

THE OFFICIAL UK CHARTS



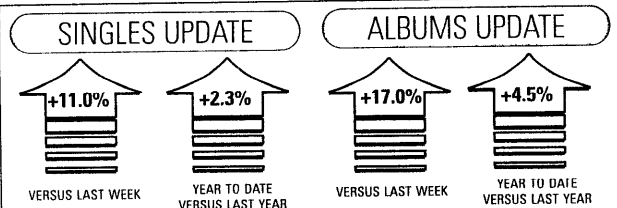
Robson & Jerome's run at the top of the singles chart is limited to two weeks, as the Prodigy prove yet again that they are the most consistent hitmakers of all dance acts. They register their 11th consecutive Top 15 smash, and their second number one in a row, as Breather debuts in pole position after selling 195,000 copies last week. This is more than twice as many as any other single, and 65% more than Firestarter managed on its chart-topping debut back in March.

Robson & Jerome can't be too downhearted, however, as their second album logically entitled Take Two, debuts at number one on the albums chart after selling 187,000 copies last week. This was more than 50% more than the outgoing number one Spice by the Spice Girls. Curiously enough, the album chart has followed the single chart exactly in recent weeks with Boyzone giving way to the Spice Girls followed by Robson & Jerome in both listings. R&J's first, self-titled album arrived in exactly the same week last year, but the result was exactly the same; an instant number one, though Robson & Jerome sold some 41% more in its first week with 264,000.

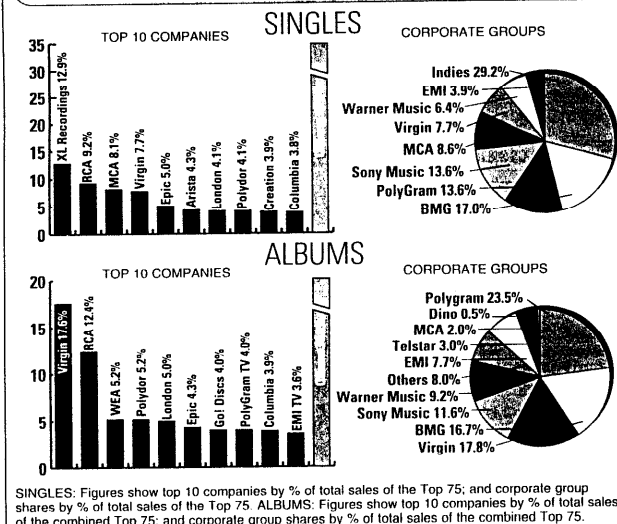
Sales are generally running at a lower level in the lead up to Christmas than they were last year, when all previous records were shattered. Approximately 2,948,000 albums were sold last week, and 2,514,000 the week before, compared to 3,191,000 and 2,645,000 in the same weeks in 1995, decreases of 8% and 5% respectively. This is somewhat offset by the increases in singles sales which were up 29% this week and 6% last week over the comparable period in 1995.

Last week, Oasis became the first act to have four simultaneous Top 40 singles since Adam & The Ants in 1981. This week they have just one in the Top 40, Whatever, which eases two places down to 36. It's holding up better than the other eight Oasis singles reissues because it's the only one not included in the two boxed sets which are charted as albums.

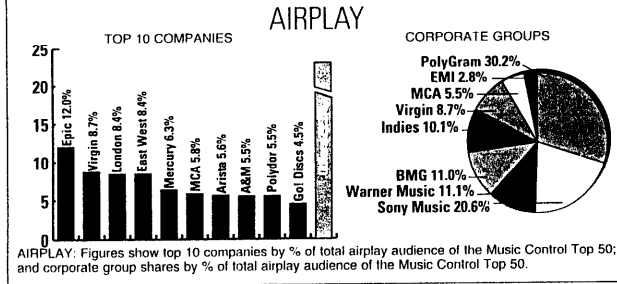
Though Whatever is the only Top 40 survivor, all nine remain in the Top 75, taking their cumulative weeks on the chart this year to 112. This is the most by any act in any calendar year, beating the previous record set by Bill Haley in 1956 and nearly equalled by Elvis Presley with 108 the following year. Presley and Haley set their totals at a time when the chart had far fewer entries. There were a mere 20 (until April 1956) or 30 (thereafter) compared to the current Top 75. But they did release far more singles - Presley had 13 new chart entries in 1957 alone -



AT-A-GLANCE WEEKLY MARKET SHARE



SINGLES: Figures show top 10 companies by % of total sales of the Top 75; and corporate group shares by % of total sales of the Top 75. ALBUMS: Figures show top 10 companies by % of total sales of the combined Top 75; and corporate group shares by % of total sales of the combined Top 75.



AIRPLAY: Figures show top 10 companies by % of total airplay audience of the Music Control Top 50; and corporate group shares by % of total airplay audience of the Music Control Top 50.

and faced less competition, so the question of which is more meritorious remains.

Shed Seven's Chasing Rainbows debuts at number 17, making them the first act this year to have five new hits. They reached number 14 with Getting Better, number eight with Going For Gold, 22 with Bully Boy while On Standby went to number 12. All five singles were lifted from the album A Maximum High which has, nevertheless, sold only about 125,000 copies and moves sluggishly 97-93 this week.

After losing out to bootleggers on his last single Be As One, **Sasha** insisted

his latest Arkham Asylum be released without the usual DJ promo and upfront radio play. Be As One peaked at number 17, but Arkham Asylum is uncharted. It's not as bad as it sounds, since it sold enough to take 60th place in the singles chart but was excluded as it was too long. It is also too cheap to qualify as an album and therefore has no home to go to.

The fact that it has performed so much more poorly than Be As One suggests that club and radio play are vital to the success of records of this kind, despite the bootleggers; a fact Sasha may choose to acknowledge next time around.

Alan Jones

Alan Jones



As predicted last week, East 17 & Gabrielle's If You Ever collaboration has overhauled the Spice Girls' Say You'll Be There to become the new airplay number one, though like each of its three predecessors at the top, it garnered more plays and a greater audience in its last week at number two than in its first week at number one and has, therefore, peaked. It's likely to stay at the top next week, however, unless **Toni Braxton** can turn her gradual gains into a spurt.

Toni's Un-break My Heart has moved 41-33-11-8-6-3, with solid increases every week. Un-break My Heart is getting across-the-board support, with Radio One and Capital delivering the largest proportion of its audience, via 23 and 37 plays respectively. The only records getting more support at Radio One - and even then it's only one extra play - are **Babyface's** This Is For The Lover In You and **The Fun Lovin' Criminals'** Fun Lovin' Criminal. Twenty-four plays is the lowest tally to give records top billing at Radio One this year and, while the Babyface single has performed well in the CIN chart, the FLC track is far more popular with Radio One than it is with either its audience or its rivals. FLC debuted on the CIN chart at number 26 last week, and has already tumbled to number 47. Apart from its Radio One plays, it got just 49 plays last week from the Music Control panel - less than one play per station - and is ranked only 34th on the airplay chart, with R1's support delivering 97% of its total audience.

The fastest developing hit on the chart is **Chris Rea's** Girl In A Sports Car which sprints 143-35, though it is too heavily favoured by Radio One. Chris Evans is particularly campaigning on its behalf, and East West has been forced to plug it to other stations in the very week Rea's previous single La Passione was released at retail. One record not getting support from Evans - possibly because of frustration that a much-trailed exclusive interview never came to pass - is Prince/TAFKAP/Symbol/The Artist's Betcha By Golly Wow!, which was premiered on Wednesday and had earned enough airplay by Saturday to debut at number 73.

The hottest new disc to be unveiled this week will be **Whitney Houston's** Step By Step, written by Annie Lennox, which is expected on Wednesday. It's the first single from her upcoming movie The Preacher's Wife, which includes plenty of gospel-flavoured selections plus new songs from the 90s' two top songwriters Diane Warren and Babyface.

Freddie Mercury
"LAST NIGHT"

E.P. INCLUDES "YOU CAN HAVE IT ALL" & "HEAVEN HAS TO WAIT"
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