

THE OFFICIAL UK CHARTS



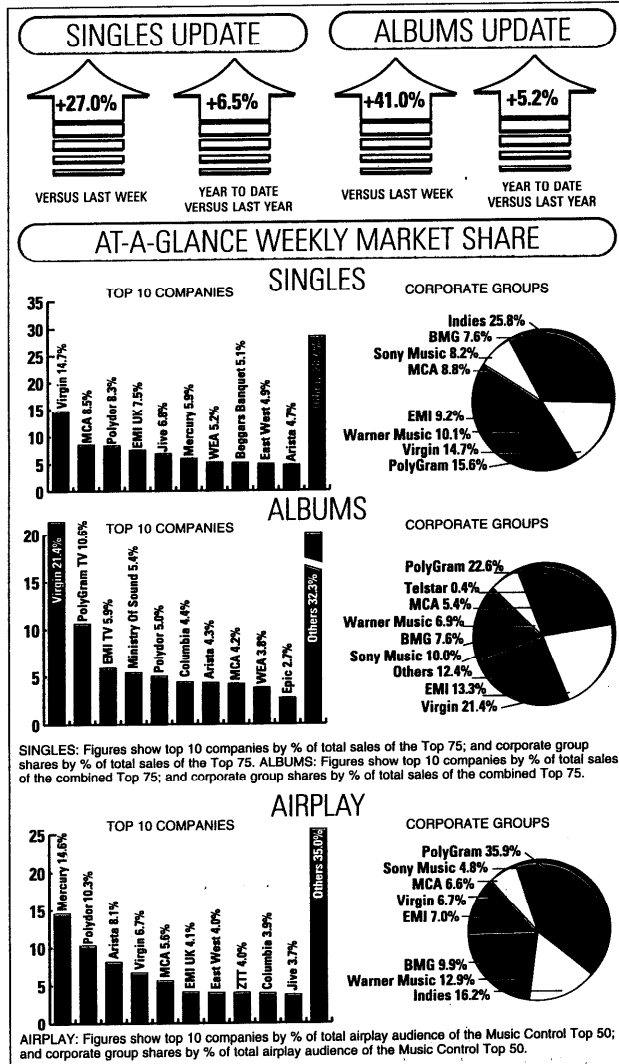
This time sans Noel Gallagher, **The Chemical Brothers** debut at number one on the singles chart for the

second time in a row after selling nearly 85,000 copies of *Block Rockin' Beats*, fewer than 1,000 ahead of the outgoing number one, *Mama/Who Do You Think You Are* by **Spice Girls**. The latter title is just one of four in last week's Top 10 to still be there this week, as six new entries cram into the upper echelon for the fourth time this year. In addition to this, there are new entries at 11, 12 and 13, making nine in the top 13 – a new record. The constant "revolving door" that is the top end of the singles chart is consigning most of one week's high new entries to become the following week's big droppers – this week's victims include **Backstreet Boys' Anywhere For You** (4-16), **Madonna's Another Suitcase In Another Hall** (7-24) and, most dramatically, **Pet Shop Boys' Red Letter Day** (9-42).

The main cause of the recent acceleration in turnover is the introduction of low price first week offers in multiples and non-specialists like Woolworths and Asda. New artists used to get a helping hand primarily from independents retailers, who championed them in exchange for free and discounted stock in the safe knowledge they weren't likely to get much competition from the High Street multiples. Now everyone is doing it, and even the less sophisticated consumer is learning that if he doesn't buy a single in its first week he's going to have to pay a great deal more for it.

On a more positive note, the movie *Space Jam* yields its third hit single in a fortnight, with the all-star rap effort *Hit 'Em High* (The Monstars Theme) debuting at number eight. Including contributions from **Coolio**, **Busta Rhymes** and **B Real** among others, it follows the debut last week of **R Kelly's I Believe I Can Fly** and **Seal's Fly Like An Eagle**. A fourth single, by **Monica**, is due imminently. The album debuted at number 11 last week, and now climbs to number seven, making it the highest ranking OST in the compilations chart. In a week in which it won nine Oscars, the OST for **The English Patient** remains fairly torpid at number 30. And **Whitney Houston's The Preacher's Wife** remains absent from the Top 50, following the fast decline of its second single *I Believe In You And Me*, which slumps 16-33, making it the fifth Houston single in a row to peak outside the Top 10, the worst sequence of her career.

Easter provided a sales bonanza, with album sales rising steeply. **Spice Girls' Spice** album was particularly



Spice Girls enjoy their fourth consecutive airplay chart number one this week, as **Who Do You Think You Are** dethrones **No Doubt's Don't Speak**, just as it did in the sales chart. It does so even though the **No Doubt** hit was played nearly 200 times more last week. With **Mama** moving 34-33 despite a small decline, the **Spice Girls** single garnered nearly 20m more impressions last week than any other disc.

The Chemical Brothers debuted at number one on the sales chart but slipped 43-44 on airplay, as radio gave scant attention to all of this week's new sales hits. Among the other singles making Top 10 sales chart debuts, the one doing best at radio is **Cast's Free Me** (31-12), followed by **Charlatans' North Country Boy** (39-19), **3T's Gotta Be You** (85-59), **DJ Quicksilver's Belissima** (89-64) and the various artists **Hit 'Em High** theme (not charted). The **Charlatans** track's improvement is due mainly to **Radio One**, where it was played 31 times last week, to become the station's new airplay champion. Without **Radio One's** support, neither it nor the **Cast** singles would be in the Top 50 of the airplay chart.

After 24 weeks in the Top 50, **Toni Braxton's Un-Break My Heart** finally checks out, leaving **Say What You Want by Texas** as the chart's longest-running hit, with 16 appearances to date. It drops 20-30 this week, however, as their new single **Halo** begins to pick up support. It debuts at number 42 after getting 292 plays last week, including 13 from **Radio One**. Another long-running (11-week) chart rider is **The Blue Boy's Remember Me**, which dips 12-21 this week though it completes its climb to the top of the Atlantic 252 chart after 64 airings last week, the highest by any record on the station this year.

Though the highest new entry this week is number 34, there are 10 new entries crammed into the Top 50, the highest tally of the year. This looks healthy, though, once again, much of it is down to **Radio One** picking up on records largely ignored elsewhere like **Shola Ama's** cover of the **Randy Crawford** hit **You Might Need Somebody** and **JT Playaz' Just Playin'**.

As well as being in receipt of an exclusive track dedicated to his recently deceased mother to benefit their annual **Help A London Child** campaign, **Capital Radio** is giving its usual generous support to the new **George Michael** single **Star People**. The track was played 31 times on the station last week, and **Star People** now sits at 57th place in the chart.

Alan Jones

perky, its weekly sales total climbing to 85,000 last week, three times as many as **Lisa Stansfield's** self-titled album, which debuts at number two. **Spice** has now spent 13 weeks at number one, making it the longest running chart-topper since **Phil Collins' 1989 LP ...But Seriously**. In the combined albums chart, however, **Spice Girls** are running a very poor second to **Now That's What I Call Music!** 36, which sold nearly 230,000 copies last week – four times as many as the album it replaces at the top of the compilations chart, **Dance Nation 3**. No fewer than 35 of the 36 regular **Now** releases have been number one, 11 of them prior to

compilations being given their own chart and 24 (consecutively) since. The last **Now** album – **Now 35** – dips 20-32 this week, ending a 19-week Top 20 residency. It's one of the biggest-selling ever with over 1.4m sales to date. Thirteen years after it was launched, **Now** remains the brand name for compilations.

Finally, demonstrating the gulf between UK and US tastes, the number one on the **Billboard** albums chart this week is **Aerosmith's Nine Lives**, which peaked at nine here, while next week's number one will be the **Notorious B.I.G.'s Life After Death**, which debuts here at number 23.

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