



The members of Slow Wow are (from left) Jenn Archerd, Tim Blake and Scaught Bates.
PHOTO/OLIVER GUINAN

To the heart

Slow Wow

For Jenn Archerd, lead singer and bass-ist of Slow Wow, the song writing process is a bit different. Soon-to-be tracks are constantly percolating, and finding time to compile and record them all is more difficult than working them out in the first place.

"I get them in my head, and then I just try to figure them out on an instrument—they're always there," Archerd said.

"She's a machine, dude," added Tim Blake, the band's drummer and Archerd's longtime friend. "She always has a song loaded up and ready to go."

Slow Wow played its first show in 2016, and the trio released a 4-track EP, *Beneath*, a year later. The EP is distinct and consistent. Despite being the group's first recording, the songs make it obvious that Slow Wow has been confident in their sound and clear in their direction since the three started playing together. This isn't surprising: Archerd, Blake and Scaught Bates, Slow Wow's guitarist, have been active in Reno's music scene for nearly two decades. In fact, Bates and Blake alone are currently playing in a combined seven bands. (Full disclosure: one of Bates' many bandmates includes RN&R Editor Brad Bynum.) They obviously have experience finding a sound.

Slow Wow recently recorded their first full-length album, *When I Break*, with Tim Green of Louder Studios in Grass Valley, California. *When I Break* is the second time Slow Wow adds their names to Tim Green's discography, which includes Bikini Kill, Sleater-Kinney and Brubaker, as well as Howlin' Rain and The Fresh and Onlys, who recently made appearances here in

Reno. The band said, at first, recording with such a well-regarded engineer was nerve-racking.

"I knew from the first experience that I was really insecure going into it," remembered Archerd. "Before we recorded the EP, I felt like vomiting I was so anxious and scared about it, and this time I was like, 'It's all good, it's going to be great.'"

Listening to *When I Break* is like getting hit with a defibrillator. It sends an electric current of psych-rock and punk straight to the heart. This release is similar to the group's debut EP in that Archerd frequently picks up the melody on bass, and, in riot grrrl fashion, uses staccato eighth-notes to carbonate an already mosh-pit worthy tempo. Bates' guitar embellishes Archerd's melodies, but this time with more psych-rock influence than in *Beneath*. Archerd's singing style is lightly inflected and straight-forward, but her lyrics are nuanced, and comment on her internal life and the state of the world.

For Slow Wow, writing and performing helps them clear their heads and improve their mental health.

"A lot of people in my family struggle with depression and anxiety, and it's something we didn't talk about for a long time," Archerd said. "I struggled with it a lot in high school, and it's something that I still struggle with. Music and talk-therapy help me a lot. Sometimes I have bouts of depression and anxiety, and it helps to just put it into lyrics and music."

"For me, it's a mental health thing," Blake said. "I notice the rare times I'm not playing music with people, I'm really unhappy and have some anger issues. Playing music really allows me to express myself and get that stuff out." □

Slow Wow will perform at the Reno for Reproductive Justice Benefit Show at the Holland Project, 140 Vesta St., alongside Vie, the Scattering, Dissidence and Blunderbusst. 6:30 p.m. \$5. for more information, visit www.facebook.com/SLOWWOWBAND

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