

# Johnny Quest: A paradox that works

By THOMAS HEALY  
Assistant Editor

With the college-hit *The Heisman* on the market and a tour rotation that includes most major cities in the southeast, Johnny Quest (JQ) is at a crossroads in its career. Sound business management is taking precedence over inane craziness. Issue-oriented statements are taking the place of offensive, misogynous lyrics. And serious, mature tunes are replacing the off-beat funkabopoundalicious sound of earlier tracks.

Sure, and George "Read My Lips" Bush will never raise taxes again.

It's not that JQ isn't at a crossroads. Lead singer Joe Farmer concedes that fact, citing the band's new management and intensified touring as evidence of a sobered attitude. But an interview with Farmer and recent concerts confirm that the soul of JQ remains alive and strong.

What exactly is that soul? That's a hard question to answer because although JQ has been defined as a lot of things, never, ever have they been defined as definable. Their music blends rock, punk, funk, rap and metal, but not one of those adjectives does justice to a band whose style is simply a... paradox.

An odd concept, but accurate. JQ juxtaposes a driving yet rhythmic bass, a metallic yet playful guitar, a pounding yet stimulating drum and a blunt yet melodic voice into a sound that makes frat brats want to slam dance.

Just attend a concert for further evidence of the JQ paradox. You've got your punkers, your funkies, your fratters, your rappers, your preps, your skaters and your Joe Farmer look-a-likes. The variety of the crowd serves as convincing evidence of the diversity of the JQ sound.

There is no logical explanation for the band's appeal to so many different types of people. JQ is fun. They're not out to change the world in a day, nor are they trying to tell anyone how to live



Race, Dr. Quest, JQ and Bandit will perform at the Cat's Cradle Saturday, July 7

their life. As Farmer put it, they're simply "hosting a big party."

And what do they get for it? According to Farmer, quite a few complaints that the band is sexist and racist. Farmer denies both charges and says when the band hears accusations of misogyny they "don't even bat an eye. We're guys writing about what happens to guys."

So what does the future hold for a paradoxical, misogynous quartet that can't decide what type of music they want to play? Farmer confirms rumors of possible record deals, but adds with frustration that nothing has been signed yet. "It's all just talk right now, it's good talk, but it's just talk."

Aside from desperately wanting to get into a studio to experiment on some new sounds, Farmer says he wants to explore the rap and hip hop scenes. He sees hip hop as being one of the two major sides to JQ (the other being slow-speed metal) and one that he would like to concentrate on. As far as rap goes, Farmer said he thinks the style is interesting because there is something very exciting about it. He notes that much of the band's influence comes from rap groups such as NWA and Public En-

emy. Farmer says he thinks the key for JQ, as well as for any band, is to keep writing new songs.

"As long as the band keeps playing and moving forward, we'll be happy," said Farmer.

But for right now, Farmer, along with bassist Jack Campbell, guitarist Bill Ladd and drummer Steve Hill will have to keep touring intensely to, as Farmer says, "bring the JQ noise to the people."

## Calendar of Events

■ **Thursday July 5**  
"Pieces," an exhibit of mixed media collage is on view at Duke University's East Campus Gallery until July 31.

The North Carolina Artist Exhibition will be on view until August 12 at the North Carolina Museum of Art in Raleigh. For more information call 833-1935.

Manbites Dog Theater Company will perform the *Report from the Holocaust*, based on the book by Larry Kramer. Performances are Thursdays through Saturdays, July 5-7, and July 12-14. Shows start at 8:15 p.m. in the Duke Power Room, upstairs in the Durham Arts Council. For more information call 628-0958.

"High Fiber," a juried exhibit of fiber art is on display in the Carolina Union Gallery until August 3.

The Chapel Hill Preservation Society presents the Senior Art Show, a juried exhibit of works by local amateur artists 55 and older. The exhibit will be on display Mondays through Fridays 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. until July 27. For more information call 942-7818.

Uncle Green and Dillon Fence will appear at the Brewery. For more information call 834-7108.

Flotsam and Jetsam will appear with Prong at the Cat's Cradle. For more information call 967-9053.

■ **Friday July 6**

3 Orange Whips will appear at The ArtsCenter in Carrboro. Tickets are \$5 for the public, \$4 for friends. For more information call 929-ARTS.

Mekeel and Goy will perform eclectic acoustic at the Ninth Street Bakery. For more information call 286-0303.

Nikki Meets the Hibachi will appear at the Cat's Cradle.

Billy C. Wirtz will appear at the Brewery.

■ **Saturday July 7**

Alexander's Band will play traditional, untraditional and original folk at the Ninth Street Bakery.

Johnny Quest will appear at the Cat's Cradle.

Human Radio will appear at the Brewery.

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