

Mp3 Clas Yngström & Sky High - Sky Highlights



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Best of - Get to know Europe's no 1 Blues-Rock act, fronted by guitar-slinger Clas Yngström. These selections are taken from ten albums from 1980 to 1996. 36 MP3 Songs

BLUES: Rockin' Blues, **ROCK:** Classic Rock Details: **SKY HIGH** - In the beginning Sky High was formed in 1978 by Yngström as a quartet, but lost its organ player early on and remained a core trio, sometimes augmented with additional members for live or studio performances. In the beginning, the material was Swedish language with the music drawing on influences from the Sixties. Sky High originals were intermixed with cover versions of tunes by The Jimi Hendrix Experience, Cream, The Who and the Kinks. Says Yngström: "Back in the Sixties I played in bands doing covers but then in the early Seventies, I started drifting towards jazzy sounds, like Miles Davis and John Coltrane. I thus mixed the rock sound of my own generation with modal influences and was for a few years involved in the jazz/fusion scene. After having done that for a while, I felt a longing for a more rootsy and bluesy approach. One night in Gothenburg our organ player stayed with a beautiful girl in the audience while the rest of us got up and played - we fired off a series of Hendrix tunes, stuff that I hadn't played for nearly ten years at that point: the place went hog wild and we haven't been looking back ever since!" The band went on to record their first, "Sky High", album in Swedish, featuring a cover version of the Hendrix classic "I Don't Live Today" with translated lyrics. Clas Yngström became a proficient Hendrix interpreter, and has played many Hendrix memorials ever since their debut in Amsterdam 1980, where they literally stole the show, prompting the Experience's drummer Mitch Mitchell to leap on stage to jam and play drums behind Yngström - a momentous event! Sky High's reputation for great live action was thus firmly established within a short time in Sweden, the band's yearly gig average being 200-250 between 1981 and 1986. First Internationally Oriented Albums In September 1981, Sky High went back to the studio, and recorded their second album in Gothenburg, their first in

English language. The album "Still Rockin" was produced by Lou Stonebridge, known for his work with The Blues Band, and completed at Nova Suite Studios in London with John "Irish" Earl (leader of Graham Parkers Rumour Brass) - tenor saxophone and Dick Hanson (trumpet of The Climax Blues Band) making a guest appearance. In 1983 Clas left Gothenburg to return to his backwoods in Borlänge, Dalecarlia. For a while Yngström considered running a guitar workshop and putting Sky High on hold for a while, but abandoned this activity as the band got signed and went to the studio to record the follow up "Freezin' Hot". That album contained what would be one of the seminal Sky High hits, the frenzied and frantic "I Ain't Beggin'", that made it to Top 10 status on the chart propelling Sky High into the Big League Of Rock. That song was also selected for inclusion on the weird and whacky underground movie "The American Way", starring Dennis Hopper. Yngström expands as follows: "It's a film about some anarchistic Vietnam vets who run an airborne pirate-TV station on board of an old B-52 bomber over USA - we got some really nice scenes for our video! - The album itself was a favourite with our fans, and I must confess that this is the one of the old albums I also personally prefer..." The soundtrack connection came via Sam Taylor, vice president of ZZ-Tops production outfit Lone Wolf, and Yngström explains further: "I had met with ZZ-Top in Norway, back in 1981- we were playing the same venue as them, only they drew crowds 20 times as big! Anyway, I gave some of my old albums to Billy Gibbons, ZZ-Tops guitarist. Imagine my surprise at receiving a phone call a few days later from Billy, stating that "there's some serious guitar playing going on here!" - we have been in touch ever since" ZZ Top asked Clas and Sky High to play support on the European leg of the "Eliminator" tour, but the idea was vetoed by the management and agencies involved, stating that ZZ-Top couldn't play together with such a competitive guitarist as Clas Yngström.

Futuristic Blues: "HUMANIZER" Sky High thus went back in the studio in 1987 to record an album that would propel them right into the future: "Humanizer", their fourth album, Yngström's guitar being augmented by sequencers, drum machines and samplers. The recording of such an experimentally-oriented album signified a move away from clubs, with music apt for large venues and giant open air festivals. The album went straight to no. 19 on the Swedish album sales list. Both singles "Tune Me To Your Station" and "Don't Move" hit Top 20, "Don't Move" reached to no. 6 in August 1987. Sky High went on their first US tour, playing at the legendary clubs CBGBs in NYC and The Steamboat in Austin Texas. The tour's highlight was a performance on the big stage at the prestigious New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival. Not content with touring the USA, Sky High also appeared at

the ground-breaking festival "Glasnost Rock -88" in Tallin, Estonia - where the band played in front of 300.000!!! people. : "I wasn't really getting tired of playing the blues as such, but I felt that the band needed some changes and we started to work on a larger formula. Suddenly everything that could go wrong went wrong - the band had developed a bad case of elephantiasis, I got bored of it all and decided to call it a day" - thus, Clas Yngström had to disband Sky High for the second time in the fall of 1988. The PIKE years

In search of new inspiration and motivation, Yngström took up a long standing invitation from Prairie Prince, drummer for The Tubes and the two of them got together a band to record the next album titled "Have Guitar, Will Travel!" Having paid for the recordings himself, Yngström decided to release it on his own label in Sweden founding Pike Records in 1988 and proceeded to tour with his recording band consisting of American musicians Ross Valory (Journey, Steve Miller Band), Norton Buffalo (Steve Miller Band, Roy Rogers), Tim Gorman (The Who, John Hiatt, The Rolling Stones) and the aforementioned Prairie Prince. Clas Yngström began searching for musicians to regroup Sky High, reunited with the two original members, Arne Blomqvist and Ulf Hman, and launched the extensive "Ten Year Anniversary Tour" from September 1989 to the spring of 1990, also recording the live album "Safe Sex", Sky High's Sixth. As to the cryptic title, Yngström offers the following explanation: "Music, especially playing music yourself is a strong emotional, sometimes almost sexual experience.... There's definitely a strong sexual element in Hendrix's music and since, as far as I'm aware, it's not possible to get AIDS via music, I thought the title Safe Sex would be the right one" The Nineties

Early 1991 Clas got together with two young and dedicated musicians from the town of Gävle, situated on the East coast north of Stockholm and most known for generating countless hockey players. With Ulf "Rockis" Ivarsson - bass and Christer Björklund - drums Sky High were back in a supertight trio format. The new edition of Sky High started with a bang, playing US showcases at the South By Southwest event in Austin and then going to India! in 1992. After successful gigs in Bangalore, Bombay and Calcutta fans went bonkers at the New Delhi Siri Fort performance, invaded the stage and forced auditorium officials to stop the concert half-way! All in all, the encounter of rootsy Blues and one of the oldest cultures on earth was momentous and inspiring for both Sky High and India. In the spring of 1994, Sky High went on another cultural mission, this time to Ecuador in South America where they managed to perform a series of concerts, despite the catastrophically haphazard organisation at local promoter level. Another ear-opening experience for Clas Yngström was to be invited to play at the Folk Music Festival in Falun, Sweden, preparing a performance that featured

Yngström playing alongside Folk musicians in a cross-pollination of styles and influences. "FuzzFace", was released early '95. It features the aforementioned trio and a young very gifted Danish sampler whiz Halfdan E. Fuzzface is a mix of all earlier Sky High styles it hosts both strait boogie without gadgets and effects of any kind AND numbers built around "machine-grooves"- FAT GUITAR The '96 album "Fat Guitar" is a straight ahead Blues/R&B album. It features 13 songs - five covers in special arrangements and eight originals on which Clas has had great help with the lyrics from Pete "The Poet" Brown (yes its the same Pete Brown that wrote all those beautiful lyrics for songs like "Sunshine Of Your Love", "White Room" etc.), who also produced the album. The album was produced in New-Jersey and features great guest appearances by ex Supremes vocalist Mary Wilson, Uptown Horns and The legendary British blues-saxplayer Mr Dick Heckstall-Smith (John Mayall's Bluesbreakers, Colloseum, etc.) PURPLE HAZE In the summer of '96 Clas started a collaboration with Uppsala Big-Band. The idea was to arrange and perform the music of Jimi Hendrix in a big-band format. The first gig took place at the Stockholm Jazz Bluesfest July '96. The project went down a storm creating a buzz at jazz bluesfestivals around northern Europe, and an album with the music was released in the spring of '98 SKY HIGHLIGHTS, two decades of rocking the blues In November '98 Clas the band celebrated Sky High's twentieth anniversary with a 25 days long party-tour to all the favourite venues in Scandinavia. A double CD-set, "Sky Highlights 78-98", featuring all the best songs and some treasures from the ol' crypt was released Oct. '98. BLUESTER The latest album by Clas Yngström and Sky High - "Bluester" - was recorded in Clas hometown Falun. It features ten new originals and four songs penned by: Jerry Lynn Williams, Jerry Beach, Al Staehely and Stephen Allen Davis. The style on the new album is "back to the roots", the songs were recorded with a minimum of overdubs and feature Per Wiberg on keyboards and Petra Kvinn on vocals on a few of the tracks. Ace Plank-Spanker Clas Yngström plays a battered vintage Fender Stratocaster as his main instrument, totes quite often a really wild cross between a Gibson Les Paul and a violin made out of brassplate! by Swedish metal artist Torbjørn Testad. He is arguably the very best no-nonsense straight ahead rocker in Scandinavia, and a sure success at open air festivals all over the world with his firebranded dance-inducing Boogie. "The music I play is a product of everything I like" states Yngström- "for me, Jimi Hendrix is the best guitarplayer that ever was; Eric Clapton is of course also a hell of a player and I really dug Cream as a band! Basically, my band plays the same old simple three-or-four chords, but the blues suits me fine. It doesn't need to be technically advanced, it's got nothing

to do with that! Its about expressing inner feelings, emotions - thats in the essence of the Blues" SKY
HIGH ALBUMS: 1. "Sky High"- 1980 2. "Still Rockin"- 1982 3. "Freezin Hot"- 1985 4. "Humanizer" - 1987
5. "Have Guitar, Will Travel!" -1989 6. "Safe Sex"- 1990 7. "Fuzzface" - 1995 8. "Fat Guitar" -1996 9.
"Purple Haze" - 1998 10. "Highlights 1978-1998" -1998 11. "Bluester" - 1999

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