



Photo special to The Gamecock

Danielle Howle and the Tantrums will be opening for Man or Astroman? at Rockafellas' tonight. For more information, call Rockafellas' at 252-7625.

## Danielle's throwing a Tantrum

JOHN LYONS Staff Writer

Danielle Howle and the Tantrums, one of Columbia's most promising bands, will be opening tonight for Man or Astroman? at Rockafellas'.

The band's four members spoke with The Gamecock Monday night before performing a live, acoustic set on WUSC-FM 90.5.

The band formed from the ashes of two very popular, now defunct Columbia bands, Lay Quiet Awhile and Blightbody.

When asked about the differences between the new and old bands, guitarist John Furr said simply, "We're different players."

Bassist Bryan Williams elaborated: "I think we play a lot more of Danielle's songs too. Lay Quiet Awhile was more of a collective effort."

Furr and Williams were formerly in Blightbody.

The Lay Quiet Awhile portion of the band is Danielle Howle on vocals and acoustic and electric guitars and Tony Tague on drums.

The Tantrums originally formed as a backup band for Howle's solo recording. Williams did not join until they decided to form as a complete unit.

They have received a very positive

response for such a young band, and Howle's long-awaited release "About To Burst," which features the Tantrums on several tracks, should be out by April.

Howle said, "It's one of those things where you say your record's gonna come out, and it doesn't."

The compact disc was originally meant to be released in October and has had several setbacks.

"We've seen it. It's all ready to go, so it won't be long," Furr said.

Part of the band's appeal has been the history of its members. Each of them is well-established in the Columbia area.

Tague teased Furr and said, "People recognize John everywhere we go. It's because of that Playgirl spread he did."

Furr and Tague have a side project together that goes by the name of Cherry Cherry Pow Pow.

When asked if any recording was underway, Furr said the band is very big in Germany and Italy.

Howle is pursuing a solo career in addition to playing with the band. She recently won best female singer in Columbia in a Free Times poll.

"I feel like I have a lot of support," she said, "but I still have to wake up everyday and come up with new songs, so it doesn't really go to my head. If

anything, it humbles me because it means that people believe in me, and they make me feel good about doing the next thing."

All four said they were excited about tonight's show at Rockafellas', and Furr said, "I can't wait to blow GhettoBlaster off the stage."

They all laughed at this, and Williams explained, "We've made a pact to start a feud with some band in Columbia."

When asked where the band was going, Williams said in a jovial manner, "to the top, baby; all the way."

Howle interjected and said, "We just want to make good records."

During both the interview and the live set on WUSC, the band was relaxed and joked around.

Howle flicked tiny wads of paper across the table at Furr during the interview and wandered around the room examining the contents.

The light-hearted attitude is just one way the band is different from Blightbody and Lay Quiet Awhile.

"See, with Blightbody, we scrounged and hurt and payed our dues," Furr said. "We drove four hours, played for \$50 for two people, and in this band we're taking a little bit different philosophy."

"We still have to be exposed, but we're concentrating more on making good

music and taking our time and selecting good performances"

"We haven't toured," Howle said. "We just kinda play around."

The band has been playing about once a month in Columbia and has played shows in Atlanta, Charleston and Charlotte.

In comparing the music scenes of Columbia and Charleston, Tague and Furr agreed that Columbia has more talent, but Charleston has a stronger base of support from fans.

Williams disagreed and said he thinks Charleston currently has a stronger scene.

Howle said, "That's what's great about music; it's something to talk about. Some bands you like, and some bands you don't. It's fun."

"Everybody can relate to music," she said. "Music's in everybody's life, even if they don't buy it. It's always in your face. It's like TV; everyone's seen a TV, everyone's heard music. Everybody can sing, some people just don't."

The excitement for Danielle Howle and the Tantrums is well-deserved, and tonight's show with GhettoBlaster and Man or Astroman? provides an opportunity to see two talented local bands with a better-known headliner.

## Man or Astroman? offers Columbia "geek rock"

JOHN LYONS Staff Writer

Birdstuff, Coco the Electric Monkey Wizard, Star Crunch and Dexter X, Man From Planet Q.

Characters in a new children's show? Remnants of B-movies from the '50s? Well, not quite...

It's actually a list of the band members of Man or Astroman?, masters of an uncanny "sonic mayhem."

The core members of the band are Birdstuff, Coco and Star Crunch. Birdstuff told The Gamecock Dexter X only plays with the band during live sets.

Dexter X is actually "a bounty hunter," he said. "All he does is conquer planets, most recently planet Q. But we need him live."

Strange? That's just the beginning.

Birdstuff took time this week to discuss the band's show tonight at Rockafellas' but spent more time explaining just who and what Man or Astroman? are.

He said he is the "self-declared dictator" of the group and that he and Star Crunch are "gaseous Siamese twins." "Star Crunch and I took a joyride and built Coco," he said. "He's primarily made of old Atari parts."

Due to an intergalactic slip-up in which Coco spilt urine in the ship, the trio crashed on Earth, or as Birdstuff describes it, "on this menial lump of a space rock."

"We ended up in the strangest place in the universe, and that is southern Alabama," he said.

He describes their situation as a "cosmic 'Gilligan's Island.'"

Man or Astroman? was formed as a cover-up for the search for parts of their spacecraft. They are originally from grid sector 23-B6-1 but have been on Earth for about three years.

The band recently moved from Alabama to Georgia.

"We broke out of the Alabama black hole, the heart of the Dixie ghetto," Birdstuff said.

When pressed to discuss the band's music, he told The Gamecock, "We've never even heard our music. Space is a vacuum. I don't know what we sound

like."

Regardless of who has or hasn't heard it, the band's sonic fusion of surf guitar rock and indie '60s garage rock has received critical praise.

Man or Astroman have been compared to surf rock great Dick Dale as well as some early punk rockers.

Birdstuff recalled one show where he refused to play to see how the audience would respond.

The band pulled a member of the audience onstage to play drums and then formed an entirely new band from the audience.

Birdstuff said they finished the set though, because the audience band was "too much competition."

When asked about the show tonight at Rockafellas', Birdstuff said, "There's no telling what will happen."

The band "just got off a little six-month brainwashing stint all across the world and plans a temporary cerebral takeover," he said.

The band's live shows incorporate televisions and spacesuits among other innovations and have been highly praised.

Birdstuff said he can't accept much credit, though, and cites their hypobeam as their real source of success.

After the hypobeam is used on an audience, "people have no choice but to do everything short of worshipping us," he said.

Birdstuff describes it as "kind of cyberkinetic geek-rock overload...everything your sensory intake should ever have."

"We're more professional dorks than we are a band," he said. "It (the show) should be harmless though, and not too painful."

They are coming off of a world tour that took them everywhere from Switzerland to Tasmania, and they are now concentrating on performing in the Southeast.

In regard to the show at Rockafellas', Birdstuff said he was "looking forward to people wearing baseball hats with the word 'cocks' on them."

They will be playing with Danielle Howle and the Tantrums and GhettoBlaster and will do an interview on WUSC-FM 90.5 between 7:30 and 8 p.m.

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