

WHAT THE PRESS HAS SAID ABOUT:

**AHLEUCHATISTAS**

**WHAT YOU WILL**

**CUNEIFORM**

**2006**

Line-up: **Shane Perlowin** (guitar), **Derek Poteat** (bass), **Sean Dail** (drums)

“...hefty doses of prog rock shock therapy... like the Magic Band on steroids. ...these young lads convey boundless energy amid some unrelenting quirks and knotty time signatures, where meter and momentum are apt to change on a nanosecond’s notice. Diehard progressive rock junkies should enjoy the heck out of this little gem.”  
– Glen Astarita, *All About Jazz*, February 2006, [www.allaboutjazz.com](http://www.allaboutjazz.com)

“...you owe it to yourself to hear this wonderful new recording from the Ahleuchatistas (great band name – think Charlie Parker, y’all). These three youngsters seem to be channeling the spirits of Fred Frith, Bill Laswell and Fred Maher, who recorded a similarly funky, spiky and fun album in 1981 under the name Massacre. Difficult, yes, but challenging, no – for all its weird jumpiness, this is friendly and inviting music that will be sure to have your patrons nodding their heads and tapping their feet. Granted, they’ll be tapping in 15/8 time, but still.”  
– Rick Anderson, *CD Hot List: New Releases for Libraries*, April 2006, [cdhotlist.btol.com](http://cdhotlist.btol.com)

“This...trio’s math rock is a series of screeds against war, for human rights, even corporate malfeasance. The nuance: There are no words. ...A free-jazz stepchild of Don Caballero, Ahleuchatistas have more swerves, rougher time changes, mini-improvisational sections and not a hint of distortion or studio trickery.  
On opener “Remember Rumsfeld at Abu Ghraib,” bass and drum roll over aloof guitars, acting as communiqués between the Pentagon and Iraq... “Shell in Ogoniland,” about the oil company’s mistreatment of people in Niger, sounds like the gurgling of a viscous liquid...created by a sludge-like bass groove and doubled bass drum kicks.  
For all their technical abilities and political ideologies, the Ahleuchatistas’ most poignant crusade may be against the necessity of the written word. 4 stars”  
– Nikhil Swaminathan, *Creative Loafing*, 10/18/06, [atlanta.creative loafing.com](http://atlanta.creative loafing.com)

“...Ahleuchatistas offers us 41½ new minutes of astonishing avantgarde music influenced by the 70s experimental side of Progressive music like King Crimson, Gong, Captain Beefheart, experimental Jazz / Fusion / Rock bands like Naked City, Ruins or Univers Zero and the actual instrumental Avant-Rock of bands like Don Caballero or Dysrhythmia, just to mention the most obvious. ...  
...they manage to keep their sound interesting, ranging from slow jazzy sections to fast Grindcore-like blastbeats and all in between. The production is awesome and the artwork is also great (courtesy of Courtney Chappel). This is instrumental music but they manage to keep a political consciousness through the song titles and the artwork which, in my opinion, is a bonus point for them.  
Besides the 14 songs, you can also find here a multimedia section...illustrating the trio qualities in a live situation.  
If you are into bands like John Zorn’s Naked City, Ruins, Dysrhythmia, Don Caballero, King Crimson, Captain Beefheart or Gong, this is the right bet for you.”  
– RDS, *Fenix Webzine*, [fenixwebzine.com.sapo.pt](http://fenixwebzine.com.sapo.pt)

“...Songs range from “Remember Rumsfeld at Abu Ghraib” and “Shell in Ogoniland” to “Sherman’s March” and “Ho Chi Minh’s Gonna Win!” It’s funny how knowing the songs titles, and the current events that inspire them, allows you to hear the band’s “voice” even though there are no lyrics. Even without the political subtext though, this really is just great, fun music. 3.5 out of 4 stars”  
– Adam A. Donaldson, *Lucid Forge*, May 30, 2006, [www.lucidforge.com](http://www.lucidforge.com)

“...it’s truly hard for me to get along with all the unframed (lacking in structure / melody / rhythm hooks) extreme metal that’s out there. Thank god that Ahleuchatistas has come to save me from the alienation...of the hard edge.  
...the level of musicianship on this release is unquestionable. The trio, although primitive in its choice of devices, which consists only of drums, unaffected guitars and bass, is remarkably refreshing...  
The compositions shift gears unexpectedly, maintaining a terrific flow while relentlessly showcasing a tremendous control of instruments via measured attacks. All of these hard-hitting assaults are far more than a hardcore bash as they incorporate melodic twists, hooks and subtleties into the inferno. ...  
What You Will is what innovative metal groups have been trying to do for a long time – Ahleuchatistas finally makes sense out of the unexpected and extreme, giving up none of its ingenuity. (9.25/10)”  
– Avi Shaked, *Maelstrom*, #44, [www.maelstrom.nu](http://www.maelstrom.nu)

“...this Asheville, North Carolina-based power trio’s quirky cross between new music compositions and raw punk energy will have the self-appointed genre limiters scratching their heads for the rest of the year. The rest of us can just enjoy it and hope there’ll be more in the not-too-distant future.”  
– Frank J. Oteri, “Today’s Pick – What the BOX is listening to,” *New Music Box*, [www.newmusicbox.org](http://www.newmusicbox.org)

“...Ahleuchatistas are an instrumental three-piece delivering dazzling, stripped-down yet mega-complex sonic acrobatics. Gloriously intricate, a superabundance of contrast and ideas contained with a framework of untempered drums, bass and guitar, their third album What You Will – out now on the ever-essential Cuneiform Records – shimmers with track after track of easy brilliance – and no filler.  
...Right now, there’s a...movement of avant-rock...bands messing with progressive punk, structured experimentalism and sheer joyous guts, doing its thing without check or self-consciousness. Raising the bar, Ahleuchatistas may well have given us the ultimate expression of that slightly nervous but expedient term, math rock. But that implies a dry exercise in counting... Ahleuchatistas are far too into melody and contrast to make that mistake. They stuff a lot of jaw-droppingly tight explosive twists and mellow breakdowns, a lot of quiet/loud, stops, starts and sprints into each track... in fact,

they sound like they're having a lot of fun, free-running around the vertiginous drops and angles of their compositions. The tunes, and the feel, stay important.

Natural comparisons are Ruins, Don Caballero, King Crimson, John Zorn and Hella, and most of all Upsilon Acrux... They're based in Asheville, North Carolina: Sean Dail on drums, Shane Perlowin, guitar and Derek Poteat on bass, all sharing a secret love of progressive rock and varying degrees of jazz, anarcho-punk and metal. Song titles like 'Remember Rumsfeld at Abu Ghraib'...display a desire to reach out and bring a wider reality into their music. But what ultimately keeps this pleasing is a light touch, an ability to give each other space, a down-to-earth, live sound, a human feel. ...natural and agile and delighting in every twist. ..."

– *Organ Magazine*, #180, October 19, 2006, www.organart.com

"...another Ahleuchatistas album is off and running like a dog with five legs, the rhythms weird and asymmetrical, cropping up in meters nearly impossible to keep track of, and rarely simple or familiar.

What You Will...displays a boost in compositional maturity. The tension and release feel more organic, and though jarring jump-cuts are still plentiful, there's often more of a sense of purposeful contrast. On "Remember Rumsfeld", dig the way Shane Perlowin's stridently unaffected electric guitar sticks stubbornly to those slow, mournful figures even as the bass and drums egg it on with frenzied outbursts. Each note quivers into adjacent quarter tones, and when the band finally coalesces, it heads off on a martially unified path of mayhem.

It's weird to hear a contemporary band stick so militantly to the basics, relying on guitar, bass, and drums without distortion or an overdub. "Ho Chi Minh Is Gonna Win!" opens with a mind-blowing patch of groove... Toward the middle, drummer Sean Dail settles on a simmering ride cymbal pattern, which Perlowin coats with chiming guitar, creating the prettiest moment Ahleuchatistas have put on tape to date.

..."Sherman's March" assembles itself from dystopian chaos into the most straightforwardly brutal rhythm the band has hit on yet. What the band's success comes down to, though, is that they're astonishingly together even on passages where it seems downright impossible to stay in sync. You don't get the impression that they're virtuosos or even trying to be, just that they're a very single-minded entity. Playing instrumental rock with a setup this basic, that single-mindedness is essential. (7.6/10)"

– Joe Tangari, *Pitchfork*, April 3, 2006, www.pitchforkmedia.com

"...Ahleuchatistas has never sounded better. They seem free of the desire to prove themselves as able to create complex compositions. ...This is a much more confident band, one assured of their prowess and now willing to push themselves into new areas. Moreover, the music's accessibility reaches far beyond avant fans, embracing anyone who loves adventurous music into its octopus arms.

Politics play an important role in the song titles and artwork accompanying Ahleuchatistas' albums. ...

The band's political positioning is admirable, but...What You Will's statements – without the press notes that critics receive – will amount to very little to those who pick up the disc. It's a shame, as I'm sure the band has something far more intelligent to say than the kind of posturing that Green Day's "activism" is being acclaimed for these days. Luckily, Ahleuchatistas have delivered an exciting album, which contains the kind of depth and layers that the buzz around them has been promising. Lying somewhere between Ruins, John Zorn and John Coltrane, Ahleuchatistas finally match their obviously forward-thinking structures with the energy of the punk rock movement they've long admired. The revolution may not sound pretty, but it definitely brings the thrill of the unexpected and the urgency of the underground. (7/10)"

– Kevin Jagerauth, *Pop Matters*, July 26, 2006, www.popmatters.com

"If ever an instrumental album were laced with political commentary, What You Will would be it. These three Asheville, N.C.-based musicians – who play likeable, stripped-down, pretentious-free, compressed and complex polyrhythmic music that has been defined as math-rock, avant-punk and avant-progressive – aligned themselves with the fight against imposed artistic and political forms...

What You Will, the band's third disc, is loaded with songs like "Remember Rumsfeld at Abu Ghraib" (an explicit political title that also pays tribute to the Mingus piece "Remember Rockefeller at Attica")... Despite the implied politics, there is also a playfulness to the music of Ahleuchatistas. One of the longest tracks...is "Sometimes There's a Buggy," a technical King Crimson-ish piece inspired by the David Lynch film "Mulholland Drive"... Ahleuchatistas leaves aural evidence of Crimson, Pink Floyd, Captain Beefheart, Hawkwind, Gong, Frank Zappa – and even Mingus and Coltrane (at least spiritually, if not so much musically) – all over What You Will. Yet the record also retains its own distinct originality and intense listenability, making a compelling argument for the effectiveness and honesty of the avant-anything genre. 4 out of 4 stars"

– Michael Popke, *Sea of Tranquility*, March 2, 2006, www.seaoftranquility.org

"...this street fighting trio is a raw minimalist version of Forever Einstein with some Doctor Nerve spice... Drummer Sean Dail, guitarist Shane Perlowin and bassist Derek Poteat can play...and their energetic drive is something to be heard, a real breath of fresh air in the avant rock canon.

Taking their name from a fusion of a Charlie Parker tune and the revolutionary Zapatistas, Ahleuchatistas play a sweaty corrosion of a trio's uncommon places, privileging intelligent rage and channeled fury to smash fractured rhythms and skeletal angular themes to even smaller smithereens. ...the bone-crunching rough maths of these kids from North Carolina constitutes their own style, which shows many things to appreciate."

– Massimo Ricci, *Touching Extremes*, April 2006, www.touchingextremes.org

"Technically, Ahleuchatistas makes instrumental rock – but that prosaic description does no justice to the intense, intelligent brand of aural freakiness this North Carolina trio dishes out. Cuts such as "Remember Rumsfeld at Abu Ghraib" feature tricky time signatures, adventurous arrangements and stunningly precise playing. That's the triumph of Will."

– Michael Roberts, *Westword*, February 23, 2006, www.westword.com

"...marvelously insane stuff... their...ridiculously complex post-punk art-freak lunatic rock appeals to me. ... In addition to the tightly coordinated style they've developed in the past, there's an element I don't remember. On the first track, "Remember Rumsfeld at Abu Ghraib," the guitar plays a slow succession of notes. ...while most rock music has some detectable relation to the blues, however remote, this has absolutely none, and no elements of European classical, jazz, folk, or anything else... A few seconds of sixteenth notes are followed by triplets at a different speed; a barrage of atonal stuttering succumbs to a lyrical bit with tinkling cymbals. ...this is endlessly fascinating music, and I endorse it heartily."

– Jon Davis, *Exposé*, Issue No. 33, May 2006

“...Ahleuchatistas create an endlessly changing patchwork across 14 cuts that seldom hits a groove for longer than a few measures, and always seems to be in a state of restless change... there is little time afforded to resolution, pause or summary here, it all just keeps changing... aggressive, noisy, thrashy and abrasive, but played with extreme technical precision. ... three amazing players...” - Peter Thelen, *Exposé*, Issue No. 33, May 2006

“The only instrumental band that entertains me on a consistent basis is back with a third album...”

Any description of the Ahleuchatistas sound has to be loaded with hyphens... their record label’s website is a prime example: avant-technical, improv-core, math-metal, art-damage, punk-rock power trio. Believe me, it’s not as scary as it looks. ...

Listening to Ahleuchatistas, I also like to break down their sound into smaller parts. Zero in on the drums, zero in on the bass, or in on the guitar, and get blown away every time. Working with absolutely no rhythm or set pattern of any recognizable kind, all three members of the band are like soloists...but are somehow fused together into one cohesive unit. It would sound entirely improvised if the individual parts weren’t so carefully and blatantly interwoven with one another. And most astounding about the Ahleuchatistas experience is the roller-coaster-like twists and the constant fluxuations in speed. When these guys are playing at the threshold, it can be hard not to reach out to some stationary object and hold on for dear life. ...as long as they keep producing albums of this quality, there’s no reason not to keep buying them. Grade: A-”

- Tim Krysko, *Wreck the Place Fantastic*, April 15, 2006, [www.wrecktheplace.com](http://www.wrecktheplace.com)

“...I’m always looking for the next album that will strike a chord, spike a nerve, make me want to break shit. Albums like the ones listed below, which Backbeat scribes all found memorable in 2006. [-DH] ...

...Ahleuchatistas' Sean Dail, Shane Perlowin and Derek Poteat confirm that legions of white-jacketed sonic scientists and laboratories filled with advanced gear aren't required to make arty rock. Armed with nothing more than technical skill, a bold vision and the most basic musical tools (guitar, drums, bass), they assemble searing instrumentals equally capable of opening minds and inspiring headbanging. [-MR]”

- Dave Herrera & Michael Roberts, “Nationalistic,” *Westword*, December 28, 2006

“...this instrumental guitar, bass and drums trio...masterfully mash together the disparate sounds of agro post-punk, math rock and post-rock into one politically charged and vitally energetic demonstration of the band’s singular, angular vision. ...*What You Will* captures this relatively fresh band (bassist Derek Poteat, guitarist Shane Perlowin and drummer Sean Dail) in full compositional flight, rocking about and careening through a hail storm of falling rock urgency that draws comparison to another jagged band with a penchant for leftist political imagery and messages: Denmark’s the Ex. Influences such as Robert Fripp and King Crimson, Ruins and John Zorn are also inescapable. ... Ahleuchatistas don’t need lyrics to speak out with vigour and velocity.”

- Kevin Hailey, *Exclaim!*, April 2006

“... Noisy, violent, precise, technical, gut-wrenching racket. ...a little too raw for my tastes, but I do recognize brilliance when I hear it, and these guys have it. ...”

- Fred Trafton, *Gibraltar: Encyclopedia of Progressive Rock*, [www.gepr.net](http://www.gepr.net)

“Disk of the week... This Asheville, NC trio is holding the torch high for the evolution of math-rock, with definite elements of discordance and stop-on-a-dime changes... Abacus rockers sometimes get their slide rulers lost up their own asses, but Ahleuchatistas engage with every polyrhythmic change-up and discordant arpeggio here. ...they make these incredibly complex blasts sound almost effortless. [rating: 8/10]”

- Johnson Cummins, *Montreal Mirror*, May 24, 2007

“It’s rare that a band like Hella or Battles comes along who can speak volumes without verbally saying anything. ... Ahleuchatistas play their instruments in a violent, funky, mathy way, and although they may not tell the actual story of songs like “Remember Rumsfeld at Abu Ghraib” or “Ho Chi Minh is Gonna Win!” they still take you on one of those “eyes closed / worlds exposed” journeys.”

- *Modern Fix*, Volume 5, No. 5, Issue 53