

1992 was an odd one and not just because it had 53 chart weeks. Alan Jones explores how dance won unparalleled singles success while US acts dominated albums sales

SINGLES

Covering a 1974 country flop that sold fewer than 1,000 copies when it was first released doesn't sound like a formula for success, but that's exactly what I Will Always Love You was before Whitney Houston's interpretation turned the Dolly Parton composition into a massive hit.

In under nine weeks, Whitney's version sold over a million copies, and became the biggest selling single of 1992, and the biggest selling single ever by a female solo artist. Its late charge to the top of the chart means that for the third year in a row the number one single is a powerful ballad from a movie.

In 1991, Bryan Adams' (Everything I Do) I Do It For You, from Robin of Sherwood took the prize, and in 1990 the Righteous Brothers' oldie Inchaind Melody used in Ghost took the top spot.

While total singles sales provisionally appeared to decline yet again, I Will Always Love You was one of three singles to be certified platinum during the year. Snap's Rhythm Is A Dancer sold 675,000 copies and Charles and Eddie's Would I Lie To You squeezed past the 600,000 mark as the year drew to a close.

In all, only 13 different singles shared the number one slot in 1992, the lowest number of chart-toppers since 1957. It's a curious fact that while some singles are selling in prodigious quantities and having extended lives at the top end of the chart, in a declining market the levels required to break into the bottom end of the chart are falling.

The result of this is a vast number of singles charting - more than 1,000 for the first time ever in 1992.

This has effectively helped dance music enormously. In fact, of the Top 100 singles for the year, upwards of 40% were dance for the first time ever.

Exact figures are difficult since no two people agree what exactly constitutes a dance record, but this figure discounts danceable but not specifically dance-based records like Erasure's Abba-Esque EP and Take That's Could It Be Magic, despite its floorfilling Rapino Brothers remix.

While dance prospered, so too did more traditional R&B styles, with the emphasis on melody rather than tempo. In the latter group were major hits like I Will Always Love You, Would I Lie To You? and Boyz II Men's End Of The Road.

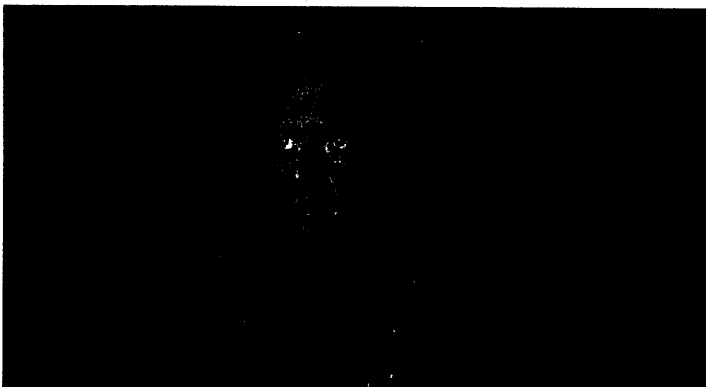
Overall, 1992 seemed to mark something of a crisis in songwriting. As the year progressed, the number of remakes reaching the chart reached hitherto undreamt of heights.

Of the Top 100 of the year, no fewer than 18 are straight remakes of former hits, while there's also a sizeable contingent of remakes of non-hits, reissues of former hits and new hits based on old hits. The actual number of brand new songs not in the dance idiom is minuscule.

Ten years ago, the middle ground between dance and cult rock was overflowing with good (British) pop/rock acts, like Dexy's Midnight Runners, Culture Club, Yazoo, Haircut One Hundred, The Jam,



BEST SELLERS



Tears For Fears, Adam Ant, Madness, Bucks Fizz, Duran Duran and myriad others. If the singles chart is to return to its former glory, a major rethink is required.

Though our current singles obsession with dance - and specifically with home-produced dance - means that there are 53 British acts in the Top 100 and only 36 from America, the real money and the real sales are in the album chart.

ALBUMS

In 1991, Stars by Simply Red sold more than 1.2m copies in 14 weeks and overhauled Eurythmics' Greatest Hits as late as Christmas Eve to become the year's best-seller.

In 1992, it repeated its triumph, but this time it won by a huge margin, having established a commanding lead early in the year.

In the process, it scored the lengthiest uninterrupted run in the Top 10 since Dire Straits' Brothers In Arms, and completed the year by

being certified platinum for the ninth time (2.7m sales) to become the first album since Simon & Garfunkel's Bridge Over Troubled Water (1970/1971) to top the sales pyramid in two different years. Latest figures from East West late last week showed the album has now achieved an astonishing total of 3m sales.

Stars wasn't the only 1991 album to hold its popularity in 1992. With the solitary exception of Paul Young's Greatest Hits, all of the Top 10 albums in 1991 retained places in the 1992 Top 100, with Michael Jackson's Dangerous proving the most consistent and tenacious, nailing down fifth place for the second year.

Of all the debut albums by new acts, the most popular was Right Said Fred's Up, which finished the year in 10th place. Runner-up Curtis Stigers' self-titled album was a creditable 23rd.

Another long-haired Yank, Michael Bolton, wins the prize for consistency in the Nineties, having provided one of

the Top 10 albums in each of the last three years.

In 1990 Soul Provider was the year's fifth biggest album. He took seventh place a year later with Time, Love & Tenderness and was seventh again last year, with his album of covers Timeless (The Classics).

Genesis remained reliably bankable too. Their latest studio album We Can't Dance remained in the album chart throughout 1991, and was the year's ninth biggest seller, after taking 13th place in 1991. Their Live - The Way We Walk Volume 1, though released only six weeks before the end of the year, was easily the year's most successful live album.

Gallup projections suggest that the album market was 5% down year-on-year, but the downturn could have been greater had it not been for some imaginative marketing of compilations.

In all, 31 of the Top 100 albums were greatest hits collections, many cunningly issued with a sprinkling of new material.

In this category come both of the top two compilations, Lionel Richie's Back To Front, and Cher's Greatest Hits 1965-1992. The Richie album was particularly successful, being certified platinum four times. Containing three new recordings (Richie's first for five years) it should hold him in good stead for his upcoming full return to the business via a new deal with PolyGram.

Independently distributed labels struggled in 1992, with just two entries in the Top 100, down from six in 1991 and 12 in 1990.

Erasure's Pop (on Mute) was clearly the indie sector's most popular offering, though The Shamen are also to be applauded for their platinum album Boss Drum (One Little Indian), which also spawned four Top 10 singles. Though it's ultimately distributed by BMG, it's worth remembering that Right Said Fred's Up album is on the independently-owned Tug label.

Finally, it's noticeable that while British A&R policies are bringing forth a succession of dance and pop acts geared towards the more youthful singles market, the album chart is increasingly dominated by more adult-orientated acts, largely of American origin.

Just 40 homegrown artists appear in the Top 100, compared to 44 Americans. That's the first time Americans have outnumbered native talent in the 100 in at least a decade - and they're crushing us in their own backyard, with 73 American and only 10 British albums in the *Billboard* Top 100 for 1992.

Even though the US contingent is a mix of new and established, the Brits succeeding there are very much the old guard, with Lisa Stansfield the only act with fewer than five years chart experience.

Similar stories are told by the annual album listings in all the other major territories.

These are sobering thoughts that need to be addressed in an increasingly cosmopolitan world if we are to maintain our traditional role as a key source of musical talent.

TOP SINGLES

Rank	Title	Artist	Label
1	AWAITS	Whitney Houston	A&M
2	IT'S A WONDERFUL FEELING	Shania Twain	Mercury
3	STAY	Shirley Bassey	Mercury
4	END OF THE ROAD	Boy II Man	Mercury
5	HEALTHY WORLD GOODNIGHT GIRL	Michael Jackson	A&M
6	EVERETT	Michael Jackson	A&M
7	EVERETT	Michael Jackson	A&M
8	EVERETT	Michael Jackson	A&M
9	EVERETT	Michael Jackson	A&M
10	EVERETT	Michael Jackson	A&M
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60	EVERETT	Michael Jackson	A&M

TOP ALBUMS

Rank	Title	Artist (Producer)	Label (Cat. No.)
1	STARS	Simply Red (Levine/H)	Capitol (550 0135) (2X) (W)
2	BACK TO FRONT	Linda Ronstadt (Levine/H)	Mercury (550 0132) (F)
3	CHER'S GREATEST HITS	Cher (Various)	Capitol (550 0135) (1M6)
4	GUTTERING PRIZE 61/92	Simple Minds (Various)	Virgin (550 0135) (F)
5	DAVID BOWIE	Michael Jackson (Levine/H)	Capitol (550 0135) (1M6)
6	DIVA	Annie Lennox (Levine/H)	Capitol (550 0135) (1M6)
7	IMMENSE (THE CLASSICS)	Michael Bolton (Levine/H)	Capitol (550 0135) (1M6)
8	DIVINE MADNESS	Madness (Levine/H)	Capitol (550 0135) (1M6)
9	WE CAN'T DANCE	George (Levine/H)	Capitol (550 0135) (1M6)
10	III	Brigitte Bardot (Levine/H)	Capitol (550 0135) (1M6)
11	GOLD GREATEST HITS	Gold (Various)	Capitol (550 0135) (1M6)
12	GREATEST HITS	Gold (Various)	Capitol (550 0135) (1M6)
13	RIDE ON A WINDY	Shirley Bassey (Levine/H)	Capitol (550 0135) (1M6)
14	HIGH ON THE HAPPY SIDE	Wendy Matthews (Levine/H)	Capitol (550 0135) (1M6)
15	BEAT LOVE	Beaumont Newhall (Levine/H)	Capitol (550 0135) (1M6)
16	THE GREATEST HITS	George (Levine/H)	Capitol (550 0135) (1M6)
17	NEVER MIND	Never Mind (Various)	Capitol (550 0135) (1M6)
18	SIMPLY THE BEST	Simply the Best (Various)	Capitol (550 0135) (1M6)
19	THE GREATEST HITS	George (Levine/H)	Capitol (550 0135) (1M6)
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80	THE GREATEST HITS	George (Levine/H)	Capitol (550 0135) (1M6)

COMPILED BY ALAN JONES

1	DEEPER LOVE/PRIDE IN THE NAME OF LOVE	Clivilles & Cole	Columbia	49	GOOD THING/WHO'S GONNA GET YOU BACK/ALRIGHT/	Faze 2
2	THE POWER/FALLIN DOWN	Nu Colours	Wild Card		BODY ACTION	Union City
3	DO YOU WANT IT RIGHT NOW	Degrees Of Motion	ffrr	50	UNDERSTAND THIS GROOVE	A&M
4	THE COLOUR OF LOVE	The Reese Project	Network	51	AIN'T NO MAN	Slam Jam
5	DON'T LOSE THE MAGIC	Shawn Christopher	AD92/Arista	52	AIN'T NO MOUNTAIN HIGH ENOUGH	Logic/Arista
6	AS ALWAYS	Secret Life	Cowboy	53	RHYTHM IS A DANCER	Ten
7	PENNIES FROM HEAVEN	Inner City	Ten	54	HANGIN' ON A STRING	Island
8	OPTIMISTIC/TESTIFY	Sounds Of Blackness	Perspective	55	EVEN BETTER THAN THE REAL THING	ffrr
9	XPAND YA MIND	Wag 'Ya' Tail feat Lonnie Liston Smith	Sanctuary	56	SAVED MY LIFE	AD92/Arista
10	LIBERATION	Liberation	ZYX	57	GETTIN' IT RIGHT	Hard Hands
11	GIVE YOU	Djaimin	Cooltempo	58	SONG OF LIFE	RCA
12	LIFT EVERY VOICE	Mass Order	Columbia	59	I GOT IT	Atlantic
13	WORKOUT/RAINFALLS	Frankie Knuckles feat Lisa Michaelis	Virgin America	60	ALL JOIN HANDS/BROTHERS & SISTERS	Cooltempo
14	ONLY TIME WILL TELL/MY PEACE OF HEAVEN	Ten City	East West	61	FOLLOW ME	4th & B'way
15	HALLELUJAH	Inner City	Ten	62	THE MESSAGE	Union City
16	THE PRESSURE	Sounds Of Blackness	Perspective	63	IS THIS LOVE REALLY REAL!	Pulse 8
17	THE BEST THINGS IN LIFE ARE FREE	Luther Vandross & Janet Jackson with special guests BBD and Ralph Tresvant	Perspective	64	ARE YOU READY TO FLY!	Virgin
18	ENTER YOUR FANTASY (EP): LOVE FANTASY/			65	FIGURE OF EIGHT	Union City
19	ENTER YOUR MIND/GET UP/EVERYBODY	Joey Negro	Z/Ten	66	CRY FREEDOM	Cooltempo
20	PERFECT MOTION	Sunscream	Sony Soho Square	67	LOVE'S GOT A HOLD ON ME	ffrr
21	PURITY	The Aloof	Cowboy	68	LET ME BE YOUR UNDERWEAR	Faze 2
22	KEEP IT COMIN' (DANCE TILL YOU CAN'T DANCE NO MORE)	C&C Music Factory featuring Q-Unique & Deborah Cooper	Columbia	69	AROUND THE WORLD	deConstruction
23	ON WALKIN'	Ce Ce Peniston	Ten	70	SOMEDAY	Atco
24	GOING HOME	Tyrrel Corporation	A&M	71	TAKE MY ADVICE	Wild Card
25	JOY	Soul II Soul	Cooltempo	72	TEARS	Pulse 8
26	LOVE U MORE	Sunscream	Ten	73	RUN TO YOU	Cheeky/China
27	FUNKY GUITAR	TCI1992	Sony Soho Square	74	UNDERSTAND THIS GROOVE	Vinyl Solution
28	ALWAYS	Urban Soul	Union City	75	I'M GONNA GET YOU	A&M
29	IT'S GONNA BE A LOVELY DAY	S.O.U.L. S.Y.S.T.E.M. introducing Michelle Visage	Cooltempo	76	SPECIAL KIND OF LOVE	Ten
30	ON A MISSION	The Aloof feat. Ricardo Nicola	AD92/Arista promo	77	MOVE ME NO MOUNTAIN	deConstruction/Parlophone
31	WE GOT A LOVE THANG	Ce Ce Peniston	Cowboy	78	SO RIGHT	A&M
32	PASSION	Gat Decors	A&M	79	FINALLY	ffrr
33	I WANNA SING	Sabrina Johnston	Effective	80	SOUL FREEDOM (FREE YOU SOUL)	RCA
34	STEP IT UP	Stereo MCs	Atco	81	CARRY ON	Warner Bros
35	MAKE IT ON MY OWN	Alison Limerick	4th & B'way	82	CHIC MYSTIQUE	Rumour
36	DON'T YOU WANT ME	Felix	Arista	83	YOUR LOVE IS LIFTING ME	Sony Soho Square promo
37	TEMPTATION	Heaven 17	deConstruction	84	ANTHEM	Ten
38	DON'T LET IT SHOW ON YOUR FACE	Adeva	Virgin	85	PRaise	Big Life
39	RAN KAN KAN	Tito Puente	Cooltempo	86	CAN YOU FEEL THE PASSION	Perspective
40	LET'S GET HAPPY	Mass Order	Elektra	87	JOY/SOUL HOLIDAYS	A&M
41	DREAM COME TRUE	Brand New Heavies	Columbia	88	SO MUCH LOVE	4th & B'way
42	CLUB LONELY	Lil Louis & The World	Acid Jazz/ffrr	89	PUSH THE FEELING ON	Talkin Loud
43	RIDE ON THE RHYTHM/THE MASTERS AT WORK	Louis Vega & Marc Anthony	ffrr	90	DON'T YOU WORRY 'BOUT A THING	Warner Bros
44	GO TECHNO	2 House	Atlantic	91	PLAY WITH ME (JANE)	RCA
45	MOIRA JANE'S CAFE	Definition Of Sound	Atlantic	92	CALL MY NAME (JANE)	Jumpin' & Pumpin'
46	IN YER BONES/FIRE ISLAND	Fire Island feat. Ricardo Da Force	Circa	93	PAPUA NEW GUINEA	SEP Music
47	FINE DAY	Opus III	Boys Own	94	I'M RUSHING	AD92/Arista
48	GOOD LOVER	D-Influence	PWL International	95	HEY WHAT'S YOUR NAME	TrueLove/React
			East West	96	ROCK	Cooltempo
				97	PEOPLE EVERYDAY	Cooltempo
				98	I'M THE ONE FOR YOU	Guerrilla
				99	LAND OF OZ	ffrr
				100	SHINE ON	

THE CLUB CHART NUMBER ONES OF '92

4 JAN	TOO BLIND TO SEE IT	Kym Sims (Atco)	1 wk	11 JUL	LOVE U MORE	Sunscream (Sony Soho Square)	2 wks
11 JAN	PRIDE IN THE NAME OF LOVE/DEEPER LOVE	Clivilles & Cole (Columbia)	4 wks	25 JUL	THE COLOUR OF LOVE	The Reese Project (Network)	5 wks
8 FEB	OPTIMISTIC/TESTIFY	Sounds Of Blackness (Perspective)	4 wks	29 AUG	GIVE YOU	Djaimin (Cooltempo)	4 wks
7 MAR	LIFT EVERY VOICE	Mass Order (Columbia)	2 wks	26 SEP	XPAND YA MIND	Wag 'Ya' Tail/Lonnie Liston Smith (Sanctuary)	1 wk
21 MAR	DON'T LOSE THE MAGIC	Shawn Christopher (AD92/Arista)	2 wks	3 OCT	THE POWER/FALLIN DOWN	Nu Colours (Wild Card)	1 wk
4 APR	JOY	Soul II Soul (Ten)	1 wk	10 OCT	LIBERATION	Liberation (ZYX)	4 wks
11 APR	DO YOU WANT IT RIGHT NOW	Degrees Of Motion (ffrr)	4 wks	7 NOV	UNDERSTAND THIS GROOVE	Frankie Pharoah (Cheeky/China)	1 wk
9 MAY	KEEP ON WALKIN'	Ce Ce Peniston (A&M)	2 wks	14 NOV	TEMPTATION	Heaven 17 (Virgin)	1 wk
23 MAY	PENNIES FROM HEAVEN	Inner City (Ten)	5 wks	21 NOV	AS ALWAYS	Secret Life (Cowboy)	4 wks
27 JUN	ENTER YOUR FANTASY (EP)	Joey Negro (Z/Ten)	2 wks	19 DEC	IT'S GONNA BE A LOVELY DAY	S.O.U.L. S.Y.S.T.E.M. introducing Michelle Visage (Arista)	1 wk

Released 29.12.92

Broken English

SAD SAGA

Mixes by Slam, The Wizard of Oz, Dave Valentine, Phil Bodger
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