

THE QUEERS: IT'LL BE FUN

becoming a fixture of the '90s punk scene, punk-pop legends The Queers made an impact on the shape of punk to come with their snotty-but-catchy brand of Ramones-influenced adolescent punk rock.

The band's unique style of hook-laden punk with humorous, if often off-color, lyrics earned them a spot on the influential Lookout! Records — the label that also launched the careers of Green Day, Operation Ivy and Ted Leo.

But even after securing a spot in punk's storied lexicon, the veteran band still has a devoted cult following, and shows no sign of slowing down — much less growing up.

With a forthcoming DVD titled "The Queers are Here" on the way and a brand-new album, Munki Brain, coming out on Asian Man Records, The Queers certainly aren't resting on their laurels.

On the road, headlining a new tour, The Queers will be crashing into Cat's Cradle on Tuesday, supported by Hellcat Records' The Heart Attacks, and The Riptides.

Divisions assistant editor Bryan Reed took the opportunity to chat with frontman Joe Queer about the legacy of The Queers — where they've been, where they are now and where they're going.

Divisions: So, after more than 20 years, more than a dozen records and varying lineups, where do The Queers stand today?

Joe Queer: Well, we were together, off and on for longer. We got on Lookout! Records in 1993 and really became a touring band then, when we got signed in '93 — which is a long time in itself. We did some stuff on the new album that musically I really like,

and the kids still show up. I mean, I don't know if I wanna do it the rest of my life, but it's been fun. We're just this little punk rock band, and we just try to stay true to this ideal — not signing to a major label. We just always were a little punk rock band, and that's kind of how the band still is. And we've got a good cult following. It's been fun.

Dive: Is there a Queers mission statement or manifesto?

JQ: Yeah, just be able to laugh at yourself and not take yourself too seriously. That's kind of it.

Dive: How would you characterize a Queers show?

JQ: Pretty wild. The audience really makes the show. They just go crazy, and it's just bang, bang, bang, lots of songs, and the kids know all the words, so it's a fun time.

Dive: Of all the records you've done over the years, which is your favorite?

JQ: It's hard to pick a favorite, but "Don't Back Down" might be my favorite.

Dive: And I understand there's a new album, Munki Brain, coming out in February. What can you tell me about that?

JQ: Rick (Miller) from Southern Culture on the Skids actually plays a guitar solo on the record, so we've got kind of a Chapel Hill connection there. We played one show with Southern Culture and I talked to Rick, and he's just good for the song, and he's a really good guitarist, so I was glad to get him up to help on the record.

Then my buddy Mike came up, Blackie from the Hard-Ons came up.

It's pretty fun; we had a lot of help.

Some of it is a good bit better musically. Our fans will like it.

Dive: And the DVD, "The Queers Are Here," what's the deal with that?

JQ: It just compiles all sorts of shows all over the world and interviews from different stages in our career. Kind of a bunch of



The influential punk-pop band The Queers brings its fun-and-dirty-joke-loving brand of rock 'n' roll to Cat's Cradle, flanked by punk rock peers The Heart Attacks and The Riptides. The veteran headliners were an influence on many other bands including Green Day, Blink-182 and The Ataris.

COURTESY OF ADAM WALDRON

cool stuff. That MVD is really cool, like they do DVDs of all kinds of bands like Bob Dylan, and so it's really cool that they got this little punk band a DVD. We're excited to be doing it.

Dive: So, decades later, you're still making punk records. What is it about punk rock that makes a lifestyle?

JQ: Umm, I dunno. I have other interests and stuff. I just love playing punk rock. I like the people; I like the energy. I get to travel, so that's where I just really like to play music.

Dive: Is a Queers show a good first punk show?

JQ: Yeah, because it's pretty fun, and it's based on fun, so there's not a lot of violence. There's a lot of shows where there's a lot of fighting and shit, but ours aren't like that. I know a lot of kids who

we've been their first show. So, yeah.

Dive: You've been a big influence on a lot of bands. Do you ever feel like you've attained some sort of "legend status"?

JQ: Uh, no, not really. It's cool that a lot of bands that have opened for us have kind of made it big.

Green Day once said, "Yeah, we wouldn't be anywhere without the Queers," and I thought that was pretty cool. I think they'd be doing just fine, but it was nice of

them to say that.

But a lot of these guys like Alkaline Trio have opened up for The Queers and gone on to make it pretty big, which I think is cool.

Dive: Will The Queers ever really grow up?

JQ: I doubt it. Not this band. But, uh, I guess we'll see. (laughs).

Dive: I guess here I'll give you the opportunity to kind of say whatever you want to get people to come out to the show on Tuesday.

JQ: If you wanna have a fun time, come on down.

I'm hoping a lot of the old punkers will come out that used to pack the Cat's Cradle, and I'm sure they will because we haven't been there in a while.

You know, the Cradle used to be awesome. I'm sure it still is. We just haven't been there for a while. But yeah, come on down, say 'hello.' It'll be fun.

Contact the Divisions Editor at dive@unc.edu.

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