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TASKMASTER REVEALS BRAND NEW LINE-UP

DAISY MAY COOPER – JOHNNY VEGAS – KATHERINE PARKINSON – MAWAAN RIZWAN – RICHARD HERRING

It was announced today, 29th July 2020, that **Alex Horne's** International Emmy and triple BAFTA nominated show *Taskmaster* has revealed the latest quintet of contestants who will feature in the brand new series set to launch this Autumn in its new home on Channel 4.

Perched on their gleaming thrones will be **Greg Davies** as the incomparable and all-powerful *Taskmaster*, and Alex Horne as his faithful sidekick and general dogsbody, scoring the efforts of five top comedians as they tackle perplexing and extraordinary challenges in the name of critically acclaimed entertainment.

Hoping to impress the *Taskmaster* and be crowned the next champion are: BAFTA winning actress and writer **Daisy May Cooper** (*This Country*, BBC Three), acclaimed comedian, writer and director **Johnny Vegas** (*Benidorm*, ITV), BAFTA winning actress **Katherine Parkinson** (*IT Crowd*, Channel 4), comedian and actor **Mawaan Rizwan** (*Live At The Apollo*, BBC Two), and comedian, multi-award-winning podcaster and writer **Richard Herring** (RHLSTP). Wax seals will open, dreams will be made and/or broken, and Little Alex Horne will be wrapped around his master's little finger providing stats and moral support in the most ridiculous and ferociously fought game show on television.

Taskmaster was crowned Best Entertainment Programme at the Broadcast Awards (beating prime time hit shows *Strictly Come Dancing*, *I'm A Celebrity... Get Me Out Of Here!*, *Love Island*, *The Voice UK*, and *All Round To Mrs. Brown's*). It was again nominated in the same category for 2020 and received a double nomination in 2019 for Best Entertainment Programme and Best Multichannel Programme. Most recently the show received its third BAFTA nomination for Best Comedy Entertainment Programme, an International Format Award for Best Returning Format and a TV Choice nomination for Best Entertainment in 2020. It has also received nominations for an International Emmy for Best Non-Scripted Entertainment, an RTS Award for Best Entertainment show, four consecutive Broadcasting Press Guild Awards for Best Entertainment Programme, double nominations at the Broadcast Digital Awards 2019 for Best Entertainment Programme and Gamechanger Programme.

The original *Taskmaster* programme and format combined has been sold into 106 countries, with 140 episodes of the format being made outside the UK including local versions of the show produced for VTM in Belgium, TVE in Spain,

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and TVNZ in New Zealand, and a second series for Discovery in Norway, a fourth series for TV2 in Denmark, as well as two brand new series for MTV in Finland, and an award-winning fifth series for STV in Sweden. While the UK original programme is making it's U.S. debut on 2nd August on The CW Network.

The Taskmaster book *200 Extraordinary Tasks for Ordinary People* has sold nearly 100,000 copies, while a *Taskmaster* boardgame was released in Autumn 2019 and entirely sold out a week after it went on sale. It has sold 26,000 copies to date, with an expansion pack to be released later this year.

WHAT THE PRESS HAVE SAID ABOUT TASKMASTER

Cleverly constructed series... Horne and Davies tormenting five different comics a season is a proven formula

★★★★ Jack Seale, *Guardian*

Taskmaster is one of the most consistently funny comedy game shows on television

★★★★ Sarah Hughes, *The I*

This glorious little show can be relied on to provide laughs week in and week out, and this ninth series has been another belter

Anne Richardson, *The Daily Mirror*

This is now a cult hit with a seemingly never-ending run of imaginative tasks for endlessly unprepared contestants

Sara Wallis, *The Daily Mirror*

It's glorious mayhem and stupidly funny

David Butcher, *Radio Times*

No other TV show makes the jeopardy of losing self-respect quite so funny... brilliantly entertaining

Frances Taylor, *Radio Times*

This is the strangest thing I've ever seen. It remains the strangest – and greatest

Jack Thorne, *Radio Times*

Funny, revealing, and glorious...Caitlin Moran once wrote that the comedy panel game is one of the glories of British TV. A new one shone bright last night

★★★★★ Andrew Billen, *The Times*

It's such a cracking format... possibly the best yet

Chris Bennion, *The Times*

The kind of Dave thing that shouldn't quite work but is actually wildly stupid fun. Mainly thanks to Alex Horne, late of so much splendid radio, and Greg Davies...a winner

Euan Ferguson, *The Observer*

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I adore Taskmaster — essentially Gladiators, but for nerds

★★★★ Evening Standard, Samuel Fishwick

Never less than brilliant

Mike Ward, Daily Star

Winning as ever

Sharon Lougher, Metro

Ludicrously funny

★★★★★ Christopher Stevens, Daily Mail

One of the funniest game shows on TV

★★★★★ Natasha Holt, TV Times Magazine

The keynote themes are ludicrous absurdity and moderately cruel sadism. Somehow, however, it all works brilliantly, with the presence of Horne adding the barest modicum of civility to proceedings...prepare for tears of laughter

Mark Wareham, Mail on Sunday, Event Magazine

Taskmaster is an unashamed celebration of the bizarre and the mediocre

Sam Wollaston, G2 Guardian

Never before has anything so absurd, so stupid, so utterly pointless, made such good television

Sara Wallis, Daily Mirror

Inventive

Mike Ward, Saturday Magazine, Daily Express

Taskmaster just keeps on giving when it comes to laughs and originality

The Sun, TV Magazine

Creative Chaos

Emma Messenger, TV Choice

This seems to be a series that really brings families together

Bruce Dessau, Beyond the Joke

Splendidly silly

Sunday Times, Culture

Clever

David Stephenson, Sunday Express, S Magazine

The show routinely delivers the funniest, most unexpected comedy of the TV week...The cleverest spin on the panel show format in years, it's must-watch TV

Wesley Mead, Den of Geek

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For more information please contact:

Florrie Sheehan at Avalon: fsheehan@avalonuk.com

Kate Conway at Channel 4: KConway@Channel4.co.uk

Notes to editors

About Taskmaster

- *Taskmaster* is an International Emmy and triple BAFTA nominated comedy game show originally created by Alex Horne. Greg Davies stars as the all-powerful “Taskmaster” who, with the help of his loyal assistant Horne, sets out to test the wiles, wit and wisdom of five comedians through a series of strange and surreal challenges in what is the most hard-fought and ridiculous comedy entertainment format on TV.
- 74 episodes have been produced in the UK so far, with a further 60 ordered by Channel 4 as part of a landmark six season deal in 2020. Series 10 – 15 will be aired on Channel 4 from Autumn 2020, following nine record-breaking series on UKTV’s Dave.
- Since the programme’s launch in 2015 on UKTV’s Dave, *Taskmaster*’s audience has grown by 80% from series one to series nine, averaging an audience of 1.8 million viewers at its peak.
- *Taskmaster* was crowned Best Entertainment Programme at the Broadcast Awards 2018 and received three more nominations in 2019 and 2020. It has also been nominated for Best Entertainment Programme at the RTS Awards, Broadcasting Press Guild Awards, the Broadcast Digital Awards, and the TV Choice Awards.
- The original *Taskmaster* programme and format combined has been sold into 106 countries, with 140 episodes of the format being made outside the UK including local versions of the show produced for VTM in Belgium, TVE in Spain, and TVNZ in New Zealand. While the original will air on The CW in the U.S. this August.
- The format has seen huge success in Europe, with the Swedish version winning Programme of the Year at the Kristallen 2019 (Sweden’s TV Academy Awards) and its fourth series for SVT reaching ratings of over a 50% market share in a primetime weekend slot. Two new series have been ordered for MTV in Finland after its first episode ranked in the top ten most watched shows in the country, and there are returning series for Discovery in Norway and TV2 in Denmark.

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- The show features the best of comedy talent including Frank Skinner, James Acaster, David Baddiel, Katherine Ryan, Russell Howard, Aisling Bea, Rose Matafeo, Romesh Ranganathan, and Noel Fielding among many more.
- The *Taskmaster* YouTube channel has received over 50 million views and has 305,000 subscribers.
- *#HomeTasking* had over 70 million impressions across all content on YouTube. Viewing grew by 42%, while subscribers grew by 85% since it launched on the Taskmaster YouTube channel. It was watched in 125 countries with viewers ranging from the US to the UK and from Moldova to Mongolia.
- The Taskmaster Book *200 Extraordinary Tasks for Ordinary People* has sold nearly 100,000 copies.
- A *Taskmaster* boardgame was released in Autumn 2019 and entirely sold out a week after it went on sale. It has sold 26,000 copies to date, with an expansion pack to be released later this year.

About Avalon:

Avalon is a multi-award-winning talent management, television production and live promotion group with offices in London, Los Angeles and New York.

The company represents a prolific roster of artists including comedians, actors, presenters, writers and directors and produces numerous ground-breaking television shows. Series currently in production include: *Not Going Out* (BBC), the UK's longest running sitcom on air; *Taskmaster* (Channel 4), the hit entertainment format showing in 100 countries; multi Emmy-winner, *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver* (HBO); *The Russell Howard Hour* (Sky), the network's most successful entertainment show launch since 2010; *Starstruck*, a new sitcom from the 2018 Edinburgh Comedy Award winner Rose Matafeo (HBO Max/BBC); *Everything's Gonna Be Okay*, from creator Josh Thomas (Freeform); *Breeders*, a new sitcom starring Martin Freeman and Daisy Haggard (FX/Sky); *The Iliza Shlesinger Sketch Show* (Netflix); new series of the iconic British satirical puppet show, *Spitting Image* (BritBox UK); and multiple comedy specials for Amazon Prime Video, HBO Max and Netflix. Other landmark Avalon shows include BAFTA winning and multi Emmy nominated, *Catastrophe* (Amazon Prime Video/Channel 4), *Fantasy Football League* (BBC/ITV), multi BAFTA-winning *TV Burp* (ITV), and seven seasons of *Workaholics* (Comedy Central USA). Avalon also distributes its catalogue of programmes to over 150 countries worldwide.

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As a leading promoter of live comedy, Avalon produced *Newman and Baddiel: Live at Wembley*, the UK's first arena comedy show; *Jerry Springer: The Opera*, the first West End show to win all four UK 'Best New Musical' awards; and has continued to produce and promote live shows globally, as well as promoting more winners and nominees of the prestigious Edinburgh Comedy Award than any other company.

For Avalon news visit: www.avalonuk.com/press or follow @avalonent

About Channel 4

Channel 4 is a publicly-owned yet commercially-funded public service broadcaster and has a remit to be innovative, experimental and distinctive. Its public ownership and not-for-profit status ensure all profit generated by its commercial activity is directly reinvested back into the delivery of its public service remit.

As a publisher-broadcaster, Channel 4 is also required to commission UK content from the independent production sector and currently works with around 300 creative companies across the UK every year. In addition to the main Channel 4 service, its portfolio includes: E4, More4, Film4, 4seven, Channel4.com, streaming service All 4 and The Box Plus Network, including 4Music.