

BPI MEMBER REPORT

WHAT THE UK STREAMED IN 2019

NO. 525

In the world of music streaming much emphasis is placed upon what's new – many of the most popular playlists on services are comprised either of tracks that have been released that week, or broadly reflect what's present in the Official Singles Chart. This is, of course, completely understandable: a cursory glance at the most popular songs in any given week will show that they are dominated by contemporary artists and material released relatively recently. There is more to the picture than just these highest-performing tracks however, as this report aims to show.

This analysis looks at what were the top 15,000 most-streamed tracks on audio services in the UK in 2019 (the exact criteria were any track played over 1m times or more over the course of the year). For each of those tracks an 'original' release date was assigned, corresponding to the first time it was released anywhere in the world. While not a perfect fit in every instance – plenty of songs gain momentum some time after their initial release – it provides a consist-

ent base from which to work. The cumulative number of plays in 2019 for tracks released in each year was calculated and from this the relative 'importance' of every year and decade was ascertained.

The results can be interpreted in a number of ways. In one sense the analysis confirms what might be expected – that the most recently-released songs garner the most plays and the further you go back in time, the smaller the play count total is for each year. Songs released in 2019, for example, accounted for over a fifth (21.1%) of plays, with those from 2018 comprising a lesser share (18.6%).

THE ROLE OF CATALOGUE TRACKS

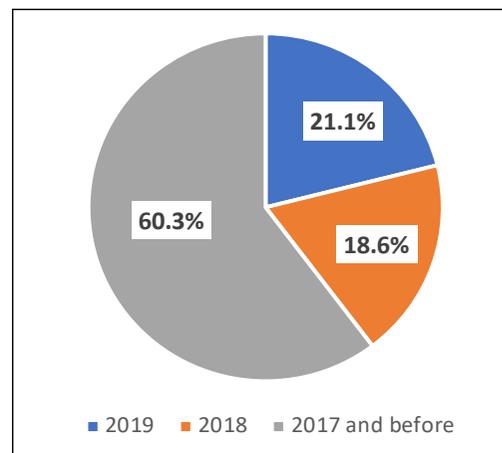
There is quite a notable drop off in the subsequent years – plays of songs from 2017 amounted to 9.5% of the total, with 2016 songs representing 5.2%. But while there are years



TOP CATALOGUE TRACKS BY DECADE OF RELEASE

DECADE	TITLE	ARTIST
2010-2017	JUST YOU AND I	TOM WALKER
2000s	MR BRIGHTSIDE	THE KILLERS
1990s	ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS IS YOU	MARIAH CAREY
1980s	LAST CHRISTMAS	WHAM!
1970s	BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY	QUEEN
1960s	HERE COMES THE SUN	THE BEATLES
1950s	ROCKIN' AROUND THE CHRISTMAS TREE	BRENDA LEE
1940s	WHITE CHRISTMAS	BING CROSBY

SHARE OF PLAYS IN 2019 BY TRACK'S RELEASE DATE



Base: top 15,000 most-streamed tracks
Source for all tables and charts: BPI Research/Official Charts Company data



IN SUMMARY

- Tracks released before 2018 accounted for over 60% of all streams in 2019
- More than 800 tracks from this period were streamed over 10m times over the course of the year
- Both the 1970s and the 1980s increase their share of catalogue streams
- Elton John and Queen account for six of the 10 most-streamed tracks from the 1970s between them
- Christmas songs prevalent in 1980s rundown - Wham's Last Christmas is top - but classics from Toto, Fleetwood Mac and Journey also fare well
- Strong presence of Motown and Soul among most-streamed tracks of the 1960s
- Catalogue (re)discoveries of the year include tracks by Lizzo (pictured), Dave & AJ Tracey, The Foundations, Bruce Springsteen and The Cure

BPI MEMBER REPORT

WHAT THE UK STREAMED IN 2019

NEW RELEASES AND CATALOGUE

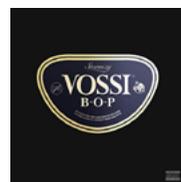
that buck this trend (of which more later), the total accrued by what might be termed 'catalogue' (defined in this case as anything released in or before 2017) is actually quite significant – 60.3% of total plays.

Because the number of tracks classed as catalogue expands with every year there is some degree of increase to be expected, although quite a significant jump has been experienced (its share was 56.5% in 2018). Contributing factors included the popularity of older tracks by artists who released new material in 2019 (such as Tom Walker, Lewis Capaldi, Freya Rid-

ings (pictured), Lizzo), along with still-popular titles such as *The Greatest Showman* being newly classed as catalogue.

NEW TRACKS DOMINATE AT THE TOP

Songs from 2019 and 2018 almost exclusively populate the upper reaches of the chart. The top two – Lewis Capaldi's *Someone You Loved* and Lil Nas X's *Old Town Road* - were both released in 2018 but only fully reached their peak in the following year. 2019-released tracks by Ed Sheeran, Billie Eilish, Stormzy and Calvin Harris all featured in the top 10 and only three tracks from before 2018 feature in the top 50.



VOSSI BOP
Stormzy
2019

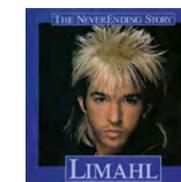
Below this very top level, however, older songs begin to gain more prevalence: 12 of the songs between positions 51 and 100 date from before 2018 and a third of the tracks ranked between 101 and 200 are catalogue too. Ranging from much-playlisted Christmas classics by Wham! and Mariah Carey to enduringly popular Brit-pop anthems, the most-played track from before the 2010s was again *Mr Brightside* by The Killers (pictured right). First released in

2003, it was played almost 55m times in 2019 and has once more risen up the year-end streaming chart, residing at just outside the overall top 50. The most-played track from before the millennium was Queen's *Bohemian Rhapsody*, which was played over 53m times.



momentum and by the end of the year it had been streamed over 43m times, placing it in the year-end top 100 (from being unplaced in 2018).

Virality is often a component in reigniting interest in older tracks. The sixth most-streamed track by Mariah Carey in 2019 was *Obsessed*, a relatively deep cut from 2009 that peaked at number 52 on the weekly chart but enjoyed real traction on TikTok.



NEVERENDING STORY
Limahl
1984

As always, being featured in film and TV productions raised the profile of a number of catalogue classics. Limahl's *NeverEnding Story* enjoyed a boost thanks to being covered by characters in the third series of *Stranger Things*. Films centred around the music of Elton John (*Rocketman*), Motley Crue (*The Dirt*), Bruce Springsteen (*Blinded By The Light*) and The Beatles (*Yesterday*) all ensured a rise in profile for the catalogues of those artists, while interest in individual tracks from *They Might Be Giants*, *Fiction Factory* and *Tiffany* may have been piqued by inclusion in the popular superhero series *The Umbrella Academy*.

WHAT'S BEHIND THE SPIKES?

Every year there are catalogue tracks that enjoy a sudden spike in popularity. The outstanding example of this in 2019 was Lizzo's *Truth Hurts* – originally released as a standalone single in September 2017, it enjoyed a prominent placing in the Netflix film *Someone Great* in April 2019. A TikTok challenge themed around the song gave it further



BPI MEMBER REPORT

WHAT THE UK STREAMED IN 2019

CATALOGUE

Other events across the course of the year can cause spikes in popularity. A number of tracks from The Cure's triumphant Glastonbury set received an uplift in 2019, the most popular being 1992's *Friday I'm In Love*, while a performance from the same weekend of Dave's *Thiago Silva* (first released in 2016) from the festival went viral, causing listeners to go back to the original recorded with AJ Tracey. Several tracks from Beyonce's *Lemonade* album charted for the first time owing to a wider

availability on streaming services, while a number of Spice Girls songs enjoyed a boost thanks to interest around their highly-anticipated reunion tour.

SHARE RISES FOR THE 1970s and 1980s

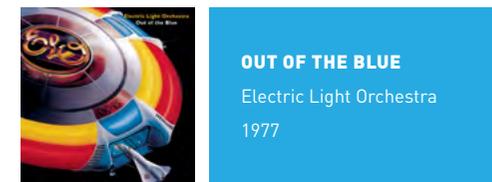
Two decades accounted for a greater share of catalogue plays in 2019: the 1970s and the 1980s (7.6% and 9.2% respectively). From

the chart of most-streamed titles by year (see appendix) it can be seen that two artists dominated in terms of 1970s songs played. In each of the first four years of the decade the most-streamed song from that year was by Elton John: *Your Song* from 1970, *Tiny Dancer* from 1971, *Rocket Man* from 1972 and *Step Into Christmas* from 1973. With not just the release of the biopic *Rocket Man* but also a best selling autobiography (*Me*) as well as a reissue of his hits compilation *Diamonds*, Elton's music was being discovered (and rediscovered) by a huge audience in 2019.

Queen were the other dominant act in terms of plays of 1970s music. The sell-through release in March of the film *Bohemian Rhapsody* kept up the interest in the band's catalogue that the cinematic release in 2018 had generated and from 1974 to 1981 Queen had either the most-streamed or second most-streamed track dating from that year, with only one exception (1977). Queen and Elton's prominence in the 1970s is underlined by the fact that between them they had nine of the 20 most-streamed tracks originally released in that decade.

1977: A year of classic albums

The year accounting for the greatest amount of streams in the 1970s was one that was not topped by Queen, however. In 1977 ELO's double album *Out Of The Blue* was released and one of its 17 songs – *Mr Blue Sky* – has gone



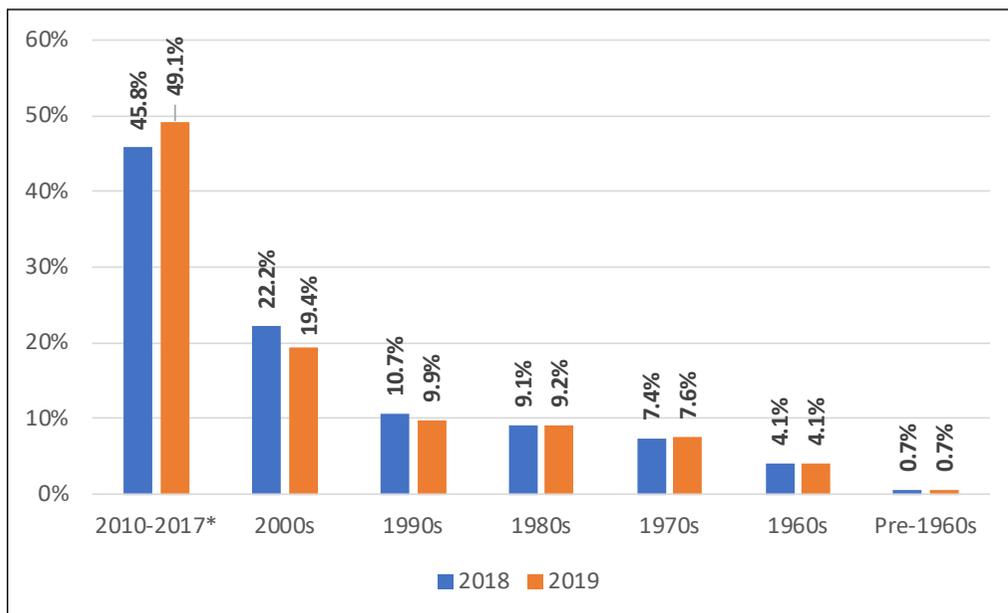
on to be one of the most popular catalogue tracks of recent years. February that year saw the release of another classic album – Fleetwood Mac's *Rumours*, from which *The Chain* was the most-streamed song. Big hits by Bob Marley & The Wailers (*Three Little Birds*, from the landmark *Exodus*), Bill Withers (*Lovely Day*) and The Bee Gees (*Stayin' Alive*) also contributed significantly to the year's tally, along with the first two songs from Queen's *News Of The World* – *We Will Rock You* and *We Are The Champions*.

1984: Wham!, Band Aid and A-Ha make it a year to remember

Queen's *Another One Bites The Dust* was the most-played song from 1980 but no one artist dominated the ensuing decade, with a different act claiming the most-played track in each year.

Christmas tracks played a significant part in the decade's streaming total, with yuletide standards (by Wham!, The Pogues ft Kirsty MacColl, Band Aid and Shakin' Stevens) comprising four of the 10 most-played songs. Both

CATALOGUE'S SHARE BY DECADE: PLAYS IN 2018 & 2019



Base: top 15,000 most-streamed tracks
 Source for all tables and charts: BPI Research/Official Charts Company data
 *Note: in 2018 the 2010s years would have comprised the period 2010-2016

BPI MEMBER REPORT

WHAT THE UK STREAMED IN 2019

CATALOGUE

Last Christmas and *Do They Know It's Christmas* date from the most popular year of the decade (1984) as do big hits from A-Ha (*Take On Me*), Bryan Adams (*Summer Of '69*) and Kenny Loggins (*Footloose*).



Selected tracks from the 80s catalogue of Queen and Elton John enjoyed significant moves up the chart from 2018 to 2019, with titles by Dolly Parton (*9 To 5* and *Islands In The Stream*), Tina Turner (*The Best*) and Bruce Springsteen (*Dancing In The Dark*) among others doing so. The reasons for why 1980s catalogue remains so relevant are up for speculation – is it the anthemic feel, the songcraft? But clearly music from this decade is resonating with audiences, both old and new.

THE 1960s: MOTOWN AND SOUL MIX WITH THE BEATLES AND THE STONES

With a couple of exceptions, the number of streams attributable to each year of the 1960s increases as the decade progresses. The biggest share of 1960s streams was claimed by tracks

released in 1969, which included *Here Comes The Sun* by The Beatles (from *Abbey Road*, which was reissued in a 50th anniversary edition in 2019), The Jackson 5's *I Want You Back* and Neil Diamond's *Sweet Caroline*. The year also saw David Bowie achieve his first top 10 hit (*Space Oddity*) and tracks from Elvis Presley, Creedence Clearwater Revival and The Rolling Stones were all popular in 2019.

Looking across the most-streamed tracks of the decade, it's apparent how well Motown and Soul tracks have worn popularity-wise. Marvin Gaye and Tammi Terrell's *Ain't No Mountain High Enough* (featured on the album *United*) was the second most-streamed track of the 1960s, with *I Want You Back* third.



The Temptations (*My Girl*), The Foundations (*Build Me Up Buttercup*) and Ben E King (*Stand By Me*) also all featured in the top 10, with songs from Otis Redding, The Four Tops, Aretha Franklin and The Supremes all in the top 20 for the decade.

TOP YEAR BY DECADE - 1990S, 2000s AND 2010s

Tracks from the 1990s accounted for just under 10% of all catalogue plays in 2019. The most popular year of origin from that decade - by some distance - was 1999. Songs from that year by Toploader (*Dancing In The Moonlight*), TLC (*No Scrubs*) and Backstreet Boys (*I Want It That Way*) were all played over 20m times on audio streaming services in 2019, with Destiny's Child's *Say My Name* not far off that marker. Mariah Carey's *All I Want For Christmas Is You*, from 1994, was the biggest 90s track by some distance however - it was played over 47m times and ranked at number 80 in the overall rundown. Oasis's *Wonderwall* and *Don't Look Back In Anger* (both from 1995) claimed second and third place in the 90s rundown.

As exemplified by the 1970s and 80s, it isn't always the last year of the decade that is the most popular in terms of play count. The same is also true for the 2000s, where music released in 2006 achieved the biggest stream total. Two tracks (*Naïve* and *She Moves In Her Own Way*) from the first album by The Kooks (*Inside In/Inside Out*) featured in the top three for the year, while big tracks from Snow Patrol, Shakira and The Fray also featuring in the top 10.

The year also saw the release of the first album by Arctic Monkeys, with *Mardy Bum* and

When The Sun Goes Down especially popular in 2019. 2008 claimed only a slightly smaller share of plays of tracks from the 2000s, with tracks from Jason Mraz, Estelle, Florence + The Machine and Beyonce (whose *I Am... Sasha Fierce* album was released in November of that year) among the most-streamed. The year also saw the release of Adele's debut *19*, Coldplay's *Viva La Vida* and Kings Of Leon's *Only By The Night*, tracks from which all appeared in the 2008 top 10.

As might be expected, the biggest 'catalogue' year of the 2010s was 2017. Accounting for 13.7% of all plays of tracks released in that decade, popular songs originally released in that year included Ed Sheeran's *Perfect*, *This Is Me* from *The Greatest Showman* soundtrack, Lewis Capaldi's *Bruises* (a top 10 hit in 2019) and Tom Walker's *Leave A Light On*. Tracks that enjoyed streaming success from earlier on in the decade included Vance Joy's *Riptide*, George Ezra's *Budapest* and John Legend's *All Of Me*.

Produced by BPI Research and Information Department

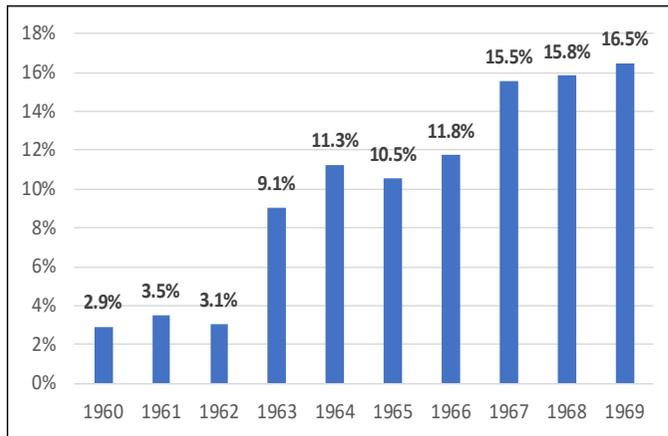
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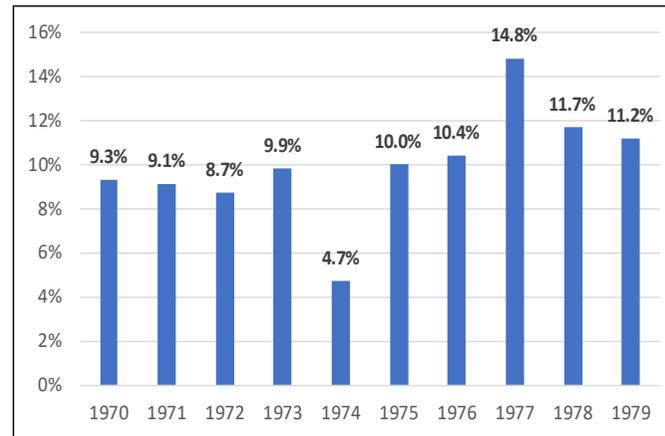
WHAT THE UK STREAMED IN 2019

MOST POPULAR YEAR BY DECADE

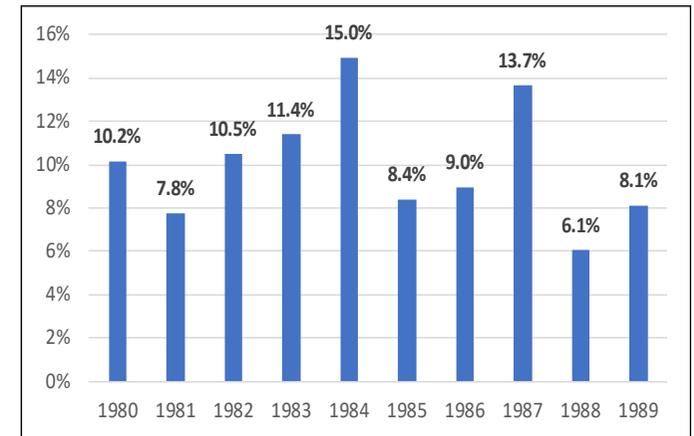
1960s



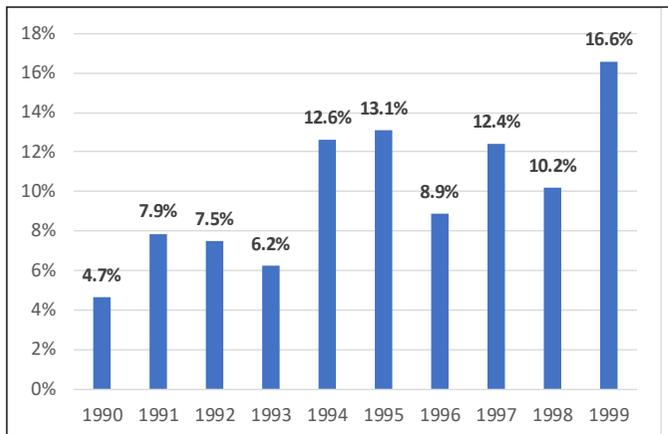
1970s



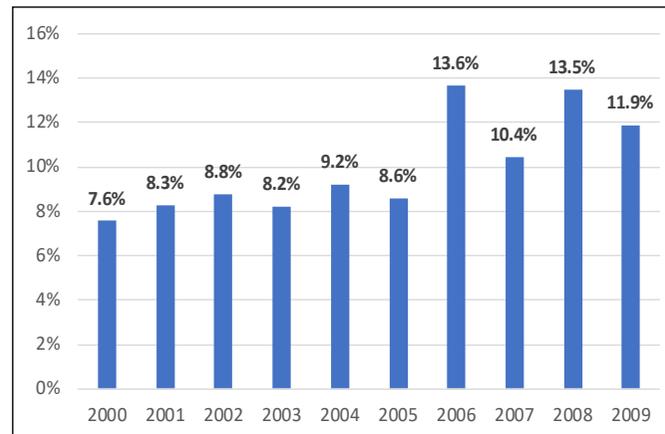
1980s



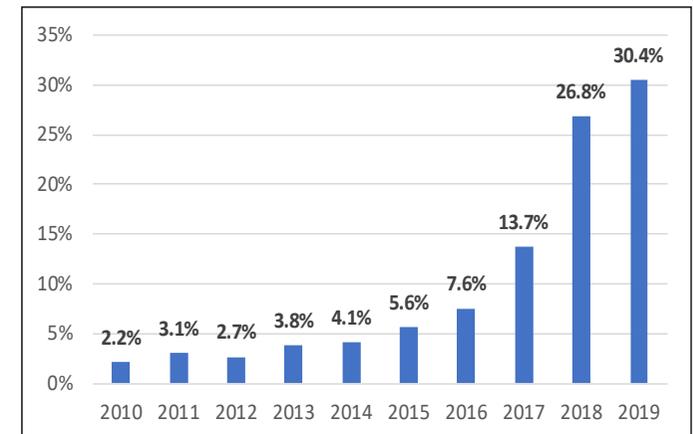
1990s



2000s



2010s



Source: BPI Research/Official Charts Company data

Base: top 15,000 most-streamed audio tracks

WHAT THE UK STREAMED IN 2019

MOST POPULAR TRACK BY YEAR OF RELEASE

YEAR	2019 POS	2018 POS	TITLE	ARTIST	STREAMS (M)	YEAR	2019 POS	2018 POS	TITLE	ARTIST	STREAMS (M)
2019	3	#N/A	I DON'T CARE	ED SHEERAN & JUSTIN BIEBER	138.8	1989	1042	1578	WE DIDN'T START THE FIRE	BILLY JOEL	11.6
2018	1	4384	SOMEONE YOU LOVED	LEWIS CAPALDI	229.0	1988	540	562	FAST CAR	TRACY CHAPMAN	17.3
2017	24	919	BRUISES	LEWIS CAPALDI	85.2	1987	151	162	FAIRYTALE OF NEW YORK	THE POGUES FT KIRSTY MACCOLL	32.8
2016	19	1715	JUST YOU AND I	TOM WALKER	93.6	1986	307	517	LIVIN' ON A PRAYER	BON JOVI	22.9
2015	139	496	OCEAN EYES	BILLIE EILISH	35.4	1985	193	290	MERRY CHRISTMAS EVERYONE	SHAKIN' STEVENS	29.0
2014	187	154	THINKING OUT LOUD	ED SHEERAN	29.7	1984	103	121	LAST CHRISTMAS	WHAM!	42.0
2013	132	157	RIPTIDE	VANCE JOY	35.8	1983	460	277	SWEET DREAMS (ARE MADE OF THIS)	EURHYTHMICS	19.0
2012	347	256	LET HER GO	PASSENGER	21.7	1982	144	143	AFRICA	TOTO	34.3
2011	232	229	THE A TEAM	ED SHEERAN	26.8	1981	166	231	DON'T STOP BELIEVIN'	JOURNEY	31.3
2010	265	288	PUMPED UP KICKS	FOSTER THE PEOPLE	25.1	1980	169	397	ANOTHER ONE BITES THE DUST	QUEEN	31.1
2009	322	387	PARTY IN THE USA	MILEY CYRUS	22.5	1979	587	591	HIGHWAY TO HELL	AC/DC	16.3
2008	202	181	I'M YOURS	JASON MRAZ	28.4	1978	100	213	DON'T STOP ME NOW	QUEEN	42.6
2007	356	337	SHE'S SO LOVELY	SCOUTING FOR GIRLS	21.4	1977	170	185	MR BLUE SKY	ELO	31.0
2006	215	180	NAIVE	THE KOOKS	27.4	1976	229	312	GO YOUR OWN WAY	FLEETWOOD MAC	27.0
2005	321	284	I BET YOU LOOK GOOD ON THE DANCE-FLOOR	ARCTIC MONKEYS	22.6	1975	60	159	BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY	QUEEN	53.1
2004	323	350	LET ME LOVE YOU	MARIO	22.5	1974	357	870	KILLER QUEEN	QUEEN	21.4
2003	56	75	MR BRIGHTSIDE	THE KILLERS	54.7	1973	245	273	STEP INTO CHRISTMAS	ELTON JOHN	26.2
2002	271	195	LOSE YOURSELF	EMINEM	24.9	1972	256	748	ROCKET MAN	ELTON JOHN	25.7
2001	773	825	HOW YOU REMIND ME	NICKELBACK	13.9	1971	285	702	TINY DANCER	ELTON JOHN	24.4
2000	450	449	YELLOW	COLDPLAY	19.2	1970	324	714	YOUR SONG	ELTON JOHN	22.5
1999	217	344	DANCING IN THE MOONLIGHT	TOPLOADER	27.3	1969	261	378	HERE COMES THE SUN	THE BEATLES	25.3
1998	372	313	IRIS	GOO GOO DOLLS	21.1	1968	610	1068	BUILD ME UP BUTTERCUP	THE FOUNDATIONS	16.0
1997	489	405	BITTER SWEET SYMPHONY	THE VERVE	18.2	1967	313	372	AIN'T NO MOUNTAIN HIGH ENOUGH	MARVIN GAYE & TAMMI TERRELL	22.8
1996	478	534	WANNABE	SPICE GIRLS	18.6	1966	946	1479	YOU CAN'T HURRY LOVE	THE SUPREMES	12.4
1995	112	123	WONDERWALL	OASIS	38.8	1965	810	1220	I CAN'T HELP MYSELF	FOUR TOPS	13.6
1994	80	99	ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS IS YOU	MARIAH CAREY	47.4	1964	569	713	MY GIRL	THE TEMPTATIONS	16.6
1993	1542	1428	LAI	JAMES	9.0	1963	533	727	IT'S THE MOST WONDERFUL TIME...	ANDY WILLIAMS	17.5
1992	761	1326	FRIDAY I'M IN LOVE	THE CURE	14.0	1962	2875	2470	BRING IT ON HOME TO ME	SAM COOKE	5.6
1991	338	362	SMELLS LIKE TEEN SPIRIT	NIRVANA	22.1	1961	594	865	CAN'T HELP FALLING IN LOVE	ELVIS PRESLEY	16.2
1990	596	687	THUNDERSTRUCK	AC/DC	16.2	1960	1890	1699	AT LAST	ETTA JAMES	7.8