

vocalion



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## John Mayer on **vocalion**

DHAMMAPADA  
1976 UNRELEASED EMI ALBUM



In May 2006 Vocalion presents British jazz composer John Mayer's unreleased 1976 EMI album **Dhammapada**. Produced by Denis Preston and engineered by John Mackswith at London's Lansdowne Studios, it is the first time this groundbreaking recording has been issued. Exclusively available from Vocalion and featuring an exciting blend of modern jazz and Eastern music, **Dhammapada** (the way of life) is based on the concept of the development of Buddhism from India through to China, Korea and Japan.

In this album John Mayer – well-known for his critically acclaimed series of Indo-Jazz Fusions recordings made with alto saxophonist Joe Harriott during the 1960s - brings to bear all his compositional genius, fusing jazz and rock elements with exquisitely detailed, progressive writing for a band consisting of the cream of Britain's jazz and session musicians. The world-class instrumental skills of Henry Lowther (trumpet), Tony Coe (sax, clarinet), Clem Alford (sitar), Harold Fisher (drums) and Toni Campo (bass) among others, are all heard on **Dhammapada**. In fact, these musicians can be thought of as the 'house' band of producer and Lansdowne Studios-owner Denis Preston, having appeared on many Preston-produced jazz recordings of the 1970s. Fisher, Campo and Alford also feature on guitarist Amancio D'Silva's 1974 'Konkan Dance' album (CDSML 8420), another unreleased British jazz album issued for the first time by Vocalion.

Born in Calcutta, India in 1930, John Mayer originally trained as a violinist and at one point studied with Melhi Mehta, father of Zubin Mehta. John arrived in the UK in the early '50s having won a scholarship to study at London's Royal Academy of Music. Unfortunately, the money from the scholarship ran out after only a year. Fate intervened when soon after John was offered a job as a violinist with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, which enabled him to pursue his dual career as instrumentalist and composer. John's association with Denis Preston began in 1964 when he contributed the composition Nine for Bacon to the Ken Jones Orchestra's album 'Strike up the Bard'. This composition eventually led to John and Joe Harriott forming and running for several years in the 1960s the Indo-Jazz Fusions band. More than a decade earlier, however, John had been combining Eastern and Western influences in pioneering works such as 'Raga Music for Solo Clarinet' and 'Jaijavanti' for sitar, tabla and full orchestra.

Inexplicably shelved by EMI in 1976 after the recording sessions that produced it, **Dhammapada** represents the logical extension of these early compositions and John's work with Indo-Jazz Fusions. It is certainly his most fully formed statement on the fusion of Eastern music with modern jazz, and the sheer hypnotic beauty of some of the pieces clearly indicate what a gifted, sensitive and forward thinking composer John was. At Vocalion we are proud to issue this milestone in British jazz for the very first time.

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