



# THE OFFICIAL UK CHARTS

# CHART FOCUS



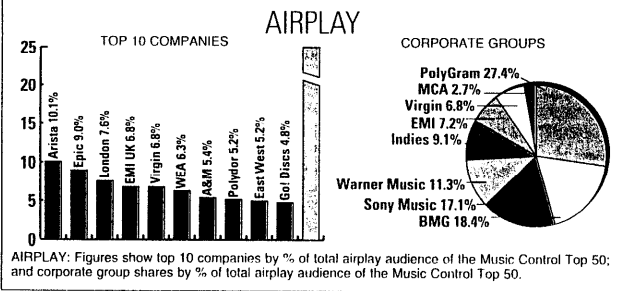
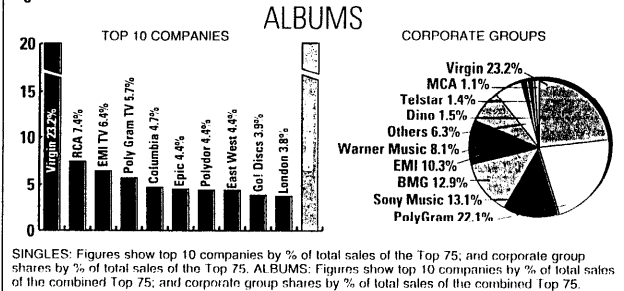
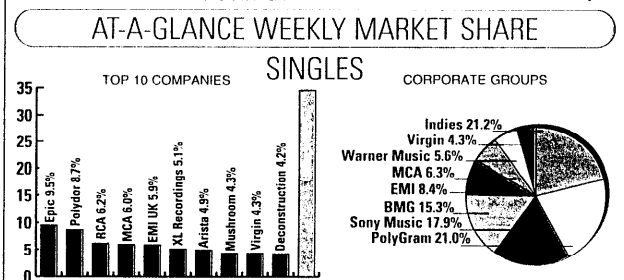
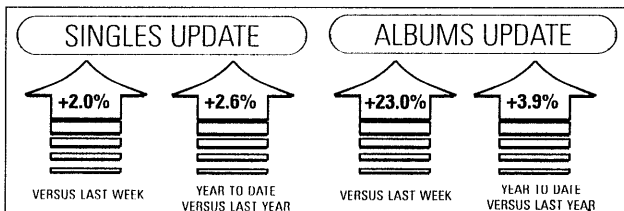
For the second time in eight weeks, **Boyzone** debut at number one on the singles chart. They first hit the summit on

October 12, when their cover of the Bee Gees' *Words* entered at number one. They return this week with *A Different Beat*. It's two years to the week since Boyzone launched their career with *Love Me For A Reason*. They've released seven singles and all seven have reached the top four, an outstanding record. It's interesting to note that all but one of their hits (*So Good*) has been a ballad, whereas, say, **Peter Andre**, who has hit the top three with each of his last three singles, has really rung the changes, going for lightweight reggae, jackswing and soul while maintaining his popularity.

*A Different Beat* is the year's 23rd number one, of which 17 have debuted in pole position, including each of the last seven - a record sequence. They're also the sixth act to have two number ones in 1996, following in the footsteps of **George Michael**, **Fugees**, **Spice Girls**, **The Prodigy** and **Peter Andre**. Additionally, **Gary Barlow** has topped the chart solo and as a member of *Take That* in 1996. The previous record for most artists to have two number ones more in a year was set in 1963 and equalled in 1964, with five apiece.

**Boyzone** are one of five acts debuting inside the Top 10 this week, equalling another chart record. This influx destroys a Top 10 which last week comprised wholly dance and related urban (rap/soul/R&B) records for the first time ever. Among this week's other interlopers are **Elton John & Luciano Pavarotti**, whose *Live Like Horses* duet gallops in at number nine. It's Elton's 70th hit single, but his first Top 10 success since 1994's *Don't Go Breaking My Heart* duet with **RuPaul**. Along with **Cliff Richard**, Elton has had hit duets with more partners than any other act, though he should maybe have lent a hand to his old pal **Rod Stewart** rather than his newer friend **Pavarotti**, since *Rod* - whose friendship with Elton goes back more than a quarter of a decade - is having a tough time. His new single *If We Fall In Love Tonight* debuts this week at a lowly number 58. Unless it picks up, it will become his lowest charting single since *Blondes (Have More Fun)* ground to a halt at number 63 in 1979 only months after he topped the chart with *Da Ya Think I'm Sexy?*

**Eternal** became the first girl group to have five consecutive Top 10 hits last week when *Secrets* debuted at number nine (**Bananarama** managed six out of seven at the start of their career, while the **Supremes** had a purple patch of four out of five at their peak) but it now slumps to number 21.



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.

Proving rather more durable, **Toni Braxton's** *Un-Break My Heart* achieves its highest position - number three - after three weeks at number five and a further three at number four, while **Robert Miles & Maria Naylor's** *One & One* follows in its slipstream, having moved 6 6 6 5 4. True hits, both.

Albumwise, the good news is that sales last week exceeded those attained in the same week of 1995, which was itself a record Christmas. In the seven days up until Saturday some 5,369m albums were sold, a 4% increase on the 5,143m tally for the comparative period in 1995. In the previous few weeks,

although album volume was building, it was consistently behind 1995 levels by between 3% and 8%. The biggest individual winner again last week was the **Spice Girls'** album, which retains its number one slot after a best-yet sale of 217,000 copies, taking its five-week tally to 790,000 copies. **Robson & Jerome** likewise cranked up a notch, selling 175,000 copies of their *Take Two* album, pushing its cumulative sales to 698,000 after four weeks. These two albums comfortably outdistance all others at present, with the third-placed *Greatest Hits* of **Simply Red** selling about 95,000 copies last week.

Alan Jones



**East 17 & Gabrielle's** *If You Ever* continues to command slightly more plays (1742) than **Toni**

**Braxton's** *Un-Break My Heart* but **Toni's** record was heard by nearly 2m more listeners than *If You Ever* last week, enabling it to move to number one after nine weeks of steady and sustained growth at radio.

With its seven solid weeks among the nation's five best-selling singles, you would think that all radio programmers would now be convinced of the wisdom of putting *Un-Break My Heart* into heavy rotation but Atlantic 252 is holding out, having played it just four times last week.

The Dublin-based long wave broadcaster continues to keep older records in higher rotation than any other station, perversely moving the **Beautiful South's** *Rotterdam* to the top of its list with 54 plays last week, even while it dropped nationally from 1059 spins to 898, making way on the airwaves for their new single *Don't Marry Her*, which leapt from 310 plays to 530, and leapfrogged over *Rotterdam* in the Airplay chart, moving 22-12 while *Rotterdam* slipped 10-16.

Needless to say, Atlantic 252 didn't play *Don't Marry Her* at all last week... yet this supremely staid station bestowed 20 plays on *Older*, the yet-to-be-released fourth single from **George Michael's** album of the same name, contributing a very high proportion of its total exposure, which added up to just 56 plays last week, although it is early days yet and it will undoubtedly register a large increase this week.

Though radio was serviced four weeks ago with **Boyzone's** *A Different Beat*, the retail chart champ is only now beginning to get widespread support. It moves powerfully 48-18 this week, increasing its plays massively from 274 to 659. Although an obvious sales chart topper, it has surprisingly failed to reach the top of any station's playlist yet.

Releasing a limited edition single of *All I Really Want* was Warner Music's way of ensuring that sales of this, the sixth single from **Alanis Morissette's** *Jagged Little Pill* album, didn't cannibalise the album's sales, while giving radio a new hit to play, thus boosting demand for the aforesaid album.

It worked well initially, with *All I Really Want* taking last week's highest climber award in the Airplay chart as it soared 46-19. But radio noticed how poorly it was doing in the sales chart and pulled the plug immediately, resulting in a 19-34 freefall.

Alan Jones

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