

## Mp3 Jp Jones - Life And Death



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Intense and eclectic folk-based collection is songwriter's ninth independently released CD. "Thoughtful, spiritually grounded music that tells stories rather than thumps bibles." - Bill Conner, KNBT 11 MP3 Songs FOLK: Power-folk, ROCK: Folk Rock Details: April, 2003 With nine CD releases under his belt, JP Jones is Rhode Island's most prolific indie recording artist. Best known for his folk-influenced songwriting, Jones' recorded work has been compared to Bob Dylan, Eric Clapton, Mark Knopfler and Greg Brown. Jones breaks new ground with the release of "Life and Death." Tackling genres as diverse as punk, funk and jazz, "Life and Death" is not for folk purists. It's a concept album about opposites: black and white, beauty and ugliness, birth, death, sex and salvation. The disc features 11 original songs and Jones' touring band, Rite Tite. The group's seven member line-up includes Jones on acoustic guitar and vocals, drummer Dave Lang, percussionist Matt Niebels, bass player Kurt Meyer, Mike Barrette on electric guitar, Louise Muller on violin and ("Dr.") Donn Watson on keyboards. Jones remains the focal point. While the band's been gigging together in this present configuration for better than a year, at smaller venues Jones often plays a stripped-down set, solo, or accompanied only by one or two from the larger group. At the larger shows and on this disc it's the best of both worlds: great songs delivered by the writer - and an organic listening experience from a band whose whole is greater than the sum of its parts November, 2001 JP Jones isn't hoping for his big musical break. "A phone call is not going to change my life," says Jones. "Sure, I'd love to be in a position to be able to sell 250,000 records...to reach a mass audience (if that's what a major label record deal would mean), but if I end up selling 500, and really touching the people that buy them, that's O.K. too." "To be alive is a great privilege. To be in a position to do the work you love to do is nothing less than a state of grace," says Jones. He should know. JP recorded his first album for CBS' Columbia/Windfall label in 1972 ("a student work as far as I'm concerned," says Jones).

The album was a commercial failure and his career was caught in the crossfire as the relationship between Columbia and Windfall became acrimonious and ended in lawsuit. "They told me at the time that 'nothing I ever wrote would be produced,'" say Jones. "Meanwhile they refused to release me from my contract asserting their right of ownership of everything I wrote for the term of the deal." It's with a wink today that Jones states: "I was unable to write anything for the next five years. Fortunately on the day after the contract expired I was able to write about 100 songs." Cut adrift in the late 70's, Jones pursued a second major label deal by submitting demo tapes and playing New York City showcase gigs at clubs like Folk City and CBGBs. It was during this time that he caught the eye of producers John Hammond Sr. (Billie Holiday, Bob Dylan) and Ed Freeman (Tim Hardin, Don McLean). Hammond visited Jones at home and offered to take him into the studio. Freeman and Jones collaborated on an additional set of demos. For a variety of reasons neither relationship produced a second album. By the early 1980s it was already becoming clear to Jones that his future in music was probably going to be as an independent artist. He fronted the New York City based folk/rock band John Train (who took their name in tribute to the Phil Ochs pseudonym) and released and promoted two independently produced rock singles. Over the next decade he supported himself by taking a day job as a commercial artist while continuing to write songs and do open mic solo gigs at clubs he'd headlined just a few years before. Everything changed in the 1990s. Jones moved back to New England and met visual artist and future wife Kerstin Zettmar. In a series of small steps he began to reconnect as a performer with the local folk circuit. He took coffeehouse gigs and had live performances featured on compilation CDs in support of non-profit projects like the WWUH Folk Next Door fund-raisers, the Rhode Island Songwriters Association's 12 Steps of Christmas and the Hope Center of Providence's Our Invincible Summer. Digital technology brought down the cost of recording and duplicating, and made making high quality records easy and relatively affordable. Jones dug in. Since 1991 Vision Company Records (today run by Jones' brother Andy) has released eight critically acclaimed discs worth of original JP Jones material. Still, this work represents only about half the JP Jones catalog....and he keeps writing. "I have no choice," says Jones. "For me it's a matter of life-and-death." Jones' newest disc Salvation Street (November 2001) is an honest and intense examination of the unavoidable call to purpose to which Jones so starkly alludes. What's remarkable is that the disc manages to have so much fun at the same time. Recorded live in the living room of JP's Newport, RI home, Salvation Street is an ambitious and uncompromising seventy-plus minute folk/rock

album that strikes an elegant balance between spontaneity of performance and polish of production. "My very best work to date," says Jones. Jones' recorded work has been compared to Bob Dylan, Eric Clapton, Mark Knopfler and Greg Brown. As a performer who's been at it more than 30 years he's shared bills with a diverse and equally prominent musical cast that includes Bruce Springsteen, Bonnie Riatt, B.B. King and Little Feat (just to name a few). He's played house concerts and civic arenas, outdoor festivals, bars and coffeehouses. He gigs, today, both as a solo artist and with back up band Rite Tite (Kurt Meyer; bass, Dave Lang; drums, Mike Barrett; electric guitar and Matt Niebles; percussion). He's got a following and fans who regularly collect his records. Still, it's at moments when Jones has an opportunity to give back that he seems most comfortable. "The other day the phrase, 'you gotta stay hungry' occurred to me," says Jones. "All of a sudden, that looked like complete insanity to me. You flip it around on its head and say, when you're really, really full, that's when you've got something to offer to somebody else. That's what's happening in my life as I get older. All of these things are coming together so that I'm feeling more full and complete. My interests in the world around me, in writing and everything I'm doing artistically." As he sees it, "It's a bigger world than what I have and what I don't have...I'm interested in other people's dreams." Discography: John Paul Jones (Columbia/Windfall) LP, 1973, Johnny Go Lightly b/w It'll All Blow Over 7" single, 1980, Don't Feel Guilty b/w Wendy 12" single, 1982, Voluntown CD, 1991, Broken Open CD, 1994, Bard CD, 1997, Angels on the Road CD, 1998, Broken Open - remixed and remastered CD, 1999, Ashes CD, 1999, Back to Jerusalem CD, 2000, Salvation Street CD, 2001, Life and Death CD, 2003

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