

# ely success ong year

## ously written off as a lost cause

downloads were sold, making it the biggest week for download sales to date.

"People are saying that the singles market is dead, but it isn't true," Talbot explains. "The download market has re-defined the singles market. In last week's chart there were several singles that sold more physically than on download - if you get the product right, for the right market people will go out and buy a physical product."

Quirk suggests that the reason pop singles sell physically is because that market typically wants a physical memento. However, he also praises incentives such as Universal's experiments with USB releases, which are designed to boost physical sales, as well as changes to chart rules that have relaxed the entry criteria for physical singles.

Nevertheless, he argues that more remains to be done to help physical sales, pointing to a Universal-led proposal to shift the release of physical singles from Mondays to Fridays to give them new attention in stores. "We really wanted to go for Friday release dates [for physical singles]. "There are things that we at Era want and we are talking to record companies about," he says.

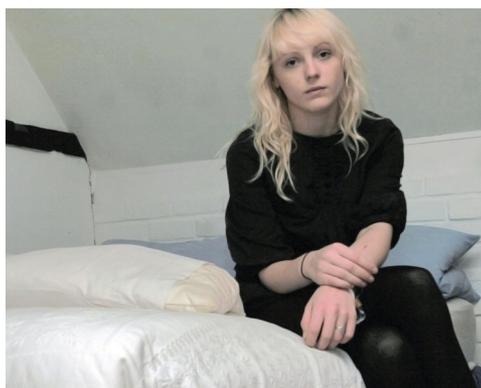
The encouraging performance of the singles market comes as album sales continue to flounder: a torrid third quarter has continued into Q4, with artist album sales for October 21.9% down year-on-year at around 6.65m units sold.

Such a figure will be fuel to the fire of retailers such as Zavvi managing director Simon Douglas, who has described the quarter four release schedule as "disappointing" and not as strong as in previous years. Privately, many industry insiders are understood to agree.

The result will also give credence to the widespread view that the popularity of downloading single tracks, which means that consumers can cherry-pick the strongest tracks from albums, has also negatively affected the albums market.

ben@musicweek.com

## host of extras



**Marling:** Virgin is to release a 5,000-run 'songbox' of her debut virtual "sales bank" and released to count toward the singles chart upon the single's physical release date of December 3. Fans will also have the option to purchase a ticket free of the download, at a cost of £10.

because you lose the track once you stop the subscription."

**Simon Wheeler, Beggars Group**

"Most people feel that music should be owned

rather than rented, so the challenge for subscription services is to deliver a service that breaks that cultural barrier."

**Jon Davis Sony BMG**

"There are many challenges.

Obviously, the service has to be great, the marketing has to cut through the clutter and the price has to be right. Then there is also the question of consumer demand. How big is the market? How do you

appeal to a wide audience? Subscription services will require significant investment and a long-term approach. This is no quick win but whoever gets it right will be onto a winner."

**Martin Talbot, OCC**

"I've always thought the subscription model has legs, especially as an experimentation service. The issue has always been about evolving the habits of consumers who have only

previously been used to the pay-per-single/album model. But the launch of several services - and our chart tracking the business - will help spread the word generally about such services."

## Dooley's Weblog

**Monday**

"It seems just yesterday that Dooley was watching *Bat For Lashes* in the intimate settings of the ULU. Sigh. Now the officially EMI- and Mercury-sponsored artist is big enough for two dates at Koko, and she's sold them out too. Ah, the powers of kooky charm. 'Natasha Khan made that tree on stage herself,' a shady source reveals. You don't get that with U2."

**Thursday**

"While Hammersmith is probably not our favourite place in the world, it does provide a home for the rather nice Distillers Arms pub, which on Wednesday night each week is the location for Tony Moore's acoustic music night. This week, the object of our visit was Polydor's latest charge Jack McManus. The frilly-haired frontman is managed by Mark Wood, manager of Imogen Heap, and delivers a catchy concoction of piano-driven pop songs made for the airwaves."

**Thursday**

"10.36pm: Babyshambles appear onstage and are overshadowed by a Mexican wave.  
10.38pm: Doherty and co respond with a blistering Delivery. Nicely done. They look a lot like The Beatles from up here.  
10.50pm: Tokio Hotel have a lovely rain effect. That's got to be dangerous with all that electricity around."



## He's the king of the world!

These are busy times for former BPI chairman Peter Jamieson. He last week addressed the Gighbeth conference in Birmingham alongside Feargal Sharkey, while, more thrillingly, he has been directing a new production of *Titanic The Musical*. Apparently, it's not a documentary about the record business, but a musical about the famous ship. And, no, he does not reprise the Leonardo DiCaprio role... Former BBC director general and Tony Blair personal advisor John Birt was spotted heading into Steven Howard's TCB Group offices last Tuesday for what turns out was the first of a series of chats he is having with artist managers in his new supervisory role for EMI. Howard, whose roster includes EMI signings Bryan Ferry and Natasha Marsh, was left impressed by Birt, who was appointed by Guy Hands back in September. "I just found it very refreshing this new regime is seeking the input of artist managers," says Howard... Hands himself won a handful of name-checks the night before, after donating a series of prizes for the raffle at the annual Mits dinner in aid of the Brit School and Nordoff-Robbins. He put up a week in Tuscany and donated four cases of wine, the latter rather suitably won by Terry Blamey, manager of the night's Mits winner Kylie Minogue... With Minogue winning the event's 16th annual award, it was a historic night at the Grosvenor House, as host Paul Gambaccini described in his own distinctive way. "Mits is an equal opportunities award," he proclaimed. "We've nearly had as many gay men as straight men - believe me I've been counting - we've had Jews, we've had Turks. Before now we've never had a woman." It was also the first Mits to have white feathers on every table, which were apparently there as a tribute to Ms Minogue rather than a sign of any industry surrender... The video tributes included Bono, in which he told Kylie to "spank my bottom", before self-awareness hit him and he added, "I don't know who to talk to about this."

Chris Martin made even less sense as he recalled the time he saw Kylie perform from two metres away: "It was the same feeling I got when I saw a beautiful waterfall or a giraffe." What is it with these pop stars?... Meanwhile, the Leighton-Pope Organisation's Carl Leighton-Pope looked a little glum at the ceremony. "Every year I come I recognise less and less people," he said. "When I eventually don't recognise anyone I won't come any more."...Talk



Picture: John Marshall/menternational.com

of some kind of merger between PPL and PRS has been in the air for years, but at long last they have come together - well, kind of. The pair partnered for the first time as the sponsors of the Mits, money worth spending surely just so PPL's chairman and CEO Fran Nevrlka (pictured, left) and PRS chairman Ellis Rich (right) could be pictured with Kylie and Dannii Minogue... It was all smiles (from Lucian at least) as The Eagles gathered for a quick photo before their exclusive show at IndigO2 last week. Pictured below, left to right: Don Henley, Timothy B.



Schmit, Lucian Grainge, Joe Walsh, Glenn Frey, Max Hole and Irving Azoff, the group's longtime manager... In the good news stakes, which modest management company has scored a hat trick of three number ones in three different countries with three different artists?... Onetime A&R man John Niven offers the following summary of his former role, in his forthcoming novel for Random House, called *Kill Your Friends*. "Sometimes, when they're trying to understand what A&R means, people who don't know anything about the music industry will say 'Ah, so you're talent spotters?' This is inaccurate. Madonna, Bono, The Spice Girls, Noel Gallagher, Kylie...do you really think any of that lot are talented? Don't make me fucking laugh. What they are is ambitious. This is where the big money is. Fuck talent. Forget Rock and Roll, if he'd just turned the other way out of the school yard Bono could have been a very successful CEO of a huge armaments manufacturer. This is the kind of person you want to sign. You've got a shot with that kind of attitude. Talented? Fuck off. Go and work in a guitar shop with all the other talented losers." Ooh-er!... We love a good freebie, so imagine our disappointment when we got wind of the goodie bags given out to performing artists at this year's MTV Europe Music Awards. Contents included a mini-Marshall amp, Sasquatch golf gear, a mobile phone, gold membership to Starwood hotels, a Bluetooth headset, candles, DVDs and a host of other goodies. Like they need them? What about us?! Pfff.... Finally, tickets are still available for the 18th Annual Nordoff-Robbins Pop Quiz, hosted by Mike Read, on November 22. Contact Julie Eyre on 020 8878 3298 and test your mettle.