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An EMU Cultural Forum Production

BLIND BOYS

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vocals with soaring solos. "God said It," a pop-soul mix with a contemporary sound, is a stark contrast to the recording's title track, "Deep River," an a capella treatment of turn of the century choral singing. As a whole, the recording is a testament to the fact that trends and fads in music will come and

go (yes even grunge), but the roots that all these diverse styles of rock 'n' roll draw from will continue to thrive.

Although *Deep River* would be a great addition to any soul fan's music collection, the real opportunity will come tonight at the Hult Center's Silva stage. Beginning at 8 p.m., The Five Blind Boys of Alabama will join 67-year-old blues legend Charles Brown for a performance sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts. Tickets for the show are \$16 and \$14.

ANI

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change. ODE: That's great! All too often, it seems, universities shelter you and seem to place blinders on you. Ani: Yeah. ODE: So did you have any major influences? Writers or musicians? Ani: I think there's a lot of different people along the way. It's sort of different every week, you know, who I'm into. So it's hard to say. ODE: Well that seems to be a positive way to go about learning and creating. Ani: You know some people, musicians, say "I don't listen to anyone because I might become too influenced and I don't want to become someone else." What the (heck) is that? If you don't listen to everybody, then how do you know where you stand? ODE: Yeah. People limit themselves that way, and, in their attempt to create, become too close-minded. Ani: Definitely. ODE: Are you familiar with the recent controversy surrounding the anti-homosexual ballot measure here in Oregon? Ani: Yeah. I've read about it as I've been traveling around. ODE: Have you felt this resurgence of the "Right Wing extremists" nationwide? Bringing with it racism and homophobia? Ani: Yeah, absolutely. I feel it's mostly stemming from intolerance and fear. I think it was really coming to a head, and I wonder how much it will really be diffused. I guess we're all sort of wondering "what now? Is the pendulum going to swing back or what?" ODE: And now we're wondering where the next hot spot will be. Ani: Things were getting so

spooky there for awhile, with OCA for example. I sort of thought that if Bush got re-elected or if we elected some sort of dictator like Perot, things would've come to a head everywhere, with race riots and total release of pinned-up anger. But now, it's funny. Now there's that typically American slow reform feeling happening again. It's like every time it seems to be coming down to "Revolution" time, it's like there's just enough to pacify us. ODE: That reminds me of a line in one of your songs: "The system gives you just enough to make you think that you see change. They will sing you right to sleep and then they'll screw you just the same." Ani: Yeah. I guess only hindsight will tell. ODE: Do you think the media tend to perpetuate the narrow-mindedness? The phobias and intolerance that are evident in our society? Ani: Yeah. The mainstream, corporate media. They make sure their interests are served. Just like any big business and the interest in big business is paramount. I think that's sort of a given. So I believe that in the structure of "the system," whatever the hell it is, only certain stories get told. I think it's kind of funny. The media always seem to need a scapegoat. And the people, too. They need a scapegoat to channel their aggressions toward. It used to be the "damn commies" that were synonymous with the devil and now it's "Drugs," "Faggots" or "Dykes" or this or that. It's scary to watch this unfold time and time again. So, yeah, I think the media feeds that. ODE: How do you think you've been represented by the mainstream media? Ani: Well I think of myself as three-dimensional and normal, and so my music has whatever


it is I am in it. And they always reduce it to anger. Some sort of hateful, militant, one-sided thing. It seems that's only the other model they can think of for women. It's like you're not following the formula that they've laid out for you, then they have to put you over here, to sort of "delegitimize" you in some way. I find that most of what's written about me in the mainstream papers is kind of silly. But it teaches me about newspapers and stuff, and people's perceptions. ODE: Definitely. And how to read between the lines. Ani: Right. I wonder how much people do, though. You know, a lot of people seem to just pick up the paper and believe it and turn on the TV and not question it. ODE: Right. Things become so diluted and so distant from our everyday lives. Like, for example, how the media handled the Gulf War and manipulated our perception of it. Ani: Yeah. I mostly overheard conversations around that time. I don't have a t.v. but it was really scary how it just disappeared from people's minds as though it never happened. I was thinking that everytime I do a regular interview and someone asks me, "So what concerns you?" "I should say for the rest of my life, "The Gulf War," to make the point that it actually did happen and thousands of people died and there was devastation. Remember that folks? ODE: Right. To not let it die. Ani: There's so many things that should always be brought up. ODE: So, winding up, do you find music the most powerful vehicle for addressing issues? Keeping them alive and openly discussed? Ani: Yeah. It's like everybody does it and everybody needs it. It's an excellent way to talk to people and cross boundaries.

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