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## THE QUEERS

"Munki Brain"

Asian Man

It's an alliance forged not in heaven, but at Rockaway Beach: New Hampshire's most devoted Ramones disciples meet Wales' keepers of the same flame. On their new "Munki Brian," the Queers cover Helen Love's "Girl About Town," the sardonic saga of a coulda-been rock star who signed with a label, "sold a hundred records to all her friends," and now is back home.

Even without its Ramonesy style, "Girl About Town" would be a natural for the Queers, who have been recording for 25 years without ever approaching a commercial breakthrough. Joe Queer and his pals aren't bitter about their outsider status, though. They just keep playing simple, catchy songs about romance, surfing and their musical idols, who also include the Beach Boys. The album ends with a pleasant ditty titled "Brian Wilson," which trills that "it's a good thing we've got you around." The Queers don't feel a similar affection for George W. Bush, who's lampooned by "Monkey in a Suit," but such commentary is rare. Most of the time, "Munki Brain" just wants to take you to the beach.

One of its protagonist's major accomplishments, "Girl About Town" wryly reports, is that she "smoked cigarettes with Joan Jett in America." The Heart Attacks might seem to have gone one better, persuading Joan Jett to duet on "Tearstained Letters," a song from their new "Hellbound & Heartless." Yet the former Runaway's presence is not enough to distinguish this Atlanta glam-punk quintet from the competition -- especially now that the genuine New York Dolls are back in action. The band's cover of Creedence's "Traveling Band" and such originals as "Guilty" are lively enough, but neither their riffs nor their worldview are remotely fresh.

--Mark Jenkins

Appearing Sunday at the Rock & Roll Hotel with the Riptides and the Ripouts.