

# Gin Blossoms

The '90s pop band will offer hits at its brewery show and 'Cake' in September

**STORY BY JINELLE SHENGULETTE**

Special to Metromix

Before '90s pop icons the Gin Blossoms were selling millions of records, guitarist Jesse Valenzuela says the band had simple dreams of what success would bring.

"The dream was to have a place to live on your own and have a car and maybe be able to buy yourself breakfast once in a while," says Valenzuela, also the band's principal songwriter. "We're one of the lucky ones."

While it could have been luck that catapulted the Gin Blossoms to stardom after their 1992 debut, *New Miserable Experience*, it was more likely positive reaction to the group's blend of melancholy lyrics and sticky sweet pop — a sound that was very different from the popular grunge and metal acts of the time.

Hits like "Hey Jealousy," "Found Out About You," "Follow You Down" and "Hear It From You" were in regular radio rotation in the '90s — and even are now — although the band continues to tour and make music. Its forthcoming album, *No Chocolate Cake*, is due out in September. And the band

is set to co-headline a gig with Soul Asylum outside the Genesee Brewery on Saturday, June 26.

But unlike in the past, the Gin Blossoms aren't as concerned with radio play or being on TV. While writing the majority of the songs for the new album — which also features songs co-written by The Replacements' Danny Wilde — Valenzuela says he just wanted to have some fun with the music.

Songs for the album came together, even though some of the band members live far from each other. (Valenzuela lives in Los Angeles, singer Robin Wilson splits his time between New York City and Arizona, and bassist Bill Leen, rhythm guitarist Scott Johnson and drummer John Richardson all live in Arizona.) According to Valenzuela, most band members have their own studios, record their own parts and send them to each other via the Internet.

"When you're a kid, your band is your whole life, and you usually live near each other, if not with each other. Fortunately,

## ROCK THE CANS

**WITH:** Gin Blossoms, Soul Asylum, Uncle Plum and a Genesee Brewery employee band.

**WHERE:** Genesee Brewery, 445 St. Paul St.

**WHEN:** 4 p.m. Saturday, June 26

**COST:** \$12 at Wegmans customer service desks; \$15 at the door.

**MORE INFO:** [www.ginblossoms.net](http://www.ginblossoms.net)

those days are over [laughs]. As you get older you ... have responsibilities (and families), and you have to move in different directions," Valenzuela explains. "We used to be locked together for six weeks in the studio, but I really think that's sort of a young man's game."

Fans shouldn't expect to hear too many of the newer tunes at the Genesee Brewery show. Valenzuela says he "doesn't want to disappoint fans" by playing only new material and calls it "a great honor" to have several hit songs that have impacted people in some way.

"I think (our hit songs) make it a lot easier to book us," he adds. "I'm thankful for that; that's why I don't mind playing them at all. ♦



Saki  
Photography

The Gin Blossoms, from left: Scott Johnson, Bill Leen, Robin Wilson and Jesse Valenzuela. Not pictured: John Richardson.