

Mp3 Simon Says - Paradise Square

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progressive rock in the vein of the Swedish legends. 7 MP3 Songs ROCK: Progressive Rock, ROCK: 70's
Rock Details: "Simon Says' music forces me to work a lot, it demands my undivided attention. Technically, it's also pretty challenging so it's impossible to let your thoughts wander off. I like that."
Mattias Jarlhed, percussion. 1979. The cellar in which Mattias Jarlhed was confined not to disturb the parents' party was empty except for a drum kit. That's where it started. Mattias was five years old. At six he had gotten his father to buy him a drum kit which he hit hard for two years, then switched to the tenor saxophone, playing in various jazz bands for six years. At 14 he dug out the drums from the wardrobe again and the devotion to music really exploded. Mattias qualified for musical high school, practiced for "thousands of hours" and then joined a local band - where Daniel Fldt was the singer - playing extremely intricate progressive rock. In the 90:s he joined Simon Says until the band was put on ice. Mattias then co-founded Valinor's Tree with whom he has cut two records. When Simon Says reformed he was the obvious choice: his technical skills and frantic swinging gives Simon Says' music a light, jazzy touch, something the band has always valued. "Simon Says compels me to find melodies that are very catchy, with effective hooks - but without ever becoming banale. And after 18 years of listening to symphonic rock I can still find new angles of approach to it. I hope these qualities also apply to us." Jonas Hallberg, guitars Jonas, born in '73, has played the acoustic guitar since he was ten. The first two years he thought it was terribly boring. He dreamed of going electric and forming a band. But when he eventually got an electric guitar, it just hung on the wall for a year, since he "didn't know what to do with it." At the age of 13, he did, formed a progressive outfit, inspired by his newly discovered idols Marillion and Genesis and gigged heavily around the West Sweden region. At 21, with an ever growing collection of prog records he went to Minneapolis, USA, to study guitar. On his return he immediately returned to the local rock circuit where he became one of the most sought after session musicians before eventually ending up in Simon Says. His sometimes clownish personality (Jonas is known to record his solos naked) and perfectionist attitude adds both distance and thoroughness to the band. As well as many a good laugh. "I've always believed there is an invisible force in every band, sometimes taking over the music, pushing it in a

direction you never intended, making it better. In Simon Says, every note we play came just like that. We never intended them, they just came from somewhere." Stefan Renström, bass and keyboards Stefan, born in '65, has played music since 1972. Between '74 and '78 he was the flute soloist of a chamber orchestra, playing churches, museums and town halls all over West Sweden. At 14 he needed something new, though, joked about buying a bass and joining a rock band - and then a few weeks later the band asked him where his bass was. The joke cost his parents 800 Swedish crowns. In 1981, he got tired of playing rock'n'roll, turned down an offer to record an LP with a rockabilly group, and instead joined a progressive band for a long ordeal through the 80:s, with few gigs, even fewer recordings - but with a lot of musical training. In the 90:s, as the third wave of prog started to roll in, he felt the time was ripe. His current band didn't want to make the effort though, so Stefan left and formed what was to become Simon Says. As both founder, songwriter, keyboard and bass player he has a lot of impact on how the band eventually sounds and his classical influences are very apparent in the music. "I'm used to freedom, to controlling the vocals myself. What fascinates me about Simon Says is that the vocals are confined to a very narrow space, by the rest of the music. And yet, within that narrow space I feel a lot of liberty." Daniel Fldt, vocals and sitar Daniel Fldt was born in 1975. At four years of age he already was a fan of Jimi Hendrix. At six he listened to everything from Mose Allison to David Bowie to singers from Burundi, picked up his father's guitar and tried to imitate Frank Zappa and the early hard rock bands. Up to the age of 18 he played in various local rock bands, until ending up in a progressive band with Mattias Jarlhed. At the same time, Stefan Renström made contact and the nucleus of Simon Says was formed. When the band was shelved during the late 90:s he went to India where he stayed for two years, learning to play the sitar, then drifted around Asia, not sure if he was ever going to return home. When Stefan eventually reached him in Benares, he bought a one way ticket. Daniel wrote his first song at the age of nine. It went: "All you lonely people, look at me 'cause I'm a crazy man." And on stage, he is the natural focal point of the band, a true performer not dreading the uncontrolled leap into the audience. He also brings a strong folk element to the music.

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