

Elton, Madonna save indies

Phonogram has appointed Paul Martin as head of deals with Wendy K as club promotions manager. Their duties will include dealing with releases on the Talkin' Loud and Global Village labels.

Suzanne Catty is the new director of international marketing at Hollywood Records. Catty, formerly international marketing manager at Phonogram, will report to Hein van der Ree.

Radio One controller Johnny Beerling will be answering questions from the public at 9pm tonight (January 7) on the station's Call The Controller programme.

Former MCA head of press Chrissie Cremore is now handling all media relations for Comic Relief. Red Nose Day is on March 15 and a single will be released to coincide.

The PRS is inviting applications from choirs, choral societies, orchestral and concert groups for its 1991 Enterprise Awards. The closing date for entries is April 2.

Record sales figures for Madonna and Elton John's two compilation albums rescued a poor Christmas for struggling independent retailers.

The two albums — The Immaculate Collection and The Very Best Of Elton John — recorded two of the highest weekly sales of all time.

Madonna sold 330,000 copies while Elton John shifted just under 300,000 in the week leading up to Christmas Day, creating an all-time record for the top two chart places.

Only Michael Jackson's Bad album did better selling 350,000 copies in its first week of release in September 1987.

Rattle and Hum by U2 sold 322,000 in its first week and the fifth place is believed to be held by their previous album The Joshua Tree at about 270,000 copies.

"These two albums have given retailers a shot in the arm," says Gallup Chart manager John Pinder. "Album sales are down by about four per cent compared to last year, but last year was a particularly good Christmas."

But the record-breaking performance of Madonna and



Elton John: shifted nearly 300,000 in week before Christmas

Elton John can be partly put down to a dearth of quality products in 1990, warns owner of Andy's Records Andy Gray.

Record companies did not produce the goods last year, he says, and must do better in 1991.

"Christmas 1990 has been

good despite an uninspired selection of chart material," he says. "As retailers we can only do as well as the products we sell."

Most of the TV advertised compilations were hardly worth stocking and showed a lack of imagination, he adds.

Record companies must come up with some new ideas for 1991, he says.

But on the whole, Christmas sales were good, even in those areas hit by blizzards in December.

Sales were particularly bright in the Midlands and the North where the recession hasn't yet hit. Andy Milburn, manager of Shrewsbury's Rainbow Records, says they were up on last year, as does Sandra Wickson, the owner of Circles in Rotherham.

Wickson claims sales picked up in the last three shopping days before Christmas Day as the seasonal boom began later than usual.

Despite reporting an increase in vinyl album sales over Christmas, it is CD and cassette sales which have contributed most to the Christmas boom, says Milburn. Andy McPherson, manager of Tracks Record Shop in Hertford, agrees.

But singles sales tailed off compared to 1989, adds McPherson. "Singles died on us in 1990," he says. "There just weren't enough good titles around."

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