

## WHAT THE PRESS HAS SAID ABOUT

### CHEER ACCIDENT

### NO IFS, ANDS OR DOGS

### CUNEIFORM

2011

“The anti-pop element in rock 'n' roll began in the late '60s with groups like Emerson, Lake and Palmer and Henry Cow and continued right through the '90s with the likes of Nick Cave and Nine Inch Nails. All were compelled to make rock more noisy and intricate rather than catchy or sensual. ... But there have always been grand exceptions like **Sonic Youth, who began abrasive but discovered their own way to go pop and still be themselves. ... they forged hooks, melodies, even beauty ... Following a similar path, two bands ... have recently put out their most appealing records, without losing their cerebral side. ... Chicago's experimental rock band Cheer-Accident has been around for 30 years... in the early years...abrasive sound as an end in itself...But...a current was rising in the band's material – harmonies, melodies, performed with increasing affection and skill. ... No Ifs Ands or Dogs indulges in pleasure more than any previous album by the group. ... Cheer- Accident is worth deliberate investigation.**”  
– Milo Miles, *NPR Music*, August 2011

“There's a story concerning Chicago's Cheer-Accident ... every summer, during a five-year period from 1994 onwards, the group would gather in a local park and play the culminating riff of the same song (Filet of Nod) for up to nine hours... it's far from being an isolated incident of absurdity... Occasionally brilliant, the in-jokes would often obscure the reward. Cheer-Accident's move to Cuneiform, and the release of 2009's *Fear Draws Misfortune*, witnessed a distinct shift in yield. ... it saw many of the more exasperating inclinations ironed out and additional sweeteners offered in the form of pronounced, protracted bouts of undiluted melodicism. The disparate elements were finally beginning to coalesce. **This incremental crawl to a newfound accessibility continues on the marvellous *No Ifs, Ands or Dogs*, documenting a streamlined reconfiguration of progressive (not prog) rock recalling past Fred Frith projects such as Henry Cow and Art Bears, or even Soft Machine prior to Robert Wyatt's departure. ... glimpses of bloat – of Yes, King Crimson, and even Comus – bubble to the fore, but ... along comes a track like the disarmingly charming piano-led, horn-laden Cynical Girl ...or the splendidous Sleep... At such moments, **Cheer-Accident ..commence hitting home runs from out of the same ballpark as The Beach Boys and Van Dyke Parks.**”  
– Spencer Grady, *BBC Music*, July 2011**

“**I love this CD. It easily made my best of 2011 list, and in my book 2011 was a great year for creative music.** That a band can make such a wildly interesting album after being at it so long (15+ releases in 15+ years) says a lot about their vision and talent. ...Cheer-Accident... refuses to sit in a box. The closest comparison is probably to American RIO-influenced bands like Thinking Plague...Cheer-Accident...come at it from a different angle, like a more mainstream rock band that fell in love with complex musical structures. ...“Life in Pollyanna”... jumps in with a complicated guitar riff and shifting meters underpinning another melodic vocal part, ... like what Gentle Giant tried to do on *The Missing Piece*. Which... is a good comparison. *No Ifs, Ands or Dogs* has that same bright, energetic sound to it, with arrangements based on polyphony rather than riffs and chords. Somehow, Cheer-Accident manages to make it work. ... **This is a great example of small-p progressive music that has very little of the large-P in it.**”  
– Jon Davis, *Exposé*, April 2013

“**Cheer-Accident ... proclaim pop sensibilities with futuristic overtones, where the 60s and 70s are merged into the present.** With injections of classic hard rock and Beach Boys type three-part harmonies, the ensemble morphs serious-minded prog-rock into the big picture to complement the pumping rhythms; off-kilter grooves, and polytonal electronics treatments. They assimilate mini-motifs from the fabled, 70s British Canterbury rock movement...a major differentiator...is that Cheer-Accident often encapsulates...memorable hooks... And they frequently lash out with tricky time signatures amid Jeff Libersher's crunching guitar voicings and D. Bayne's artful synth and keys work. ... **In sum, previewing this album was akin to falling in love on the first date. And the qualitative aspects loom larger on subsequent spins. They're a tenacious bunch, armed with a creative spark that goes well above and beyond the call of duty.**”  
– Glenn Astarita, *Jazz Review*, July 2011

“**Chicago based art collective...Cheer-Accident...don't fail to confound us with their interpretation of influences. ... Musically these guys go from crafting odd pop ditties to strange cacophonous musical excursions.** These tunes, most of which ... run about three or four minutes are simply loaded with musicianship. ...a wide range of musical influences such as XTC or Frank Zappa...some vocal arrangements...reminiscent of the Beach Boys and a couple tunes that even sound a bit sixties Brit-pop...but then stir...angular moments, the strange minor keys and chords, some jarring bits of music and you have a very eclectic mix of music that is never boring. ... fans of RIO or Avant-Prog will find much to enjoy here, however prog fans who are looking for something a little bit more adventurous to stretch their listening pallet will also enjoy the work of Cheer-Accident. *No Ifs, Ands or Dogs* is a really enjoyable CD.”  
– Jerry Lucky, *Jerry Lucky*

“**Over the past three decades...Cheer Accident have embraced and hybridized every musical genre that has come their way. ... and incredibly complex listening compendium, which can be poignant and melodious, mathematical and conceptual, or obtrusive. ...Always the experimentalists, their musical direction is constantly forking. ... A few possible genre glints...are the soft rock vocals ala Cheap Trick and Scorpions...the Wire-like angular...Zappa-esque shape shifting...and poly-rhythmic synth drills...“Barely Breathing” would not be out of place on The Beach Boys’ “Sunflower” and “Cynical Girl” shows affection for Todd Rundgren. “No Ifs, Ands or Dogs” is bewildering and bizarre, but entertaining.**”  
– Willsk, *Leicester Bangs*

*BBC Music Blog*, *BBC Music Writer's Albums of 2011* – (Cheer Accident's *No If And Or Dogs* featured under Spencer Grady)

*Alarm Press*: “**This Week's Best Albums: May 31, 2011,**” “Honorable Mentions: Cheer-Accident: *No Ifs, Ands or Dogs* (Cuneiform)”

“Cheer-Accident's gonzo synth-horn prog rock couldn't have happened anywhere but the Midwest. ...**Cheer-Accident's music...seems like the inevitable nexus of half a century's worth of Chicago music, Styx meets the AACM meets SKiN GRAFT noize. ...you could call them “post-rock” if they didn't, in fact, rock. ... Though their musical ideas come from all over the place, Cheer-Accident put those ideas together in ways that approach the ideal of ears raised on radio: one kick-ass sound after another, a never-ending string of rad shit. ... Imagine ELP with better beats and a yen for German neo-tonal composer Paul Hindemith. ... Sometimes they do straight-up guitar rock. ... They also do Super Sounds of the '70s pop... You'll also find nods to minimalism, maximalism and motoric. ... Like any good prog band, they also do multi-song suites—or mini-suites, as befits this modest 48-minute album. ...The only problem with *No Ifs* is that it doesn't threaten chaos more often. ... The vocal melodies often resemble vocalese, that Midwest-born jazz practice of setting words to instrumental lines. This usually works out well, because Cheer-Accident writes interesting and unconventional melodies. ... you should listen to 'em.” [8 out of 10 stars]**

– Josh Langhoff, *PopMatters*, September 2011

“Cheer-Accident stands out...you could pigeonhole them into experimental rock, but their music covers the gamut of (to name a few) Squeeze, Frank Zappa, Yes, Henry Cow and even the Beach Boys. ... Moreover, the music is all done up with cheery wit that’s been present in British avant-rock since the mid-60s emergence of the Canterbury scene. ...their seventeenth release *No Ifs, Ands or Dogs* has arrived. ... The songs ... hit so many touchpoints of the weird alongside the conventional, but like a whole bandful of Adrian Belew, they prove to be master pop craftsmen even as they fearlessly prance in areas few commercial acts know about, much less dare attempt to venture out to. ... After three decades, many long-running acts have long run out of ideas. Cheer-Accident in 2011 sounds like a band that’s barely dug into its big bag of tricks.”

– Victor Aaron, *Something Else!*, July 2011

“Listening to Cheer-Accident’s new album *No Ifs, Ands or Dogs* is like stepping into a world of experimental avant-pop. It’s said to be their 17<sup>th</sup> album and you can hear it; they are certainly no novices. ...their music...a bit difficult to describe. **Take a big pot, throw in Beatles 1996, early 10 CC, The Residents, spice with Zappa, U Totem and King Crimson.** The music is so complex, it’s like being at an art exhibition with extremely colourful paintings. It’s fascinating, overwhelming.”

– Stefan Ek, *Terrascope*, December 2011

“Who gets proggy with age? “Sleep” comes from their 17<sup>th</sup> album, *No Ifs Ands or Dogs*, and it’s quite the 90s-style weirdo pop-rock number, reminiscent of Mike Patton’s Mr. Bungle project – or maybe that should be the other way around?”

– *Tiny Mix Tapes*, July 2011

“...These guys have been making credible music for many years now with no signs of letting up. *No Ifs, Ands or Dogs* is another fine addition to the band’s catalog...and it features modern pop tunes that are even more challenging than usual. ... this band combine basic elements from pop music with instrumental passages reminiscent of progressive rock bands from the 1970s. ... **Imagine combining artists like Todd Rundgren, The Beatles, Frank Zappa, and 10CC with bands like Soft Machine and Gentle Giant...and you might begin to have some idea of where this band is coming from.**”

– *Babysue*

“Cheer-Accident [makes] prog-pop-noise. ... *No Ifs, Ands Or Dogs* contains quite an eclectic bunch of songs. Ranging from pop in Drag You Down via irritating noise in Trial Of Error to the Residents-like...This Is The New That. There are also side-trips to zuehl-like music in Sleep, Death By Pollyanna and to Frank Zappa in Barely Breathing, to end somewhere near Robert Fripp in Salad Dies and The Beach Boys in Cynical Girl. References like Magma, Thinking Plague and Henry Cow. ... You have to like that kind of stuff.”

– André de Waal, *Background Magazine*

“**Cheer-Accident most readily recall Art Bears**, Fred Frith’s avant-rock troupe formed from the ashes of Henry Cow. **It’s probably the way both groups seem to navigate clearly defined genres, without being attached to any.** ... The swiftness with which gears are shifted and terrains switched make it near impossible to pin them down. ...**Stripped of extraneous gristle, these carefully crafted compositions demonstrate an acutely keen pop sensibility** that, on tracks such as the disarmingly charming Cynical Girl...and splendorous Sleep, find Cheer-Accident hitting home runs from out of the same ballpark as The Beach Boys and Van Dyke Parks.”

– Spencer Grady, *Record Collector*, August 2011

“*No Ifs, Ands or Dogs* finds...Cheer-Accident...regressing to its garage roots. ... “This Is the New That”...offers the yearned-for elaboration, with the drum rolls and oddities driving a more sinister noise-rock. ...the 15-track album...turns out to be an effective song cycle reminiscent of the one found on The Soft Machine’s 1968 debut (where it is not always clear when one song ends and another one starts)...**the songs are engaging with their playful numbness and bent, dedicated delivery, as well as ... crafty pop sensitivity**...listen to the lovely “Cynical Girl,” which sports a tribute to...band Chicago.” [6.5/10]

– Avi Shaked, *Maelstrom*, 2011

*Sea of Tranquility*: Honorable Mention 2011: Cheer-Accident: *No Ifs, Ands or Dogs*