

TISHAMINGO - "The Point" MT-2311

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In an industry that sometimes squanders its most valuable resource, Tishamingo is a breath of fresh air. Having toured extensively for the last half-decade, the Georgia-based quartet has honed its collective musical instincts and songwriting craft to present its most accomplished record to date -- *The Point*.

For the last half-decade, Tishamingo has grown tighter as a playing unit and increased its core fan base through constant touring (on both sides of the Atlantic). *The Point*, produced by John Kurzweg (Creed, Puddle of Mudd), reflects this personal and musical evolution and marks a new chapter in the band's ever-advancing story. It's the record fans -- and the band members themselves -- have been waiting for. "I think we had to go through our first two records and spend five years on the road together in order to make this record," says guitarist/vocalist Cameron Williams. "The maturity level of everybody, as musicians and people, has progressed at the right pace."

Flavored by the same salt-of-the-earth humanity inhabiting The Band's *Music From Big Pink* and *Northern Lights-Southern Cross* eras, infused with sentiments of self-indicting relationship dysfunction (a la Gregg Allman) and Ronnie Van Zant-esque Southern-rock lyrical poetry, and built on an organic recording process unprecedented in the band's career, *The Point* is true to its title: it's the band's most focused artistic vision to date. "We knew how important this record was and we were all working toward the same goal," says Williams. "We're a step above where we were for the last record, and just working with John -- someone we've wanted to work with for a long time -- really capped things off for us."

"It was great to work with a band whose main focus was the music," adds Kurzweg. "They had been searching for their sound and they'd found it. They are like modern-day troubadours."

In early 2006, Cameron Williams (guitar/vocals), Richard Proctor (drums), Jess Franklin (guitars/keys/organ/vocals), Chuck Thomas (bass) holed up in a remote Alligator Point, Florida, beach house for a very productive writing session. The timeout helped to spawn numerous tunes and, ultimately, the title of the record. "We thought it would be a great place for a retreat," Williams says.

With a dozen-plus songs under its belt, Tishamingo ascended upon Kurzweg's home-studio, The Kitchen, in the hills of Santa Fe, New Mexico. Or, as the band came to know the town -- "Fanta Se" (read: fantasy) -- which became more a state of mind than a physical locale. "There's just this openness and creative atmosphere in Santa Fe," says Williams. "We definitely picked up on its vibe."

"It's been said that Santa Fe brings out aspects of yourself that have remained hidden," says Kurzweg.

After two months in the studio (on and off between venue engagements) under the guiding presence of Kurzweg, what emerged was an 11-track record packed with kick-ass guitar overdrive, straight-ahead rock backbeats and deep rhythmic pockets, and shades of classic and contemporary rock. "John is like a coach, and the best football coaches are the ones who are not only great with Xs and Os but also with people," says drummer/lyricist Richard Proctor. "He sees your talent and talent level and works accordingly. He brought out the best of us."

The ill-conceived tag of "neo-hippie jam band" often applied to Tishamingo is completely shattered by instantly familiar, gritty, guitar-driven songs such as, "Are We Rollin'?", the stompin' Son House-meets-Joe Walsh six-string slidin' of "Travel On", the Texas boogie of "Bad News", the Southwestern-tinged "Devil's Love Song", "Chest Fever" (a cover of the classic Band tune), and the lethal "Get On Back."

"I think the guys really wanted to take it to the next level with this record," says Kurzweg. "I have a tendency to work hard and long in the studio, but these guys were up for all of it."

The Point's musical characters recall rock's classic personalities, from Bad Company's "Shooting Star" to Lynyrd Skynyrd's Curtis Loew. Tishamingo presents its real-world observations and trusts the listener to get the message (i.e. "the point") without being preachy. In "Mitchell", for instance, we experience spiritual resurrection on the streets of downtown Birmingham, Alabama. "Are We Rollin'?" speaks to unexpected kindness of strangers, and the compositionally dynamic, multi-layered "Tennessee Mountain Angel" easily draws comparisons to Skynyrd's enduring anthem "Free Bird" and The Marshall Tucker Band's signature tune "Can't You See."

After forming in Atlanta, Georgia, Tishamingo moved into a farmhouse outside Athens. Like The Band at Big Pink or Traffic in a English-countryside cottage, Tishamingo bonded in a private space, blasting away into the night without a care. "We were out in the country and with no one else around we could play music as loud as we wanted to," Cameron says. "We were poor, we were struggling. But it was fun. It was probably the best two years of my life that I never want to do again [laughs]. It proved how committed each one of us was to the band."

In recent years, the band has "taken on the road" -- in a big way -- solidifying its focus and winning fans inside and outside America, from European festivals and Bonnaroo to Skynyrd's "Gimme 3 Days Cruise." Tishamingo has distilled many of their personal experiences on and off the road and created a very satisfying record in *The Point*. "I think we said, 'Finally, we made the record we've wanted to and with an amazing producer,'" says Williams. "That's a great feeling."