

GO MARCH



Photo: Rob Walbers

The term 'instrumental music' probably conjures a certain mood in most people's minds – muzak, perhaps, the sort of inoffensive background sounds actively designed not to intrude on your day. *Go March* don't make that sort of instrumental music.

If they'd been around in the '50s and '60s this Antwerp-based trio – *Philipp Weies*, *Hans De Prins*, and *Antoni Foscez* - would probably have wound up as one of those genre-bending genius jazz acts, the way they dig in and jam for days on end. But the sounds that actually abound here are inspired by a diverse cocktail of genres – all types of rock music, some hip-hop, techno - and some newer departures on their second album, *'II'*.

Guitarist and bandleader *Weies* brought this trio together to actively add extra edge his musical output, an objective they very much achieved with the debut album *'Go March'* in 2015, eight stirring cuts of propulsive future-rock. The follow-up was never going to tread a familiar path, though, and for *'II'* they threw out the original blueprint, sketched out some bold new designs, then hunkered down for a two-week boot-camp. The results surprised them too.

"This was in March last year," says Weies. "We worked from 10am to 2am, or 3am, everyday. It was a great pressure, but we were in a creative rush."

Go March sounds how you'd imagine their dynamic would: two musically experimental Belgians, *De Prins* (keyboards) and *Foscez* (drums), marshalled by a "meticulous" German. They certainly have a fascinating process: Weies is a researcher as much as a musician, wading through tapes of their jams to find the gems. Like all the best bands, the good stuff bursts forth from creative tension, and the 'll'-sessions were "often a struggle between us," he admits. "We'd be playing against each other, because someone is suddenly following a different idea. But then something interesting emerges."

Sometimes whole sessions would be based on unique sounds procured from obscure equipment. The album opener '*Chop Chop*', for example, is a repetitive nine-minute riff epic initially based on a distorted beat from an archaic drum machine. But then the much woozier '*Meristem*' also came about due to "a new effects unit with a distorted delay effect". The band's subsequent riffing with it conjured something akin to a Vangelis soundtrack, or perhaps De Prins channelling *Jean Michel-Jarre*, with his moody, spacey synths.

"Our drummer, *Antoni*, he suggested we do five minutes of it live before anything else kicks in," laughs Weies. "Maybe we'll start concerts with it, we'll come on in white robes. With gold hair."

While *Go March* haven't perhaps quite reached the robe-and-gold-hair stage, there certainly are some musical departures here. The trippy, euphoric '*Leopolderson*' is "almost not a song, it's a mood, with interesting textures." And the finale, '*Kalmar*', is "named after a remote town in Sweden. It's very calm, there's hardly anything in there, like desert blues."

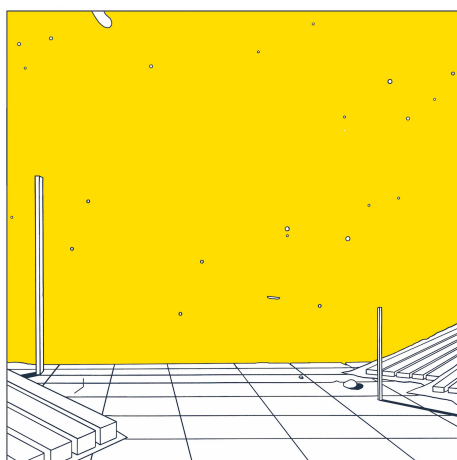
The desire to endlessly jam began when Weies started hanging out with activists and squat-dwellers and became an enthusiastic smoker of... let's call them jazz cigarettes. Those formative experiences forged his sonic synapses, and after establishing himself as a sought-after guitar player in other people's bands, Weies went searching for the *Go March* way. Although another big inspiration also infiltrated heavily. "*Go March* is a combination of everything, plus a huge influence from techno," he says. "There's one special growl, it triggers something in me that nothing else can trigger – it's one of my biggest frustrations with the guitar."

As a trio, though, they've developed something unique. Weies hooked up with drummer *Antoni Foscez* having seen him play at a festival. "He's ten years younger, and grew up drumming along to the *Chilli Peppers* & *nu-metal*. We always ended up in these repetitive jams, it was more like electronic music. Then I thought, yeah, maybe we should get a synthesizer."

So his old friend *De Prins* came on board, “and brought his own sound to it, arpeggiated stuff which made it even more repetitive. It’s definitely a jigsaw.”

There’s a respectful brotherly vibe that probably helps keep them all sane, as they fight to find that elusive sound, over lengthy studio sessions. Momentum is key, keeping the creative energy growing until the alchemic moments emerge, and a jam turns to gold. It reminds you of certain animals, who need to keep moving to survive. Are *Go March* the musical equivalent of... sharks?

“There are worse animals to be compared with,” laughs *Weies*. They’re having a whale of a time.



Go March – II (YZ004)

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1. Chop Chop
2. Leopolderson
3. Morris More
4. Meristem
5. Downside Up
6. Zabriskie
7. Bark
8. Kalmar

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