

Bio information: **AHLEUCHATISTAS**
Title: *EVEN IN THE MIDST...* (Cuneiform Rune 261)

Cuneiform publicity/promotion dept.: 301-589-8894 / fax 301-589-1819

email: joyce [-at-] cuneiformrecords.com (Press & world radio); radio [-at-] cuneiformrecords.com (North American radio)

www.cuneiformrecords.com

FILE UNDER: ROCK / AVANT-PUNK

"I don't mean to detract from any other band in this area... but none of them are coming at music with the same intent, will and desire to destroy music into a thousand pieces, reassemble it again and make us all look ourselves in the mirror, scream "holy fuck" and pray until the storm is over. This shit is good..." – The Last Place on Earth

An all-instrumental guitar/bass/drums trio whose music "resides at the meteoric end of the tempo spectrum" [*Splendid*], **Ahleuchatistas** is in the front ranks of a youthful musical movement fusing the energy and attitude of punk, the power of metal, and the fractured, angular compositions and irregular, shard-like meters of avant rock to create music perhaps best-described as **avant-punk**. Favoring a clean, stripped-down sound and a delivery devoid of pretension, and possessing super-human chops, the trio plays short, compressed and complex polyrhythmic compositions with unrelenting speed, unrestrained joy, and near-telepathic precision; what *Organ* calls "dazzling, stripped-down yet mega-complex sonic acrobatics." The trio's interplay in "controlled chaos" leaves listeners awestruck: "...they're astonishingly together even on passages where it seems downright impossible to stay in sync." [*Pitchfork*]. Critics have described their music as "spiritually overseen by the likes of **Robert Fripp**, **Damon Che** and **John Zorn**... recalling the restless avant-punk zeal of *End Hits*-era **Fugazi** and the pulsingly organic hyperactivity of early **King Crimson**" [*Splendid*], while comparing it to bands like **Ruins**, **Massacre (Laswell/Frith/Hayward)**, **Lightening Bolt**, **Dysrhythmia**, **Don Caballero**, **Hella**, **Sonna**, **Shellac** and **Upsilon Acrux**. Critics variously define it as math-rock, technical metal, speed-rock, avant-punk or avant-progressive, while invariably recognizing Ahleuchatistas' music as the best of its kind. On *Even In the Midst...*, the band's fourth release and second CD on **Cuneiform Records**, Ahleuchatistas have further honed its unique version of avant-punk, distilling stylistic extremes into multifaceted sonic mosaics that assume organic form. In the band's own words:

"On this latest record we have achieved a new fluidity and amorphousness in our structures. We have round the edges in many places. This was an intuitive move on our part. Really, when you break it down the jagged angularity has multiplied, become more microscopic and varied. Like digital information, you don't see the 1's and 0's..."

Ahleuchatistas formed in 2003 in Asheville, a arts oriented town in **North Carolina**'s Blue Ridge Mountains. Bassist **Derek Poteat** and guitarist **Shane Perlowin** began playing together in late 2001 in an improv group, **The Hibernaculum Trio**. Poteat and Perlowin later recruited drummer **Sean Dail** to form a new band after seeing him in **Ressurrectum**, a metal grind band. Dail recalls that: "He [Shane] came up to me after we had played and asked me if I like **John Zorn**'s **Naked City**. I knew then that's what I wanted someone to ask me. And I asked him if he liked **Univers Zero**." Drawn by their common love of non-mainstream music and shared geo-political views, Poteat, Perlowin and Dail began writing and performing as **Ahleuchatistas** in February 2003. The band chose a name that aligned them with those who fight against imposed artistic and political forms, derived from a **Charlie Parker** song called "**Ah-Leu-Cha**" and from the "-tistas" part of "**Zapatistas**", an indigenous people's revolutionary movement in **Chiapas, Mexico**. As Perlowin explained: "The rebellious spirit of punk, when it's honest, is no different from the radical sentiments that feed creativity in jazz music. I consider artists like **Charles Mingus**, **John Coltrane** and others to embody a "punk" attitude in their approach. Their music is about shaking things up and transcending imposed systems."

Ahleuchatistas quickly established a wide following with their high energy, awe-inducing live shows on the punk circuit. *Punk International* maintained that "An Ahleuchatistas performance can be likened to a fireworks display: it's flashy, colorful, and every thirty seconds or so you'll find yourself with your mouth wide opened, mumbling "whoooooa."" In Dec. 2003, the band released its 1st CD, *On the Culture Industry*, on **Angura Sound**. Containing 54 minutes of music that *Pitchfork* described as "ranging from ridiculously tight, turn-on-a-pinhead careening to barely controlled chaos, and all points between," and packaged in art depicting "AK-47s and apocalyptic gore," the debut CD sparked an immediate web-wide buzz. "Listening to this record reminded me of having my mind blown by the first **Massacre** album," said *Pitchfork*, "*On the Culture Industry* is one hell of a starting place."

When the Ahleuchatistas' 2nd CD, *The Same and the Other* came out on **Noreaster Failed Industry** in 2004, *Pitchfork* called it "a powerful statement and an explosive piece of music." Containing 28 minutes of music that was more concise, consolidated and compressed than the band's debut, the new CD received rave reviews. *The Same and the Other*'s political references were likewise more pointed and potent than its predecessor; its cover, designed by Asheville artist **Courtney Chappell**, depicted Muslim women and children cowering beneath bombs – an unveiled reference to America's war in Iraq. Rating it 9/10, *Lost at Sea* called the CD "a massacre – and a thought provoking one at that. ...Whether you agree with their implied stance or not, *The Same and the Other* makes a powerful statement whose questions resonate deeply." Not long after, in Feb. 2005, Ahleuchatistas released a 7" split-vinyl with the **Friendly Bears** on **Angura Sound/Said Records**.

Cuneiform Records signed Ahleuchatistas and in 2005 and released *What You Will*, the band's 3rd CD, which contained 41 minutes of studio recordings – 14 songs as condensed and powerful as hand grenades – and 3 QuickTime video clips of a live performance. It also featured politically charged song titles ("Remember Rumsfeld at Abu Ghraib") and provocative artwork again by **Courtney Chappell** that lamented the indoctrination of youths into a culture of violence. The critically acclaimed CD received high ratings from numerous zines, who praised it as a masterwork of the tech-metal/math-rock/avant movement. England's *Organ* magazine reviewed it with awe: "Gloriously intricate, a superabundance of contrast and ideas contained with a framework of untempered drums, bass and guitar, their third album *What You Will*...shimmers with track after track of easy brilliance – and no filler. ...Raising the bar, Ahleuchatistas may well have given us the ultimate expression of that slightly nervous but expedient term, math rock." Said *Wreck the Place Fantastic*: "...as long as they keep producing albums of this quality, there's no reason not to keep buying them. Grade: A-"

Even In the Midst... is Ahleuchatistas' 4th album and 2nd release on Cuneiform. It contains 12 songs, each of them an exquisitely complex gem. Throughout, tightly written, complex compositions are executed with ease and joyous abandon. The music is dynamic, simultaneously frenetic and dissonant yet surprisingly lyrical and fluid. The music covers a wider variety of moods than any Ahleuchatistas recording to date; while most of the music is Ahleuchatistas' typical, powerful and intense blend, *Even In the Midst...* also features some of the "prettiest", most typically "beautiful" music that Ahleuchatistas has ever written. The nature of the music is reflected in the CD's title, which alludes to the band's desire to bring beauty and art into a world wracked by violence and destruction. Asked to explain the title of the CD, guitarist Shane Perlowin said:

"even in the midst..." is shortened from "even in the midst of all this". The first song is called "...of all this". Basically, what we are saying is "even in the midst of all this, we are creating beauty". or at least trying to. "all this" being the endgame of our current economic conditions, what with the ecological crisis and the exploits of imperialism. So, it is a humanistic gesture to put out an honest record that transcends the nihilism of most contemporary music and art. It speaks to something essential and is a force for good and peace in the world."

Like all of the band's previous releases, *Even In the Midst...* features provocative, politically charged song titles and artwork. The artwork here criticizes imperialism and the violence it spawns. As Perlowin maintains: "Art is a product of cultural conditions. What we're doing is being honest by reflecting the chaotic climate that we live in." This honesty results in all-instrumental music that can nonetheless serve as a cutting critique or "wordless political statement." *Pitchfork* noted, "their music – with all its polyrhythmic complexity and **Beefheartian** splatter – still feels palpably, urgently political, an impression corroborated by song titles." Like all enduring art, Ahleuchatistas' music functions on multiple levels. *Pitchfork* continues: "Ultimately, when listening... you can take the Wassily Kandinsky approach – abstract art is concrete, he famously insisted – or you can...read it is an allegory for contemporary strife and suffering..."

For Ahleuchatistas, music is a dynamic process best expressed and experienced in live performance; studio CDs like *Even in the Midst...* capture their music at a single point in time. As Perlowin explained:

This record, like our previous ones, is a snapshot of a process between close musical friends. Performing music is first an interpersonal relationship. No matter what the skill level of the players, if the personalities do not work in a musical way, the music will not move. Our albums are imperfect documents of our process. We strive for the ideal of the compositions in the recording, but invariably the music evolves after we've left the studio. Our music is meant to be performed and heard live. Nevertheless, we take the snapshot and present it to the world. We hope that it speaks.

Ahleuchatistas' live shows are high-octane, joyous experiences that provoke audience shock and awe. Reviewing the band's performance at Austin's SXSW in 2006, *Go and Do Michigan* described Ahleuchatistas as "a wonder of complex rhythms, virtuoso musicianship and a name that's really, really hard to pronounce. The three-piece is simply brilliant..." and noted that its playing made "the Mars Volta look like a band to yawn at." Besides SXSW, Ahleuchatistas have played at such other major festivals as the **CMJ Music Festival** in 2005 in NYC, the **27th International Saalfelden Jazz Festival** in 2006 in Saalfelden, Austria, **Suoni Per Il Popolo** (Music of the People) **Fest** in Montreal in 2004, and **MACRoCk** (Mid-Atlantic College Radio Conference) in 2005 and 2006 in Harrisonburg, VA. In addition, the band has toured the entire USA and parts of Canada, sharing bills with **Ken Vandermark**, **Xiu Xiu**, **Marc Ribot**, **Henry Kaiser**, **Weasel Walter**, **Steve Coleman** and **Five Elements**, **Tomas Stanko**, **Dysrhythmia**, **Grand Ulena**, **Cinemechanica**, **We Versus the Shark**, **USAISAMONSTER**, **Parts and Labor**, **Behold... the Arctopus**, **Upsilon Acrux**, **Alec K Redfearn & the Eyesores**, **Sleeping People**, and many more.

For more information on **Ahleuchatistas**:
www.ahleuchatistas.com * www.myspace.com/ahleuchatistas

BAND MEMBER BIOS

SEAN DAIL

Drummer **Sean Dail** grew up listening to his dad's progressive rock, and reverently cites **Hawkwind** as an enduring influence. Hearing **Green Day's Kerplunk** got him into punk. Dail began his music career at age 12, as the front man on vocals and guitar for **Popular Rejection**, a punk-rock band that covered **Green Day**, **NOFX**, and **Descendents**, and also played originals. In his next band, a hard-edged group called **Regurgistate**, he taught himself to play drums as though he still played lead: "I am a front man, I thought. So with that in mind I taught myself to play fast enough to keep up with the thrashing guitar licks. Soon after I started playing with a double kick pedal..." Listening to "anarcho-crust-grind-punk stuff like **Dystopia**, **Dissociate**, **Dropdead** and **Capitalist Casualties**" as a young teen, he discovered **King Crimson**, **Gong** and other psychedelic rock, and such avant-progressive bands as **Univers Zero**, **Blast** and **Happy Family** when he was 17. Dail played in various psych-rock projects in Raleigh, NC before moving to Asheville in 2002, where he played in **Ressurrectum** before joining Ahleuchatistas.

SHANE PERLOWIN

Guitarist **Shane Perlowin** discovered music by **Frank Zappa**, **King Crimson** and **John McLaughlin** early on. When he was 16, he purchased **John Coltrane's Giant Steps**, which, he said "changed everything" and led him into jazz. Perlowin played in numerous jazz and experimental improv groups. When he lived in Florida, he played in **Human Zoo**, a **Brand X-Pastorius-Fripp**-esque fusion band, and **Agni**, a 12-piece Indian fusion ensemble led by **Nalini Vinayik**. In Asheville, he belonged to a hardcore punk band **Shovel Fight** (2002-2003). Besides Ahleuchatistas, Perlowin plays in **Mind Vs. Target!** (avant-jazz trio), **Doom Ribbons** (loop-based guitar/drums duo), and **Ashes in Order** (avant-Balkan acoustic guitar/accordion duo). Perlowin cites **John Coltrane**, **Miles Davis**, **Charles Mingus**, **Philip Glass**, **Ruins**, **Steve Reich**, **John Cage**, **Frank Zappa** and **John Zorn** as some of his musical influences.

DEREK POTEAT

Bassist **Derek Poteat's** background was mainly in rock, metal, jazz, and progressive rock. He grew up listening to his parents' Country music, and particularly **Johnny Cash**. While he maintains that Country hasn't influenced his playing, "it definitely has scarred me as a human being." He began playing music as an adolescent, listening to **Led Zeppelin**, **The Doors** and **Pink Floyd**; his first concert was **Judas Priest**. Hearing **Metallica's Master of Puppets**, featuring bassist **Cliff Burton**, inspired Poteat to play bass; unlike most bassists, he plays without a pick. While he listens to a broad spectrum of music that includes **Philip Glass**, **The Melvins**, **Ruins**, **Coltrane**, **Johnny Cash**, and everything in between, and he admires the tone of bassists **Chris Squire** (Yes) and **John Wetton** (Crimson), he cites life, people and the world as the biggest influences on his music.