

New album from the critically acclaimed group We Float (SE/NO)



It's not often that we think of reassurance as a force to be reckoned with. *Let Go*, the third album from the Malmö, Sweden-based quartet We Float, might just change that.

As bass and drums slowly circle like a cone of light into an eerie mist of synthesizer trails on the album-opening title track, We Float establish the potent blend of solemnity and consolation that defines the album. Likewise, songs like “Golden Sun,” “Come Back,” “A Place For Us” and album closer “It Will Be Okay” lend new meaning to the term “emotional support” as they hold you in their grip.

But after two albums of wearing their progressive jazz inclinations on their sleeve, We Float have arrived at their own brand of pop music — weighty yet somehow bright and irresistibly tuneful, *Let Go* never ceases to be inviting, even in its most earnest moments. Looking back, bassist/bandleader and principal songwriter Anne Marte Eggen was bound to strike precisely this kind of balance on her own terms. Growing up on a farm in rural Norway with three older siblings and mother who taught music to children, the home of Eggen’s childhood was alive with the clamor of musical instruments and pop/rock fare like Queen and The Beatles.

The first album she sought-out on her own, though, was Björk’s *Debut*, which she listened to obsessively. She dove into PJ Harvey’s catalog not long after that. (The name We Float, in fact, is derived from a PJ Harvey lyric.) When you begin your individual musical journey with visionary artists who play by their own rules, the idea of being able to bridge the gap between challenging and accessible doesn’t seem out of reach. Around that same time, Eggen inherited a bass guitar from one of her older siblings.

“I liked how I could jump right in and play along with songs I liked,” Eggen recalls, “in a way that wasn’t immediately within reach on piano or cello. To be honest, I thought it looked cool too. But it also *felt* right — the way the bass lends itself to both rhythm and melody, and the way you build songs

from the bottom up along with the drums, that's still something that guides my writing and challenges me." No surprise, then, that on *Let Go* we can hear Eggen employing the bass as a support instrument, a textural element, and a vehicle for her proggy/fusion chops all at once. Like the band as a whole, though, what Eggen displays more than ever these days is her singular knack for discretion.

Other than the fusion-style breakdown in the bridge of "Come Back," or the meshwork of King Crimson-esque guitar lines on "Restlessness," you would never know that all the members of We Float studied jazz at the Malmö Academy of Music (where the band formed). Drawn to the majestic soar of Linda Bergström's vocals, keyboardist Fanny Gunnarsson's ear for atmosphere, as well as drummer Filip Bensefelt's uncanny ability to drive the music like a rock drummer but with a jazz drummer's finesse, Eggen knew that she had assembled a group that could stretch not only the bounds of both pop and jazz, but also stretch past its own limitations.

With *Let Go*, We Float (along with avant-twang guitarist extraordinaire Samuel Hällkvist) move beyond an *instrumentalist* mentality and achieve the kind of high-minded but highly relatable *art* that the likes of Kate Bush, Simple Minds, Tears For Fears and Peter Dinklage conquered the airwaves with during the 1980s. If pop music was due for a modern makeover, We Float pull it off so well you might not immediately recognize what a feat of songcraft *Let Go* truly is.

That's perfectly fine with Eggen, though.

"We've all studied music a great deal," she admits. "It's not that we don't love challenging ourselves — we still give ourselves plenty of room to stretch in the live show — but there's a certain joy that comes from finding a balance. You can listen to this album without your music brain turned on, or you try to find the little tricks we kept up our sleeves. They're still there, you just have to pay attention!"

"I'm also," she continues, "pretty self-conscious about my lyrics, so if the overall mood comes across more than anything — if you can *feel* something without having to think about the mechanics of the words or the sounds underneath — then we've accomplished what I was hoping for."

Credits:

Anne Marte Eggen – electric bass, synthesizers, backing vocals
Linda Bergström – vocals, backing vocals, synthesizer
Fanny Gunnarsson – rhodes, piano, synthesizers, backing vocals
Filip Bensefelt – drums, percussion
Guest: Samuel Hällkvist – electric guitar

Music, lyrics and arrangements by Anne Marte Eggen
Recorded and mixed by Tobias Ekqvist in Sunnanå Studio
Mastered by Hans Olsson, Svenska Grammofonstudion
Produced by We Float and Tobias Ekqvist
Press photos by Jens Nordström
Artwork by Miriam Semb Namork

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