



1340mag.com



...MEDIA VIEWED BY FIRE...

CD Reviews

DVD Reviews

Book Reviews

Concerts

Interviews

Staff

Archives

Contact

Home

1340MagBooks.com

Links

Editorial



Interviewed
by Jim
McDonald

The Queers have been building a following for 25 years now. Joe Queer and company have built a reputation based on solid songs, an original sound and a great sense of humor. I hooked up with Joe to talk about the new album, the new DVD, and upcoming projects.

Jim McDonald: So what's it like to be Joe Queer?

Joe Queer: Really good. I'm just drinking my tea, watching "Seven Brides for Seven Brothers" and checking my email. It's a rather uneventful day.

JM: So I hear you just got off tour.

Joe Queer: Yeah, and we're heading back out for a two weeker. We're staying really busy. We've been really busy the last two years. It's surprising still. We've got a little corner of the punk world, and it's pretty fun. I'm trying to stay off the road more than the past two years, which was crazy.

JM: How did you get hooked up with Asian Man Records?

Joe Queer: I hooked up with Asian Man through Ben Weasel. We all got our Lookout catalogs back, screeching Weasel, Green Day, The Queers and a bunch of other bands, and Ben released his back catalog with Mike (Park, Asian Man head honcho) who I knew. Well, I didn't really know him well, I had met him a few times when we had played with Skankin Pickle, his band. Anyway, Ben said ask him. We've got a little relationship with Screeching Weasel, so we figured that would be a good place to put our back catalog. Then I kind of pushed Mike to

This Site Best
Viewed In
Firefox



1340Mag on
MySpace



put out the new Queers album, so he did and that's cool. It's going good and I like it.
 He's got good distro and Mike's honest and he works out of his garage and I just kind of
 like that DIY punk thing. I like being able to call the place and Mike picks up, not some
 flunky that's a half stoned fan of the band. It's just him and Skyler. Sometimes his mom
 will come down and answer the phone. I love that whole thing. It's just my speed and I
 love it.

JM: So Asian Man turned out to be a good fit for you.

Joe Queer: Yeah, it is. You know, people talk about major labels and they're like "evil
 major labels" and in my experience I haven't had good luck with the indie labels. Lookout
 ended up keeping our money and that never got straightened out. They just stopped paying us
 and we took our albums back. Hopeless Records was just a big mess. We never made any money
 there. Well, we made a lot of money, but we didn't see any of it. It sucked. It's nice

that we made money, but when the label decides to keep all of it, it sucks. It's great to
 see your albums across the world, you know there's your album for sale in Sweden, and it's
 not selling millions, but it's selling, and not to see a single penny from it. It sucks when
 the label keeps every penny that comes in. It's nice to be with Mike. He sends a statement
 out every month. It's like "this is where you are" in black and white. I like that.

JM: What is your connection with Screeching Weasel?

Joe Queer: We met Ben back in 1990 I think. Around the time of their album "Boogada
 Boogada Boogada". We became friends and did some shows with them. One day you wake up and
 Ben and I are still like best friends. But that's how I met him. We're actually talking
 about me and Ben weasel, me and Ben would write all the songs, and record with Marky Ramone.
 So it would be me, Marky and Ben and I don't know who would play bass. I'm not sure what
 we'd call it, but I just talked to Marky on the phone today and he seems to be into it.
 He's like "If I like the songs, I'll do it" so that's kind of a fun thing. I love writing songs with Ben. He wrote a song for the new album and helped me with another one. When I
 was in the studio and needed advice on a word or something he'd throw his two cents in.
 Ben's a great songwriter, so it's really been great to work with him. He's got a solo album
 coming out. He's recording with a couple of the kids from All American Rejects.

They're a big band now. I don't listen to them too much. I hear that they're real Queers/Screeching weasel fans and they contacted Ben. He didn't have much of a budget, and I think it's their drummer and guitarist decided to play. They're doing an album that's going to be done in a month or so. Really psyched about that. Then hopefully Ben, me and Marky can find time to get in the studio this summer. You know it's funny, I've been playing so long, but there are still projects I want to do that I'm really psyched about. F*ck man, this is great.

This is fun, so it's really not about money. I mean, hopefully it will make money but that's not what's important. It's like g*ddamn, I'm doing a project with Ben Weasel and Marky Ramone. It's like a dream come true. So that's the stuff that gets me out of bed in the morning. Not how many t-shirts I sell on Interpunk or how many friends I have on MySpace or any of that kind of sh*t. When I first started playing if not a lot of kids showed up that dictated how my day was. It was like oh my god not a lot of people showed up, or conversely if a thousand kids showed up it was like oh my god look at this. You can't find value in that sh*t. You can't let that dictate who you are or run your life or your day. So I kind of just don't worry about that sh*t and life got a lot easier and a lot better and a lot funner.

JM: Nice. If that project comes out with you, Weasel and Ramone, I'll buy that. If it helps, you've already got a sale.

Joe Queer: Great! I'm gonna call up those guys and tell them we've already got one CD sold, so let's do it! You know, Ben is such a great songwriter. He's got a ton of leftover that I think are just awesome and I've got a bunch of songs that are half done and I love sitting down with Ben and writing. Ben and I were talking and we're like let's do the greatest album since "Road To Ruin". I think we can do it! I really do. If you get Marky and Ben in the same room and I can play a little guitar. I think it's gonna be a f*cking fun project. We'll see. I'm gonna try to push it through.

JM: Speaking of Screeching Weasel members, why would anyone think Danny Vapid is gay?
(Referring to the song "Danny Vapid Ain't a Faggot" from the Queers "Pleasant Screams" album)

Joe Queer: What? Oh, "Danny Vapid Ain't No Faggot". That was just kind of written from the point of view that people with purple mohawks and studded leather jackets would call us fags. I think that came about because Vapid called me up on the phone and when I asked him how he's doing he's like "The Methadones played a show last night and some f*cking crusty motherf*cker got up in my face and called me a faggot. I kind of wrote it from that. The lyrics are all over the place, but that was kind of where it came from. It's like the *Queers*, our new album. Someone emailed me, some lesbian girl it turns out from Texas, and said we're a bunch of emo pussy fags. I really like that. I kind of want to keep one step ahead of the audience. On the new album we had some really like alternative songs. We had one with just piano that was like my idea of a Beach Boys "Pet Sounds" type song called "I Think She's Starting To Like Me". You know, Joey Ramone, I knew him just a little, was like "f*ck what all those people say, do what's in your heart and keep one step ahead of them. Move on and try other stuff". We talked about the Beach Boys. A lot of bands do pop punk good, but I think very few are great. I'm proud of the fact that we can still do stuff and move ahead with the music and not worry about if I've pleased every kid who's going to the Warped Tour this year.

JM: I was listening to the new album, and I'm really impressed with it. Particularly with the fact that it's hard to peg into any one genre.

Joe Queer: I didn't sit down and say "I'm gonna write this kind of album". We kind of threw the sh*t at the wall in the studio and created it there. We really had very little mapped out. Songs like "Brian Wilson" and "I Think She's Starting To Like Me" were arranged right there in the studio, which was really fun. That's just what came out, songs like "I Can't Stay Mad At You". I love that pop stuff. It reminds me of a summer day back in the 60s when I was a little kid. Or like hearing the Ramones in the late 70s when we were just getting out of high school and our lives were really starting and we didn't know what we wanted to do. We were kind of aimless and life kind of sucked, but when we would to to a Ramones show and sing along with the lyrics of every single song "Rockaway Beach" and "Sheena Is A Punk Rocker" we just had the world by the balls. Everything for that three hours was OK. It was like the Ramones were telling us don't worry, everything's

going to be

OK. We didn't know what we wanted to do with our lives. I did other things before I finally did this. I owned a restaurant for a while.

JM: What kind of restaurant did you own?

Joe Queer: I owned a cafe called Joe's Place. We sold it and it passed around it a few people. It was for sale again a while ago, and I thought about getting back into it. I

just decided I don't want to do that. Taking care of inventory and all that. It was a cafe/bar called Joe's Place. It was fun.

JM: Tell me about the new DVD that's coming out.

Joe Queer: very DIY. All down and dirty. MVD threw it together for us. A lot of live stuff on it, it's a little herky jerky. We'd use the audio from one show, and then we'd show like four different lineups playing the same song. surprisingly it synced right up on all the songs. A lot of interview stuff. I wanted to get more of the old interview stuff on the DVD, but we didn't really have time to get it all together. We're gonna try to do another one. It's a lot of different footage from all around the world. It's got an animated video that we never released, so that's kind of cool. MVD is a great company to work with. I just love them. They do big stuff like Dylan and Lou Reed and Neil Young, and the Pixies. They're a great company and they make me feel good about it. If I need to get ahold of them they call me right back.

JM: What's with the surf rock influences in your music? You don't hear a lot of that in punk.

Joe Queer: Well to me the Ramones were sort of like a punk rock Beach Boys. I always loved that Beach Boys pop, Jan and Dean and all that stuff. People ask why a guy from New Hampshire was into it, but I just was. A lot of my friends were surfers. I used to surf. Certainly not full time, but I used to live in Hawaii and I hung out on the beach and had a lot of surfer buddies. I got into it. I hear that in August we're going over to Europe to open up some festival shows for Marky Ramone and I'm gonna play guitar for him. I hear we're playing at a festival that Brian Wilson is headlining. I'm real excited about that. I'm gonna see if I can pull some strings and see if I can possibly get in touch with him and

see if Brian would let me get up and sing "Don't Back Down" with him. I think that's probably a long shot, but crazier shit has happened and I'm not too bashful to ask.

JM: That surf influence is what seems to separate the Queers from a lot of other pop punk bands. I don't think I've heard another punk band reference Duke Kahanamoku.

Joe Queer: Yeah, we got Rick from Southern Culture On the Skids to play lead guitar on that one. They're a great little surf/rockabilly band. I had that chorus "Duke Kahanamoku" that I'd shown Ben Weasel and he's not really a Beach Boys fan. Later he was like "are you going to record that f*cking Duke Kahanamoku song" and I was like "what the f*ck, are you kidding me?" So I kind of wrote the chorus and then arranged the rest of it in the studio. Some reviews have said they thought it was a Beach Boys song which is like a great review to me.

JM: When the Queers have played their final note, how do you want them to be remembered?

Joe Queer: I don't know. We'll let other people say that. I guess as a fun band that never took themselves too seriously. We got to tour around the world, make some friends and have some laughs, and hopefully we didn't hurt too many people doing all that. Maybe as the band who started with "We'd Have A Riot Doing Heroin" and ended with "I Think she's Starting To Like Me" and "Duke Kahanamoku" and learned a few things in between.

This page is best viewed in Firefox or Internet Explorer. If you are using Netscape the page may not load correctly.

All content © 2007 by 1340mag.com.

All rights reserved. Please contact us if you wish to reproduce any articles, reviews or interviews.

CD Covers and band pictures are © Copyright by their respective artist or record label and are used by permission.

1340mag.com designed and maintained by Jim McDonald & Mark Rounds.