



COURTESY PHOTO

Cincinnati-area band Blessid Union of Souls' song "i wanna be there" debuted on Eugene radio this month on 104.7 KDUK. The song now holds the number five spot and is the fifth most requested for airplay.

Love, devotion lie at heart of album

By Matt Garton
Oregon Daily Emerald

If Blessid Union of Souls' first album was their musical honeymoon, then the release of their new album this month is like an anniversary. Their new self-titled album contains an aggressive, non-pop acoustic groove that swells in waves and ripples of emotion.

As with their first album, *Home*, Blessid Union of Souls continues to use their diverse musical talents to create an album that is purely about love and dedication.

"It's easy to be all lovey-dovey in the beginning," lead vocalist Eliot Sloan said in a recent press release, "but two or three years into the relationship you have to restore what was there when things were fresh and new."

And that is what is at the heart of this album.

The first release from their new album, "i wanna be there," debuted just last week on radio and is slowly moving its way up the Billboard Charts.

The album revisits themes of devotion, friendship, heartache and the complexities of love and is supported by a big live sound that includes acoustic guitars, piano, bass, drums and lyrics delivered in Sloan's raspy-rock voice.

The band consists of vocalist Eliot Sloan, guitarist Jeff Pence, Eddie Hedges on drums, Tony Clark on bass and C.P. Roth as co-producer and keyboardist.

"Jeff is from the country, born on a farm — that's where we get that grassroots feeling," Sloan said.

He also said he tends to bring a more urban sound to the band while Roth brings in some of his classical tastes.

"We never wanted to be a straight, mainstream 'rock' or 'pop' band," Sloan said. "We really like to tap into the different types of music we enjoy."

This is evident on the album with tracks such as "my friends" and "humble star," which rocks with a Counting Crows kind of funky-rock sound, and songs like "when she comes" and "hold her close," which possess a musical texture similar to the band's hit, "I believe."

Despite a reasonable variance in song tempo and style, however, the album does take on some monotonistic qualities, with some songs running into each other. You find that the album suddenly ends, and you've gone through all 11 songs.

Overlooking that, I'm sure this album will be one that will see a reasonable amount of play in my CD player this summer.



REVIEW

Blessid Union of Souls

Blessid Union of Souls
★★★
(grassroots urban pop)

Play: Connie Cohen to perform pre-show

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into context: "What does this have to do with you?"

Connie Cohen, a Northwest singer-songwriter, will perform a pre-show on June 7 at 7:30 p.m. One of the songs Cohen will sing is "Queen of Diamonds."

"It's an *a cappella* song about recognizing the oppression and beauty and power in women" Cohen said.

Aronsen recruited Cohen for her production of *Vinegar Tom*. Aronsen had first heard Cohen perform in Santa Cruz in 1989.

The cast of *Vinegar Tom* consists of Emma Reznic, a sophomore theater arts major; Bridie Harrington, a sophomore English major; Charlie Kimball, a sophomore theater arts major; and Jessica Grindell, a sophomore theater arts major as well as many others.

Vinegar Tom will be performed May 30-31 and June 5-7. All performances will begin at 8 p.m. Tickets are available at the University Theatre Box Office and at the EMU Ticket Office. They are \$6 for the general public, \$5 for senior citizens and \$3 for University students.

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