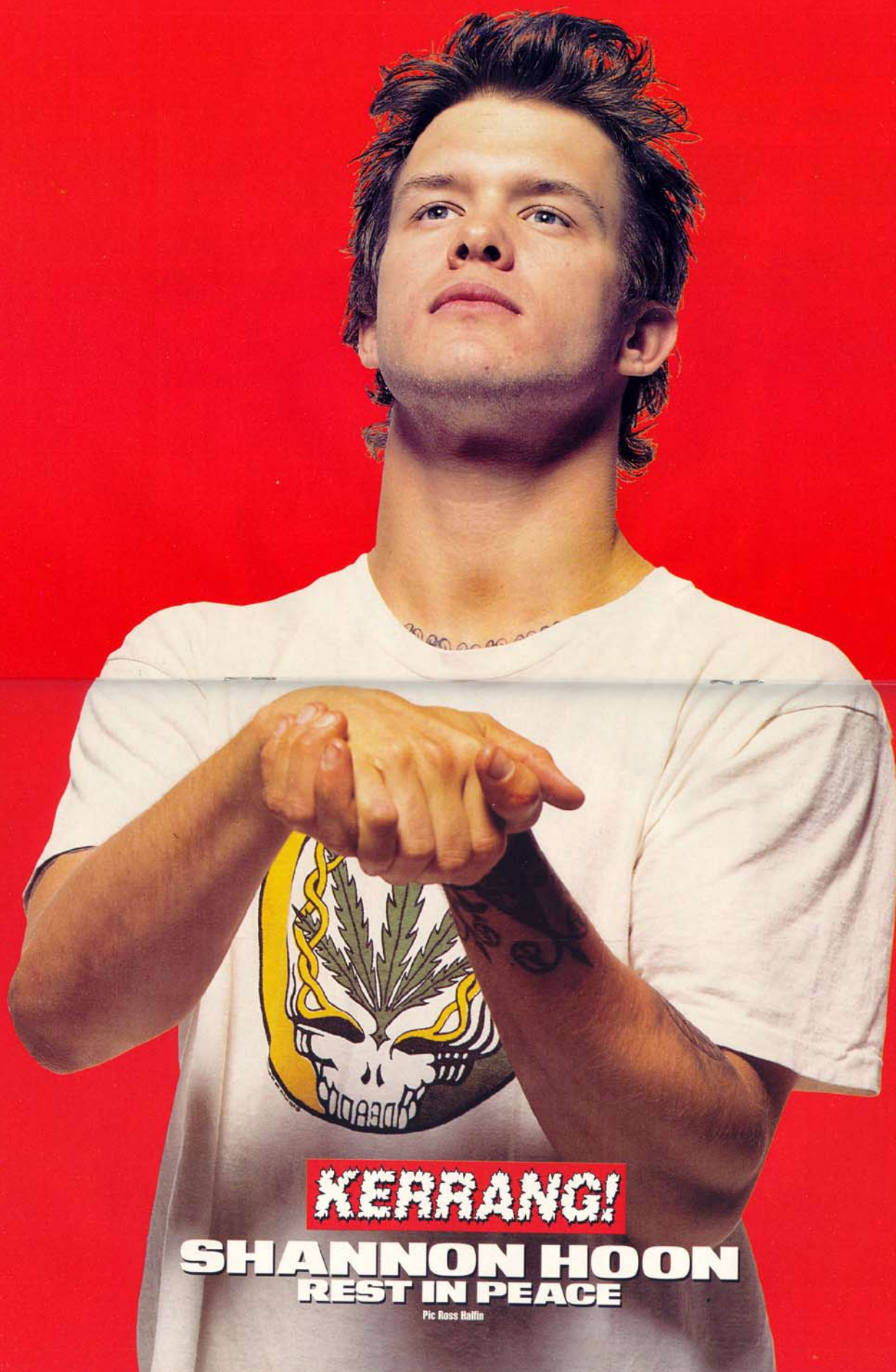


BLIND MELON (l-r) Brad Smith, Shannon Hoon, Glen Graham, Christopher Thorn, Rogers Stevens: 'all their future plans are on hold'



Pic: Ross Halfin

Pic: Joe Green



KERRANG!

SHANNON HOON
REST IN PEACE

Pic Ross Hallin

LUST FOR LIFE

Blind Melon singer Shannon Hoon lived life to the full. Now, after a suspected drugs overdose, he is dead. Jason Arnopp interviewed the singer in August...

THERE WAS Shannon Hoon, the singer in million-selling US rock band Blind Melon, clutching a selection of soppy kids' books. One was called 'Papa, Please Get The Moon For Me'. Another was 'My Little Golden Book About God'.

It was mid-August in London's Copthorne Tara hotel. Photographer Dave Willis and I were there to do a Blind Melon feature for Kerrang!. It was our first time working with the boys, and by the end, we definitely didn't want it to be the last.

There was a concept to the piece. With the band poised to return to hard touring, the idea was for each member of the band to present a vital possession of theirs. Something they couldn't really be without on the road.

For example, bassist Brad Smith brought a pool cue down to the room. His secret ambition, believe it or not, turned out to be to meet UK snooker star Stephen Hendry. Drummer Glen Graham, uh, brought a keyboard in. Guitarist Rogers Stevens brought a book. His guitar partner Christopher Thorn brought liquorice sticks and his sketch pad.

Shannon Hoon was last in, wearing his hat and shades, a little hazy, having just awoken. Displaying his kiddie's books, he explained that he had been reading them onto tapes, then sending them to his month-and-a-half-old baby daughter Nico Blue. "This is the only way that I can be there without *being* there,"

he shrugged.

He suddenly noticed my tape recorder running.

"Are we doing the interview now?" he asked.

Yep.

"Whoah!" he laughed. "I'm gettin' all mushy here! I'd better put my rock head back on..."

He was just kidding, and continued to chat in exactly the same vein, stressing how much the birth of Nico Blue had changed his life. He was a man with a new-found sense of purpose.

"No matter how much I could try to prepare myself for it, there's no way you can. How do you prepare to be overwhelmed in every part of your body?! It gives meaning to the big picture now. I'm gonna be a father longer than I'm gonna be a singer. I don't know which will be the most exhausting, actually!"

Would being a father affect Shannon's writing?

I'll be doing a little more sleeping too! This time we'll be pacing ourselves. Trying not to live at 90 miles an hour.

"I think the band and crew are probably a bit relieved when they call my room and I happen to be sleeping!" he smiled. "Usually I'd be calling their rooms at 6am, going, 'Heymanwhat'sgoingon? Igotnothingtodo!'"

Hoon also revealed that he had recently come out of a rehabilitation centre for alcohol and drug problems. At present, he was banned from the demon drink - something he found quite amusing.

"I was just sitting in my room, and the concierge came in and took all the alcohol out of my mini bar!" he chuckled. "He was from Zaire or something, and he was saying, 'Ha ha, I take away your lager now. You can't have none!'. It's pretty weird when someone from Zaire knows who you are, and knows about your alcohol problem!"

**"BEING A FATHER, THERE'S A LOT OF THINGS I NEED TO TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION. STAYING ALIVE IS ONE OF THEM..."
SHANNON HOON**

"It won't affect the way I write, but it will affect the way I live. My home life has always been very calm and quiet, believe it or not, and although it's a bit noisier now, it's the healthiest thing that's ever happened to me. We'd been wanting to have a child for a while, and of course when you stop trying, it happens!"

The singer candidly admitted that leaving home had proved hard.

"I'd be lyin' to you if I said I was enthusiastic about being back on tour. A month is by no means enough time to enjoy something so huge as a child. Trying to mesh it all together is quite a difficult task. I'm not even sure I want to. One is a bit purer than the other."

BLIND MELON'S first, eponymous album sold over two million copies.

The subsequent touring drove the band a little crazy. By the end, they all admit that they didn't particularly care for each other's company.

This time, pledged Hoon, they were going to take things slower.

"We can prepare for it a little bit better now. We'll know the cities better this time. I think

More seriously, he sighed, "There's a lot of things I'm trying to get used to on this tour. There's so much time on hand. I'm spending a lot of time going out and seeing cities now. This band doesn't spend a lot of its spare time together, though. Trying to fill in and kill the 'hurry up and wait' part of this business is difficult."

"It would be a little easier if I had Lisa and Nico with me, but the baby's too young to travel. Should be a couple of months yet..."

With that thought in mind, Hoon cheerfully went through to the next room, where Dave Willis was waiting to take pictures.

PHOTO SESSIONS can be like pulling teeth if a musician isn't into it, but Hoon was not only patient and willing, but a f**king good laugh.

"Guide me, baby, guide me!" he comically pleaded to Willis, in his wispy, cartoon-character voice. He went on to exchange general conversation about the imminent Reading and Donington festivals, talking both to us and his tour manager Paul.

There were a couple of distinctly off-the-wall moments. At one point, Hoon remembered a

SHANNON HOON REST IN PEACE



**"MY HOME LIFE HAS ALWAYS
BEEN VERY CALM AND QUIET,
BELIEVE IT OR NOT..."**
SHANNON HOON

SHANNON HOON REST IN PEACE



Pic David Willis

LONDON'S COPTHORNE TARA HOTEL: the site of Blind Melon's last Kerrang! interview...



Pic Ray Palmer

◆ dream he'd had about UFOs, then appeared confused. Had it been a dream, or had he seen it on TV?

He also produced a serviette that he called his "relapse napkin". On the serviette was a letter he'd written to someone while in rehab, earlier that month.

We had heard that Hoon had slightly bizarre feet, due to him having walked around barefoot a great deal. At Willis' request, Hoon gladly removed his shoe, showing off a second toe which was one knuckle longer than the first.

AS WILLIS snapped away, I pointed out that no one at Kerrang! knew why the band were called Blind Melon, after all this time.

"Y'know what?" Hoon grinned, now lying on the floor with his foot in the air. "I've just established a common denominator with everybody in your office.

Because I don't have a f**king clue why we're called Blind Melon! The definition of Blind Melon is to have no f**king clue!"

What with the band's new album being called 'Soup', there was always going to be a dumb shot of Hoon with a can of minestrone. The singer was happy to oblige.

Before you knew it, he and his bandmates were off on a bus to play an acoustic set for the BBC. Hoon's parting shots were a firm handshake and a cry of, "Thank you, Sir. Take care!"

Shannon Hoon had no death-wish, making his demise all the more tragic and shocking. He was a gifted individual who appeared to love life.

One thing that Hoon said during the interview could hardly be more bitterly ironic.

Asked if drugs would be kept under control on the 'Soup' tour, he shrugged.

"It depends, y'know. My world and this tour don't revolve around that. Our off-time was spent repairing all the damage that all that crap does to you. By no means am I a Christian yet, but obviously now being a father, there's a lot of things I need to take into consideration. Staying alive is one of them..." ■

SHANNON HOON 1967-1995

A personal profile, by Paul Rees

Shannon Hoon died at 1.30pm on Saturday, October 21. The Blind Melon singer had suffered a suspected drug overdose. Shannon was 28 years old. He leaves behind his girlfriend, Lisa, his six-month-old daughter, Nico Blue, his parents and his bandmates.



These are the facts. They can't explain who Shannon Hoon was, what drove him, or how he came to be slumped unconscious on a tour bus in some nondescript parking lot. Neither can anyone who didn't know, live with and love Shannon Hoon.

I met him twice, and interviewed him on the phone several times more. He came across as an amusing, awkward, self-deprecating, often opinionated and occasionally infuriating human being.

He had his bad days, like everyone else, especially towards the end of the two years Blind Melon spent on the road promoting their first album, but mostly he was genuinely good company.

He walked out on one interview I conducted with him for Kerrang!, right before the band almost fell apart after their 1994 Glastonbury Festival appearance, muttering darkly about getting out of rehab and not needing "dumb questions", but he later apologised.

He was born on September 26, 1967 in Lafayette, Indiana. It was, he said, "A small community. You're able to live your whole life there, and really be quite comfortable. But I wanted to see more."

At the age of 18, he packed a small car full of all his belongings and drove cross country to Los Angeles. He arrived on the West Coast with nowhere to stay and only a vague idea of what he wanted to do. He began "people watching. You just go into a part of town, sit down and try to be invisible. I just used to eavesdrop and zoom in on different kinds of people."

Among the first people he actually met in LA were fellow smalltown exiles Rogers Stevens, Christopher Thorn, Brad Smith and Glen Graham. Together, they formed Blind Melon.

The band itself started at a "grass-roots level", playing clubs. By the time they had signed to Capitol and released their first record, though, Hoon had already been plastered all over MTV, after he accepted an offer from a friend from back home, one Axl Rose, to appear in Guns N' Roses' "Don't Cry" video.

When I first met him, in Florida in 1993, Shannon was an MTV star in his own right - the 'No Rain' video, the one with the Bee Girl in it, had been gobbled up by the station - and 'Blind Melon' was selling thousands of copies a week.

The band had been on tour for 18 months, the pressure was on, and they, and their singer in particular, were a peculiar mixture of elation and exhaustion. Sadly, no one listened to them.

Consequently, six months on, they flew home from Europe in a terrible state. Hoon quite openly confessed that he'd been battling drug problems for the best part of a year, and the band were suffering from the sort of personal problems unique to people who have been forced to share the same confined, claustrophobic space for years on end.

However, when the band re-emerged in April, 1995, after a protracted break and a spell recording 'Soup' in New Orleans, Shannon sounded happy and optimistic. He was proud of the new record, he enthused about everything from AC/DC to moving house and, more than anything else, he couldn't stop talking about the fact that he was about to become a father.

It was, he laughed, the most remarkable thing that had ever happened to him. It had also given him a new sense of responsibility, one which he was desperately keen to uphold. "I have to set an example now," he reflected.

Of the drugs and the detox, he joked that he'd managed to leave New Orleans just in time - "before the Mardi Gras came to town".

Tragically, he returned to New Orleans for the last time all too soon. The last time I saw Shannon Hoon was on September 7. He was on stage at London's Mean Fiddler, wearing a false moustache and a red clown's nose, and looking for all the world like he was having the time of his life. I'd prefer to remember him that way.



Photo: Paul Harris

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