

= Bloc Party =

Bloc Party are an English indie rock band , currently composed of Kele Okereke (lead vocals , rhythm guitar , keyboards , sampler) , Russell Lissack (lead guitar , keyboards) , Justin Harris (bass guitar , keyboards , saxophones , backing vocals) and Louise Bartle (drums) . Former members Matt Tong and Gordon Moakes left the band in 2013 and 2015 respectively . Their brand of music , whilst rooted in rock , retains elements of other genres such as electronica and house music . The band was formed at the 1999 Reading Festival by Okereke and Lissack . They went through a variety of names before settling on Bloc Party in 2003 . Moakes joined the band after answering an advert in NME magazine , while Tong was picked via an audition . Bloc Party got their break by giving BBC Radio 1 DJ Steve Lamacq and Franz Ferdinand 's lead singer , Alex Kapranos , a copy of their demo " She 's Hearing Voices " .

In February 2005 , the band released their debut album Silent Alarm . It was critically acclaimed and was named Indie Album of the Year at the 2006 PLUG Awards and NME Album of the year which both honour indie music . That year , the record was also certified platinum in Britain . The band built on this success in 2007 with the release of their second studio album , A Weekend in the City , which reached a peak of number two in the UK Albums Chart and number twelve in the Billboard 200 . In August 2008 , Bloc Party released their third studio record , Intimacy which entered the UK Albums Chart at number eight and number eighteen on the Billboard 200 . The band went on a hiatus in October 2009 to focus on side projects . They reunited in September 2011 , and shortly thereafter released their fourth album , Four , which entered the UK Albums Chart at number three . In 2013 , Bloc Party released their third EP titled The Nextwave Sessions in August ; the band then began an indefinite hiatus to continue with their respective side projects . The band 's fifth studio album , Hymns , the first to involve Harris and Bartle , was released on 29 January 2016 . Bloc Party have sold over 3 million albums worldwide .

= = History = =

= = = Formation and rising popularity (1999 ? 2004) = = =

Russell Lissack and Kele Okereke first met in 1998 in London . Lissack had attended Bancroft 's School , while Okereke attended Ilford County High School , then Trinity Catholic High School , Woodford Green for sixth form . They bumped into each other again in 1999 at Reading Festival and decided to form a band . Bassist Gordon Moakes joined after answering an advert in NME , and drummer Matt Tong joined after an audition . After going through a variety of names , such as Union , The Angel Range , and Diet , the band settled on Bloc Party in September 2003 , a play on block party . The band has said that the name was not intended to be an allusion to the Soviet Bloc or the Canadian political party Bloc Québécois . However , Moakes said on the group 's official Internet forum that it was more a merging of the eastern " Blocs " and the western " parties " , in the political sense . He also notes that the name was not explicitly driven by politics , but rather it " looked , sounded , seemed fine so we went with it . "

In November 2003 , Bloc Party had their track " The Marshals Are Dead " featured on a compilation CD called The New Cross released by Angular Recording Corporation . They then released their debut single " She 's Hearing Voices " on the then fledgling record label Trash Aesthetics . The band got their break after Okereke went to a Franz Ferdinand concert in 2003 , and gave a copy of " She 's Hearing Voices " to both lead singer Alex Kapranos and BBC Radio 1 DJ Steve Lamacq . Lamacq subsequently played the song on his radio show , labelling the track " genius " , and invited them to record a live session for the show . The buzz generated off the back of the single led to another release , " Banquet / Staying Fat " , this time through Moshi Moshi Records , and to the eventual signing with independent label Wichita Recordings in April 2004 .

= = = Silent Alarm (2004 ? 2006) = = =

Bloc Party 's debut album , Silent Alarm , was released in February 2005 and was met with universal critical acclaim . It was voted ' Album of the Year ' for 2005 by NME , and reached number 3 on the UK Albums Chart before being certified platinum . The first single from the album , " So Here We Are / Positive Tension " , made the top 5 on the UK Top 40 chart . Further singles " Banquet " (which reached number 13 in NME 's ' Top 50 Singles of 2005 ') , " Helicopter " , and " Pioneers " , whilst failing to repeat this success , still managed to reach the UK top 20 . The animated video for " Pioneers " , made by the Shoreditch @-@ based Minivegas design agency , was top of the NME video charts for four weeks . NME tagged them as " art @-@ rock " at that time but the band felt it was too limited .

The band received positive reviews from critics in the United States and they toured there heavily in the 18 months that followed the release of Silent Alarm . In early 2006 , they finished their tour with sold out shows in Los Angeles , Miami and Berkeley . The album went on to sell more than 350 @,@ 000 copies in North America and over a million worldwide . After this success , the established electronic group , The Chemical Brothers , soon collaborated with Okereke for " Believe " , a track on their Push the Button album . An album of remixes of tracks from Silent Alarm had also been released at the end of August 2005 in the UK . This remix album , entitled Silent Alarm Remixed , retained the album 's original track list and includes remixes from the likes of Ladytron , M83 , Death from Above 1979 , Four Tet , and Mogwai .

During July 2005 , Bloc Party recorded two new tracks with Silent Alarm producer Paul Epworth . The songs were released as a single with a B @-@ side , titled " Two More Years " , to coincide with the band 's October 2005 UK tour . The tour was also accompanied by a re @-@ issue of Silent Alarm , which included " Two More Years " and former single " Little Thoughts " as bonus tracks . A remix of " Banquet " by The Streets , as well as a music video for the song , were included in the " Two More Years " single . Bloc Party also contributed the track " The Present " to the Help ! : A Day in the Life compilation , the profits of which benefited the War Child charity .

= = = A Weekend in the City (2006 ? 2008) = = =

Bloc Party 's second album , A Weekend in the City , was produced by Garret " Jackknife " Lee . It was released in February 2007 , although it was leaked in November 2006 . It became available for download on the UK iTunes Store before the physical release , and reached the number 2 spot on the UK Albums Chart . The album also reached number 2 on the Australian and Belgian charts , and debuted at number 12 in the Billboard 200 , with 48 @,@ 000 copies sold . The first single , " The Prayer " , was released on 29 January , and became the band 's highest charting single in the British Top 40 , reaching number 4 . In the buildup to the release of the album , BBC Radio 1 DJ Zane Lowe aired a live set by the band from Maida Vale studios on 30 January 2007 , featuring a mix of old and new songs . On 1 February 2007 , A Weekend in the City was made available to listen to for free through Bloc Party 's official MySpace page .

The next single , " I Still Remember " , was Bloc Party 's highest charting American single , peaking at number 24 on the Modern Rock Chart . The band released their third single , " Hunting for Witches " , with an accompanying video clip in August 2007 . The single became their only ARIA Chart entry , peaking at number 20 . In October 2007 , it was announced that Bloc Party would release a new single , " Flux " , on 13 November ? ahead of their end of year gigs . The electronic song , also produced by Jackknife Lee , was very different from previous singles released by the band .

The band 's first gig following the release of A Weekend in the City was on 5 February 2007 , in Reading , and was broadcast live on BBC 6 Music . On 20 May 2007 , Bloc Party headlined on the In New Music We Trust stage at the BBC Radio 1 Big Weekend in Preston . They also performed at the UK leg of Live Earth on 7 July 2007 at Wembley Stadium . Furthermore , the band played sets at T in the Park and Oxegen 07 that same weekend , as well as Glastonbury and the Reading and Leeds Festivals later in 2007 . Bloc Party announced a tour of Australia and New Zealand in August 2007 , which would include a special appearance at the Splendour in the Grass Festival on 5 August

. On 17 September 2007 , they recorded a set for the PBS show Austin City Limits a day after playing at the Austin City Limits Music Festival . On 27 October , the band performed a set at London 's The Roundhouse with the Exmoor Singers , a London @-@ based choir , as part of the BBC Electric Proms . The set included songs from both Silent Alarm and A Weekend in the City along with the first British live performance of " Flux " .

= = = Intimacy (2008 ? 2009) = = =

" Mercury " was released as the first single from Bloc Party 's third album in August 2008 . Again produced by Jacknife Lee and Paul Epworth , Intimacy was rush @-@ released later that month , with the album available to download 3 days after an announcement in August 2008 . Later in the month the band played second on the bill at the Reading and Leeds Festivals before headlining the Hydro Connect Music Festival in Argyll , Scotland .

During the autumn of 2008 , the band went on a short tour of North America , which included an appearance at the Virgin Festival in Toronto , as well as the band 's first ever American college show at Syracuse University . They made their live return to the UK on 30 September 2008 with a special gig in London as part of Q Awards : The Gigs . They also played the Glasgow date of MTV2 's and Topman 's " Gonzo on Tour " on 19 October 2008 . A follow @-@ up single , " Talons " was released in October 2008 . The song was not part of the pre @-@ order album , but did feature on the full album CD release and was made freely available to people who already purchased the download @-@ only album . An album of remixes of all tracks on Intimacy , Intimacy Remixed , was released in May 2009 . The band undertook their first UK tour since December 2007 in October 2009 , dubbing it " Bloctober " .

= = = One More Chance and hiatus (2009 ? 2011) = = =

In July 2009 , Okereke stated that the band did not have a current recording contract and had no obligation or pressure to release a new album in the foreseeable future ; he went on to suggest that the release of a fourth album was on an indefinite timescale . A new single , " One More Chance " , was released in August 2009 . The song did not appear on Intimacy and was produced by Jacknife Lee . After this , the group went on a hiatus , with the members unsure as to whether they would carry on .

During this period of hiatus Lissack revived his project Pin Me Down and joined the live line @-@ up of Irish rock @-@ band Ash as guitarist and synthesiser player on their touring for the A ? Z Series . Moakes formed the group Young Legionnaire with Paul Mullen , vocalist & guitarist of The Automatic , and William Bowerman , drummer for La Roux , releasing a single , " Colossus " in August 2010 . Okereke released a solo album , The Boxer , in June 2010 . Produced by Hudson Mohawke and XXXChange , its release was preceded by the single " Tenderoni " . Rumours throughout 2011 suggested Okereke had left the group to focus on solo work , though these were denied by other band members .

= = = Four and The Nextwave Sessions (2011 ? 2013) = = =

Bloc Party started writing material for a fourth album in 2011 , but decided not to play live . In the meantime Okereke finished an EP titled The Hunter . The group stated they intended to release a new album in 2012 . In May 2012 , Bloc Party announced Four , which was released on 20 August 2012 , after being made available to stream in its entirety for over a week preceding release . The album was recorded with Alex Newport , who had previously worked with At The Drive In and The Mars Volta , in New York City . Bloc Party released " Octopus " that July and later released another single entitled " Day Four " . The band released " Kettling " on 12 November 2012 , followed by " Truth " on 25 February 2013 . Four peaked at number three on the UK Albums Chart and at number 36 on the Billboard 200 .

The band debuted new material during their 2013 North American tour , including " Children of the

Future " at Rams Head Live ! , " Ratchet " at The Pageant , " Montreal " at the Ogden Theatre and " X @-@ cutioner 's Song " at Mr. Smalls Theater in Pittsburgh . Lissack later confirmed the band 's plans to release a new EP in " northern hemisphere summer " . He told Marc Zanotti of Australian website MusicFeeds that the new material was " not like a continuation of the record we 've just made , it 's a completely separate thing [...] the next step ; the next progression " . " French Exit " was given its debut live performance at Crystal Ballroom on 24 May . Some of the new material would feature on The Nextwave Sessions , an EP announced on 25 June and for release on 12 August via Frenchkiss Records .

= = = Hiatus and line @-@ up changes (2013 ? 2015) = = =

During the summer tour of 2013 , drummer Matt Tong left the band . Lissack told a Canadian newspaper , the National Post that the band were planning to take an indefinite hiatus following their appearance at the Latitude Festival on 19 July . In October 2013 , Kele assembled a DJ Mix for ! K7 's Tapes mix series , released under the Bloc Party name . In September 2014 , Okereke stated that Bloc Party were working on a fifth album . In March 2015 , bassist Gordon Moakes tweeted he had parted ways with Bloc Party . Following the departure of their former members Okereke and Lissack started to work on new songs on their own in late 2014 .

Bloc Party unveiled their new line @-@ up at two intimate gigs in the Los Angeles area (19 August 2015 at The Glass House in Pomona and 20 August 2015 at The Roxy in Los Angeles) . Following these performances , Bloc Party also subheadlined FYF Fest in Los Angeles on 22 August 2015 . At these shows , the band confirmed that they 've finished recording their next album . The shows marked the live debut for new bassist Justin Harris of the Portland , Oregon , indie rock outfit Menomena , who had previously opened several Bloc Party U.S. tour dates in April 2009 ; and Louise Bartle , who was accidentally announced a month earlier as Bloc Party 's drummer by instrument manufacturer Natal Drums in a since @-@ deleted tweet , leading to fan speculation regarding her membership that was ultimately proved correct . These shows also included the first performances of two new songs called " Eden " and " Exes " according to the setlist .

= = = Hymns (2015 @-@ present) = = =

In a performance at Maida Vale , Bloc Party gave " The Good News " its live debut ; hours later , " The Love Within " was featured as " Hottest Record in the World " by Annie Mac on BBC Radio 1 . Okereke revealed the band 's upcoming fifth album is set to be titled Hymns . The album 's release was later confirmed on social media as 29 January 2016 .

= = Musical style = =

Bloc Party 's brand of guitar rock draws on influences such as The Chemical Brothers , The Cure , Manic Street Preachers , Joy Division , Sonic Youth , Blur , and The Smiths . Okereke has also stated that Mogwai 's album Mogwai Young Team changed his life by being his musical " year zero " . Okereke also cites Suede as a major influence , he says Dog Man Star was the first record he fell in love with . Particular parallels were made between Bloc Party and Gang of Four upon their arrival on the music scene , yet the band were " mildly infuriated " at such references , claiming they had never " particularly liked " Gang of Four . To achieve their unique style , numerous delay and other effects pedals are implemented . During the recording of second album A Weekend in the City , the band suggested it would contain " some truly R & B styled beats , a song where [Tong] and [Moakes] play drums simultaneously [with] both eggshell @-@ thin fragility and trouser @-@ flapping hugeness " , as opposed to their typical sound . The style has been compared to and inspired by such bands as Radiohead , U2 , Depeche Mode , and Björk . Some of the most noticeable changes between debut Silent Alarm and A Weekend in the City are that the songs became more layered and less raw due to inclusion of string arrangements .

With the release of " Flux " , Bloc Party 's style became even more diverse with the inclusion of

electronic music . " Mercury " saw Bloc Party distance themselves even further from the traditional guitar band set @-@ up by experimenting with dark electronic sounds and a brass section inspired by Siouxsie and the Banshees . The band 's third album Intimacy also features synths , processed drum beats and loops , vocal manipulation , and choral arrangements . Even though the album was influenced by electronic music , the band still had not lost their feel for guitar music . For example , in an interview , Okereke said that the band was starting to miss their more traditional sound , and confirmed that may have been the way fourth album was headed . However , Tong contradicted this , stating : " There 's every chance we might go back to more orthodox arrangements or things that resemble a traditional band but I don 't think we 'll ever write songs like we did on Silent Alarm again . " A 2009 Vice Records mix lists the following songs Bloc Party are influenced by : Eagle Boston 's " Wild Wild Ost " , Pylon 's " Working Is No Problem " , Delta 5 's " Mind Your Own Business " , John Foxx 's " Underpass " , Prince 's " I Would Die 4 U " (also covered live) , Sonic Youth 's " Youth Against Fascism " , Dinosaur Jr . 's " Freak Scene " , La Roux 's " Quicksand (Nightrunners Edit) " , and Bruce Springsteen 's " 57 Channels (And Nothin ' On) " .

= = Awards and nominations = =

Bloc Party have had several nominations from a number of different awarding bodies during their recording career . The band themselves were nominated for ' Best New Artist ' at the 2005 NME Awards , and were also up for the ' Best Alternative Act ' category at the 2005 MTV Europe Music Awards . In 2006 , Bloc Party were nominated for another NME Award , this time in the ' Best British Band ' category . They were also shortlisted for three PLUG Awards : ' New Artist of the Year ' in 2005 , and ' Artist of the Year ' and ' Live Act of the Year ' in 2006 . At the 19th GLAAD Media Awards in 2008 , they were nominated in the ' Music Artist ' category for their work on second album A Weekend in the City .

Their debut album Silent Alarm was nominated for the 2005 Mercury Music Prize and won the NME award for ' Best Album ' . It was also nominated as ' Album of the Year ' at three different ceremonies : the New Pantheon Music Award (Shortlist Music Prize) , the 2006 NME Awards , and the 2006 PLUG Awards , where " Helicopter " was also up for ' Best Music Video ' . The record won the award for ' Best Indie Rock Album ' at the 2006 PLUG Awards . At the 2008 NME Awards , " Flux " was nominated in three different categories : ' Best Track ' , ' Best Video ' and ' Best Dancefloor Filler ' .

= = Personnel = =

Current

Kele Okereke ? lead vocals , rhythm guitar , sampler , electric piano (1999 ? present)

Russell Lissack ? lead guitar , sampler , synthesiser , programming (1999 ? present)

Justin Harris ? bass guitar , backing vocals , glockenspiel , saxophone (2015 ? present)

Louise Bartle ? drums , percussion , backing vocals (2015 ? present)

Former

Gordon Moakes ? bass guitar , backing vocals , occasional lead vocals , keyboards , synthesiser , drums , glockenspiel (2001 ? 2015)

Matt Tong ? drums , percussion , backing vocals (2001 ? 2013)

Timeline