

THE OFFICIAL UK CHARTS

CHART FOCUS



Only the seventh record ever to debut at number one in America, and the first by a Brit, **Elton John's** *Candle In The Wind 1997* continues its chart-topping exploits on this side of the Atlantic too, but its enormous sales are now declining rapidly. It sold a further 572,000 copies last week, to bring its 22-day total to 3,845,000, enough to make it comfortably the biggest selling single ever in the UK. But its sales were down by 46% over the previous week and, far from being number one until Christmas as some have suggested, it will likely have two, possibly three, more weeks at number one before yielding.

A fortnight ago, **Blur** became the first act to have four Top 20 hits in 1997. Last week, **U2** upped the ante, becoming the first to have four Top 10 hits this year. This week, **Backstreet Boys** top that, earning their fourth top five – top four actually – hit of the year, making the week's highest debut at number three with *As Long As You Love Me*. Debuting immediately behind them at number four are **Eternal** with *Angel Of Mine*. Thus they equal last week's debut by former member **Louise**'s *Arms Around The World*, and str... their run of consecutive Top 15 hits.

My own survey of song titles suggests that Sunday is the most popular day of the week with 36% of mentions, followed by Saturday (25%), Monday (21%), Friday (8%), Tuesday (5%), Wednesday (3%) and Thursday (2%). There are new entries this week for both Saturday and Friday, **East 57th St's** Saturday, which debuts at number 29, features vocalist Donna Allen, who has had Top 10 solo hits with *Serious and Joy And Pain*. Friday Street is the new **Paul Weller** single. It debuts at number 21, nine places ahead of **The Bitterest Pill** (I Ever Had To Swallow), a reissued single by the group with which he made his name. **The Jam**. Weller had 18 hits with *The Jam*, 17 with *The Style Council* and has now had 15 as a solo artist.

Showing what a difference a couple of hit singles can make, **The Verve** debut at number one with their album *Urban Hymns*, which sold just over 250,000 copies last week.

Including the number two hit *Bitter Sweet Symphony* and the number one *The Drugs Don't Work*, it has already sold more than three times as many copies as their last album, *A Northern Soul*, which peaked at number 13 in 1995.

With **Portishead** debuting at number two with their self-titled album, and **Elton John's** *The Big Picture* new at number three, **Oasis** are pushed down to number four with

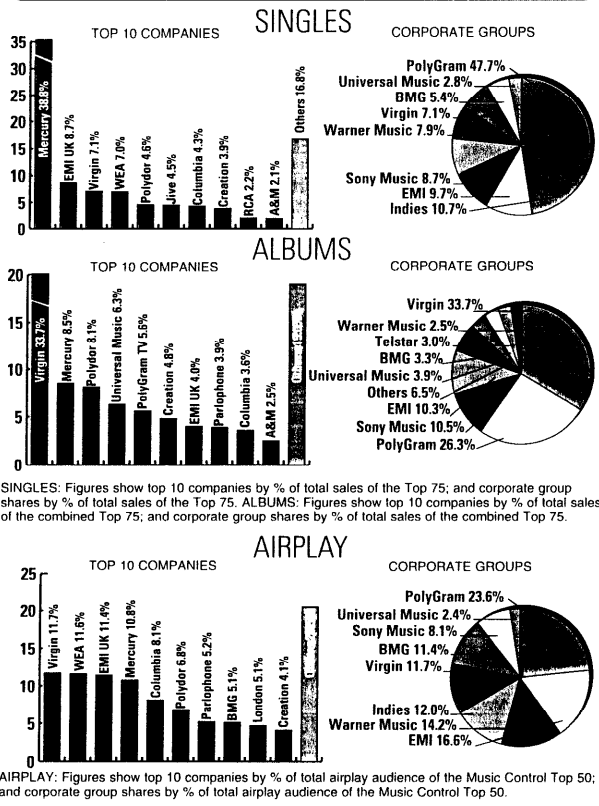
SINGLES UPDATE



ALBUMS UPDATE



AT-A-GLANCE WEEKLY MARKET SHARE



M People's *Just For You* only just made it to the top of the airplay chart last week, with more rapidly-advancing records, particularly **Dario G's** *Sunshine*, apparently about to overtake it. But a week on, the challengers have faltered and *Just For You* is sitting pretty with over 10% more support than its nearest challenger, and an audience of nearly 66m, one of the higher audiences of the year.

The **M People** single debuted at number eight on the sales chart last week, one place behind **U2's** *Please* but the two records have had vastly contrasting airplay support. While *Just For You* has spent the past fortnight at number one, *Please* was ranked 145th last week, and is now placed 63rd, with 145 plays generating an audience of just 10m. And most of that audience, as well as a substantial number of its plays, was gained as a direct result of chart show countdowns where it couldn't be avoided. Quite why **U2** have suddenly become so cold at radio is hard to determine.

Looking at the flipside of the coin, dance hits usually attract minimal airplay until they prove themselves at retail, so the support given by radio to **East 57th St's** Saturday single is surprising. The single climbs to number 22 this week, while it makes a disappointing number 28 debut at retail. Initially championed by the specialist stations and then in a big way by Radio One, it is also getting huge exposure from Capital, where it was spun 44 times last week, just two fewer than the station's joint top tunes, **Lighthouse Family's** *Raincloud* and **Ultra Nate's** *Free*.

The speedy descent of **Elton John's** *Candle In The Wind 1997* continues. The single dropped from one to five last week, and now slumps to number 18, after losing 20m listeners in a week. Keen on avoiding its sobering qualities, more and more stations are beginning to pick up on *Something About The Way You Look Tonight* again instead.

Finally, a reminder to all stations preparing their own edits of songs to advise Music Control. Capital Radio created its own edit of *Oasis' Stand By Me* causing it to evade Music Control's fingerprinting system. The edit has now been fingerprinted, but around 10 plays have been lost. **Alan Jones**

Due to an inputting error, Mercury's airplay market share has been under-reported in the graphics on this page for the past three weeks. Mercury was the top airplay company for the weeks ending September 20, 27 and October 4, with market shares of 12.9%, 12.3% and 10.7% respectively.

Be Here Now. It's the first time in album chart history that the top three have all been new entries. In fact, seven of the top 11 albums this week are new – another record. It's all the more remarkable because 1997 has been a year in which there have been fewer entries to the album chart than any other in the Nineties.

Among the new entries this week are three of the 10 most successful album acts of all time, as judged by number of chart hits.

The aforementioned **Elton John** registers his 35th entry with *The Big Picture*, while **Bob Dylan's** *Time Out Of Mind* is his 40th chart entry, and

The Rolling Stones have their 42nd hit with *Bridges Of Babylon*. That's easily a record for a group – **The Beatles**, in second place, have 29 charted LPs.

Unusually lifting four singles from an album before its release, **Robbie Williams** finally made his large format debut last week with *Life Thru A Lens*. It debuted at number 11, making it rather less successful in its first week than **Gary Barlow's** *Open Road*, which reached number one in June, but comfortably more successful than **The Green Man, Mark Owen's** debut solo album, which peaked at number 33 last December. **Alan Jones**

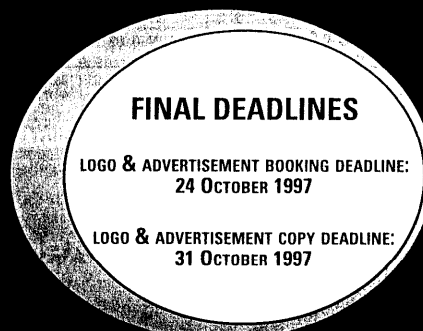
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