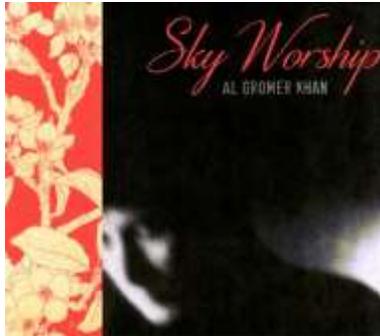


Al Gromer Khan
Sky Worship

Eyes Up



Sit still. Take a breath. Take another. Now open a door in your mind. Step inside. And close the door. Once inside you will hear the spiritually cleansing music of **Al Gromer Khan** called **Sky Worship**.

It is so difficult to leave the physical world behind right now, but the ten World/ambient/ethnic tracks on Sky Worship should be a welcomed companion in the attempt. There are breathy whispers and calmly spoken words here and there courtesy of **Ute**

Gromer. I have reviewed Khan's music before and he always fascinates me with his unlikely combinations of traditional and contemporary instrumentation. His is a Grand Master of the sitar and his pairings with electronic music on his latest release are harmonious in intriguing ways. It just works. Khan's music makes for an environment in the mind where sun and sky and openness prevail. When humankind first became cognizant of its surroundings, surely Sky was their first God.

Reso opens the album with ambient ringing tones. It segues into touches of sitar and waves of synth, exhibiting their dualities. There is a flow to Khan's composition, an endless river of serenity. Ironically, your consciousness is traveling on this stream. Meaning contentedness in Arabic, **Naima** is a song with an ebb and flow, like wave action on shore or like breathing. A pendulum of the mind perhaps. The mild surge is calming, sedate, and comforting. There is no gravity, no bounds in this mesmerizing tune.

One of my favorites on Sky Worship is called **Have You Seen?** It is an unanswered question with an open framework of percussion, sitar and synth strings. When I listened to it I thought of a kaleidoscope of colors; blues, greens, and aquas in my mind. Freeform shapes amongst the clouds. As with the other tracks, Khan has composed a fantasy induced world tailored to the individual listener. Another case of music doing its job.

Kali, the Hindu Goddess of many identities, get a devotion on Khan's tune **Hymn in Praise of Goddess Kali**. Shyama, her other appellation, is also known as the Goddess of Time, Creation, Destruction and Power. She is also dutifully worshipped as Mother of the Universe. The music has an inorganic voice and echoing sitar. Maybe a symbol of east meets west in a modern age. **Deo D'Or** or Golden God resonates quietly until a strong sitar form takes the lead. Swirls of weightless currents are uplifting, stabilizing energies. **Vérité est beauté**, French for Truth is Beauty is poignant, maybe even sad, for what is truth and beauty but concepts created by our senses. Some Transcendentalist believe that truth stands for science and beauty for the arts. On the other hand, John Keats wrote, "Beauty is truth, truth beauty - that is all ye know on earth, and all ye need to know". So the music speaks for itself.

The final cut is **Sky Clad on Park Crescent**. Wave on wave of synth quavers, sitar, and tabla stride along in a warm ending of aural dreams. Khan's vivid younger years in London get revisited in this fantasy driven reverie. The piece is just over six minutes and it contributes strongly to an ambient mood. It's another favorite, and it is sad for it to all end. I'm playing it again.

For composer and Grand Master Sitar Player Al Gromer Khan, this eclectic mix is par for the course. I say this as he is known for mixing elements of different genres and having them result in a highly listenable matrix. Sky Worship is a good example. His use of "sky" as an endless musical canvas allows him to take sonic liberties that are uplifting and inspiring. Take a breath.