

Coldplay have been a band since January 16th 1998, when four young university friends -- Guy Berryman, Jonny Buckland, Will Champion and Chris Martin -- lost a demo tape competition on London radio station XFM.

Happily, things have improved since that early blow, with the band going on to sell tens of millions of copies of their four albums: 2000's "Parachutes," 2002's "A Rush Of Blood To The Head," 2005's "X&Y" and 2008's "Viva La Vida or Death And All His Friends." They've also toured the planet, playing life-affirming songs like "Yellow," "The Scientist" and "Fix You" to a dedicated -- and ever-growing -- army of fans. And they've managed to fill their trophy cabinet with pretty much every major music award there is (including four MTV VMAs and seven Grammys).

Coldplay's most recent album, "Viva La Vida or Death and All His Friends," was not only the band's boldest and brightest album yet, but arguably their most successful. It debuted at Number One in more than 30 countries and went on to sell more than 11 million copies. The album also spawned Coldplay's first Number One single on both sides of the Atlantic ("Viva La Vida") and catapulted them around the globe on a tour which sold over three million tickets and climaxed in September 2009 with two sold out nights at London's 90,000-capacity Wembley Stadium.

At the end of 2010, the band took a break from recording their fifth album to return with a gorgeous, one-off Christmas single, "Christmas Lights." Released without any great fanfare, the song still reached the Top 10 in 22 of the 23 iTunes Stores worldwide, and looks well-placed to become a rare modern-day addition to the canon of classic Christmas songs.

The band then retreated back to their London studio, where they've spent the first half of 2011 working with "Viva" producers Brian Eno and Markus Dravs. Once again, they're pushing themselves incredibly hard to make a new record which bothers more boundaries, smashes more preconceptions and, of course, delivers more timeless songs capable of warming a million hearts and lighting up a million radios.

Outside music, Coldplay are committed supporters of Oxfam's work to find solutions to poverty and injustice around the world. The band are also patrons of ClientEarth, the public interest environmental law organisation which is committed to securing a healthy planet.