

blur

The new album from Blur, titled **The Magic Whip**, started life in Hong Kong when the band had an unexpected break in touring in May 2013. It is released by Parlophone Records on 27th April 2015 - 16 years since 13, the band's last record as a four-piece.

The recordings for the band's eighth studio album began in Spring 2013 at Avon Studios in Kowloon. Damon Albarn, Graham Coxon, Alex James and Dave Rowntree spent 5 days jamming together and carried on with their live dates while the recordings were put aside and the group finished touring and returned to their respective lives. Dave resumed his day job as a lawyer and Alex returned home to his farm in Oxfordshire from where he writes a regular farming column in The Telegraph and hosts the annual food and music festival The Big Feastival with Jamie Oliver. Graham, who has released eight critically acclaimed solo albums to date, continued to work on his own material and, in 2014, Damon released his Mercury-nominated debut solo album 'Everyday Robots'.

Then, in November last year, Graham revisited the tracks and, drafting in Blur's early producer Stephen Street (Leisure, Modern Life is Rubbish, Parklife, The Great Escape, Blur), he worked with the band on the material. Damon then added lyrics and the 12 tracks on **The Magic Whip** is the result.

Blur were formed in 1989 by Damon Albarn, Graham Coxon, Alex James and Dave Rowntree and signed with Food/EMI the same year. Announcing their arrival with debut album **Leisure** in 1991, Blur continued to revolutionise the sound of English popular music with second release **Modern Life Is Rubbish** (1993). Five successive UK #1 albums followed - with **Parklife** (1994) and **The Great Escape** (1995) helping to propel the band to mass popularity in the UK and beyond. The eponymous **Blur** was released in 1997 and seventh album **Think Tank** (2003) was Blur's first as a three-piece after the temporary departure of founding guitarist Graham Coxon. One of the most successful British bands of the last two decades, Blur have won a total of five BRIT Awards, and were twice nominated for the Mercury Music Award.

In 2009 Blur reconvened as a four-piece to play a series of UK shows including two sold out dates at Hyde Park and a historic Sunday night appearance at Glastonbury. A film about Blur *No Distance Left To Run* was made that summer and released the following year. In 2012 the band received a BRIT Award for Outstanding Contribution to Music and wrote two new songs ahead of their massive sold out show in London's Hyde Park to mark the closing of the Olympic Games. The songs 'The Puritan' and 'Under The Westway' were debuted live on Twitter via a worldwide video stream from a London rooftop. And twenty one years after the release of their debut album, 2012 also saw **Blur 21: The Box**, the band's body of work compiled and gathered together into one box.

The band embarked on a 30 plus date world tour in 2013 which saw them play to fans around the globe, with shows across Asia, Europe, South America, as well as a headline slot at the Coachella Festival in California.

Blur will return to London's Hyde Park for a headline set on 20th June 2015.
