

CHART COMMENTARY

by ALAN JONES



B*Witched succeed where **George Michael**, **Boyzone** and many others have failed by knocking **Cher** off the top of the singles chart this week. It's the Irish girls' third hit - and their third number one, their previous chart toppers being *C'est La Vie* in June and *Rollercoaster* in October. They are the seventh act in chart history to open their account with a hat trick of number ones, following **Gerry & The Pacemakers**, **Frankie Goes**

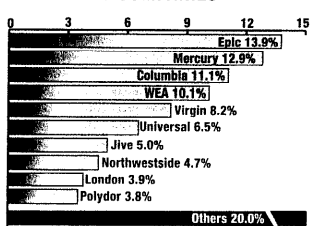
SINGLE FACTFILE

To **Hollywood**, **Jive Bunny & The Mastermixers**, **Robson & Jerome**, the **Spice Girls** and **Aqua**. **B*Witched** have sold more singles than **All Saints** and the **Spice Girls** this year, with only **Boyzone** and **Celine Dion** outranking their tally of 1.4m. singles sales. Their singles chart success is beginning to rub off on their self-titled debut album too - it has sold more than 320,000 copies since it was released nine weeks ago.

The **Spice Girls** are in the wings waiting to stake their claim but **Girl Power** is already a potent force in the chart this week, with each of the top five records performed by a female act. **Cher's** seven week run atop the list is over, and she slips to number two, while **B*Witched**, **Billie**, **Mariah Carey** & **Whitney Houston** and **Honeyz** occupy the remainder of the top five with new entries. Women have filled only the top three positions previously, doing so on five occasions, most recently on March 14 this year, when **Celine Dion** topped ahead of **Natalie Imbruglia** and **Madonna**.

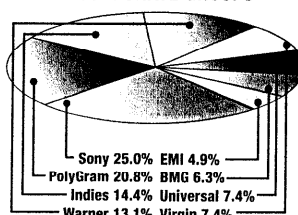
Remarkable 56 years after it was ded, **Bing Crosby's** classic recording of *White Christmas* makes a seasonal return to chart duty. The **Irving Berlin** composition has charted over the years for no fewer than seven other acts including comedians **Freddie Starr** and **Jim Davidson** and **Keith Harris** and **Orville**, but none has topped the number five peak **Bing** climbed in 1977,

MARKET REPORT



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

TOP CORPORATE GROUPS



SALES UPDATE

VERSUS LAST WEEK: +8.3%

YEAR TO DATE VERSUS LAST YEAR: +7.3%

PERCENTAGE OF UK ACTS IN THE CHART

UK: 53.3% US: 33.3% Other: 13.3%

though the laidback crooner was in no position to appreciate his success, having laid back for the last time a few weeks

earlier. **Bing's** recording returned to the chart briefly in 1985, reaching number 69. Since it was first released in the UK, it is

estimated to have sold at least 1,500,000 copies.

UB40 achieve a unique distinction this week. Though the number 31 debut of their latest hit *Holly Holy* is a modest one by their standards, it does mean that they have now charted with remakes of both sides of an obscure 1970 reggae single. The B-side was **Lord Creator's** ode to **Kingston Town**, which was a number four hit for the group in 1990. *Holly Holy* by the **Fabulous Flames** was the A-side, although it was written and originally recorded by American singer-songwriter **Neil Diamond** in 1969. **Diamond** also penned **UB40's** first number one single, *Red Red Wine*, which topped the chart in 1983.

The ballad *Every Time* is the fifth hit lifted from **Janet Jackson's** current album *The Velvet Rope*, and looks like being the smallest by some distance. Got 'Til It's Gone peaked at six, *Together Again* at four, *I Get Lonely* at five and *Go Deep* at 13. **Every Time** debuts at number 46.

THE YEAR SO FAR... TOP 20 SINGLES

1	MY HEART WILL GO ON	CELINÉ DION	EPIC
2	BELIEVE	CHER	WEA
3	IT'S LIKE THAT	RUN-D.M.C. VS JASON NEVINS	SM E COMMUNICATIONS
4	NO MATTER WHAT	BOYZONE	POLYDOR
5	C'EST LA VIE	B*WITCHED	GLOW WORM/EPIC
6	HOW DO I LIVE	LEANN RIMES	CURB/THE HIT LABEL
7	GHETTO SUPASTAR (THAT IS WHAT YOU ARE)	PRAS MICHEL feat. ODB & MYA	INTERSCOPE
8	TRULY MADLY DEEPLY	SAVAGE GARDEN	COLUMBIA
9	MUSIC SOUNDS BETTER WITH YOU	STARDUST	VIRGIN
10	VIVA FOREVER	SPICE GIRLS	VIRGIN
11	3 LIONS '98	BADDIEU/SKINNER/LIGHTNING SEEDS	EPIC
12	DOCTOR JONES	AQUA	UNIVERSAL
13	NEVER EVER	ALL SAINTS	LONDON
14	THE BOY IS MINE	BRANDY & MONICA	ATLANTIC
15	FEEL IT	TAMPERER feat. MAYA	PEPPER
16	I DON'T WANT TO MISS A THING	AEROSMITH	COLUMBIA
17	BRIMFUL OF ASHA	CORNERSHOP	WILLJA
18	'ROZEN	MADONNA	MAVERICK
19	ROLLERCOASTER	B*WITCHED	GLOW WORM/EPIC
20	HORNY	MOUSSE T VS HOT'N JUICY	AM/PM

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UK	Title Artist	Label	US	Title Artist	Label
1	TO YOU I BELONG B*Witched	Glow Worm/EPIC	21	THE EVERLASTING Manic Street Preachers	Epic
2	BELIEVE Cher	WEA	22	UP AND DOWN Vengaboys	Positiva
3	SHE WANTS YOU Billie	Innocent	23	THANK U Alasia Morissette	Maverick
4	WHEN YOU... Mariah Carey/Whitney Houston	Columbia	24	MY FAVOURITE GAME The Cardigans	Stockholm
5	END OF THE LINE Honeyz	1st Avenue/Mercury	25	GOODBYE Spice Girls	Virgin
6	WHEN YOU'RE GONE Bryan Adams With Melanie C	A&M	26	FALLING IN LOVE AGAIN Eagle Eye Cherry	Polydor
7	HARD KNOCK LIFE... Jay-Z	Northwestside	27	TAKE ME THERE Blackstreet & Mya	Interscope
8	HEARTBEAT/TRAGEDY Steps	Jive/EMI	28	THE GREATEST LOVE... Lutricia McNeal	Wildstar
9	BIG BIG WORLD Emilia	Universal	29	PERFECT 10 The Beautiful South	Go! Discs/Mercury
10	I LOVE THE WAY YOU LOVE ME Boyzone	Polydor	30	IF YOU BUY THIS...Tampere feat. Maya	Pepper
11	NO REGRETS/ANTMUSIC Robbie Williams	Chrysalis	31	I JUST WANNA BE LOVED Culture Club	Virgin
12	SO YOUNG The Corrs	Atlantic	32	I'M YOUR ANGEL Celine Dion & R Kelly	Epic
13	DUMB The Beautiful South	Go! Discs	33	MUSIC SOUNDS BETTER WITH YOU Stardust	Virgin
14	SWEETEST THING u2	Island	34	THIS KISS Faith Hill	Warner Bros
15	MIAMI Will Smith	Columbia	35	WAR OF NERVES All Saints	London
16	OUTSIDE George Michael	Epic	36	WHAT CAN I DO The Corrs	Atlantic
17	THE POWER OF GOOD-BYE... Madonna	Maverick	37	SEARCHIN' MY SOUL Vonda Shepard	Epic
18	I DON'T WANT TO MISS A THING Aerosmith	Columbia	38	MILLENNIUM Robbie Williams	Chrysalis
19	I WANT YOU Savage Garden	Columbia	39	LITTLE BIT OF LOVIN' Kele Le Roc	1st Avenue/Polydor
20	ALWAYS HAVE, ALWAYS WILL Ace Di Base	London	40	CRUSH Jennifer Paige	Edel

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THE OFFICIAL UK ALBUM CHART

TOP 75

19 DECEMBER 1998

This Week	Last Week	Title	Artist (Producer)	Label/CD (Distributor)	Cass/Vinyl
1	1	LADIES & GENTLEMEN - THE BEST OF ★4	George Michael (Michael/Douglas/Walden)	Epic 4917052 (SM) 4917054/	
2	4	TALK ON CORNERS ★5	The Corrs (Lieber/Foster/Corr/Pearson/Knowles/Steinberg/Ballard)	Atlantic 7567809172/7567809174/ (W)	
3	2	THE BEST OF ★2	M People (M People)	BMG 74321627682 (BMG) 74321613874/	
4	3	I'VE BEEN EXPECTING YOU ★2	Robbie Williams (Chambers/Power)	Chrysalis 4978372 (E) 4978374/	
5	29	WHERE WE BELONG ★3	Boyzone (Lipson/Sturken/Rogers/Mac/Hedges/Magnusson/Kreiger/Absolute)	Polydor 5592002/5592004/ (F) 5592004/	
6	14	ONE NIGHT ONLY ★2	Bee Gees (Bee Gees)	Polydor 5592202 (F) 5592204/	
7	7	STEP ONE ★2	Steps (Topham/Fwigg/Waterman/Frampton/Sanders/Work In Progress)	Jive/Ebul 0519112/0519114/ (P)	
8	10	VOICE OF AN ANGEL ★	Charlotte Church (Row)	Sony Classical SK 60957 (SM) ST 60957/	
9	8	THE BEST OF 1980-1990 ★	U2 (Eno/Lanois/Lillywhite/Lovine/U2/Xavier)	Island CIDU 211 (F) UC 211/U 211	
10	12	QUENCH ★2	The Beautiful South (Kelly/Heaton)	Go!Discs/Mercury 5381792 (F) 5381664/5381661	
11	13	THE BEST OF - THE STAR AND WISEMAN ★2	Ladysmith Black Mambazo (Shabalala/Skarbek/Abrahams)	PolyGram TV 5652982 (F) 5652984/	
12	9	HITS ★2	Phil Collins (Various)	Virgin CDV 2870 (E) TCV 2870/	
13	11	NO 1S ★	Mariah Carey (AfanasiEFF/Carey/Various)	Columbia 4926042 (SM) 4926044/4926041	
14	14	B*WITCHED ★2	Michael Ball (Wright)	Glow Worm/Epic 4917042 (SM) 4917044/	
15	18	BELIEVE ●	Char (Taylor/Rawling/Vasquez/Terry)	WEA 3984253192 (W) 3984253194/	
16	17	THE MOVIES ★	Michael Ball (Wright)	PolyGram TV 5592412 (F) 5592414/	
17	16	HONEY TO THE B ★	Billie (Marr/Page)	Innocent CDSIN 1 (E) SINMC 1/	
18	21	FIVE ★	Five (Various)	RCA 74321589762/74321589764/ (BMG)	
19	15	GREATEST MOMENTS ★	Culture Club (Levine/Martin/Hahn/Pet Shop Boys/Culture Club/Rogers)	Virgin CDVX 2865/TCV 2865/ (E)	
20	19	MODERN CLASSICS - THE GREATEST HITS ●	Paul Weller (Lynch/Weller)	Island (F) CIDD 8080/ICT 8080/LPSD 8080	
21	22	THE VERY BEST OF ★	Meat Loaf (Rundgren/Stenman/Meat Loaf/Jacobs/Mack/Tielman/Neison/Galiss/Dowd)	Virgin/Sony TV CDV 2868/TCV 2868/ (E) 9362470944/9362470941	
22	20	SUPPOSED FORMER INFATUATION JUNKIE ★	Alanis Morissette (Ballard/Morissette)	Maverick 936247094 (W) 9362470944/9362470941	
23	41	SAVAGE GARDEN ★2	Savage Garden (Fisher)	Columbia 4871612 (SM) 4871614/	
24	13	THIS IS MY TRUTH TELL ME YOURS ★	Manic Street Preachers (Hedges/Ering)	Epic 4917039 (SM) 4917034/4917031	
25	23	THE BEST OF 1980-1990 & B-SIDES ★	U2 (Eno/Lanois/Lillywhite/Lovine/U2/Xavier)	Island CIDU 211 (F) -	
26	33	RAY OF LIGHT ★3	Madonna (Madonna/Oribi/De Vries/Leonard)	Maverick 9362468472 (W) 9362468474/9362468471	
27	31	THESE ARE SPECIAL TIMES ●	Celine Dion (Foster/Wake/Adams/Kelly)	Epic 4927302 (SM) 4927304/	
28	27	GREATEST ●	Duran Duran (Various)	EMI 4962392 (E) 4962394/	
29	24	THE MASTERPLAN ★	Oasis (Morris/Gallagher)	Creation CRECD 241 (3MV/V) CCRE 241/CRELP 241	
30	25	Songs from 'ALLY MCBEAL' ★	Vonda Shepard (Shepard)	Epic 4911242 (SM) 4911244/	
31	30	UP ●	REM (McCarthy/REM)	Warner Brothers 9362471512 (W) 9362471124/9362471121	
32	29	SULTANS OF SWING - THE VERY BEST OF ●	Dirk Straits (Knopfler/Various)	Vertigo 5586582 (F) 5586584/	
33	39	BIG WILLIE STYLE ★	Will Smith (Puff Daddy/Trackmasters/Warren G/Dupris/Jazzy Jell/Various)	Columbia 4886622/4886624/4886621 (SM)	
34	32	LIFE THRU A LENS ★5	Robbie Williams (Chambers/Power)	Chrysalis CDCR 6127 (F) TCCR 6127/	
35	34	LESLEY GARRETT ●	Lesley Garrett (Thomas)	BBC/BMG Conifer (BMG) 75605513382/75605513384/	
36	35	YOU'VE COME A LONG WAY, BABY ●	Fatboy Slim (Fatboy Slim)	Skint BRASSIC 11CD (3MV/P) BRASSIC 11MC/BRASSIC 11LP	
37	38	ALL SAINTS ★5	All Saints (Various)	London 5560172 (F) 5560174/	
38	45	JANE MCDONALD ★	Jane McDonald (The Music Sculptors/Jarrat/Reedman/Smith)	Focus Music Int FMCD 1 (V) FMCC 1/	
39	37	R ●	R Kelly (Kelly/G One/Combs/Lawrence/Tone & Poke/Rooney/West/Stevie J)	Jive 0517932/0517934/0517931 (P)	
40	36	ANOTHER LEVEL ●	Another Level (Williams/Various)	Northwestside 74321582412 (BMG) 74321582414/	
41	42	GREATEST HITS ●	Aretha Franklin (Wexler/Walflen/Various)	warner.exp/Global TV RADCD 110 (BMG) RADMC 110/	
42	40	VERY BEST OF THE BEE GEES ★3	Bee Gees (Gibb/Gibb/Various)	Polydor 8473392 (F) 8473394/	
43	49	LET'S TALK ABOUT LOVE ★6	Celine Dion (Martin/Foster/Wake/AfanasiEFF/Hornet/Hart)	Epic 4891592 (SM) 4891594/	
44	41	THE GLOBE SESSIONS ●	Sheryl Crow (Crow)	A&M/Polydor 5409742 (F) 5409744/	
45	46	THE BEST OF ★	James (Eno/Hague/James)	Fontana 5581732 (F) 5589894/	
46	53	LIFE ON A MOUNTAIN ●	Sashi (Sashi/Tokapi)	Multiply MULTVCD 2 (W) MULTVMC 2/	
47	63	ON A DAY LIKE TODAY ●	Bryan Adams (Adams/Rock)	A&M/Mercury 5410162 (F) 5410164/	
48	44	TITANIC (OST) ★3	James Horner (Horner/Franglen)	Sony Classical SK 63213 (SM) ST 63213/	
49	48	POSTCARDS FROM HEAVEN ★4	Lighthouse Family (Feden)	Wild Card/Polydor (F) 5395162/5395164/	
50	43	LEFT OF THE MIDDLE ★3	Natalie Imbruglia (Thornalley/Goldenberg/Wright/Bronleeweel)	RCA 7432151382 (BMG) 7432151384/	
51	52	WONDER NO.8 ●	Honeyz (Levine/Ignorants)	1st Avenue/Mercury 5588142 (F) 5588144/	
52	56	GREATEST HITS ●	Foster And Allen (I)	Telstar TV TTVCDC3000 (W) TTVMC3000/	
53	50	MY LIFE: THE GREATEST HITS ●	Julio Iglesias (Hammond/Arcusa)	Columbia COL 4910902 (SM) COL 4910904/	
54	49	INTERNATIONAL VELVET ★2	Catania (Tommy D/Catania)	Blanco Y Negro 3984208342 (W) 3984208344/3984208341	
55	47	LABOUR OF LOVE III ●	UB40 (UB40/Armstrong/Canaan)	DEP International (E) DEPCD 18/CADEP 18/	
56	51	MY LOVE IS YOUR LOVE ●	Whitney Houston (Jean/Babyface/Foster/Jenkins/Soul Shock/Karlin)	Arista 07822190372 (BMG) 07822190374/	
57	55	TRAMPOLINE ★	The Mavericks (Malo/Cook)	MCA Nashville UMD 80456 (BMG) UMC 80456/	
58	54	LOVE SONGS ●	Daniel O'Donnell (Ryan)	Ritz RBZCD 715 (RMG/F) RBZLC 715/	
59	58	ONE WAY OF LIFE - BEST OF ●	Levellers (Scott/Kelly/Various)	China/Jive (F) 0522152/0521734/	
60	57	DESIRELESS ●	Eagle-Eye Cherry (Kwiman/Eagle-Eye Cherry/Alhurd)	Polydor 5372262 (F) 5372264/	
61	29	COME ON OVER ●	Shania Twain (Lange)	Mercury 5580004 (F) 5580004/	
62	60	VERY BEST OF - THE FIRST 40 YEARS ●	Hank Marvin & The Shadows (Various)	PolyGram TV (F) 5592112/5592114/	
63	69	GOLD - GREATEST HITS ★3	Alba (Andersson/Ulvaeus/Andersson)	Polydor 5170072 (F) 5170074/5170071	
64	64	REAL AS I WANNA BE ●	Cliff Richard (Wolf)	EMI 4979512 (F) 4974064/	
65	RE	SITIN' ON TOP OF THE WORLD ●	LeAnn Rimes (W.C. Rimes)	Curb/Hit Label/London 5560202 (F) 5560204/	
66	71	THE MISEDUCATION OF LAURYN HILL ●	Lauryn Hill (Hill/Guevara)	Columbia (SM) 4898432/4898434/4898431	
67	66	ON REPLICATION - THE VERY BEST OF ●	Etaine Flegel (Visconti/Lloyd Webber/Wright/Moran/Various)	Telstar TV/WEA TTVCDC 2999 (W) TTVMC 2999/	
68	62	THE ESSENTIAL ●	Tony Bennett (Ramone)	Columbia 4928222 (SM) 4928224/	
69	68	URBAN HYMNS ★7	The Verve (Youth/The Verve/Potter)	Hut/Virgin CDHUT 45 (E) HUTMC 45/HUTLP 45	
70	70	VERSION 2.0 ★	Garbage (Garbage)	Mushroom MUSH 29CD (3MV/P) MUSH 29MC/MUSH 29LP	
71	73	FORGIVEN, NOT FORGOTTEN ●	The Corrs (Foster/Corr)	Atlantic 7567926122 (W) 7567926124/	
72	RE	MY WAY - THE BEST OF ★	Frank Sinatra (Various)	Reprise 9362467104/ (F) 9362467104/	
73	67	BACK TO TITANIC ●	James Horner (Horner/Garston/Altman/Hasler/AfanasiEFF)	Sony Classical SK 66691 (SM) ST 66691/	
74	75	NEVER S-A-Y NEVER ●	Brandy (Brandy/Kallman/Davis/Jenkins/Foster)	Atlantic 7567830392 (W) 7567830394/7567830391	
75	RE	MANILOW SINGS SINATRA ●	Barry Manilow (Ramone/Manilow/Mandel)	Arista 07822190332 (BMG) 07822190334/	

PLATINUM * (300,000) GOLD ● (100,000) SILVER (50,000) RPI awards are made on combined unit sales of cassettes, CDs, LPs, MiniDisc and DCC. LPs and cassettes with a published dealer price of £3.49 or below and CDs of £5.99 or below require twice the sales quantity quoted above to obtain an award.
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◆ Highest new entry ◆ Highest climber Sales Increase ▲ Sales increase 50% or more

TOP COMPILATIONS

This Week	Last Week	Title	Artist	Label/CD (Distributor)	Cass/Vinyl
1	1	NOW THAT'S WHAT I CALL MUSIC! 41 ★3		EMI/Virgin/PolyGram CDNOW 41/TCNOW 41/ (E)	
2	NEW	HITS 99	warner.exp/Global TV/Sony TV MOODCD 64/MOODC 64/ (SM)		
3	4	THE BEST CHRISTMAS ALBUM IN THE WORLD...EVER! ★2	Virgin VTDCD 103/VTDMC 103/ (E)		
4	2	CHEF AID - THE SOUTH PARK ALBUM ●	Columbia 4917002/4917004/ (SM)		
5	7	MUSIC OF THE NIGHT ●	PolyGram TV 5654962/5654964/ (F)		
6	3	THE ANNUAL IV - JUDGE JULES & BOY GEORGE ★	Ministry Of Sound ANNCD 98/ANNMC 98/ (3MV/SM)		
7	5	WOMAN ●	PolyGram TV/Sony TV 5654392/5654394/ (F)		
8	8	THE ALL TIME GREATEST LOVE SONGS - III ●	Columbia SONYTV 566CD/SONYTV 566C/ (SM)		
9	10	THE VERY BEST OF THE LOVE ALBUM ●	Virgin/EMI VTDCDX 213/VTDCM 213/ (E)		

10	9	HEARTBEAT - THE 60S GOLD COLLECTION	RCA/Global TV RADCD 90/RADMC 90/ (BMG)
11	12	THE ULTIMATE CHRISTMAS COLLECTION ●	PolyGram TV 5654582/5654584/ (F)
12	6	HUGE HITS 1998 ★	warner.exp/Global TV/Sony TV MOODCD 62/MOODC 62/ (SM)
13	17	THE CHRISTMAS ALBUM	warner.exp/Global TV/Sony TV RADCD113 (BMG) RADMC113/
14	14	MASSIVE DANCE:99	Warner/PolyGram/Global 5655352/5655354/ (F)
15	11	THE GREATEST HITS OF 1998	Telstar TV TTVCDC 3002/TTVMC 3002/ (W)
16	18	FUNKY DIVAS 2	Global Television RADCD106 (BMG) RADMC106/
17	13	KISS ANTHEMS 98 ●	PolyGram TV 5592652/5592654/ (F)
18	16	THE BEST '60S ALBUM IN THE WORLD...EVER! IV ●	Virgin/EMI VTDCD 216/VTDCM 216/ (E)
19	19	THE DISNEY EXPERIENCE	Walt Disney WD 608202/WD 608204/ (F)
20	20	MOST RELAXING CLASSICAL ALBUM...EVER! II ●	Virgin/EMI VTDCD 207/VTDCM 207/ (E)

ARTISTS A-Z

ABBA	63	IMBRUGLIA, Natalie	50
ADAMS, Bryan	47	JAMES	45
ALL SAINTS	37	KELLY, R	44
ANOTHER LEVEL	40	LADYSMITH BLACK MAMBAZO	31
B*WITCHED	14	LEVELLERS	59
BALL, Michael	16	LIGHTHOUSE FAMILY	49
BEAUTIFUL SOUTH, The	10	M PEOPLE	1
BEE GEES	642	MADONNA	26
BENNETT, Tony	68	MANIC STREET PREACHERS	24
BILLIE	17	MANILOW, Barry	75
BOYZONE	5	MARVIN, Hank & THE SHADOWS	62
BRANDY	74	MAVERICKS, The	57
CAREY, Mariah	1	MEAT LOAF	21
CATANIA	14	MICHAEL, George	1
CHER	25	MORISSETTE, Alanis	2
CHERRY, Eagle Eye	60	MCDONALD, Jane	58
CHURCH, Charlotte	8	MCDONNELL, Daniel	5
COLLINS, Phil	12	OASIS	29
CORRS, The	271	PAIGE, Elaine	67
CROW, Sheryl	44	REM	31
Culture Club	19	RICHARD, Cliff	64
DION, Celine	2743	RIMES, LeAnn	46
DIRE STRAITS	32	SASH	28
DURAN/DURAN	38	SAVAGE GARDEN	23
FATBOY SLIM	36	SHEPARD, Vonda	30
FIVE	18	SINATRA, Frank	72
FOSTER AND ALLEN	52	SMITH, Will	33
FRANKLIN, Aretha	41	STEPS	7
GARBAGE	70	TWAIN, Shania	61
GARRETT, Lesley	35	U2	925
HILL, Lavin	66	UB40	55
HONEYZ	51	VERVE, The	69
HORNER, James	4873	WELLER, Paul	20
HOUSTON, Whitney	56	WILLIAMS, Robbie	434
IGLESIAS, Julio	53		

CHART COMMENTARY

by ALAN JONES



Despite attracting some negative reviews, Cher's album *Believe* has sold solidly since its release five weeks ago. Though it has yet to improve on the number eight peak debut position, it has remained in the Top 20 ever since, and has sold 120,000 copies, with TV ads trailing the next single, as well as the chart-blasting title track, helping to raise its profile. Last week I said there were no new Diane Warren songs on Cher's album.

ALBUM FACTFILE

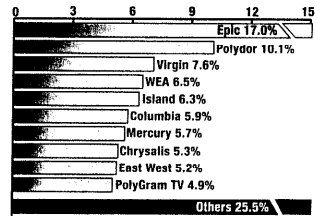
I should qualify this by mentioning that two Warren credits appear on the LP - there's a dance remake of *We All Sleep Alone*, a hit for Cher in 1988, and *Takin' Back My Heart*. Other current Top 75 albums including Warren-penned songs are *The Movies* by Michael Ball, *The Very Best of Meat Loaf*, as well as the chart-blasting title track, helping to raise its profile. Last week I said there were no new Diane Warren songs on Cher's album.

Newspapers were quick to denounce George Michael's interview with Michael Parkinson as "a flop" after it attracted an audience of "only" 7m viewers, but it certainly had a dramatic effect on sales of his *Ladies & Gentlemen - The Best Of George Michael* album, which, having already sold 550,000 copies in four weeks, saw its sales rise steeply to a new one-week high of 239,000 last week. That's twice as many as any other album, and carries it past last year's *Best Of Wham!* album, sales of which are approaching 670,000 and which, like all Michael-related albums, saw its sales ease significantly last week.

Celine Dion's album *These Are Special Times* climbs to number 27 this week, the highest position of its four-week chart career. Comprised for the most part of seasonal songs, neither its sales (just more than 40,000) nor its chart position are what one would expect from a Celine Dion album at this stage, but the British public, unlike its

MARKET REPORT

TOP 10 COMPANIES



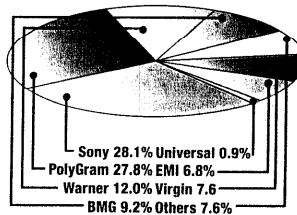
Figures show top 10 companies by % of total sales, and corporate group shares by % of total sales, of the Top 75 artist albums

SALES UPDATE

VERSUS LAST WEEK: +20.9%

YEAR TO DATE VERSUS LAST YEAR: +10.3%

TOP CORPORATE GROUPS



who have stalled at 32, 37 and 93 with Christmas albums in recent years.

This year, Celine is alone in charting. Only two seasonal albums have reached the Top 10 in the Nineties, with Cliff Richard's *Together With Cliff* reaching number 10 in 1991, and the *Smurfs' Christmas Party* reaching number eight in 1996. In America, *These Are Special Times* has had a much warmer reception - in just five weeks it has sold more than 1m copies, including 366,000 last week, enough to move it up to second place in the chart, just behind Garth Brooks.

One genre missing out on the Christmas sales bonanza is dance music. Though acts like M People, George Michael and Steps include dance tracks on their current hit albums, the only LP currently in the Top 40 by an artist whose primary musical output is dance music is *You've Come A Long Way, Baby* by Fatboy Slim, and even that is barely in there, ranking number 36 this week.

American counterpart, rarely warms to Christmas albums by individual artists, even though multi-artist compilations are very

popular here. Dion's album has already bettered the peak positions of star acts like Mariah Carey, Diana Ross and Michael Bolton

COMPILATIONS

Now *That's What I Call Music!* 41 continues to dominate the compilation market. It sold 181,000 copies last week to take its three-week total to more than 580,000. All told, the *Now!* series has spent 17 weeks at number one thus far in 1998 (*Now!* 40 was top for four weeks, and *Now!* 37, a hangover from 1997, was number one for the first two weeks of the year). The trio are the three biggest-selling compilation albums of the year so far.

The compilation chart will celebrate its 10th birthday in January, and the regular *Now!* series (excluding *Now Dance*, and the like) has topped it for a remarkable 155 weeks, representing more than 30% of the entire period.

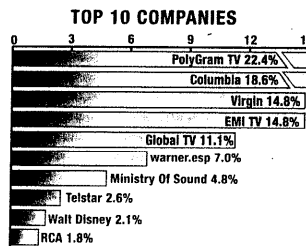
The highest new entry to the chart last week, PolyGram TV's *Music Of The Night*,

a compilation of hits from stage and screen, has bedded down in the Top 10. Leaning heavily on Andrew Lloyd Webber's many creations, it also includes such diverse tracks as *Over The Rainbow* by Judy Garland, *How Deep Is Your Love* by the Bee Gees and *If I Were A Rich Man* by Topol.

In the absence of any current blockbuster movie, Christmas has really put the squeeze on soundtrack albums, which have withdrawn from the upper reaches of the chart, unable to compete with the avalanche of TV advertised compilations. For the first time this year, there are no movie titles in the Top 40 and only *Grease*, *Lock Stock & Two Smoking Barrels*, *The Full Monty*, *Blade*, *Saturday Night Fever* and *The Wedding Singer* also manage to cling to places in the Top 100.

MARKET REPORT

TOP 10 COMPANIES



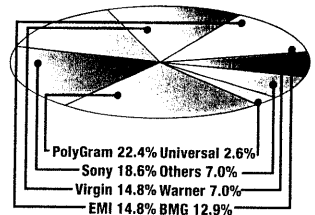
Figures show top 10 companies by % of total sales of the Top 20, and corporate group shares by % of total sales of the Top 20.

SALES UPDATE

VERSUS LAST WEEK: +12.5%

YEAR TO DATE VERSUS LAST YEAR: +0.8%

TOP CORPORATE GROUPS



COMPILATIONS' SHARE OF TOTAL SALES

Artist albums: 72.3%
Compilations: 27.7%

THE YEAR SO FAR... TOP 20 ALBUMS

1 TALK ON CORNERS	THE CORRS	ATLANTIC
2 LIFE THRU A LENS	ROBBIE WILLIAMS	CHRYSLIS
3 URBAN HYMNS	THE VERVE	HUT
4 LET'S TALK ABOUT LOVE	CELINE DION	EPIC
5 WHERE WE BELONG	BOYZONE	POLYDOR
6 ALL SAINTS	ALL SAINTS	LONDON
7 TITANIC - OST	JAMES HORNER	SONY CLASSICAL
8 LADIES & GENTLEMEN - THE BEST OF	GEORGE MICHAEL	EPIC
9 RAY OF LIGHT	MADONNA	MAVERICK
10 POSTCARDS FROM HEAVEN	LIGHTHOUSE FAMILY	WILD CARD
11 I'VE BEEN EXPECTING YOU	ROBBIE WILLIAMS	CHRYSLIS
12 LEFT OF THE MIDDLE	NATALIE IMBRUGLIA	RCA
13 INTERNATIONAL VELVET	CATATONIA	BLANCO Y NEGRO
14 SAVAGE GARDEN	SAVAGE GARDEN	COLUMBIA
15 BLUE	SIMPLY RED	EAST WEST
16 QUENCH	BEAUTIFUL SOUTH	GO! DISCS/MERCURY
17 HITS	PHIL COLLINS	VIRGIN
18 STEP ONE	STEPS	JIVE/EBUL
19 ONE NIGHT ONLY	BEE GEES	POLYDOR
20 THE STAR AND WISEMAN - THE BEST OF	LADYSMITH BLACK MAMBAZO	POLYGRAM TV

THE YEAR SO FAR... TOP 20 COMPILATIONS

1 NOW THAT'S WHAT I CALL MUSIC! 39	VARIOUS ARTISTS	EMI/VIRGIN/POLYGRAM
2 NOW THAT'S WHAT I CALL MUSIC! 41	VARIOUS ARTISTS	EMI/VIRGIN/POLYGRAM
3 NOW THAT'S WHAT I CALL MUSIC! 40	VARIOUS ARTISTS	EMI/VIRGIN/POLYGRAM
4 FRESH HITS 98	VARIOUS ARTISTS	WARNER/GLOBAL/SONYTV
5 THE FULL MONTY	ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK	RCA VICTOR
6 NEW HITS 98	VARIOUS ARTISTS	WARNER/GLOBAL/SONYTV
7 HUGE HITS 1998	VARIOUS ARTISTS	WARNER/GLOBAL/SONYTV
8 BIG HITS 98	VARIOUS ARTISTS	WARNER/GLOBAL/SONYTV
9 THE ANNUAL IV - JUDGE JULES & BOY GEORGE	VARIOUS ARTISTS	MINISTRY OF SOUND
10 THE IBIZA ANNUAL	VARIOUS ARTISTS	MINISTRY OF SOUND
11 GREASE	ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK	POLYDOR
12 NOW THAT'S WHAT I CALL MUSIC! 38	VARIOUS ARTISTS	EMI/VIRGIN/POLYGRAM
13 FANTASTIC '80'S!	VARIOUS ARTISTS	COLUMBIA
14 CLUBBER'S GUIDE TO...IBIZA - JULES/TONG	VARIOUS ARTISTS	MINISTRY OF SOUND
15 PETE TONG/BOY GEORGE - DANCE NATION 5	VARIOUS ARTISTS	MINISTRY OF SOUND
16 THE VERY BEST OF THE LOVE ALBUM	VARIOUS ARTISTS	VIRGIN/EMI
17 DIANA PRINCESS OF WALES - TRIBUTE	VARIOUS ARTISTS	DIANA MEMORIAL FUND
18 CHEF AID - THE SOUTH PARK ALBUM	VARIOUS ARTISTS	COLUMBIA
19 THE BEST...ANTHEMS...EVER! 2	VARIOUS ARTISTS	VIRGIN/EMI
20 THE BEST SIXTIES SUMMER...EVER!	VARIOUS ARTISTS	VIRGIN/EMI

To hear the charts hot-off-the-press on Monday morning, call 0891 505291 (artist albums)/0891 505289 (compilations). Calls cost 50p/min