

60 Years of German Album-Charts

July 1962 – July 2022

60 years of LP charts, a good opportunity to take a look at the history of the most successful albums in the German charts. There are still numerous current books that deal with the British and US charts, but in Germany you won't find any information in a similar form for many years. Since I have all the chart data from the beginning until today, I decided to share some of this interesting information and data with other chart enthusiasts.

I myself have nothing to do with the music business, but do all this purely as a hobby. I have been interested in music (although completely non-musical) and statistics since I was a child. So I guess it was inevitable that I got involved with music charts - i.e. no-ticking and analysing data. Since I have been involved with the charts since the mid-1960s, I have experienced most of the developments "live". It is extremely interesting to follow how the content and artists in the charts have changed. Hit parades never say anything about the quality of a title or album, but they are definitely a reflection of the respective society. And they are also the most popular releases of their time.

In July 1962, the first German long-playing record hit parade appeared in the trade journal "Der Musikmarkt". Exactly three years earlier, a ranking list of the best-selling singles had already been created in the German music market. The British and Americans had been enjoying weekly bestseller lists since 1956, and Billboard had been publishing sales lists at irregular intervals since 1945. But 1956 can be considered the birth year of their LP charts.

In Germany, however, a weekly list was still a long way off. But at least there was now a regular LP hit parade every month. The date was always the 15th of the month. The monthly rhythm was maintained until December 1976.

And this is how the first hit parade looked with its 25 placements:

1	My fair Lady Karin Hübner, Paul Hubschmid u. a., Philips – SO 8644 L	14	Play Bach, Folge 1, 2 und 3 Jacques Soussier, Decca – BLK 16 167-P / BLK 16 182-P / BLK 16 215-P
2	Porgy and Bess Original Sound Track, Philips – R 07 522 L	15	Bravo, Ray Conniff Ray Conniff, Philips – B 47 029 L
3	Die große Starparade 1962/1 Verschiedene Interpreten, Polydor – LPHM 46 613	16	Weltmeisterschafts- Tanzturnier Max Greger, Polydor – 46 542
4	Tanzparty bei Paul Kuhn Folge 1-3 Paul Kuhn, Electrola – E 83 194 / E 83 298 / E 83 313	17	Blue Hawaii Elvis Presley, RCA – LPM 2426
5	Freddy auf hoher See Freddy, Polydor – 46 750	18	Alle Kameraden Musikkorps der Bundeswehr, Telefunken – TW 30 205
6	Die Spitzenreiter 1961 Verschiedene Interpreten, –, Polydor – 47 013	19	Carmen (Querschnitt) Dir. Ferenc Fricsay, DGG – 19 191 LPEM
7	In der Bar nebenan Fritz Schulz-Reichel, Polydor – 46 608	20	Helmut Qualtinger als der Herr Karl Helmut Qualtinger, Electrola – Lebendiges Wort LW 1
8	Tschaikowsky Concerto No. 1 Van Cliburn, RCA – LM-2252	21	Time out Das Dave-Brubeck-Quartett, Fontana – 682 065 TL
9	Drei Lilien, drei Lilien Musikkorps der Bundeswehr, Decca – BLK 16 141-P	22	Das teuerste Programm der Welt Extra-Produktion Electrola – E 83 227 (WCLP 688)
10	Überleben Sie mal! Münchner Lach- und Schießgesell- schaft, Polydor – LPHM 46 587	23	Unser Hans Albers Hans Albers, Decca – BLK 16 181-P
11	My fair Lady Rex Harrison, Julie Andrews, Philips – B 07 245 L	24	Dein ist mein ganzes Herz Sándor Kónya, Polydor – LPHM 46 758
12	Eine unvergessene Stimme Peter Anders, Polydor – 46 757 LPHM	25	Schlagerparade der 14 Besten, Folge 1 und 2 Verschiedene Interpreten, Decca – BLK 16 209-P / BLK 16 218-P
13	Somebody loves me Ray Conniff, Philips – B 47 110 L		

A colourful mixture of musical, classical, orchestras of all kinds, "spoken word" and hit compilations. Only Elvis Presley seems to be a bit out of the ordinary here. As you can see here, several records from

a series were also condensed under one position. This continued for some time, as can be seen here at positions 4, 14 and 25.

So the first top album was the German performance of the musical "My Fair Lady" in Berlin. This album was to find itself at No. 1 a total of 22 times (the equivalent of 96 weeks) in the next 3 ½ years - a value that is still unmatched today and will probably never be reached again.

The positions 3, 6 and 25 were hit compilations of individual record companies. They were thus the forerunners of the "Bravo Hits" and contained the most successful titles of the last few months. The number of these placed samplers was still moderate at that time and the albums were integrated into the charts just like the "normal" artist albums.

Until February 1964, the LP list always consisted of 25 positions. After that, the length of the Hitparade changed several times, and the current value of 100 has existed since August 1992. A more detailed list of all these facts can be found in a separate info sheet.

It took until January 1977 before the monthly publication of the LP-Hitparade was abandoned. From then on, there were two issues per month, one dated the 1st of a month, the other, as before, the 15th. Singles had already been represented with two lists per month from 1965.

From September 1978 there was then a weekly list - as is still the case today.

In the 1970s, there were more and more hit compilations: Some companies specialised specifically in these releases. Many of the "old hands" surely still know the products of K-Tel or Arcade, which could be seen daily in the TV commercials. For the consumer (like me), these records were a good opportunity to get a lot of current hits for as little money as possible. The other record companies were not so happy about this, because they preferred to see their current artists with their new products high in the charts. Because a number 1 album was a good advertising medium then, as it still is today.

By the mid-1970s, the situation had become so bad that at times there were 8 hit compilations in the Top 10. When the charts were changed to the biweekly rhythm (1.1.1977), a regulation was made at the same time to "banish" these albums to their own hit parade (compilation chart). But they were so rigorous about it that all TV-promoted albums were no longer allowed to be in the normal charts. There were some prominent performers who fell victim to this regulation. After Media Control took over the survey of the charts in September of the same year, all the spun-off titles were allowed back into the normal charts. However, only for about a year. With the weekly publication of the hit list, the samplers were again listed in a separate list, but now only really the records with several artists (Various Artists). More detailed information about the compilation charts can also be found on a separate sheet.

How were or are the hit parades determined? Until the 2000s, it was simple: the numbers of albums sold as LPs, cassettes or CDs were taken from as many sources as possible. Whoever had sold the most of these physical data carriers was at number 1 in the hit parade. In 2007, there was a change that so far only applied to Germany (at least as far as the most important markets were concerned). The ranking was no longer determined by the sales of the products, but by the turnover achieved. So if a box with all the CDs of an artist is sold at a corresponding price, it can enter the charts even with low sales figures. Even if a T-shirt or other devotional items of the artist are sold together with the record, the turnover is included in the evaluation. However, there are upper limits to prevent excesses.

What also distinguishes the German charts from the British and American charts is the possibility of a pure video DVD entering the charts without a corresponding music CD. If both exist, the sales figures are added together.

At the beginning of this century, there were even cases where DVDs of TV series were found in the charts that one would not actually look for there (e.g. Stromberg, Die Wochenshow and Ladykracher). However, these special cases were then excluded again after some time.

From 2009 onwards, legal digital downloads were included in the rating in addition to physical sales. More albums reappeared in the charts that were no longer available on LP or CD. Many things were always and everywhere available as downloads. This is particularly noticeable after the death of a popular artist, when all his/her albums can be found in the charts the following week.

There were even bigger changes from 2014 onwards, after streaming figures were also taken into account. In the past, you could only help "your artist" achieve a good ranking once by buying an LP or CD, but today it is also possible to influence the result by frequently streaming a title. Whether this is positive for the charts (whether singles or albums) is difficult to judge. On the whole, however, the general interest in the charts has diminished considerably. The "old chart friends" can no longer really identify with the products in the new charts.

How can one compare the successes of performers and albums over six decades? Was James Last more successful than Ed Sheeran, were the Beatles more successful than Rammstein? I have tried to collect and present some of this information. In any case, it's an interesting mix.

I hope I haven't bored you too much with this journey through the history of the German album charts.

You can find even more information, numerous statistics and other interesting things on the individual sub-pages of my "birthday page".

At Wikipedia there is an interesting page that also highlights other aspects. It is certainly worth taking a look at it. https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deutsche_Albumcharts

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