

Independent charts to be re-launched, supported by new “Breakers” charts

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Following a period of discussion and debate, The Official Charts Company, the British Phonographic Industry and AIM have reached agreement on a new formula which will see a re-launch this month of the 31-year old Official Independent Album and Singles Charts.

The new-look charts will be launched on Monday June 29, with the new criteria for independence replacing the former focus on independent distribution. The main Independent Charts will be accompanied by new Independent Breakers charts.

These additional new charts – a Singles Breakers and Albums Breakers Chart - will provide a brand new platform for new, developing talent from the UK’s renowned independent community.

The changes have not only been devised to bring new relevance to the independent charts, but they have also created a new marketing and promotion platform for the entire independent label sector.

The Independent Chart was originally created in 1978, the brainchild of Cherry Red Records founder Iain McNay. First published in the UK music trade magazine Record Business in January 1980, the chart quickly established itself as an important chart for hundreds of enterprising Independent D.I.Y. punk and new wave record labels during that time.

The initial criteria defined an independent release as any record which was released by a label with independent distribution, in an era when major record companies were self-distributed and smaller labels used alternative routes. Today, however, with even majors outsourcing their own distribution to independent operations, this criterion has become less relevant.

Under the new rules, a download or CD will be eligible for the Official Independent Charts if it is released on a label which is 50% or more owned by an independent (or non-major) company, irrespective of the distribution channel through which it is shipped or delivered.

In addition, two new charts will be launched to reflect “breaking talent”. The Official Independent Breakers Charts – for singles and albums, respectively - will be open to independent releases by artists which have not previously been featured in the Top 20 of the Official Singles or Albums national charts.

Martin Talbot of the Official Charts Company says, “The independent record sector has changed beyond recognition since these charts were initially borne out of the punk/new wave surge of the late Seventies and early Eighties. This new set of rules is designed to address those changes.”

Cherry Red Chairman and AIM board member Iain McNay says, “The change in rules and the launch of the Independent Breakers chart gives the independent label community a genuine platform again to help give their releases profile. The Independent Chart will now, once again, be genuinely independent charts which can help measure the success of, and promote independent records.”

Julian Wall, the BPI’s Director of International Events & Independent Member Services says, “The independent chart has a long and illustrious history. After 30 years, the time is right to bring it back into a world in which truly independent labels are releasing masses of music that deserves to be heard and recognized. A credible independent label chart for albums, single tracks and new ‘break’ acts is an important step to achieving this.

“Working alongside AIM, Iain McNay (the chairman of Cherry Red Records responsible for launching the independent chart in 1978) and the Official Charts Company, has been a great experience. The BPI is 101% committed to the re-launch of an authoritative and genuine UK Independent Chart.”

Alison Wenham, Chairman and CEO of AIM commented, “The new chart is a vitally important tool that will showcase diverse music of high quality from the UK’s independent sector.”

Talbot adds, “The fact that we have found common ground right across the independent sector, is a great credit to the industry itself, as well as to the BPI and AIM, whose independent members have contributed considerably to the debate. Our next efforts will secure the widest exposure we can achieve for these charts. The editorial support we have secured with Music Week and our forthcoming media partners will play a big part of this.”