

●

BAND'S BIG GIG SEES 23 SONGS PLAYED TO 400-STRONG ARTS CENTRE CROWD



■ Gig - Blur onstage at Colchester Arts Centre Picture: Phoebe Fox



■ On stage - the Blur crew Picture: Phoebe Fox



■ Enthralled - crowds at the show Image: Phoebe Fox

‘Sorry it took so long’ – Blur return to city

By **GEORGE KING**
george.king@newsquest.co.uk

BLUR made an emotional return to Colchester as they treated fans to an intimate and once-in-a-lifetime performance.

The Britpop rockers, who announced details of their new album *The Ballad of Darren* on the eve of the concert, took to the stage of Colchester Arts Centre on Friday night.

Over the course of the two hour-long performance, Damon Albarn and co. dazzled an admiring audience of 400 lucky fans who had crammed into the modest-sized venue.

Throughout the legendary show, Damon, guitarist Graham Coxon, drummer Dave Rowntree and bassist Alex James played hit after hit, deep cuts and new material.

Setlist staples such as *Song 2*, *There's No Other Way* and *Parklife*, were given an airing ahead of the band's huge Wembley Stadium gigs, each unsurprisingly sending the crowd into a frenzy.

Beetlebum, *Tender*, *Coffee* and *TV*, and *Girls and Boys* were also performed during the 23-song show, much to the delight of the



■ Frontman - Damon Albarn

sweaty gig-goers.

New single *The Narcissist*, released just over 24 hours before the show, was also given its live debut, as was *St Charles Square*, which opened the night.

The high-octane show, which unsurprisingly sold-out within seconds of going on sale, proved particularly sentimental given the band's connection to Colchester.

Damon and Graham famously met at the Stanway School, while

Dave was born in the former town before studying at the Gilberd School and working at Colchester Council.

And the emotion reached a crescendo with the arrival of moving set closer *The Universal*, which powerfully tugged on the heartstrings of all.

Speaking during the gig, frontman Damon said: "I don't think we have actually ever played Colchester, so sorry it took us so long. "It has been an absolute pleasure. You have been a magnificent audience."

Anthony Roberts is the director at Colchester Arts Centre, and the man who oversaw Blur's return to the city.

He said: "Blur are without doubt the biggest celebrities ever to take the stage at our venue. "The atmosphere of expectation and excitement had been building all day.

"Keeping the show secret was a bit of a challenge because with something as big as this the old rumour mill usually gets going pretty quickly.

"Fortunately, Colchester Arts Centre is run with a very small team so that made it a little bit easier."

Largest mobility and stairlift retailer in the UK!



Here at Ableworld Colchester we are situated on Peartree Road, opposite Topps Tiles, making it easy and convenient to reach with ample free parking. Our store is open 6 days a week, and we are on hand to help with any mobility queries that you or a loved one may have. In our store our product range expands from

Mobility Scooters and Wheelchairs, to Bathing Aids and Household Accessories, and much more. You are in safe hands with our team of mobility experts. As well as mobility products, we can also provide many other services from our store, such as Stairlift installations, Mobility Scooter repairs and Wheelchair hire, all completed through our fully trained

Engineering team.

Why Choose Ableworld Colchester?

Friendly Helpful Staff, Home Demonstrations, In-House Engineering Team and Which? Trusted Traders.

How to find us: Ableworld Colchester, 5 The Stanway Centre, Peartree Road, Colchester CO3 0JX

Tel: 01206 561335

Email: info@ableworldcolchester.co.uk