

WAAN – Biography (AUG 2026)

WAAN is the brainchild of saxophonist **Bart Wirtz** and keyboardist **Emiel van Rijthoven**. Together with bassist **Matteo Mazzú** and drummer **Mark Schilders**, they shape a sound that blurs the lines between electronic and acoustic music, dancefloor energy and jazz improvisation. Since their debut, WAAN has become known for a raw, adventurous style—merging groove-based electronics, atmospheric melodies, and improvisational freedom. In the studio they work closely with producer **Oscar de Jong** (Kraak & Smaak).

Their debut album *Echo Echo* (Sonar Kollektiv, 2023) received international acclaim, two Edison Jazz Award nominations, and airplay on BBC shows hosted by Jamie Cullum. The album led to an extensive tour of festivals and venues including Paradiso, Bimhuis, Transition, So What's Next, Amersfoort Jazz, RAUW, InJazz, Eurosonic, Jazzahead (DE) and more. In 2024, WAAN released a live EP, capturing the tension between acoustic interplay and electronic textures on stage.

In **January 2026** WAAN released their second album *We Want WAAN* on Sonar Kollektiv. The writing process began in the summer of 2024 on the Dutch island of Texel, where Wirtz and Van Rijthoven retreated into nature. Out of spontaneous jams and explorations, the sound shifted toward something freer, rougher, and even more rhythmically daring. Returning to **Eminent Studios** in Leiden with Mazzú and Schilders, the band shaped these ideas into a new body of work. Once again produced with Oscar de Jong, the record is marked by sonic layering, bold grooves, collaborations with **Ivy Sole** (US), and string arrangements. The album artwork was created by **Braulio Amado**.

The album was preceded by four singles:

- **Talking Trees** — melancholic jazz, trip-hop beats and analogue synths merge into an intense, cinematic sound that becomes even more captivating live.
- **Lodge Texas** — a bold, energetic track in which WAAN further pushes the boundaries between jazz, electronics and rhythmic experimentation.
- **Been Blue** — a collaboration with Philadelphia-based rapper, vocalist and producer **Ivy Sole**, in which hip-hop, jazz and electronic sounds come together into a boundary-blurring whole.
- **Mirrors** — a lightning-fast bass and drum groove in 5/4 and 6/8 recorded in jazz café **De Twee Spiegels** in Leiden that perfectly captures WAAN's live energy and the tension between studio technique and live interaction.

With *We Want WAAN*, the quartet expands their sonic universe: bold, restless, and brimming with curiosity. It is music that speaks to both the body and the imagination—a call to listen, to move, and to experience the full spectrum of sound that WAAN continues to explore.

Note- all relevant links can be found in the Onesheet