

## Drive Like Maria

The Best Kept Secret is a secret no more

Belgian/Dutch rock trio Drive Like Maria jumped onto the music scene in 2006. They won the Dutch finals of The Global Battle of the Bands (GBOB), even though they had only met weeks earlier, working as engineers/producers/musicians at Wisseloord Studios.

The group got bored waiting while hearing yet another lead singer complaining about the color of his microphone. So they started to jam.... and found their loathing of spoilt rock stars wasn't the only thing they had in common.

They went on to become the runner-up in the GBOB world finals at the London Astoria, and have been on the road ever since. Drive Like Maria played The Historic Center Festival in Mexico City, toured the US twice – over 40 shows including Arlene's Grocery (New York), Thee Park Side (San Francisco), Middle East Club (Boston), Dan's Silverleaf (Texas), SouthGate House (Newport) – and did numerous gigs in Belgium and the Netherlands: Pukkelpop festival, Charlatan, Kinkystar, Melkweg, Waterfront, Club3voor12 (Amsterdam), Rosrock, Rockoekoe, etcetera, etcetera.

Drive like Maria's killer rock songs have been described as "influenced by Led Zeppelin, early ZZ Top, Neil Young and Queens Of The Stone Age", among others. But none of these great bands has Drive like Maria's twenty two year old female lead guitarist who can tear up a room.

Some are still calling Drive like Maria "one of the Low Countries' best kept secrets". But not for much longer. As word of their solid live reputation is quickly spreading, they are gaining a global following. Or as one American fan put it: "Wicked. Fucking. Awesome."

In 2009 the band was signed by Play it Again Sam, who released Drive like Maria's self-produced debut album 'Elmwood' in Belgium and the Netherlands. 'Elmwood' features Folk singer Janis Ian on two tracks and was mixed by John Congleton (Black Mountain, The Roots, The Thermals, Polyphonic Spree). The album received rave reviews in the Netherlands and Belgium and a sold out headlining club tour, support shows with AC/DC, ZZ Top and Motorhead, and a run through the low countries finest festivals (Pukkelpop, Lowlands, Bospop, Paaspop etc.) followed.

This year Drive like Maria will be touring the US starting at SXSW in Austin this March.

Drive Like Maria:

-Bjorn Awouters - drums/lead vocals/guitar

-Nitzan Hoffmann - guitar

-Robin van Saaze – bass

[www.drivelikemaria.com](http://www.drivelikemaria.com)