

# Floating World

## The Band

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In 1965 they joined a rhythm&blues band called "Second Thoughts" headed up by lead singer Patrick Lyons. Second Thoughts split up later that year, and the boys joined Tom Newman, Alan James, and Chris Jackson in Newman's band "The Tomcats". The band spent the best part of 1965 and 1966 in Spain, earning themselves quite a bit of local notoriety as one of the first bands to bring the "British invasion" of pop/rock music to Spain. They released four EPs which did very well on the Spanish charts.

After returning to England in 1966, the Tomcats were re-named "July", playing psychedelic-pop/rock written mostly by Tom Newman, releasing one LP which is highly collectable by psych fans to this day (although Jon insists that it's sought more for its cover than for its music).

After July disbanded in 1968, Tony joined Unit Four Plus Two for a club tour in the U.K., meeting bass guitarist and vocalist Glyn Havad, and drummer Allan Price. Jon spent the time learning to play flute, and wrote music for a couple of dance dramas being performed at a drama school he was attending.

After Tony and Glyn left Unit Four Plus Two, they put a few musical ideas down on tape, and met with Jon again. Their material worked so well together that the three were encouraged to form a band, joining Glyn's words, vocals, and bass with Tony and Jon's music and compositions. They called the band Jade Warrior -- a name chosen by the three to reflect both power and artistry.

Jade Warrior was signed up by Vertigo Records. The trio was joined by Alan Price and by Tony's brother David, releasing three albums between 1970 and 1973 which combined rock, jazz, African, and Oriental influences. Even the first album showed impressive signs of musical and technical maturity, with subtle use of multitracking and compositional layering.

Unfortunately, the band's music was difficult to pigeonhole -- it wasn't quite rock, nor quite jazz, nor quite ethnic of any single flavor -- and Vertigo never seemed to figure out how to promote or market it successfully. The band played at clubs around the U.K., completed their second album "Released", and as a result of favorable album sales in the United States were invited by Mercury Records to go on tour. Jade Warrior opened for headlining bands such as Dave Mason, Long John Baldry, Sparks, and Earthquake -- the latter being so impressed that they insisted Jade Warrior receive equal billing on the marquee at the Whisky-a-go-go.

After the tour, Jade Warrior returned to the studio and recorded "Last Autumn's Dream", their most polished and mature work to date. Unfortunately their problems with poor promotion by Vertigo continued. An additional two albums worth of material were recorded, but the albums were shelved when Vertigo cancelled their contract. Friction within the band over their future direction led to the cancellation of a second tour in Holland, and the band dissolved.

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Released between 1974 and 1978, the Island-era Jade Warrior albums are often extremely visual in their composition, painting "pictures in the mind" through a characteristic mix of subtle and dynamic instrumentation and "found sounds". Like the band's earlier albums, they were too unique to fit easily into any stylistic pigeonhole, and not structured to cater to radio stations' desire for short stand-alone songs. Although Blackwell had been enthusiastic about Jade Warrior, Island's marketing-and-promotion bureaucracy never seemed to get the message, and the band received little support. The Island albums were poorly distributed, and often almost impossible to purchase. After the fourth album was completed, Island declined to renew the contract.

Lacking a record deal, and facing health and family problems, Jon and Tony drifted apart, leaving London for separate lives in the English countryside. Jade Warrior largely faded from sight for several years. Tony moved to Glastonbury, opening Jade Warrior Studios to produce albums for local bands, and releasing a solo album "Horizen" under the Jade Warrior name in 1984 (something Jon wasn't happy about). The two musicians rejoined in 1989 to release the pastoral and meditative "At Peace".

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but the effort stalled and the album was never completed. Jon "semi-retired" from music, while Dave and Colin worked on other projects.

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## The Album

The first of Jade Warrior's four albums for Island, "Floating World" focuses on the concept of Ukiyo. Dating to a time of social stability, peace, artistic growth, and economic progress in 17th century Japan, Ukiyo embraces the gentle pleasures of nature, art, music, and entertainment even in the face of the inevitable sorrows of the world. The album's cover art reflects the esthetic of Ukiyo-e woodblock prints of the era, invoking the spirit of painters such as Hokusai with a modern twist.

The album introduces the basic sound which would characterize all of the Island albums. Almost entirely instrumental, it blends Field's flute work with Duhig's characteristic "open C" guitar sound, bringing in accents from other instruments both conventional and improvised. It reflects a fascination with dynamic contrasts, moving in a heartbeat from subtle musical strokes painted on a background of black silence to an assault of musical power. Cyclical percussion themes, a melody on a bell tree, and use of the "wordless chorus" make their first appearance here and are echoed in subsequent albums.

"Floating World" is structured as two series of compositions, with tracks which often flow into one another with a near-seamless transition. This is a structure which would appear in most of Jade Warrior's future albums, and reflects both the two-sided nature of vinyl records and also an explicit artistic decision by Jon and Tony. It allowed for great flexibility in conveying their musical vision, but it probably tended to hurt the albums' chances for airplay -- 20-minute "songs" don't and didn't fit the programming requirements of most commercial stations.

On "Floating World" in particular, the structures of the two series of compositions are clearly related -- first cousins, as it were. Musical themes from songs on side 1 reappear for a moment, are echoed, or are referred to, in songs on side 2. It's almost as if we're being given a look at a landscape from two different points of view, from two points of view or two sets of eyes.

"Floating World" opens quietly with choir and acoustic guitar in "Clouds", and moves into the energetic and jazzy "Mountain of Fruit and Flowers" (an interesting descendent of "On the Mountain of Fruit" from the long-unreleased "Fifth Element" album). "Waterfall" starts as a languid melodic composition for acoustic and electric guitar, then moves into a rushing, impetuous flow of conga and percussion, ending with a gentle and almost whimsical conversation between

flutes. The stroke of a gong carries us into "Red Lotus", a stirring and almost martial theme of electric guitar and drums, joined by flutes which then carry the song to a quiet and peaceful conclusion.

A reprise of "Clouds" opens the second half of the album. "Rainflower" mirrors the flow of "Waterfall" with another quiet conversation between electric and acoustic guitars, to which is joined the voices of flute and vibes in "Easty". In "Monkey Chant", the band shares a quirky interpretation of a Balinese kecak dance, punctuated by a searing Henrix-eseque guitar break. Coming down from this peak of energy, the album relaxes into "Memories of a Distant Sea" with harp providing the framework for flute, reed, and guitar. Wrapping up the album on a quiet note, "Quba" brings in the luscious vocals of Martha Mdenge, who carries us over a flow of quiet guitar notes to a peaceful and satisfying conclusion.

<http://www.radagast.org/jade-warrior/>

## Waves

### The Band

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The first generation of Jade Warrior consisted of Jon, Tony, and Glyn Havard, a bassist and vocalist Tony had met while touring with Unit Four Plus Two. The band's first contract was a multi-album deal with Vertigo Records. The trio was joined by Alan Price and by Tony's brother David, releasing three albums between 1970 and 1973 which combined rock, jazz, African, and Oriental influences.

Being largely self-taught, Jon and Tony were quite open to non-traditional instrumentation and sound. Tony used an unconventional "Open C" tuning for his guitar, which lent a distinctive sound to the band's music throughout their career. Jon and Tony also had a fascination for improvised instruments (a padded kitchen stool struck by two pieces of wood makes a unique "thwack!") and for sudden leaps from subtle near-silence to hair-raising volume.

Good God, they used to scare me sometimes - they'd bring things in! It's like... there's a movie out, called "Deep Blue Sea"... and you're really convinced by this time in the film that this is the guy who's going to lead them out of the mess... and as he's in the middle of his speech, this huge shark leaps out of a pool next to him and gobbles him up whole. It's so quick... it's like a Jade Warrior piece!

Glyn Havard

Unfortunately, the band's music was difficult to pigeonhole -- it wasn't quite rock, nor quite jazz, nor quite ethnic of any single flavor -- and Vertigo never seemed to figure out how to promote or market it successfully. The band played at clubs around the U.K., completed their second album "Released", and as a result of favorable album sales in the United States were invited by Mercury Records to go on tour.

After the tour, Jade Warrior returned to the studio and recorded "Last Autumn's Dream", their most polished and mature work to date. An additional two albums worth of material were recorded, but the albums were shelved when Vertigo cancelled their contract and weren't released until 1998.

Friction within the band over their future direction led to the cancellation of a second tour in Holland, and the band dissolved.

On the urging of Steve Winwood, Chris Blackwell of Island Records offered Jon and Tony a contract for a series of four instrumental albums, possibly as Island's answer to Virgin Records' Mike Oldfield. This offer did not extend to bassist/vocalist Glyn Havard, and he departed to pursue other musical ventures in the punk and new-wave genres.

Released between 1974 and 1978, the Island-era Jade Warrior albums are often extremely visual in their composition, painting "pictures in the mind" through a characteristic mix of subtle and dynamic instrumentation and "found sounds". Like the band's earlier albums, they were too unique to fit easily into any stylistic pigeonhole, and not structured to cater to radio stations' desire for short stand-alone songs. After the fourth album was completed, Island declined to renew the contract.

Lacking a record deal, and facing health and family problems, Jon and Tony drifted apart, leaving London for separate lives in the English countryside. Jade Warrior largely faded from sight for several years. Tony moved to Glastonbury, opening Jade Warrior Studios to produce albums for local bands, and releasing a solo album "Horizen" under the Jade Warrior name in 1984 (something Jon wasn't happy about). The two musicians rejoined in 1989 to release the pastoral and meditative "At Peace".

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Jon, Dave, and Colin went on to release two Jade Warrior albums on the Red Hot Records label -- "Breathing the Storm" in 1992 and "Distant Echoes" in 1993. Work began on a third album in 1995, but the effort stalled and the album was never completed. Jon "semi-retired" from music, while Dave and Colin worked on other projects.

Glyn Havard re-entered the music scene in 2002, joining with David Duhig to release "Dog Star Poets". In 2005, Glyn rejoined Jade Warrior, with the foursome working in an album slated for release in 2006.

## **The Album**

The second of Jade Warrior's albums for Island, "Waves" carries forward many of the traditions introduced in its predecessor "Floating World". Long, intricate sequences of tracks flow into one another, sometimes seamlessly and sometimes with an abrupt shift of character. Acoustic and

improvised instruments rub shoulders with electric and electronic, bringing tones both starkly natural and heavily-processed.

Tony Duhig plays guitars of several sorts, of course, with Jon Field playing flute, oboe, piano, drums and percussion, bell-tree, whisky bottle, and various other instruments. The duo are joined by Steve Winwood, David Duhig, Graham Morgan, Maggie Thomas, and "Suzie". The band included a graphic score of the album on the slipjacket of some (but apparently not all) pressings of the album.

The theme of "Waves" is, of course, the sea, its denizens, and its surroundings, and takes the form of a journey from deep water to land in Part I and then back again in Part II.

The album starts out on the deep ocean in near-silence, and soon shakes the room as "The Whale" rises and then breaches the surface of the water. It must be a clear day, as we can hear the glinting sunlight of bells and chimes.

"The Sea" and "Section See" carry the album onwards, conveying images of splashing waves and blowing foam under a blue sky. The major themes are carried by Tony's electric guitar and Jon's flute, with additional accents being contributed by Steve Winwood on piano, Graham Morgan on drums, and numerous other instruments played by Jon and Tony.

After a few moments of silence, "Caves" arrives with an almost harpsichord-like sound from Tony's 12-string guitar, joined by Jon's multiple flutes and Maggie Thomas's alto recorder to create an impression of water-hollowed sea caves filled with rushing wind and abruptly-sloshing waves.

"Wave Birth" opens the second half of the album with some land imagery: the sound of birds, and rain pattering down through the trees, soon joined by the sound of distant voices raised in chorus and by a ritualistic conga-drum rhythm.

"River to the Sea" begins with a flute solo, joined by acoustic guitar and other flute themes. It finishes with a bell-tree melody, with Tony's electric guitar soloing in the distance.

"Groover" is a peppy little jam whose basic framework is defined by Jon's bell-tree and Tony's Gibson rhythm guitar work. It features solos by David Duhig on electric guitar and Steve Winwood on Moog, with Jon joining in on concert and alto flutes. Tony and Jon finish up the track with bass guitar and flutes.

"Breeze" carries us into a quiet transitional composition for multiple flutes and multiple guitars. There's a definite impression of gentle air fluttering by.

"Sea part two" brings an evocative theme on acoustic guitar - almost harp-like in places - supported by flutes and electric guitar. It ends in a wash of gentle bell-tree and wind chimes.

The album ends as it began, out in the deep ocean, with "Song of the last whale". Jon's richly-overdubbed flutes and organ bring hints of a distant foghorn as they play a parting theme of almost wistful sadness, which fades into the eerie and amelodic song of the whale as it drifts away into the silent blueness of the depths.

"Waves" was released in 1975, and was the unfortunate victim of some nasty international power politics. The OPEC oil embargo of 1973-1974 had sent shock waves through the music industry, as the supply of high-quality "virgin" vinyl dried up and prices soared. Many record companies reacted to the shortage and high cost of vinyl by recycling old, unsold LPs, shredding them and mixing the "regrind" with some fresh vinyl to manufacture new LPs. This often led to the vinyl becoming contaminated with dirt and paper fiber from the regrind, and the LPs pressed with this mixed vinyl tended to be noisy.

"Waves", unfortunately, was pressed on bad vinyl. Music which had been conceived and recorded to have a wide dynamic range, was pressed onto records that sounded like a bowl of breakfast cereal. The snap!crackle!pop of the groove was sometimes louder than the music.

"Waves" was an album meant to be heard on CD, written years before CDs existed.

<http://www.radagast.org/jade-warrior/>



# Kites

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Tony and I, we didn't set out with [gaining a following] in mind. We were just scratching an itch. We'd collect records, or lists of records, and go see Alexis Korner and things like this, but there was a whole area of music you couldn't go and see or hear, that was going on in our heads. So, basically, that's how we started. Not because we had any great vision that we thought anybody else would be interested in.

It's odd, because it was very private. I think there were many reasons why Tony and I never made it big when we *could* have made it big, and I think one reason is that we excluded people. Not deliberately, but that's how we had to produce that sort of stuff. We couldn't take in other direct ideas, they had to filter through us. Of course, everything is derived from hearing something or seeing something, but even so if someone suggested something, almost as if *because* they voiced it, we couldn't use it. I don't know if that makes sense, but we almost couldn't do it because someone said "Why don't you do this?". It hadn't gone through the filter.

I think we guarded, very very carefully, this little tiny plant, this little object, which could be knocked off course so easily. Tony and I could be knocked off-course just by being depressed about this or that, we wouldn't want to do music. It was always a music you'd do when you were up. The opposite of the blues, I think... (*laughter*)... which seems to be stuff you're supposed to do when you're down. This was stuff we did when we felt our head was in the right place...

Jon Field, 1996

In 1965 they joined a rhythm&blues band called "Second Thoughts" headed up by lead singer Patrick Lyons. Second Thoughts split up later that year, and the boys joined Tom Newman, Alan James, and Chris Jackson in Newman's band "The Tomcats". The band spent the best part of 1965 and 1966 in Spain, earning themselves quite a bit of local notoriety as one of the first bands to bring the "British invasion" of pop/rock music to Spain. They released four EPs which did very well on the Spanish charts.

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After July disbanded in 1968, Tony joined Unit Four Plus Two for a club tour in the U.K., meeting bass guitarist and vocalist Glyn Havard, and drummer Allan Price. Jon spent the time learning to play flute, and wrote music for a couple of dance dramas being performed at a drama school he was attending.

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Jade Warrior's music was strongly influenced by Jon and Tony's interest in African drumming. The band's time with Vertigo brought Jade Warrior into close contact with fellow label-mate Assagai, anchored by respected African musicians Louis Moholo, Mongezi Feza, and Dudu Pukwana. Assagai was impressed enough by Jade Warrior's musicianship to record cover versions of the band's "Telephone Girl" and "Barazinbar" and "Sanga", to record a couple of songs written or co-written by Tony, and to ask Jon and Tony and Glyn to record on Assagai's second album and take part in a recording session released under the band name "Simba".

Unfortunately, Jade Warrior's years with Vertigo were plagued by problems of poor support and promotion by the label. An additional two albums worth of material were recorded, but the albums were shelved when Vertigo cancelled their contract. Friction within the band over their future direction led to the cancellation of a second tour in Holland, and the band dissolved.

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Glyn Havard re-entered the music scene in 2002, joining with David Duhig to release "Dog Star Poets". In 2005, Glyn rejoined Jade Warrior, with the foursome working in an album slated for release in 2006.

## The Album

"Kites" is the third of the albums Jade Warrior recorded for the Island label. It stands out from its predecessors "Floating World" and "Waves" by having a dual nature - it's composed around two different themes (one per side of the album) rather than a single one. In many places it's more traditionally orchestral than previous albums, with melodies scored for choir, string quartet, piano, and violin (with some soulful contributions on the latter by Joe O'Donnell and Fred Frith).

Continuing further with the tradition of explanation they introduced in "Waves", Jon and Tony kindly describe the imagery and inspiration which lies behind their music. However, in the grand tradition of Zen, the explanation may leave the reader more puzzled after reading than before!

The first side presents a musical impression of forest, wind, and flight, inspired by a Paul Klee drawing. In most places it's an airy, light, and abstract sequence of melodies, but its centerpiece "The Emperor Kite" is a more forceful passage which dips and swishes and plunges its way along.

The second side is a musical koan, telling the tale of Teh Ch'eng, the Boat Monk - a Zen Buddhist sage of 9th-century China. Both in subject and in its musical construction, it reflects Jon and

Tony's long-time interest in matters of the East. And, in fitting with its material, it seems to leave as much unsaid as otherwise.

The album comes with a bit of a puzzle - possibly just a repeated typo, or possibly quite deliberate. The first side refers several times to an "Emporer" kite (huge, and capable of carrying a man). One song on the second side is "Arrival of the Emporer" - but the tale of Teh Ch'eng given on the album cover refers only to an "official (who was passing)". Were they referring to an "emperor" (ruler), or is "emporer" a play on the Greek "emporos" (traveller or passenger - one who is on a voyage)? A subtle pun, or a strangely-appropriate typo? In any case, the ambiguity disappeared when the album was reissued as part of Island's "Elements" collection - the word is spelled "Emperor" in all cases.

<http://www.radagast.org/jade-warrior/>

## Way of the Sun

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After the tour, Jade Warrior returned to the studio and recorded "Last Autumn's Dream", their most polished and mature work to date. Unfortunately their problems with poor promotion by Vertigo continued. An additional two albums worth of material were recorded, but the albums were shelved when Vertigo cancelled their contract. Friction within the band over their future direction led to the cancellation of a second tour in Holland, and the band dissolved.

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Well, it's burrowing through a mountain... you know that deep in this mountain there's a pot of gold. You set off from different sides of the mountain, trying to get through to the gold.

You never make it, but you think "We were really close there, if we come in from another way...". And that's all it is - it's trying to make the same album. But, the day we make the same album, will be the last thing I'll make, anyway - I won't need to.

Jon Field, 1996

"Way of the Sun" is the fourth album Jade Warrior recorded for Island. It's probably the most intensely *visual* album they ever recorded, their most polished, and perhaps their most emotional as well. The LP cover contains an extensive interview with Jon and Tony in which they describe their own personal imagery of the "scenes" behind the music. Even people who have never read this interview have reported "seeing" dawn break over the jungle in "Sun Ra" just as Jon and Tony described... the music's cinematographic nature is that powerful!

Reflecting the band members' long-time interest in Latin music, it focuses its attention on Central and South America. It portrays a day - or perhaps a century - of life and culture and change around the time of the Spanish conquest of the New World.

The band breaks a three-album tradition of starting out their albums subtly, with music and sounds climbing up out of a background of deep silence. Not here - not this time! As Rudyard Kipling wrote of Mandalay, "the dawn comes up like thunder" in the opening of "Sun Ra", with energy and anticipation oozing out of every note. This sets the course for the rest of the album - it's a dashing passage through life with all of its life's complexities. Feelings run the gamut, from the "all's right with the world" flavor of "Sun Child", to the mystery and fear and change of "Moontears", to the joyous celebrations of "Carnival" and the completion of "Dance of the Sun".

The album ends as all days must end, with sundown and "Death of Ra", a deeply-felt paean by Tony's electric guitar and Jon's flutes, filled with thanksgiving and passion and more than a bit of grief. If you listen carefully, you may hear one missed guitar half-note - reportedly, Tony was so caught up in the emotion of the piece that his eyes were tearing up, and he fumbled slightly. Wisely, they chose not to re-do the track.

It was a fitting end to the album, and carried with it more than a little irony. In the world's various mythologies of sun worship, the sun god must usually undergo some form of trial or challenge as he passes from view during the night... combat with mortal enemies, exile in the darkness, ritual death, or some other form of transformation. So it was to be for Jade Warrior, who had their own period of darkness and exile ahead of them.

After the completion of "Way of the Sun", their contract with Island was fulfilled, and was not renewed. Lacking a record deal, and facing health and family problems, Jon and Tony drifted apart, leaving London for separate lives in the English countryside. Jade Warrior largely faded from sight for several years.

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## **A personal perspective on Jade Warrior**

Jon Field once told me that he and Tony were never satisfied with their albums... that they never felt that they really expressed the "music in their heads" properly, wished they'd done one or another bit differently, and so had to keep trying again and again in different ways. He also expressed some surprise at how much of a long-standing loyalty Jade Warrior's music has had among the band's fans, or that people would even be interested in it at all.

I think that the difficulty and the loyalty have a common cause: Jade Warrior's music reflects something deep and powerful. Those who go digging for archetypal images, and try to turn them into concrete representations in music or art or literature, are facing an impossible task. Those sorts of images and experiences are bigger, and in a sense more real than we are, and whatever part of their inspiration we can drag back into the material world is bound to be fragmentary and incomplete. "The Tao which can be named, is not truly the Tao."

These limits and flaws don't detract from the power of the underlying image, though - and I think it's the deep power of the images in Jade Warrior's music which explains the strong reaction of many listeners. Like a p'o-mo drawing of ink and paint on gold leaf, the beauty of Jade Warrior's music is made even more memorable by the warm glow from underneath.

Being offered the opportunity to write these liner notes was a wonderful treat, and a terrible challenge. “The finger which points to the moon, is not the moon.” Trying to write about highly-expressive music is an exercise in futility, as music speaks to us in ways which words cannot. Take the imagery I’ve suggested with a very large grain of salt, listen to the music with your ears and your heart wide open, and see what pictures it draws for *you*. The one true thing I can tell you, is that it will be worth the journey.

Jon, Tony - many thanks for thirty-odd years of hikes around your Mountain of Fruit and Flowers!

Dave Platt  
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<http://www.radagast.org/jade-warrior/>