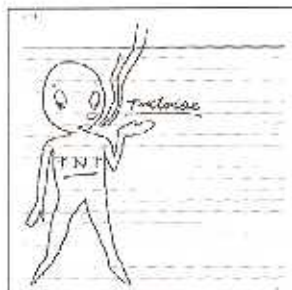


Cheap Trick at Metro. It will take a tremendous amount of musical and tour support (\$\$\$\$) to recreate *Adore* in a live setting and the band realizes this and is prepared to undertake it even if losing money is in the equation. Good Luck!!!!

Tortoise
TNT

Label: Thrill Jockey Records
 Engineer: John McEntire
 Recorded: SOMA Electronic
 Music Studios; Idful
 Music Corporation
 Reviewer: Robert F. Gabella



On their latest release, *TNT*, the five members of Tortoise (along with a little help from their friends) take everything you ever thought you knew about on the edge alternative jazz and turn it inside out. Then, they serve it back to you on a surprising and unique silver platter of sound.

What starts out like a Buddy Rich-meets-Bob Mould acid trip in "swung from the gutters" builds quickly into the woozy free-form intro to "ten day interval"—which doesn't stay woozy for long; it grabs hold of a late '60s Euro-sound-track feel with a thumping bass line and a cry-baby guitar. Marimbas and electronic keyboards merge together in "i set my face to the hillside," which has an epic flavor reminiscent of classic Mike Oldfield or of Mannheim Steamroller's broad, sweeping brush strokes.

But comparisons aren't really fair here, where feelings and reminiscences are far stronger than direct appropriations. This group of musicians is so exceedingly talented and so refreshingly original that their sound challenges the concept of definition. Yet even with all their originality, most of the songs on *TNT* have a timeless quality which is hard to pin down. Stirring chords and primal rhythms have a way of inspiring a certain breathlessness in the listener, and believe me, after even a single run-through of *TNT*, you may be ready to reach for the oxygen!

This tour-de-force of auditory vision is accomplished without pretense and by the use of essentially subtle techniques devoid of gimmickry or fanfare. John McEntire's often gurgling keyboards are reminiscent of Steve Winwood's work on Marianne Faithfull's classic *Broken English* album. This is not in-your-face keyboarding, but subtle use of effects such as good old-fashioned vox humana. And with the tip a tap (rap-and-slap) drumming of John Herndon on "the suspension bridge at Iguazu falls" you get the feeling that something really important and unique is happening here! There is more McEntire gurgling on "four day interval," but this time Tortoise adds marimbas and a richly-toned bass line by Doug McCombes. The end result? An earful of sonic soup that gets your blood moving and your spine twitching!

On "jetty," extreme techno-funk is the word; this collage of percussion and synthesized sound is a blend of sampled breathing and a variety of other tones (a cat's meow? A

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hungry baby?) that all come together in a wild melange. This cut is truly unique—there is simply nothing else like it in recorded music!

"everglade" ends the disc on a much looser, less frenetic pace. It's not hard to visualize a hydrofoil bouncing across the sea grass on a lazy summer afternoon, and guest player Sarah B. Smith's trombone echoes the cry of a Manatee as the album draws to a sunset close.

It's no surprise that *TNT* has been so well-received. On this album, Tortoise has so much to offer that it may take the listener some time to sort it all out. Give this disc the careful attention that it demands, and you will be richly rewarded on many levels and in many ways. Tortoise makes music that will move you and soothe you, and *TNT* is the perfect way to get acquainted!

Contact: Thrill Jockey Records
PO Box 476794, Chicago IL 60647

Verbow *Chronicles*

Label: Sony/550 Music
Producer: Bob Mould
Engineer: Jim Wilson
Recorded: Cedar Creek Studios,
Austin, TX, Arlyn
Studios, Austin, TX;
Gravity Studios
Reviewer: Robert E. Gabella



Produced by Bob Mould, Verbow's new CD *Chronicles* combines the unique talents of four Chicago based musicians in a way that seems natural and right. Mould, the legendary lead singer-guitarist of Hüsker Dü, has shined as a producer of his own solo projects (*Workbook* and *Black Sheets of Rain*) as well as his follow-up band, Sugar. Now, as mentor for the band which could easily be described as Chicago's Next Big Thing, he masters the controls while the band just rocks.

From the very first track, "Fan Club," singer Jason Narducy, in the role of a fan, plaintively reflects on the fleeting career of a favorite, unnamed rock star. His broken admiration culminates with a searing chorus of "but you really don't care!" There's no veiled emotion here, just a quiet, yet gut-wrenching disdain. With Narducy's direct vocal attack, you can't help but feel it personally.

In contrast, "The Chronicles of Agent Kidd," sounds uniquely radio-ready in a collection of tunes flung far from the trappings of hooks and formulas. And with "Execution of a Jester," we hear a tuneful, original ode to lack of accomplishment. Yet somehow, it's chorus of "I'm coming along without any songs" manages to accomplish far more than most songs which bother to state a purpose.

On "River Wish," a counter-rhythm intro pits Narducy's vo-