

VISION

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THE YEAR THAT NEVER WAS



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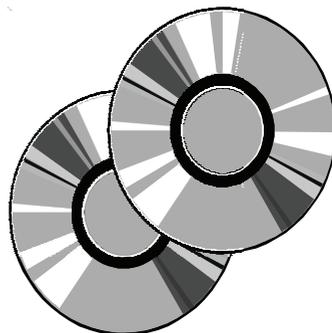
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EDLINES

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Frances Ruffelle almost sang it in 1994. We're in the middle of a mad equation right now, but we can yet untangle it. There's already been some amazing examples of how Eurovision fans are doing just that.

This has to be the most unusual edition of **Vision** in its history. What should have been a taster for the extravaganza to come in Rotterdam is now a recognition of an unexpected, but absolutely necessary, gap in May's calendar.

It's not fun having the contest out of our lives for 12 months longer than expected but we're going to do our best to keep your spirits up in this edition. Not that we're the first in the community to do so, there's already been some engrossing Saturday nights spent on social media in the company of **#EurovisionAgain** - it just goes to show how the worst of times can bring out the best in people. I'm sure OGAE won't mind if I use Edlines to thank the organisers on everyone's behalf for distracting us all from COVID-19 for a few hours, even if we didn't get justice for Daz Sampson in the 2006 rewatch (please don't judge, I've always thought that was a brilliant wee pop song).

The cancellation of Eurovision 2020 meant a last-minute rethink of the content in this issue. Some of it, including Gordon Roxburgh's look at how the 1977 Eurovision almost became the first in the event's history to be called off at the last minute, we're written at extreme short notice, so thanks to everyone involved for the team effort which made this issue happen.

Eurovision will be back. We may need to be patient, but it will. And when it does, it'll be the biggest party in its history. Rotterdam 2021, we'll be so ready for you.

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NEXT ISSUE: OUT IN JULY

SAVE THE DAY!
Saturday October 3rd 2020
We have no idea what the world holds for us in the next few months, but just in case...

eurobash
THE OFFICIAL UK EUROVISION FAN GATHERING

PEARL CARR

2nd November 1921 –
16th February 2020



Pearl Lavinia Carr, who represented the United Kingdom at the 1959 Eurovision Song Contest with her late husband Teddy Johnson, has died at the age of 98. Born in Exmouth, Devon, Pearl developed her singing career as a stage and broadcast artist during the 1940s and early 1950s, performing alongside her future husband as early as 1943. Most of Pearl's songs from this period were not recorded, but included *Longing For You*, *April In Portugal* and *Poppa Piccolino* which were all published as sheet music. She would also become the lead female vocalist with The Keynotes who provided backing vocals for numerous other singers including Gracie Fields, Anne Shelton and comic turned singer Dave King. It was with Dave King that The Keynotes scored a Top Five hit in 1956 with *Memories Are Made Of This*, although the next release,

You Can't Be True To Two, stalled at Number 11.

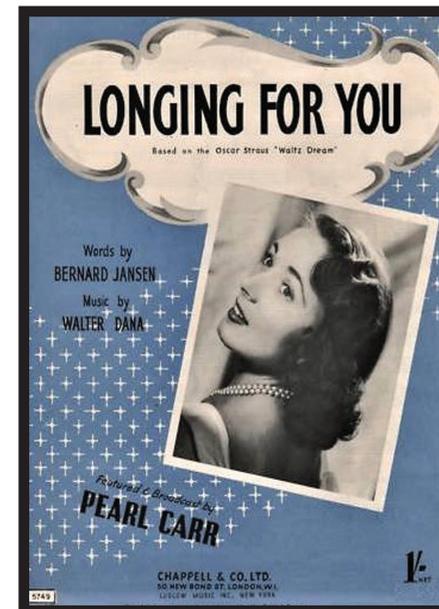
Prior to her first chart success, Pearl had duetted with Dick James on the 1951 release, *Blue For A Boy*, with both singers backed by Stanley Black and His Orchestra. It was around this time that the BBC wanted her to duet with another male vocalist whom she had previously encountered and who went by the name of Teddy Johnson. Considering himself a solo performer, Teddy initially refused but did allow Pearl to accompany him on his summer tour. It was not too long before the singing couple became attracted to each other, cementing their love by getting married at Marylebone Register Office on 18th June 1955. Pearl's marriage to Teddy also coincided with the release of her last known solo record, *Where Will The Dimple Be*, which failed to chart.

The couple's first release together was in 1957 when the EP, *Meet Teddy And Pearl*, was issued by Pye Records. The four songs featured were *Tomorrow, Tomorrow*, believed to be the first song recorded by Pearl and Teddy, *Sweet Elizabeth*, *Never Let Me Go* and *Mandolin Serenade*; the latter of which had been written and composed by none other than the iconic 20th century actor, Charlie Chaplin. *Tomorrow, Tomorrow* was also released as a single but, despite proving popular in Music Halls across the country, the song failed to chart.

Although her brother-in-law, Bryan Johnson (UK 1960) had unsuccessfully

taken part at the 1957 *Festival Of British Popular Song*, it was not until 1959 that Pearl Carr and her husband, Teddy Johnson, entered the Eurovision Song Contest British Final, as it was then known. Performing two songs, *That's It, That's Love!* was eliminated in the first round, while the ultimately victorious *Sing Little Birdie* would become the United Kingdom's second ever Eurovision entry. Although the song was expected to win the contest that was held in Cannes, it was to become the first of many second placed songs from a country that has often been the bridesmaid but rarely the bride.

Returning to the British Final in 1960,





appeared on television variety shows, but in 1986 their career was revived after the couple were surprised by Eamonn Andrews on ITV's *This Is Your Life*. Following the broadcast, the pair were invited to appear in the West End as part of Stephen Sondheim's revival of the musical *Follies* and, four years later in 1990, Pearl and Teddy finally announced their retirement. However, after Katrina & The Waves won the 1997 Eurovision Song Contest and Birmingham was preparing to host the 1998 event, Mr and Mrs Music, as they were affectionately known, were surprised to find themselves back in demand.

RECOGNITION

Joining past UK performers at the recording of Hale & Pace's *Jobs For The Boys: Eurovision Special* in 1998, the following year Pearl Carr and Teddy Johnson joined Chiara (MT 1998/2005/2009) at the 1999 OGAE UK Convention where they delighted delegates by speaking about their lifetime in music which had started in the years before most of the assembled crowd had been born! Nine years ago, Pearl and Teddy were recognised by the British Music Hall Society who presented the couple with a Lifetime Achievement award. However, soon after receiving this important recognition, Pearl's health started to deteriorate, with Teddy remaining the more active of the two until his death on 6th June 2018.

Now reunited with each other, Pearl Carr and Teddy Johnson will always be remembered for their infectious performance of *Sing Little Birdie*, which is not only reminiscent of the early years of Eurovision but also a reminder of that bygone musical era which must never be forgotten.

Obituary by Gordon Lewis



Pearl and Teddy failed to reach the final seven songs with *Pickin' Petals*, while *When The Tide Turns* was easily beaten by *Looking High, High, High* which was performed by none other than Teddy's singing brother, Bryan Johnson. Although Bryan's song peaked at Number 20, the two songs entered by Pearl and Teddy did not generate enough record sales to enter the British charts despite being released as a double A side. Although Pearl and Teddy continued to release records throughout the decade that followed their second Eurovision attempt, *How Wonderful To Know* struggled to peak at Number 23 and became the couple's last appearance in the charts. The Swinging Sixties were about to change the style of popular music, making Pearl and Teddy's contributions seem sadly outdated.

Pearl and Teddy continued performing on the nostalgia circuit and frequently

BILL MARTIN

MBE 9th November 1938 – 26th March 2020



Sandie Shaw



Cliff Richard



Phil Coulter and Bill Martin

One of the songwriters who helped the United Kingdom achieve its first Eurovision victory has died at the age of 81. William Wylie MacPherson, who became better known as Bill Martin (hereafter referred to as Martin), was born in Govan, Scotland in 1938. Together with his parents and older brother, Martin lived at Govan throughout World War II but, after peace returned, the family moved to a new housing development at Priesthill on the south side of Glasgow. Although he remembered writing his first song at the age of ten, Martin completed an apprenticeship to become a Marine Engineer working in the shipyards of Glasgow. It was during this time that he found himself listening to the emerging sounds of the 1950s and knew that he wanted to become a professional songwriter.

Having spent two years in South Africa with his first wife Margaret (née Howe), the couple returned to Scotland during

1962 and Martin started to concentrate on writing songs in the hope that some might be recorded. Just over one year later, his first song, *Kiss Me Now*, was recorded by Tommy Quickly & The Remo Four but failed to chart. Unfortunately for Martin, the record was released on 22nd November 1963 and coincided with the assassination of John F Kennedy. Radio stations did not want to be seen playing light-hearted tunes after such a tragic global event, which no doubt contributed to the song's lack of success.

During 1964, Martin started working alongside Tommy Scott, who was the production manager for Twinkle, a female singer who achieved limited success during the 1960s. Twinkle's musical director was named Phil Coulter and, by 1965, Bill Martin and Phil Coulter had formed a song writing partnership that would last more than ten years. With Martin writing the lyrics and Coulter writing the music, the

pair soon found numerous acts wanting to record their compositions. Demand for songs came from a diverse range of acts, including Dave, Dee, Dozy, Beaky, Mick & Tich, Helen Shapiro and The Troggs, as well as popular TV comedians Ken Dodd and Dick Emery.

BREAKTHROUGH

However, Martin's international breakthrough came in 1967 when *Puppet On A String*, which he had written alongside Coulter, was chosen to represent the United Kingdom at the Eurovision Song Contest in Vienna. With its memorable lyrics, catchy melody and an infectious performance from bare-footed Sandie Shaw, juries across Europe had no hesitation in awarding victory to Martin and Coulter's composition. Not to be outdone, the pair then found themselves responsible for writing *Congratulations* which was chosen to represent the United Kingdom when the contest was held in

London the following year. As most people will be aware, Cliff Richard narrowly lost out to Spain's Massiel by just one point, denying the songwriters a second successive Eurovision victory.

Despite not topping the scoreboard in 1968, the hits continued throughout 1969 and the early 1970s. Cilla Black had a 1969 Top Three hit with *Surround Yourself With Sorrow*, while the following decade saw numerous Martin and Coulter compositions vying for chart success, including *Fancy Pants* from glam-rock band Kenny and *Shang-a-Lang* from the tartan clad Bay City Rollers, both of which were released in 1974. The following year, Bill Martin and Phil Coulter were jointly recognised when they won an Ivor Novello award for Songwriter of the Year. They also had a Number One hit in the USA when *Saturday Night*, a non-UK single from the Bay City Rollers, soared up the American charts to claim the top spot.

Another Eurovision song appeared in



Phil and Bill in recent years

latter more well-known as a member of Ultravox and co-writer of Band Aid's *Do They Know It's Christmas?* However, Martin and Coulter stopped working together in 1983 when Martin bought his song writing partner's shares in the company which was eventually sold to EMI. However, Martin still continued to involve himself in other businesses, including music publishing, marketing and property development.

AWARD

During October 2008, Martin was one of the special guests at OGAE UK's Eurobash and delighted delegates while reminiscing about his Eurovision involvement. Exactly one year later, Martin and Coulter were recognised with a Gold Badge Award by the British Academy of Songwriters, Composers & Authors for their services to the music industry. The lavish ceremony coincidentally saw Hank Marvin from The Shadows (UK 1975) receive an award for his own musical contributions.

Just eight years ago, Martin received the Sunday Mail Living Legend Award while, in 2014, he received the MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours List for Services to Music and Charity in Scotland. In 2017, Martin published his autobiography, *Congratulations - Songwriter To The Stars*, which received mixed reviews, but documented the life of an incredibly prolific songwriter who left his mark on British popular music, even though the listener may not have always known who had written the songs.

Bill Martin died on 26 March 2020 and is survived by his second wife, Jan (née Olley), who he married in 1972 and their two children. Angus and Melanie, as well as Meran and Alison from his first marriage. Vision and OGAE UK would like to offer its sympathies to Bill Martin's family at this time of sadness.

Obituary by Gordon Lewis



CLOSED DOWN!



OK – we may not have Eurovision this year, but we’re certainly not going to ignore the efforts and national finals that went into selecting all the entries that should’ve been performing in Rotterdam. **Vision** editor **Hass Yusuf** gives us his 41 views and information on the entries that should have been. Prepare for lots of angst and roll out the shout-o-metre...

Additional information from eurovision.tv and natfinals.50webs.com

ALBANIA



Song: *Fall From The Sky*
Performer: Arlena Ara
Songwriters: Michael Blue, Robert Stevenson, Sam Schummer, Darko Dimitrov, Lazar Cvetkoski

It’s in the DNA y’know. Genetics has dictated that all Albanian singers must belt out their songs! Pity the poor shout-o-metre. But if you lower the volume, this is a decent attempt of a mid-tempo classical rock entry full of emotion and angst. As you all know emotion and angst are main staples of Eurovision songs. Arlena is a bit of a star in her country - she’s been in the industry since she was five years old and won *X Factor Albania* aged 14, seven years ago. Besides winning loads of other awards she’s also been a coach on *The Voice of Albania*. The lyrics suggest that Arlena is breaking free from a destructive relationship. You fly away girl!

● After two semi-finals 12 acts made it to the national final where a jury decided the winner.

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ARMENIA



Song: *Chains On You*
Performer: Athena Manoukian
Songwriters: Athena Manoukian, DJ Paco

Well they do say diamonds are a girl’s best friend and this is a real gem of a song. Of course it didn’t start out that way, but after a serious makeover it could’ve won the contest. It’s a modern sounding quick-paced dance number, with slight ethnic overtones. And it’s all about sex really - with lots of chains and such. I was quite taken back. The song suggests she’s her own woman - no one’s gonna hurt her - she rules! And she rocks as well. Oh, what could’ve been... Athena is an Armenian-Greek winning various international awards - and even tried out for Junior Eurovision (for Greece) and the UK’s *X Factor*.

● At the national final the winner from 12 acts was chosen equally by a jury, international jury and SMS voting.

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AUSTRALIA



Song: *Don't Break Me*
Performer: Montaigne
Songwriters: Montaigne, Anthony Egizii, David Musumeci

It's all about girl power again. Montaigne combines performance art with this powerful and emotional fast-paced entry. The lyrics suggest she's trying to make a go with a relationship, but that heel wants to play around! But how can she break free? The biggest advantage of this act is that Montaigne is able to tell her story expertly. Montaigne (real name Jess Cerro) is a big name in the Aussie indie scene, picked up loads of awards, produced successful albums and gone on various tours. Certainly a real tour-de-force.

- At the national final the winner, from ten acts, was chosen equally by televoting and a jury.

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AZERBAIJAN



Song: *Cleopatra*
Performer: Efendi
Songwriters: Luuk van Beers, Alan Roy Scott, Sarah Lake

My goodness, I was nearly worn out - or should I say my Goddess? Another song about girl power that would've done well. This up-tempo dance number is very modern with ethnic overtones and some unique sounds. All together now - Cleo-pat-TRA!! It's all in the tongue. Efendi is telling us, like Cleopatra, she is a complex person who made a few bad decisions, but was now back in charge. Yeah, it's all about sex again - who can resist her womanly ways? Of course, we all saw all this in *Carry On Cleo*. Finally after her fifth attempt, Efendi gets to represent her country - and has participated in TV contests in her country and nearby Kazakhstan.

- Efendi was internally selected.

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AUSTRIA



Song: *Alive*
Performer: Vincent Bueno
Songwriters: Vincent Bueno, David "Davey" Yang, Felix van Gons, Artur Aigner

Vinny's definitely got the moves - which is handy as this is a fast-paced dance number. It's basically a love song to his other half who makes his life worth living - but not to take it for granted. Emotion and angst again, but it's nice to see a happy-chappie. The song has a good beat and sounds quite modern, so could've done well. Vincent trained at the Vienna Conservatory, won the TV show, *Musical! The Show* and appeared on *Dancing Stars* - hence his groovy moves no doubt. He's also a music producer and co-penned his entry.

- Vincent was internally selected.

Image copyright © David Yang

BELARUS



Song: *Da Vidna (Before Dawn)*
Performers: VAL
Songwriters: Mikita Naidzenau, Vladislav Pashkevich, Valeria Gribusova

This is a somewhat bonkers electro dance number. It's sung in Belarusian, and the translation doesn't really help to explain what it's all about. But who cares - just go with the flow, though the key-changes may throw you off balance! The duo certainly like to experiment and are known for combining various genres. VAL are actually music producer Vlad Pashkevich and singer/songwriter Valerie Gribusova. Vlad produced the country's entry in 2017 for Naviband, while Valerie participated in *The Voice Ukraine*. They co-penned their entry.

- At the national final the winner, from 12 acts, was chosen equally by a jury and televoting.

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BELGIUM



Song: *Release Me*
Performer: Hooverphonic
Songwriters: Alex Callier, Luca Chiaravalli

Close your eyes and clear your mind, and what we have here could be a rather superior sounding James Bond theme. It's a lovely combination of symphonics and classic music. The story of the song is quite sad - coming to terms with a faltering relationship. Yes, sometimes it's best to part ways. The band have been together for 25 years with much international success. Their entry was co-penned by front man Alex Callier - also a successful coach on *The Voice of Flanders*. Much was made when the band was announced that they would representing their country. The hoo-ha was justified.

- Hooverphonic were internally selected.

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CROATIA



Song: *Divlji Vjetrovi (Wild Winds)*
Performer: Damir Kedzo
Songwriter: Ante Pecotic

Oh dear, it's another sad song, suggesting autumn blowing away all that hot love of summer and all that's left are leaves falling off trees - you get the idea. But regardless this is quite an impressive classical/pop number superbly sung - and the old shout-o-metre enjoyed the experience. It has a nice traditional quality to it and sounds wonderful in its native language. Damir is a big name in Croatia, having many hit songs as well as acting awards - and was nominated for the extremely prestigious Porin Award Best Male Vocal Performance. (Calm down, I said 'Porin', not 'porn'!)

- The winner at the national final, which featured 16 songs, was decided by five regional juries (50%) and televoting (50%). As there was a tie, the televoting count took precedence.

Image copyright © Damir Kedzo Promo

BULGARIA



Song: *Tears Getting Sober*
Performer: Victoria
Songwriters: Victoria Georgieva, Borislav Milanov, Lukas Oscar Janisch, Cornelia Wiebols

There's a lovely spooky and atmospheric 'enchanted forest' feel to this lovely entry. Whenever Bulgaria have time off from Eurovision they come back stronger - and this is no exception. It's a softly performed song and very unique and tells the story of having the strength to get over a broken relationship. Victoria co-penned her entry - so obviously lots of talent - but to add to her pedigree she's also a animal lover. And to further add to her credentials she's an official European ambassador for the Earth Hour movement which encourages people around the world to switch off their lights to protect the environment. I'm wiping away the tears because we won't hear this song at Eurovision!

- Victoria was internally selected.

Image copyright © Lora Musheva

CYPRUS



Song: *Running*
Performer: Sandro
Songwriters: Alfie Arcuri, Sebastian Rickards, Octavian Rasinariu, Sandro, Teo DK

The song tells a sad story of depression (which Sandro has experienced himself) - running through darkness, but seeing light at the end of the tunnel. This is an interesting entry with very unusual sounds - a mixture of genres, but with a good underlying beat. Sandro was born in Germany and also has American and Greek roots. He started his musical career playing drums at four years old, gradually learning more instruments and even forming his band when he was 15. He co-wrote his entry and also appeared on *The Voice of Germany* and even represented the USA in a festival in Russia.

- Sandro was internally selected.

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CZECH REPUBLIC



Song: *Kemama (Okay Mama)*
Performer: Benny Cristo
Songwriters: Ben Cristovao, Charles Sarpong, Osama Hussain, Rudy Ray, Filip Zangi

This is an engaging hip-hop dance number highlighting Benny's African roots. His mother is Czech and his father comes from Angola. This is definitely an interesting choice from the Czechs. It all adds to the diversity of Eurovision. Benny co-wrote his entry - but besides being a singer/songwriter he's also an actor and sportsman (tennis, snowboarding, Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu). All this and he still has time to be an advocate of animal rights. The lyrics reflect the story of his childhood and all the difficulties he faced - but he clearly emerged as an independent spirit.

- The national final, which featured seven acts, was held online and the winner was chosen equally by an international jury and App voting.

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ESTONIA



Song: *What Love Is*
Performer: Uku Suviste
Songwriters: Sharon Vaughn, Uku Suviste

This blue-eyed hunk of a man, once described as the country's sexiest man, is looking for love. And he's found it in his co-penned entry, *What Love Is*. The song is a good mix of classical and rock/pop and has a hint of musical theatre about it. It's passionately sung by Uku, who studied at the famous Berklee College of Music in the USA. But music isn't his only interest - he's also patron of UNICEF Estonia. He was a contestant in *The Voice of Russia* in 2018 where he was mentored by our own Ani Lorak. He's applied to represent his country a number of times before and was even runner-up last year.

- After two semi-finals, 12 acts made it through to the national final where after two rounds of voting the winner was chosen by televoting.

Image copyright © Karl Saare

DENMARK



Song: *YES*
Performers: Ben & Tan
Songwriters: Emil Adler Lei, Jimmy Jansson, Linnea Deb

What's this then? Is this an uplifting pop song? Is it a positive tale of love? Does it have a happy ending even during hard times? Does it make you smile? Is it easy on the ear with a nice up-tempo tune and decent key changes? Do the duo have good chemistry between them? What's the answer to all these questions? Yes - that's right - it's, er... yes! Ben & Tan are actually Benjamin Tsimalona Rosenbom (from a German/Malagasy background) and Tanne Amanda Balcells (from a Danish/Spanish background). They both live in Denmark and first met as competitors in 2019 on *X Factor Denmark*.

- After three semi-finals, ten acts made it to the national final where after two rounds of voting the winner was eventually chosen by SMS/mobile App voting.

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FINLAND



Song: *Looking Back*
Performer: Aksel
Songwriters: Joonas Angeria, Whitney Phillips, Connor McDonough, Riley McDonough, Toby McDonough

It's no secret that many fans wanted the brasher entry, *Cicciolina*, to win the national final, but instead they had to settle for a more gentle up-tempo pop song with a toe-tapping beat. And there's nothing wrong with that. Through his smooth sounding voice, Aksel expertly expresses to the listeners that it's really not worth aiming for things that won't make you happy - don't let anything weigh you down - live for the day instead and seize the moment! You can't fault Aksel's vocals - well he was part of *The Voice of Finland* in 2017.

- The national final featured six acts and the winner was chosen equally by a international jury and televoting.

Image copyright © Mona Salminen

FRANCE



Song: *Mon Allié (The Best In Me)*
Performer: Tom Leeb
Songwriters: Peter Boström, Thomas G:son, John Lundvik, Tom Leeb, Amir Haddad, Lea Ivanne

It's difficult not to fall in love with this French love song. In some ways it's painting by numbers, but Tom's singing really brings out the best of the composition. There's such passion and angst - though maybe a bit too soppy for words (understatement), but think of it as a guilty pleasure. Don't judge - remember, as Eurovision fans, we're all romantics at heart. The song is full of uplifting key changes, with classical violins and such like. Tom co-penned his entry (along with some familiar names) and is also a well-known actor and comedian. He is part of a comedy duo Kevin & Tom - and have a popular YouTube show.

● Tom was internally selected.

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GERMANY



Song: *Violent Thing*
Performer: Ben Dolic
Songwriters: Borislav Milanov, Peter St. James, Dag Lundberg, Jimmy Thorén, Connor Martin

This is more like it Germany! After that shoutfest of last year, we have something completely different this time. And different is the key word here (pun intended). This is an outstanding electro-funky dance song going at 100 beats per hour. Young Ben has a very unique high-pitched voice (so what if he sounds like a teenage girl in parts) that's a perfect fit for the groovy sounds and moves. The song isn't actually about violence - but passion! And sex. He's going to sweep her off her feet. How very shocking! Anyway, Ben was born in Slovenia, moved to Switzerland and settled in Germany. He's appeared on *Slovenia's Got Talent* and was runner-up in *The Voice of Germany*.

● Ben was internally selected.

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GEORGIA



Song: *Take Me As I Am*
Performer: Tornike Kipiani
Songwriter: Tornike Kipiani

TIME TO WAKE UP! Yes - it's time for a good old fashioned loud electro-rock song which nearly blew away the circuits of the poor shout-o-metre! Tornike, who wrote his entry, certainly gives it some welly. This is another entry with a depressing story - asking the eternal question why can't you love me for myself? Never mind mate. But Tornike's got nothing to be ashamed of - in 2014 he won *X Factor Georgia* (probably blew the roof off) where he was mentored by Tamta (Cyprus 2019) and in 2019 he won *Georgian Idol* gaining the ticket for Eurovision. He'll be back next year.

● After six elimination shows, four performers were chosen for the national final where the winner was chosen equally by televoting and Facebook Messenger. The song was later internally selected.

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GREECE



Song: *SUPERGIRL*
Performer: Stefania
Songwriters: Dimitris Kontopoulos, Arcade, Sharon Vaughn

That exclamation mark probably stops any lawsuits from DC Comics who own the Supergirl character. As the title suggests this super song is all about girl power. It's an interesting upbeat dance number with a super techno-beat and a bit of ethnicity thrown in. Stefania (who has Greek-Dutch heritage) has a super voice - having perfected at a young age on *The Voice Kids* and Junior Eurovision representing the Netherlands in 2016 as part of the girl-band Kisses. All very super experiences. She's also appeared in movies and TV series. No doubt they were all super!

● Stefania was internally selected.

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ICELAND



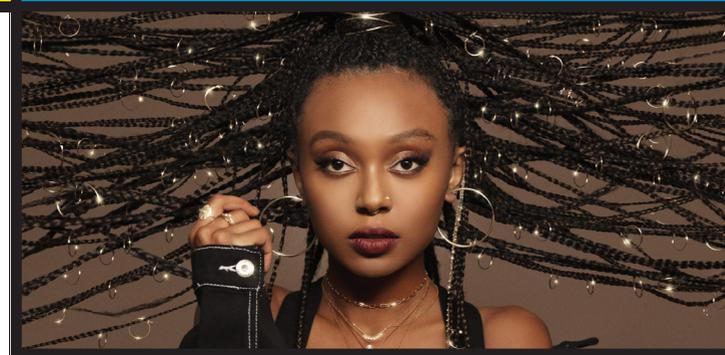
Song: *Think About Things*
Performer: Daði og Gagnamagnið
Songwriter: Daði Freyr

For such a small population, the country definitely punches above its weight. Once again they offer us something different with this engaging and whimsical funk-like pop number. By all accounts it appears to be very popular among Eurovisionistas. Of course there's too much hair floating around but it all works well in this witty act - and you can't go wrong with a wind machine. Let's have fun, enjoy life and strut you booty suggests the song. Daði wrote the entry and his wife and two sisters are in the band (Gagnamagnið translates as 'data plan').

- After two semi-finals five acts made it through to the national final where after two rounds of voting the winner was eventually chosen by televoting.

Image copyright © Mummi Lu

ISRAEL



Song: *Feker Libi (Just Think)*
Performer: Eden Alene
Songwriters: Doron Medalie, Idan Raichel

Three for the price of one! Well, that's what it feels like with this entry. But nevertheless, in a strange way - for key-change lovers, it just about works. It combines sounds from Africa, the Middle East as well as western pop into an ethnic mesh that is very energetic. It's also sung in four languages, English, Hebrew, Arabic and Amharic. It's a happy song all about accepting who you are and that we should all love each other. Eden was born in Jerusalem to Ethiopian parents. As a young adult she organised a multi-faith choir, won *X Factor Israel* in 2018 and this year won *The Next Star*, which gave her the ticket to Rotterdam.

- At the national final Eden sang four songs and the winner was chosen by juries (50%) and televoting/mobile phone app (50%).

Image copyright © Ran Yehezkel

IRELAND



Song: *Story Of My Life*
Performer: Lesley Roy
Songwriters: Lesley Roy, Robert Marvin, Catt Gravitt, Tom Shapiro

The country is back in full force in this fast-based electro-dance number. It's a captivating and moreish Country song that really gets you rocking. The story of *Story Of My Life* is a positive one - you may get knocked down in life but bounce right up again - and who cares if you're different! It's certainly one of the better Irish entries in recent years. Lesley, who co-penned her entry, is a prolific songwriter based between the USA and Ireland. Her early influences included Motown, Fleetwood Mac and Sheryl Crow, but nowadays gets inspired by Robyn, Kacey Musgrave and Christine & The Queens. Lesley worked with club creators ThisIsPopBaby on her entry.

- Lesley was internally selected.

Image copyright © Luca Truffarelli

ITALY



Song: *Fai Rumore (Make Noise)*
Performer: Diodato
Songwriters: Antonio Diodato, Edwyn Roberts

Is there such a thing as a bad Italian Eurovision song? Very doubtful. And Italians have done it again with this haunting song about unforgettable love. In some ways it sounds like a obvious power ballad, but it's much more than that. Just listen to that wonderful orchestration. And this song makes the point that all songs should be sung in Italian or French. Diodato, who co-penned his entry, has got a superb voice getting across the right emotion for the composition. His talents have been recognised in recent *San Remo Festivals*. He has had successful hits and was involved in a project to build a school in Syria. Una vera stella.

- Diodato won the annual *San Remo Festival* so was able to represent Italy at Eurovision.

Image copyright © Giuseppe Gradella

LATVIA



Song: *Still Breathing*
Performer: Samanta Tina
Songwriters: Samanta Tina, Aminata Savadogo

This is another techno-blast from Latvia - a very fast-paced number with some unusual sounds dealing with girl-power. The song tells a story that women were expected to conform to traditional views - look slim and beautiful, be a good hard-working housewife - and explores the difficulties in trying to remain independent. Talk about multi-tasking! Samanta made a name for herself in nearby countries such as Belarus and Lithuania (*The Voice*). After six attempts of trying to represent her country with her powerful voice, she finally made it. She describes her voice as a god-given talent. Not sure if the poor old shout-o-metre agrees.

- At the national final, which featured nine acts, the winner was chosen equally by televoting and internet voting.

Image copyright © Arturs Martinovs

MALTA



Song: *All Of My Love*
Performer: Destiny
Songwriters: Bernarda Brunovic, Borislav Milanov, Sebastian Arman, Dag Lundberg, Joacim Persson, Cesár Sampson

This is a toe-taping electro-pop offering with a hint of gospel. The fast-paced song tells a story of how love can set you free. Destiny's voice, for a 17 year-old is very mature and she knows how to deliver. This isn't the first time we've seen Destiny - she won Junior Eurovision in 2015. She appeared on *Britain's Got Talent* and won the second season of *X Factor Malta* (where she was mentored by Ira Losco), which gave her the ticket to Rotterdam. No doubt we'll be seeing Destiny for many more years - it's in her stars.

- The national final was actually the last show of *X Factor Malta*. The winner was chosen in three rounds of televoting with one act being eliminated at the end of each round. The song was later internally selected.

Image copyright © Albert Camilleri

LITHUANIA



Song: *On Fire*
Performers: The Roop
Songwriters: Vaidotas Valiukevičius, Robertas Baranauskas, Mantas Banišauskas

Is this bit of magnificence one of Lithuania's best efforts? No need for discussion, it most certainly is! The Roop's music has been heard all around the globe and they offer their audiences a variety of genres from pop to rock, indie, dance and so forth. And the band, who wrote their entry made many pleasant toe-tapping sounds with voice and music. And the message of the song is quite positive - you don't need to be young to be successful or full of energy! You can enjoy and embrace life to the full even when you reach your 30s! After trying to represent their country two years ago, they gave it another shot. Bullseye!

- After two semi-finals eight acts went through to the national final where the winner was chosen equally by a jury and televoting.

Image copyright © Paulius Zaborskis

MOLDOVA



Song: *Prison*
Performer: Natalia Gordienko
Songwriters: Sharon Vaughn, Dimitris Kontopoulos, Phillip Kirkorov

This is an interesting electro-pop number with nice ethnic undertones, which utilises Natalia's vocals perfectly. The song explains that it's sometimes difficult to break free from a relationship - which Natalia expertly portrays with good emotion. Every since she performed in Eurovision 2006, she's gone from strength to strength winning many international awards, releasing successful albums and embarking on world tours. She's also a DJ and hosts the country's highest TV-rated show. No surprise she won her national final then!

- At the national final, which featured 19 acts, the winner was chosen equally by a jury and televoting.

Image copyright © NG

NETHERLANDS



Song: *Grow*
Performer: Jeangu Macrooy
Songwriters: J.A.U. Macrooy, P.L. Perquin

Oh come on now Netherlands - let another country win the contest! Jeangu, who co-penned his entry, originally hails from Surinam, but has taken the Netherlands by storm winning many accolades including successful albums. And this entry shows why - it's a slow starting composition that slowly builds up to a gospel-like masterpiece. If any song in this year's non-contest is going to give you goose bumps, this is it. *Grow* is meant to represent Jeangu's own life and experience. He tries to convey the message that life has its ups and downs, but you can still achieve great things if you want to - just accept who you are.

- Jeangu was internally selected.

Image copyright © Anton Corbijn

NORWAY



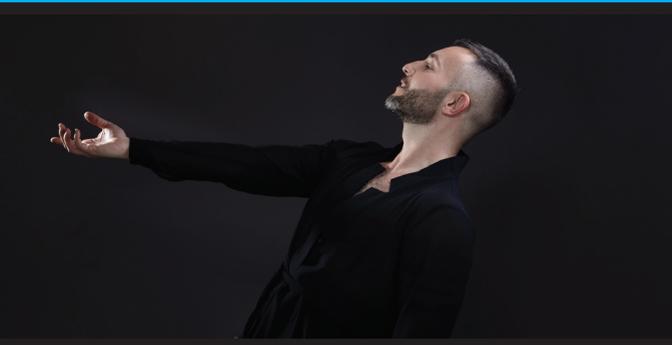
Song: *Attention*
Performer: Ulrikke
Songwriters: Kjetil Mørland, Christian Ingebrigtsen, Ulrikke Brandstorp

There's no need to stand up - it's not that sort of attention. Rather it's trying to get the attention of someone - a sad tale of unrequited love and why we somehow change the way we are to please others. Ulrikke says the song is based in personal experience. Even though the old shout-o-metre had to be rolled out, this is an impressive song sung with much passion by Ulrikke. The composition uses live strings with its electro background - it starts off quietly then builds up and up. Ulrikke is a well known TV and theatre star in Norway.

- The national final featured ten acts, five were preselected and five went through from semi-finals. The winner (after technical problems) was decided by online voting, after a 30 member people's jury put through the top four.

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NORTH MACEDONIA



Song: *YOU*
Performer: Vasil
Songwriters: Nevena Neskoska, Kalina Neskoska, Alice Schroeder

Last year the country had its breakthrough entry - and it's trying hard again - but with something completely different. *YOU* is an up-tempo electro-dance number with nice ethnic under-tones sung by one of the best voices in this year's (non) contest. Vasil's vocal range is quite impressive - reaching those high notes with ease. There's no deep message with this entry - just a mating call to be truthful. Vasil's impressive voice was obvious from a very young age and when he moved to America aged 12 he joined the Chicago Children's Choir, which further led him to train in prestigious music schools in Toronto and Milan.

- Vasil was internally selected.

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POLAND



Song: *Empires*
Performer: Alicja
Songwriters: Patryk Kumor, Dominic Buczkowski-Wojtaszek, Laurell Barker, Frazer Mac

This is another entry that could easily be a James Bond theme - it's a rather impressive classical music number. It starts off at a steady pace and gets very dramatic. Alicja, who won *The Voice of Poland* last year, has a unique quality to her voice - and was able to hit those high notes to wake up the shout-o-metre. She grew up loving RnB and Soul and puts her young experience to good use here with a song with a serious message - the planet is being destroyed by forces that are more interested in power and forgetting the really important things in life. The metaphor seems quite apt at the moment!

- After three semi-finals, three acts went through to the national final where the winner was chosen equally by a jury and SMS voting.

Image copyright © Dawid Ziemba

PORTUGAL



Song: *Medo De Sentir (Fear Of Feeling)*
Performer: Elisa
Songwriter: Marta Carvalho

This is a classical music inspired entry gently sung with much angst and emotion by Elisa. You can definitely tell it's a Portuguese song - and not just from the language! The composition appears to ask a question of trust - will love be reciprocated? Elisa was born on the island of Madeira and started singing aged seven, got involved in musical projects around the island and eventually went on to study jazz in particular. She moved to Lisbon in 2018 and is now studying at the Music Academy of Lisbon. She's recently signed a record deal with Warner Music Portugal and plans to compose her own songs.

- After two semi-finals eight acts went through to the national final where the winner was chosen by seven regional juries (50%) and televoting (50%).

Image copyright © Andre Madeira

RUSSIA



Song: *Uno (One)*
Performers: Little Big
Songwriters: Little Big

Hurrah for flares! This is just too weird and wonderful for words! What an inspired appointment which could've definitely won in Rotterdam. *Uno* is just a pop song that hits all the right buttons. While the so-called unbiased juries would've probably hated it, the voting public would've appreciated the humour and sounds made by this punk/pop/rave group. If you examine the lyrics carefully, *Uno* is a bit saucy - getting ready for some action, yummy yummy and all that. Should we be shocked? Nah, it's all part of the memorable act. Big Little, who wrote their entry, have won numerous awards, produced successful albums and singles and are YouTube sensations. They're clearly numero uno for many!

- Little Big were internally selected.

Image copyright © Ilia Prusikin

ROMANIA



Song: *Alcohol You*
Performer: Roxen
Songwriters: Ionuț Armaș, Breyan Isaac, Viky Red

This is probably the most angst-ridden song of the contest - but it is nevertheless quite an impressive composition really well sung with the right amount of emotion from Roxen. It's a story of the pain of heartbreak and trying to come to terms with it all. (There are so many depressing songs this year!) Roxen started singing aged just seven and went on to writing and publishing books, acting (and filming) in theatre - so she's clearly a lover of the arts.

- Roxen was internally selected and at the national final she sang five songs where the winner was chosen equally by a jury and televoting.

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SAN MARINO



Song: *Freaky!*
Performer: Senhit
Songwriters: Gianluigi Fazio, Henrik Steen, Nanna Bottos

Senhit returns to Eurovision since 2011 and this time she offers an up-tempo 1980s-style bit of disco chic! It's a bit of a fun romp - very lively and colourful. Not sure what current Eurovision viewers would think of it, but it adds nice diversity to the (non) contest. The message of the song suggests live life to the full, ignore prejudices - and don't be afraid of breaking the rules. Yep, that's it - freak out! Senhit was born in Italy to Eritrean parents and likes to combine her African roots with western electro-pop music. She's appeared throughout Europe in various shows and has had chart success in the UK - a true talent.

- Senhit was internally selected and at the online national final, which featured two songs, the winner was chosen by online voting.

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SERBIA



Song: *Hasta La Vista (Goodbye)*
Performers: Hurricane
Songwriters: Kosana Stojić, Sanja Vučić, Nemanja Antonić

Well hello girls - what's all this about then? Talk about using womanly charms to say look at what you're missing mate - me! Yes, this upbeat electro-dance number with a Latin touch gives a message of take me as I am - or get lost! Who can possibly have eyes other than for this talented, in more ways than one, trio? Band member Sanja Vucic co-wrote the entry and represented Serbia at Eurovision in 2016 with the song, *Goodbye* (now we have the Spanish title!). Another band member, Ksenija Knežević, was a backing vocalist for Montenegro in Eurovision 2015 supporting her father, Knez, while Ivana Nikolić is an award-winning dancer.

- After two semi-finals, 12 acts went through to the national final where the winner was chosen equally by a jury and SMS voting.

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SPAIN



Song: *Universo*
Performer: Blas Cantó
Songwriters: Blas Cantó, Dan Hammond, Ash Hicklin, Mikolaj Trybulec, Dangelo Ortega

Blas, who co-penned his entry, offers us an emotional up-tempo number with a toe-tapping electro-beat. The song appears to be about wanting forgiveness and searching for something in the space of your mind. Well this isn't a bad entry so there's nothing to forgive Blas. We're sure you've done your best. The shout-o-metre was only disturbed a couple of times, but Blas has a good vocal range. Well he's had plenty of practise - he used to be a member of Spain's most successful boy-band, Auryn. He also won an award for Best Spanish Artist at the MTV European Music Awards - all-in-all he's big in the world of Hispanic pop. He's also toured internationally, but not among the stars yet.

- Blas was internally selected.

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SLOVENIA



Song: *Voda (Water)*
Performer: Ana Soklič
Songwriters: Ana Soklič, Bojan Simončič, Žiga Pirnat

Time for a bit of class now with this power love ballad. This is a nicely composed classical music venture with nice electro under-tones. And what a voice Ana has! Of course we had to put mufflers on the poor shout-o-metre, but it all worked out well in the end as the emotion really came through. Ana co-wrote her entry, which has a message that water may wash away many things, but not love. She's an accomplished singer/songwriter and has trained with the best. She's entered her national final twice before as well other music contests - and has won awards for her efforts. She likes to perform in large and small venues.

- After a semi-final 12 songs made it to the national final where the winner was chosen in two rounds of voting. First a jury selected the top two songs and then in the second round televoting decided the winner.

Image copyright © Bojan Simoncic

SWEDEN



Song: *Move*
Performers: The Mamas
Songwriters: Herman Gardarfe, Melanie Wehbe, Patrik Jean

We didn't have to wait long for the return of The Mamas, after supporting John Lundvik at last year's contest. This is basically a strong love song - love is so strong that it can move mountains! And if anyone can rock mountains it's these three talented divas with their magnificent voices! The song is a powerful pop-like gospel anthem that suits the trio perfectly. So what if the shout-o-metre complained? The public loved them. We loved them! We're sure that we haven't seen the last of Ash Haynes, Loulou Lamotte and Dinah Yonas Manna.

- After five semi-finals, 12 acts made it through to the national final where the winner was chosen by eight international juries (50%) and public vote (50%).

Image copyright © Anna-Lena Anistrom

SWITZERLAND



Song: *Répondez-moi (Answer Me)*

Performer: Gjon's Tears

Songwriters: Gjon Muharremaj, Alizé Oswald, Xavier Michel, Jeroen Swinnen

Finally we have another French entry from Switzerland - and it's parfait! It's a really unique sound - a very moody tune with a toe-tapping electro-beat - and you can't beat Gjon's voice with his perfect pitch (sorry shout-o-metre). The song asks many questions - such as why we are here and where are we going? The subject is very personal to Gjon, who co-wrote his entry - as his ethnic roots are from Albania (hence the high-pitch - it's in the Albanian generic code). Aged 12 he came third in *Albania's Got Talent*, got through to the semi-finals in *Switzerland's Got Talent*, and last year was in *The Voice France*. The tears in his name are meant to represent joy and sadness when people listen to his music. Well this is just tears of joy!

● Gjon was internally selected.

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UNITED KINGDOM



Song: *My Last Breath*

Performer: James Newman

Songwriters: James Newman, Adam Argyle, Ed Drewett, Iain James

Well just for you, we thought we would save one of the best to last! Tasked with finding a Eurovision hit, record company BMG, chose James Newman, who happens to be a multi-platinum selling singer/songwriter - and who has also won a Brit Award as well as being nominated twice for a Grammy. So the talent is there! And talent runs in the family as his younger brother is the equally successful John Newman. James, who co-wrote his entry, offers us a song that has an upbeat sound - making good use of chorus. The composition is essentially a song holding onto a love. Hopefully we'll see James back next year with an even better song.

● James was internally selected.

Image copyright © BMG/Victor Frankowski

UKRAINE



Song: *Solovey (Nightingale)*

Performers: Go_A

Songwriters: Kateryna Pavlenko, Taras Shevchenko

We have a first here - an entire song sung in Ukrainian. And why haven't they done it before? This is a tour de force of folklore meeting electro-sounds. The lead vocalist, Kateryna Pavlenko, who co-wrote the entry with fellow band member Taras Shevchenko, is an expert of 'white voice' - a singing technique that requires a special vocal range. And she sounds magnificent! But this is a sad tale of a love that cannot be. But it sounds great, so never mind. The band's name, in case you were wondering, is inspired by 'Go' as in 'movement' and 'A' as in 'alpha'. It deserves an A for effort.

● After two semi-finals six songs made it through to the national final where the winner was chosen equally by a jury and televoting.

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NEARLY ROCK BOTTOM



In 1977 the contest nearly hit rock bottom and was in danger of cancellation. Eurovision historian **Gordon Roxburgh** explains...



Throughout the history of the Eurovision Song Contest, there has always been the occasional year where doubts are thrown up as to whether a broadcaster can host the next contest. This has usually been down to either the political situation within a country, or whether a broadcaster had the financial resources to stage the event.

Up until the mid-1970's the cost was the responsibility of the host broadcaster, so when a smaller broadcaster such as RMC (Monaco), or CLT (Luxembourg) was faced with the financial burden, one of the larger organisations, invariably the BBC, would step in to pick up the bill and the organisation. In 1974 the BBC somewhat reluctantly agreed to host the event following the successive victories of Luxembourg but had suggested that a new method of financing the contest in future should be found. In 1975 SR (Sweden) were somewhat reluctant hosts when they too had to find the budget to stage the show.

The EBU then came up with a system that is still in place today, so that every broadcaster contributes a share towards the overall budget for the contest, with the larger broadcasters, nowadays referred to as the Big Five contributing the most. The system was largely in place by the

time of the 1976 contest, although the Dutch broadcaster NOS protested that they not only had to pick up their share as a participant broadcaster, but also had costs as the organisers. In the end their participant fee was waived as a one-off exception.

With the United Kingdom taking the Presidency of the EEC for the very first time from January to June 1977, and in the year of the Queen's Silver Jubilee it seemed the stars were lining up for the UK to be the hosts of the 1977 contest.

SAFE HANDS

When the Brotherhood of Man stormed to victory in the Hague for the United Kingdom, there was probably a collective sigh among the EBU members, that there would be no problems in staging the 1977 contest; at least it would be in the safe hands of the most experienced broadcaster in the contest's history - the BBC.

Having considered Blackpool, Cardiff and Birmingham as possible venues for the 1977 contest, the BBC opted for the newly built Wembley Conference Centre, in Middlesex, that could seat around 2,700 spectators and the date was set for the 2nd April.

It wasn't all plain sailing. In June 1976 countries had been asked for their views



The opening sequence with the newly built Wembley Conference Centre



Shots of the audience made up the 'postcards'

on the language rules of the contest, and the consensus was that countries should sing in one of their native languages. However, even this was misinterpreted, as some broadcasters took this to mean a recommendation rather than a stipulation, and as a result ARD (Germany) and BRT (Belgium) had gone ahead and commissioned English language songs. Ultimately it was the BBC who was considered to blame for the mix-up, but it meant that YLE (Finland) and RTP (Portugal) wanted to reserve their rights to reconsider their participation.

In October 1976 JRT (Yugoslavia) and DR (Denmark) announced they wouldn't be entering the 1977 contest, although the latter hoped to enter the 1978 edition. MBA (Malta) were also considering entering, but ultimately declined. By November SR (Sweden) confirmed they

would return to the contest having missed out the 1976 contest, while RTT (Tunisia) planned to make their debut. The Italian broadcaster RAI were late in confirming their participation but made it in time for the running order draw of 19 countries, with newcomers Tunisia drawn at number four, although they subsequently withdrew from the competition. Two countries, Germany and Austria requested a deferred transmission from the 2nd April due to planned programme scheduling.

The rules had stated that all entries should be submitted by 7th March, however the BBC got special dispensation, as their national final A Song For Europe was scheduled for the 9th March.

It turned out to be an eventful national final, which had been due to be broadcast live from the New London Theatre. With just hours to go it was hit by industrial action by the camera crew. As part of an on-going pay dispute over a demand for an extra £3.00 per week, the unions ordered the camera crew to stand down. The dispute, however, didn't concern the sound crew, and the programme went ahead on sound only and was broadcast on Radio 2's 1500m service just after 21.00 on the same evening.

The dispute itself somewhat overshadowed the victory of Lynsey de Paul



Mike Moran and Lynsey de Paul perform Rock Bottom

and Mike Moran who won with the song *Rock Bottom*, as the press were speculating what would happen to the actual Eurovision Song Contest which was scheduled just over three week later.

The initial problem was that the ABS (Association of Broadcasting and Allied Staff) union just wouldn't offer the BBC any guarantees as to whether they would or wouldn't hit the actual contest. Publicly, to begin with the BBC stated they wanted to go ahead with the 2nd April date, but privately they were already in discussions for alternatives.

One of the preliminary ideas was that the Dutch broadcaster NOS could step in and take over, as they had the experience and infrastructure required. However, NOS anticipated at the short notice it would cost around £220,000, plus they too would need to clear it with the unions. By the 15th March it was already looking to be ruled out, as the ABS had asked the Dutch unions not to support it, and NOS quickly retracted their offer.

Another idea, which will seem familiar to those following what has happened in 2020, was to have an international link up, with each country presenting its own entry. However, just like the current situation there were anxieties over the different production values between countries. For example, in 1977, the Greek broadcaster ERT only operated a black and white television service and would have been disadvantaged. A variation on this idea of grouping countries into perhaps three centres across Europe was also similarly rejected as it would still involve considerable effort for each of the hosts to organise.

A straightforward cancellation was also ruled out, mainly due to the fear of possible lawsuits from artists and composers over loss of present and future earnings. It was also ruled out that ITV would offer its services, despite having



Presenter Angela Rippon



The only caption that appeared during the winning reprieve by Marie Myriam

made open bids to stage the 1972 and 1974 contests.

Postponing the contest until not later than mid-May was the most obvious choice, though the BBC still wouldn't be able to guarantee they could stage it unless they had resolved the position with the ABS union. However, it would give another prospective broadcaster a bit longer to organise, probably at less expense, and could also avoid potential legal challenges; although there were still concerns as to whether artists would still be available on a new date. One thing that was clear was that the BBC wanted to see the contest continue.

STATEMENTS

On 17th March in Geneva, the EBU prepared three possible statements. The first was a simple cancellation of the 1977 contest, with the BBC offering to stage the 1978 contest. The second was to be used if another broadcaster could be found to stage the contest on 2nd April, but only at the expense of the BBC withdrawing. The third was prepared if another broadcaster could be found to stage the contest later, although in this statement there was no mention of the BBC withdrawing. In the end none of these statements were ever issued.

The following day the BBC held a

further meeting, this time looking at the possibility of holding the contest on 7th May. Issues such as whether to continue the set building, printing of tickets, hotel bookings and broadcasting the preview programmes in their original proposed slots were all discussed.

On the 24th March the BBC went public and stated that it could not go ahead with the 2nd April transmission, and the EBU also confirmed they were looking to stage the contest at a later date in another country.

Just a few days later however the ABS agreed to take their pay dispute to a tribunal, and on the 31st March, it was decided to go ahead after all with the contest on 7th May in Wembley.

There were a few problems with the remount, mainly over hotel bookings, as it wasn't possible to get everybody in the same hotel next to the Conference Centre, and some delegations would have to be bussed in from hotels at Heathrow (this was in an era before the M25). The Austrian delegation couldn't make the proposed first rehearsal date of 3rd May and had to be moved back as the final country to rehearse on the 5th May. Italian television had to take the programme now by deferred transmission, though Germany and Austria by contrast could now take it live.

Originally it had been planned to film similar postcards to those used in the 1976 contest, with artists filmed in their own country, but due to a lack of money on the remount that idea got knocked on the head. The alternative was to film artists at the Cockney Restaurant on 5th May where the BBC hosted a party. Unfortunately some of the delegations complained to BBC Head Bill Cotton that it wouldn't look good to their domestic audience to see them wining and dining to that extent on licence-payer's money, and the decision was made to drop the postcards. In the end producer Stewart Morris just had to fill the time with endless shots of the audience, which was a disappointment for all concerned.

There was more disappointment to come as there were numerous mistakes made during the voting procedure, which resulted in half the countries not having their correct score displayed by the end of the evening, and to further compound the errors on the night, the roller caption with the production credits didn't appear due to some confusion between the producer and the caption operator, and the only caption that made it to the screen was for the Producer, Stewart Morris.

It had been a chaotic end to a contest that had been in doubt at one stage as to whether it would even be staged at all. It wouldn't be the last contest to have the threat of industrial action hanging over it, but it was the only one to ever actually be postponed... that was until 2020. ■

IRELAND	19	GREECE	92
MONACO	96	ISRAEL	50
NETHERLANDS	36	SWITZERLAND	71
AUSTRIA	13	SWEDEN	2
NORWAY	18	SPAIN	52
GERMANY	56	ITALY	33
LUXEMBOURG	17	FINLAND	47
PORTUGAL	18	BELGIUM	69
UNITED KINGDOM	122	FRANCE	136

THE ENTRY THAT NEVER WAS



Gordon Lewis finds out a little more about James Newman who, along with 40 other international acts, has been denied the chance to perform his song at Eurovision



John Newman



Rudimental feat. Ella Ayre



Blame with Calvin Harris feat. John Newman



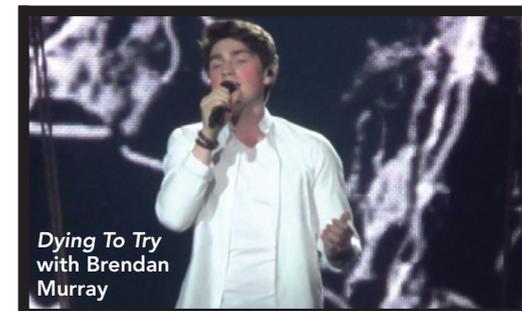
After dismally failing at Eurovision 2019, the BBC changed its tactic once again by asking international music company, BMG, to choose the UK's next entry. As the deadline for submitting songs to the EBU rapidly approached, speculation was rife with former *Fame Academy* finalist Lemar and *X Factor*'s Fleur East among those rumoured to have been chosen. A few days before the song and singer were unveiled to the British public, attention turned to singer/songwriter John Newman, but when the announcement was finally made on 27th February 2020, it was John's older brother, James, who had been given the honour of flying the Union flag.

RECOGNITION

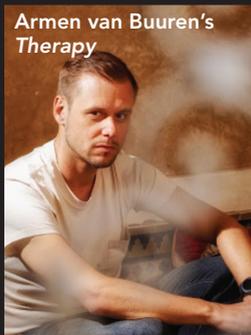
Thirty-four-year-old James Newman may not be as well known as his younger brother, but his musical success is equal if not greater than that of John. Having moved to London from his Yorkshire home almost ten years ago, James continued developing his song writing skills before achieving success in 2013 when he co-wrote chart topping *Waiting All Night* for Rudimental featuring Ella Eyre. The following year, James and his team won the award for British Single of the Year at the 2014 Brit Awards for the same track. Soon after receiving such recognition, James scored another Number One with *Blame* for Calvin Harris which featured none other than John Newman. The track itself was co-written by James, John and Adam Wiles (aka Calvin Harris).

With two Number One songs under his belt and a growing international recognition, James found himself becoming a much sought-after songwriter and, during 2015, he was involved in writing tracks for Jess Glynne and Little Mix. He also joined forces for a second time with Rudimental, who featured Ed Sheeran on one of the three tracks that James had written for the band that year. By 2016, he could also add Kaiser Chiefs and Olly Murs to his resume, but it was the following year that James ventured into the world of Eurovision when he co-wrote *Dying To Try* with top Swedish writer Jörgen Elofsson. Representing Ireland and performed by Brendan Murray, the song failed to qualify from its semi-final held in Kyiv on 11th May 2017. James also contributed to Guy Sebastian's (Australia 2015) 2017 album, *Conscious*, with the song *Keep Me Coming Back*. The album reached number four in Australia and number nine in New Zealand.

The next two years were probably James' busiest, as he was credited in co-writing songs for a host of British and international



Dying To Try with Brendan Murray



PREZ PAGE

A word from OGAE UK President Alasdair Rendall

The Eurovision Song Contest 2020 is cancelled.

Not words that any of us wanted to read - and indeed it still feels quite surreal to be writing them. But I think deep down, as the Coronavirus situation worsened, outright cancellation of the contest seemed to be the most inevitable outcome. It is right that the protection of health must be the priority, however devastating this is for those of us who are fans of Eurovision.

Obviously it is a very fast moving situation and what I write now may already be out of date by the time you read this. However it is to be hoped that, in some form or another, the songs that were selected for Eurovision 2020 can be noted and marked by fans. We don't yet know what all this means for the 2021 contest, although a number of countries have already confirmed that their artist selected for this year will get an automatic pass to represent their country in 2021. Personally speaking it would be nice for Rotterdam to still get its moment in the sun at some point.

I know the cancellation of the contest is, of course, very sad but I'd like to thank all members of OGAE UK for responding realistically and with good humour in what are very uncertain and unsettling times. The strength and warmth of the fan community has really come to the fore in recent weeks.

At the time of writing we don't have details about the impact of the cancellation on ticketing, but we will of course keep members updated as and when we have more information.

Despite the cancellation of the contest, it is of course worth noting the new approach by the BBC, and OGAE UK were delighted to get an invitation to the launch event of the UK's entry from James Newman. He is a good singer and we were offered a credible song, but of course it's a moot point as to how well or otherwise the song would have done. Let's see what happens now going forward with James Newman - we wish him well.

I'd also like to thank all those involved in the many preview events which have had to be cancelled due to the pandemic, including Boom-Bang-A-Bang, Eurofest and of course the London Eurovision Party. OGAE UK was happy to be a sponsor of the event once again and were looking forward to bringing Sieneke to London as our sponsored act. Sadly this wasn't to be, but we know how hard the team behind LEP work and we look forward to its return.



artists including Don Diablo, Sigala, Dan Caplen, Matoma, Louis Tomlinson and Backstreet Boys. As his success widened, he was nominated for two Grammy awards for Keshha's 2017 *Let 'Em Talk* featuring Eagles of Death Metal and *Coping* which featured on Toni Braxton's 2018 album, *Sex And Cigarettes*. He also teamed up with his brother once again, as well as Jess Glynne and Olly Murs with whom he had previously worked.

HEADLINER

Having dabbled with singing alongside his song writing, James provided vocals for Don Diablo's *Head Up*, Armen van Buuren's *Therapy* and Matoma's *Lights Go Down*, all of which were album tracks released in 2018. However, always being one for a challenge, by the end of 2019 James was starting to seriously considering becoming the headliner for his own tracks and was signed to BMG as a recording artist. Having already been appointed by the BBC to find the United Kingdom's 2020 Eurovision entry, BMG had no hesitation in selecting James'

first solo track, *My Last Breath*, with the song and video both recorded in snowy Scotland during January 2020.

Writing his entry in collaboration with Adam Argyle, Ed Drewett and Iain James, this provided another connection with the international song contest, as Iain had co-written Azerbaijan's winning entry, *Running Scared*, for Ell & Nikki back in 2011. However, James admitted that he wasn't convinced that the song was suitable for Eurovision at first and had to think very carefully before agreeing that the song should be submitted to the BBC. Although *My Last Breath* was officially announced on Thursday, 27th February 2020, eagle-eyed Eurofans spotted the song on YouTube the previous evening. No one has admitted to leaking the song, but it was quickly taken down and did not reappear until after the official announcement.

Within a few short weeks, the COVID-19 virus was quickly spreading around the globe and this resulted in the unprecedented cancellation of the 2020 Eurovision Song Contest which had been due to be held in Rotterdam. Although *My Last Breath* had not been considered as a potential winner, no one will ever know how James and his song would have fared on the international stage. Under EBU rules, none of the songs from this year are eligible to compete in 2021, although many countries have already decided to send the acts chosen for 2020. At the time of writing, it is not known whether the BBC will afford this opportunity to James Newman. ■



MISSING YOU ALREADY!



So what do you do when for decades you've attended Eurovision live? Well you pull yourself together and reminisce about the good old days! **Robin Scott** tells us his personal story.

It's the spring of 1976 and while countries across Europe were preparing for the Eurovision Song Contest to take place, for the third time in the Netherlands, I was also preparing - but for my debut broadcast on the new commercial radio station in Northern Ireland, Downtown Radio.

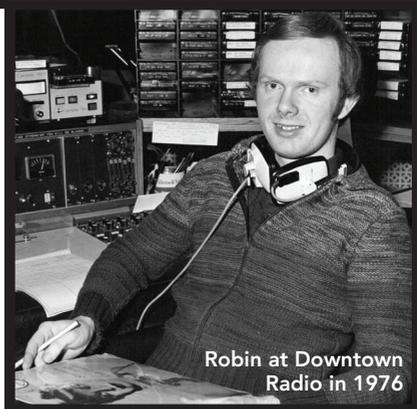
Roll forward 44 years to now and I had started preparing for my annual local radio reports and television news pieces for the 2020 contest. I was really looking forward to my 26th consecutive trip to wherever my beloved contest was being staged. As it happens it was, again, in the Netherlands.

I'd even been down to the BBC to contribute to the morning news programme in advance of the unveiling of the United Kingdom's entry. I was starting to buzz.

...And then everything changed.

It's hard to describe what it's like to spend a huge portion of your life, year after year, working at Eurovision. It all started with the radio station suggesting that I head off to Oslo in 1996. I'd been a guest on Radio Ulster the previous year when the circus came to Ireland for the third time in a row. The BBC had heard about this "enthusiast" after I was featured in a newspaper article and wanted to talk to me about my passion. I was even invited down to the event to add my tuppence worth.

Anyway, back to the story. In March 1996 a letter was sent to the BBC Press Department



Robin at Downtown Radio in 1976

applying for accreditation. Those were the days when real paper and ink was used. A confirmation was duly received and I headed off with Steve Truslove (officially my Radio Assistant) to a world that was to take over several months of my life, every year, from then on. Sitting at home with friends was to be a thing of the past. Instead I would be cheering on our Artist from the centre of the broadcasting world on a Saturday (usually) in May.

BUBBLE

It wasn't just the excitement of being in the press 'bubble' but travelling to places that I probably wouldn't have seen otherwise. In Oslo the summer sun turned to winter snow but I was in a new city. In 1997, back in Dublin, it was a dream come true when Katrina brought the trophy home but odd to



UK press conference in 1996



Robin today hard at work

be able to drive back to Belfast afterwards. In Birmingham the following year the Opening Party was held in a shopping centre when Dean Asker (that year's Radio Assistant) and I chatted to a shy and slightly unwell girl from Malta who was about to come third that Saturday.

Roll forward one more year and 1999 saw the 'family' assemble in Jerusalem. The press corps was so small in those days that two coaches, across two days, were all that it took to go to the Dead Sea. Eurovision had become my annual pilgrimage. A time NOT to be at home! Those were still the days when I would report live from a telephone, attached to a cable, attached to a box, attached to a wall. No mobiles or phones in the press centre yet. Three days of our week saw me writing copious notes as I had no idea what I would be asked about. It was an adrenalin rush but working the many hours in preparation was worth it to be there.

Each year my first choice of annual leave had to be those weeks at the contest. It wasn't so difficult when it was one week, but then it became ten days, followed by 14 and this year would have been 15.

My journeys from Birmingham to Baku, from Serbia to Sweden both broadened my horizons and made new friends.

So we arrive in 2020, or more precisely 2019 when the first national final took place for this season. This unashamed geek, and his similarly badged friends, is also into



Robin and friends in Dublin 1995



Robin in Riga 2003



Name dropping with Blue in 2011



...and Carola in 2013

collecting those selection shows by various means. It's how second chance events like Second Cherry happen and Eurobash videos too. Each year every broadcast is captured, yes including the heats. The season continued as we heard about this flu-like virus in China, but life went on. January led to February and then to March when I headed off to Stockholm for another year at *Melodifestival*. On the Friday we heard that the Danish Government had brought a ban into place restricting the maximum numbers allowed to attend a public event with *Dansk Melodi Grand Prix* now being broadcast from an arena, empty except for the hosts, artists and production crew. Would 'melo' suffer the same fate? The Friends Arena was to hold 15,000 for the dress rehearsal that night, and it did take place, but what about OUR night at the live final? We waited for official news, but nothing came and the 'glitz och glamour', to quote one of David Elder's favourite phrases, came to pass. The Mamas were going to Rotterdam.

The selection season came to an end and

we, the dedicated fans, were in full flow deciding who would win. Perhaps Iceland, or maybe Russia? Last plans were made by some for flights and accommodation despite the looming uncertainty about this bug spreading across Europe. Surely it wouldn't be so bad as to affect the biggest, televised musical entertainment show in the world?

Then it happened. The announcement came. The abyss had opened and swallowed up the highlight of my Eurovision year. No Jon Ola hadn't retired early. Eurovision 2020 was no more. Cancelled. Kaput. Nil Points.

What to do? I now had large hole in my existence. How could I sit at home, just the two of us, and watch something else on a television screen? I could simply play all the song videos in a row, a drink in one hand a handkerchief in the other.

I could watch last year's contest, maybe go back to 1995 when I first sat in the audience, but where's the camaraderie in that? I know - I could pretend that it's just another evening. Maybe not. We can't even have friends over as it's against social isolation!

The only comfort is that we are all in the same, isolated boat (or rather boats two metres apart), marooned.

Roll on 2021 with the same venue. Me sitting with David Elder, David Ransted and Hass Yusuf in the press centre, doing what we love. Immersed in the wonderful world of Eurovision! ■



Move over Graham Norton! Robin invades the UK booth in Tel Aviv.

NATIONAL FINAL RESULTS

We know many of you live for these results so **Vision** doesn't want to disappoint!

ALBANIA

Song	Artist	Points
Shaj	Arlena Ara	67
Me Tana	Elvana Gjata	64
Ajër	Sara Bajraktari	50
Malaseen	Bojken Lako	45
Eja Merre	Era Rusi	43
Më Ngjyros	Kamela Islamaj	35
Ku Ta Gjej Dikë Ta Dua	Albërie Hadërgjonaj	27
Me Gotën Bosh	Tiri Gjoci	23
Kutia E Pandorës	Valon Shehu	23
Shqiponja E Lirë	Gena	18
Ajo Nuk Eshtë Unë	Robert Berisha	18
Botë Për Dy	Olta Boka	17

ARMENIA

Song	Artist	Points
Chains On You	Athena Manoukian	168
Life Faces	Erna Tamazyan	120
What's Going On Mama	Vladimir Arzumanyan	118
Run Away	Miriam Baghdasaryan	108
It's Your Turn	Gabriel Jeeg	99
Ha, Take A Step	Sergey & Nikolay Arutyunov	96
Save Me	Tokionine	96
No Love	Eva Rida	84
Why?	Karina EVN	84
Butterflies	Agop	75
Heaven	Arthur Aleq	65
What It Is To Be In Love	Music Hayk	57

AUSTRALIA

Song	Artist	Points
Don't Break Me	Montaigne	107
Proud	Casey Donovan	100
Lessons Of Love	Vanessa Amorosi	82
Raw Stuff	Didirri	63
Together	Mitch Tambo	57
Rabbit Hole	Jaguar Jonze	46
Can We Make Heaven	Diana Rouvas	42
I Am Queen	Jack Vidgen	34
Life	iOTA	32
Pushing Stars	Jordan-Ravi	23

BELARUS

Song	Artist	Points
Da Vidna	VAL	20
La-Ley-La	Chakras	18
Fire	Yan Yarosh	18
Chili Pepper	KeySi	15
Invisible	Anastasiya Malashkevich	12
True Love	Angelica Pushnova	10
Barani Svajo	Aura	10
Rocky Road	Sasha Zakharik	6
Don't Let Me Down	Napoli	5
Burning Again	Anastasiya Glamozda	2
Hello	Anastasiya Razvadovskaya	0
On Fire	Dariya Khmel'nitskaya	0



Belarus

CROATIA

Song	Artist	Points
Divlji Vjetre	Damir Kedžo	31
When It Comes To You	Mia Negovetic	31
You Will Never	Indira	28
Break My Heart		
Zovi Ju Mama	Aklea Neon	23
Drowning	Lorena Bujan	20
Love, Love, Love	Zdenka Kovacicek	18
Zidina	Colonia	17
One	Đana	17
Da Se Ne Zatare	Alen Vitasovic & B. Matija Cerina	15
Više Od Rijeci	Bojan Jambrošić	12
Justo	Elis Lovric	12
Let's Forgive	Nikola Marjanovic	12
Coming Home	Edi Abazi	11
Hajde Nazovi Me	Jure Brkljaca	11
Naivno	Marin Juric Civo	10
Vrati Se Iz Irske	Lorenzo feat. Dino Puric & Reper iz sobe	4

CZECH REPUBLIC

Song	Artist	Points
Kemama	Benny Cristo	22
Wanna Be Like	Eliz Mraz ft. Cis T	18
Black & White Holes	Barbora Mochowa	14
All The Blood	We All Poop	12
<i>(Positive Song Actually)</i>		
At Least We've Tried	Karelll	10
Dark Water	Olga Lounová	9
Get Up	Pam Rabbit	9

DENMARK

Song	Artist	Points
Yes	Ben & Tan	61%
Screens	Sander Sanchez	20%
Ville Onske Jeg	Emil	19%
<i>Harde Kendt Dig</i>		
Faith	Benjamin Kissi	
Bølger	Isam B	
Bye Bye Heaven	Jamie Talbot	
Human	Jasmin Rose	
<i>feat. RoxorLoops</i>		
Forget It All	Kenny Duerlund	
Den Eneste Goth I Vejle	Maja & De Sarte Sjøele	
Honestly	Sys Bjerre	

ESTONIA

Song	Artist	Points
What Love Is	Uku Suviste	19 33,582
Beautiful Lie	Jaagup Tuisk	20 7,944
Write About Me	Anett x Fredi	19 7,690
Georgia (On My Mind)	Egert Milder	12
Out In Space	Shira	11
Uks Kord Veel	Traffic	11
By My Side	Stefan	8
Only Dream	Inger	7
Majakad	Synne Valtri feat. Väliharf	4
I'm Sorry, I Messed Up	Uudo Sepp	3
Break Me	Laura	1
Young	Rasmus Rändvee	1

FINLAND

Song	Artist	Points
Looking Back	Aksel Kankaanranta	170
Cicciolina	Erika Vikman	157
I Let My Heart Break	Tika	127
Bananas	F3M	84
Eternity	Catharina Zühlke	66
Lover View	Sansa	36

GEORGIA

Song	Points
Tornike Kipiani	33.82%
Barbara Samkharadze	31.18%
Tamar Kakalashvili	18.38%
Mariam Gogiberidze	16.62%

ICELAND

Song	Artist	Points
Think About Things	Daði & Gagnamagnið	60,324 118,643
Almyrkvi	Dimma	37,715 80,183
Oculus Videre	Iva	37,498
Meet Me Halfway	Isold & Helga	22,738
Echo	Nina	21,801

ISRAEL

Song	Points
Feker Libi	282
Roots	205
Rakata	139
Savior In The Sound	94

LATVIA

Song	Artist	Points
Still Breathing	Samanta Tina	35.42%
Heart Beats	Katrina Dimanta	28.12%
Polyester	Anna	16.83%
I'm Falling For You	Miks Dukurs	7.35%
Sail With You	Bad Habits	4.06%
Like Me	Seleste	2.82%
Tridymite	Edgars Kreilis	2.46%
I Will Break Your Heart	Katrina Bindere	1.52%
Stay	Driksna	1.42%

LITHUANIA

Song	Artist	Points
On Fire	The Roop	24
Make Me Human	Monique	20
If I Leave	Monika Marija	15
Unbreakable	Aiste Pilvelyte	13
We Came From The Sun	Rūta Loop	13
Drip	Meandi	9
Alligator	KaYra	9
Fully	The Backs	7



MALTA

Artist	Position
Destiny Chukunyere	1st
Justine Shortid	2nd
F.A.I.T.H.	3rd
Kyle Cutajar	4th

MOLDOVA

Song	Artist	Points
Prison	Natalia Gordienco	24
My Wine	Pasha Parfeni	20
Take Control	Maxim Zavidia	15
Die For You	Catarina Sandu	12
It's Time	Valeria Pasa	8
Dale Dale	Dianna Rotaru	7
Touch	Lavinia Rusu	6
Hi Five	Lanjeron	6
Moldovita	Valentin Uzun & Irina Kovalsky	6
Do It Slow	Dima Jelezogle	4
We Will Be Legend	Petronela Dönciu & Andreea Portarescu	4
Tears	Julia Ilienکو ft. Mishel Dar	2
Love Me Now	Live Beat	2
Cine Te-a Facut Sa Plangi	Alexandru Cibotaru	0
Like A Champion	Denis Midone	0
Chain Reaction	Irina Kit	0
Our Home	Maria Ciolac	0
Summer Of Love	Sasha Letty	0
Remedy	Viorela Moraru	0

NORWAY

Song	Artist	Points
Attention	Ulrikke Brandstorp	200.345
Pray For Me	Kristin Husøy	194,667
I Am Gay	Liza Vassilieva	Q
Wild	Raylee	Q
Som Du Er	Akuv	
Out Of Air	Didrik & Emil Solli-Tangen	
Over The Sea	Magnus Bokn	
One Last Time	Rein Alexander	
Take My Time	Sondrey	
Hurts Sometimes	Tone Damli	

POLAND

Song	Artist	Points
Empires	Alicja Szemplinska	10
Lucy	Albert Cerný & Lake Malawi	6
Count On Me	Kasia Deren	2

PORTUGAL

Song	Artist	Points
Medo De Sentir	Elisa	20
Passe-Partout	Bárbara Tinoco	18
Gerebera Amarela Do Sul	Filipe Sambado	16
Diz Só	Kady	15
Abensonhado	Jimmy P	13
Movimento	Throes + The Shine	11
Mais Real Que O Amor	Tomás Luzia	11
Não Voltes Mais	Elisa Rodrigues	7

ROMANIA

Song	Points
Alcohol You	10
Storm	6
Cherry Red	3
Colors	3
Beautiful Disaster	0

SAN MARINO

Song	Points
Freaky!	51.6%
Obsessed	48.4%

SERBIA

Song	Artist	Points
Hasta La Vista	Hurricane	24
Baš, Baš	Naiva	15
Ples Za Rastanak	Igor Simic	14
Iajna	Ana Milenkovic	11
Oci Meduze	Andrija Jo	11
Kolaci	Marko Markovic	11
Bomba	Neda Ukraden	9
Cvet Ssa Prokletija	Bane Mojicevic	8
Niti	Milan Bujakovic	6
<i>feat. Olivera Popovic</i>		
Sudnji Dan	Thea Devy	4
Samo Mi Kazi	Lift	3
Trag	EJO	0

SLOVENIA

Song	Artist	Points
Voda	Ana Soklic	1st 5,035
Man Like U	Lina Kuduzovic	2nd 4,369
Cupid	Parvani Violet	3rd
Se Kar Lovim Tvoj	Saska	4th=
<i>Nasmeh</i>		
Nisi Sam	Simon Vadnjak	4th=
Forever	Tinkara Kovac	4th=
Verjamem Vase	Gaja Prestor	7th=
The Salt	Inmate	7th=
Stop The World	Klara Jazbec	7th=
Vecnost	Manca Berlec	10th
Femme Fatale	Inset	11th
Maybe Someday	Božidar Wolfand - Wolf	12th

SWEDEN

Song	Artist	Points
Move	The Mamas	137
Bulletproof	Dotter	136
Kingdom Come	Anna Bergendahl	107
Brave	Hanna Fern	94
Vem Ar Som Oss	Anis Don Demina	82
Talking In My Sleep	Paul Rey	68
Boys With Emotions	Felix Sandman	67
Take A Chance	Robin Bengtsson	63
Troubled Waters	Victor Crone	57
Shout It Out	Mariette	51
Vamos Amigos	Méndez feat. Alvaro Estrella	40
Winners	Mohombi	26

UKRAINE

Song	Artist	Points
Solovey	Go_A	12
Call For Love	Khayat	9
99	Krut	9
Horizon	David Axelrod	5
Bonfire	Tvorchi	5
Vegan	Jerry Heil	2

APOCALYPSE

AGAIN!



Roy Delaney returns with his annual review of the weird and wonderful from the national selection season

We see you. That person who always proudly proclaims that they're not going to watch any of the songs before the big nights. And while we can fully understand that point of view, it has meant that in this most difficult of Eurovision years, that you've done yourself out of a couple of dozen tiny little Eurovisions, each with their own often quite bizarre local colours and flavours.

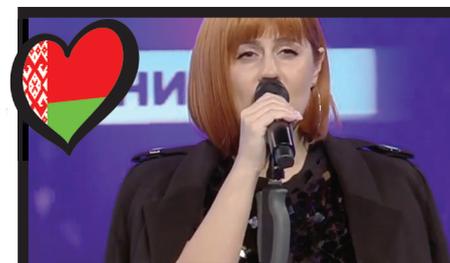
So let's celebrate those bold warriors who constantly apply to their respective national finals with a vain hope of getting on the big Eurovision stage, but who often left a little lacking in the song and concept stakes, because these are the true Eurovision heroes - even if they can be a little tricky to watch and listen to at times. Yes, here's our traditional top ten of the strangest fruit from this year's qualifying tree. We watch them so that you don't have to...

BELARUS

Pavloni
Stones Of My Soul

There are some songs that you laugh with during the qualifiers, and some that you can hardly help but stifle an awkward guffaw at from behind a clenched fist. This performance has both feet firmly in the latter category. You see, Belarus holds these televised open auditions where pretty much anyone can shuffle in off the streets - and boy did they here. You know it's going to get strange when Pavloni begins the song by making the noises of the winds with her voice, before attempting to launch into a big meaningful singy bit when it soon becomes clear that she's an utter stranger to key or pitch. But if you get bored by the first minute then hold on, because here's where it gets really bonkers. Inexplicably she begins to make a whining noise like a sad dog, before throwing off her trenchcoat and belting through a complicated rap segment - complete with gangsta style hand gestures. Truly one of the strangest three minute we saw all season. And no, they didn't pick her for the properly televised stages, worst luck.

● tinyurl.com/pavloni



LITHUANIA

Twosome
Playa

One of the early delights of the qualification was this jaunty little number that, quite surprisingly, didn't even make it out of the first Lithuanian quarter final. After a Europop promising start, two big old thirtysomething lumps on man life start to mumble an incoherent verse, before cracking into possibly the most infectious chorus of the whole darned Eurovision

year - "I'm a Lithuanian basketball player". It doesn't sound like much, but we assure you, if you hear it once it'll be stuck in your head for weeks! Then a violinist comes on, breaks his instrument, ahem, 'by accident', and the whole thing descends into pure chaos. A cracking way to kick off the season.

● tinyurl.com/babaplaya



MOLDOVA

VoviAN
10 Minuni Are Moldova

Another nation that goes down the open audition route is Moldova, and you can only wonder at the marvels on display there. Indeed, we could simply fill this article with clips from that every year and still have plenty spare at the end. But this little beauty tickled both out funny bone and our heart strings. For the VoviAN boys here, resplendent in silver garb, and telling us all about the ten wonders of Moldova and each of their respective merits, while a slightly wrongly-sized slide show of the lot of them rotates in the background. You've



got castles, cathedrals, museums, the world's largest wine cellar, the world's second largest wine cellar, statues of the great and good and the revered poet Mihai Eminescu - and plenty more besides! It's like a quaint and utterly charming history lesson on a subject you never knew you wanted to learn about, and utterly lovely for it, bless 'em.

● tinyurl.com/vovian

UKRAINE

Jerry Heil

Vegan

Jerry Heil is something of an internet sensation back in Ukraine, and her YouTube videos have been viewed in their millions. Only recently has she turned to the world of pop, but she's been making something of a teen idol success of that too. And while her song about the jokes she's had to put up with since she turned to a plant-based diet is entertaining enough on the outset, the production crew lumbered her with a show so ludicrous that it could only have put paid to her chances of a place in the fated big show. After entering the stage through a giant fridge, she's flanked by a couple of dancers dressed as pigs, before a stylised chicken and what looks like a pea begin trampolining in giant takeaway boxes behind her! And no, we didn't have too much cheese before we went to bed last night - that really happened! Honest guv...

● tinyurl.com/heilvegan



ITALY

Achille Lauro

Me Ne Frego

The full five days of San Remo might be a bit too much for the less hardy to manage, but there was one act who made it an absolute delight of jaw-dropping danger and expectant wonder. Achille Lauro. Since his last effort as a slightly awkward mumble rapper a year earlier the fella's developed into a star of some stature, and each of his four showings in this year's show had us in rapt anticipation of what the flipping heck he was going to do next. But it was his first appearance that grabbed us the most. Beginning at the top of the stairs in an extravagant Gucci cloak, he cast it from his shoulders to reveal the most scant and skimpy of nude suits, and pranced around threateningly as the entire front ten rows all sat back a little further in their chairs. Supposedly it was an allegory relating to St Francis divesting himself of his worldly goods and walking into the church naked, but it was flipping stunning, whatever the heck it meant!

● tinyurl.com/alauoro



NORWAY

Kevin Boine

Stem På Mæ

Now if you thought you'd seen a few kitchen sinks among our selections so far, they're got nothing on this. What starts off as a reasonably good-looking lad having a wobbly stab at a standard Scandipop song soon escalates into something a whole lot bigger. Suddenly some over enthusiastic dancers come on. Then a few more. Then he stands behind a plinth for a bit. Then he starts to rap, then joik quite unexpectedly. Then two blokes with a guitar and a banjo come on, before seemingly the whole population of rural Norway are standing alongside him with placards and the banjo catches fire - but not before possibly the worst attempt at a key change we've ever seen. Oh, the song's called *Vote For Me*, you tell us? I guess it's some kind of parody then. Didn't get you out of a weak qualifying round though, did it Kevin.

● tinyurl.com/kboine



SWEDEN

Nanne Grönvall

Carpool Karaoke

Come on, you must have watched *Melodifestival* then? Not even a little bit? Well, it wasn't one of the better ones, but there were still some cheesy-assed treats to behold, not least this spangly little gem that managed to condense about a

thousand years of MelFest history into one jam packed three-minute chunk. Here you'll witness competition old stager Nanne totter about like your favourite unhinged auntie two hours before the end of a hen night, telling all the world about her undying love for James Corden. Yes, we know! But then there's an even stranger bit where she and all the dancers pretend to be a car, and it all ends up in a jolly good singsong! Sometimes it's fun to go back to the old days of pure schlager in these ever more dreary times.

● tinyurl.com/nannekar



CROATIA

Aklea Neon

Zovi Ju Mama

This year's *Dora* got a bit overshadowed by all the other bigger, flashier shows happening on the same night, and also perhaps the fact that they only released the songs the day before the contest, but there were still many, many strange delights on show. From the endless parade of game old nans either shouting their lungs out or stamping about in their pants, to the dour old gents grumbling out sad songs about the old days, it was a joy from start to end. But it was this particular performance that caught our eye the most. Remember when you were at school and a well-meaning travelling drama troupe came to visit, and you all shuffled to the big hall to watch them perform a mix of meaningful caterwauling and interpretive dance that was waaaaay over your spotty teenaged head? Well imagine that it took place in the pot plant department of Ikea and you're part way to picturing this performance.

● tinyurl.com/akleaneon



PORTUGAL
Judas
Cubismo Enviesado

We must confess that when we first heard the audio of this song about a month before the contest itself, we never imagined that the visuals were going to quite be like this. But to be honest, you'll hardly notice the song if you watch this clip, because your attention will almost certainly be diverted elsewhere throughout its somewhat repetitive duration. Nope, we certainly weren't expecting a bloke with the build,

singing voice and dancing skills of a brickie and his two mates to be stamping about in skintight silver suits in quite this way. You genuinely won't know where to look. No, actually, you'll know exactly where to look... We love you, Portugal. Don't ever change.

● tinyurl.com/judascubismo



FINLAND
Erika Vikman
Cicciolina

We won't beat about the bush here - this performance has possibly the greatest opening fifteen seconds in recent Eurovision history. A woman of a certain age stands proudly, centre stage, swathed in tight pink vinyl and grasping a staff with a glowing red heart atop it. She strides purposefully to the front of the stage, and as the camera pans out we notice that she's surrounded by flame, and is being

escorted by two dancers in ridiculously realistic looking bear suits. We honestly don't know how anybody could top that as a major life moment. Then as the song progresses, Ms Vikman tells us of the merits of leading a lusty life like her hero, the Hungaro-Italian pornstar politician of the song's title to a bounding Scandipop background. This was pure Eurovision on a stick, and won the public voting by a mile, only to be done out of a place on the big show by a grumpy old jury who preferred a big lad in a suit singing a decent but dreary ballad. Oh well, we suspect this won't be the last time we see this one around these parts. Or at least we certainly hope it's not!

● tinyurl.com/erikavik

Roy Delaney writes for magazines and television, and is the editor of a blog called *Eurovision Apocalypse*, where you can find all of these rare treasures and more.



WHATEVER HAPPENED TO LINDA KENDRICK



The sad news that Eurovision was cancelled brought back memories of the late Seventies when strike action forced the BBC to cancel Song For Europe at late notice. **Marcus Keppel-Palmer** profiles Linda Kendrick whose moment of fame was snatched away when the 1979 Song Contest was cancelled.

The late 1970s was a time when trade unions and strikes were never far away from the newspaper headlines. In 1977, Song For Europe was cancelled at short notice so far as the television broadcast was concerned because of trade union action. That show was still carried by radio. In 1979, we were not so lucky. As a result of an incident, one of the riggers was fired before the show. The Association of Broadcasting Staff went on strike, which meant that the show was called off a couple of hours before broadcast. Black Lace won the vote from the juries who listened to recordings, and the only time the songs were heard was when Terry Wogan played them all the next morning.

Linda Kendrick was one of those affected by the cancellation as she was due to perform the song *All I Needed Was Your Love* written by Doug Taylor. Although the full voting has never been officially published, Linda's song failed to attract much support, other than from the Bangor jury, and came 12th and last. Neither Linda nor Doug Taylor appear to have entered Song For Europe again. So who was Linda?

She was born in 1952, the second of three daughters, and the family moved to Canvey Island in 1959 where she went to St Joseph's School. Aged about 12, Linda first showed her promise as a singer when she won a local talent competition. Inspired by this



early success, Linda decided she wanted to go into showbusiness. Lots of young lads at the time had got together and started bands or groups, usually a 'Beatles style' line up of four and Linda joined in with a local group and started practising in the family lounge. Even at the early age of 14 she was starting to find a little bit of local work with the group. Her first professional gig took place in Braintree in Essex, where she was the billed singer supported by a trio.

Linda was soon scouted by Ann Bishop who signed Linda to professional London management. Ann placed Linda on the lucrative cabaret circuit performing nightly in clubs such as The Talk Of The Town and working men's clubs in the North, where she would regularly be supporting Dusty



Springfield and Cilla Black. Despite only being 15 at this time, Linda was already a confident performer. As well as touring, Linda was signed to Polydor Records and released her first single in 1966. The A-side was called *It's the Little Things*, on which she was backed by the well-known Labybirds group. The Ladybirds were formed out of members of The Vernon Girls group, and the trio were regular backing singers for artists on *Top Of The Pops* (a role they continued until 1978) as well as in recording studios. They notably backed Sandie Shaw on *Puppet On A String*, not only on the recorded version, but they also performed as backing vocalists in Vienna as Sandie won Eurovision for the first time for the UK. Later the Ladybirds also acted as the backing singers for Olivia Newton-John at Eurovision 1974 in Brighton.

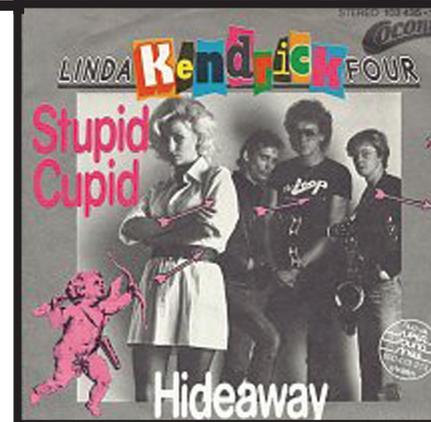
In 1967, Linda released another single on Polydor. First came *I Fall Apart* written by Eric Woolfson who went on to be a founder member of the Alan Parsons Project, backed by a cover of the Ashford and Simpson song *A Friend Of Mine*. Despite the touring, the song was not a success and Linda left Polydor and signed with their sister label Phillips. In 1968, she released the single *Grey Sunny Day*, a cover of a song by folk group The Cowsills. Although that wasn't a hit, Linda would find a sunny day calling.

With the loosening of the grip of the Lord Chamberlain on theatre, Linda

auditioned successfully for a part in the counter-culture musical, *Hair*, which opened at the Shaftesbury Theatre in late 1968. The musical concerned drugs, hippiedom, sexual freedom and featured a famous nude scene and this made it an immediate success. Linda played the role of Jeannie In a cast featuring future stars such as Tim Curry, Elaine Paige, Oliver Tobias, Marsha Hunt and Paul Nicholas. As a result of the success of the show - it ran for over 2,000 performances - the original cast recorded the songs from the show and Linda took lead vocals on several songs including *Good Morning Starshine* and *Let The Sun Shine In* which were released as singles as well.

ACTING

After finishing her spell in *Hair*, Linda continued to pursue her acting career with roles in shows such as *Z Cars* as well as *4-3-2-1 Hot and Sweet* in Germany. She also became a regular resident singer on the *Mike and Bernie Winters Scene* TV show. Between 1969 and 1971 Linda released four singles on the Phillips label. The first of those was *I Will See You There* written by Alan Blaikley and Chip Hawkes and it was the closest Linda got to the top 40 as the single reached number 41, tantalisingly close. The B-side had been written by her father. The follow-up, *Hold On*, didn't find such support and in 1970 Linda's only single



release was *Faith Hope And Charity* written by Roger Cook and Roger Greenaway, veterans of the Song For Europe circuit. The song was covered by French group Captain Nemo. She did release her first solo album called *Linda Kendrick*, which contained a cover of the Paul Simon song *Cloudy* among other tracks.

In 1970, Linda married the actor John Maghoo who was best known for the TV show *Adamant*. In 1971 Linda released her final single with Phillips, *Come With The Gentle People* which was also the theme tune to the film *Beyond The Valley Of The Dolls*. Despite that exposure the song was not a hit. Linda returned to the stage appearing in *Fire Angel* and then *Shoot Out At Elbow Creek*, before returning to singing, touring as backing singer for both Elton John

and also The Kinks. Linda and John had a son and Linda then returned to work releasing further singles in 1973 (*That's What Friends Are For*) and in 1974, a cover of the Rolling Stones' *Sympathy For The Devil*.

In March 1975, Linda released *House Of Cards* written by Elton John and Bernie Taupin, but shortly afterwards tragedy struck. Her husband died at the age of just 25. Her young boy had a heart problem. Within the space of a year, she had lost them both. Not surprisingly Linda took time out from public life. However, she found love again and moved to Cologne where she settled down and had another son. She was still making records and was back on the cabaret circuit but this time in Germany working in Munich and Berlin. In 1978 she released a single *Go On Girl* and then of course participated in Song For Europe in 1979. Unfortunately, although the single of *All I Needed Was Your Love* was due to be released, the record label Epic withdrew it after the contest failed to be broadcast.

Linda was living in Germany and formed a group called the Linda Kendrick Four. They released a single, a cover of *Stupid Cupid*, but once again success eluded Linda. After several more years on the cabaret circuit, Linda and family moved back to London. She died of pneumonia in November 2010. While her moment at Song For Europe never happened, Linda Kendrick still had a long career in the music industry. ■

RETURN TO ROTTERDAM



All aboard for Rotterdam and Eurovision... in 1976! **Andy Brook** looks back to his rebellious youth! **Please note:** This feature was written before the cancellation of this year's contest.

(NEARLY)



Andy in 1976

I was 15 in 1976 and Eurovision was already my passion. The Brotherhood of Man had won A Song For Europe and *Save All Your Kisses For Me* was heading up the charts. I couldn't wait for Eurovision at the end of March, as I was confident of a British victory. To add to my excitement, I would soon be joining a school exchange trip to Münster, in what was then West Germany. My first holiday without my parents, my first trip abroad, and my first time on a ferry. I had never even set foot on a boat before and the Hull to Rotterdam ferry was an overnight trip.

And then the date for Eurovision was announced. Instead of being at the end of March it was to be held on 3rd April, in Den Haag, at the very time that I would be on board ship sailing towards Rotterdam. So close and yet, so far. I was determined that I wasn't going to let my disappointment over missing Eurovision spoil the biggest adventure of my life.

I bought two brand new C90s (90 minute cassette tapes. You couldn't risk the two hour tapes; they had a habit of breaking). I persuaded my brother to record the contest from the television and gave very specific instructions about when to turn the tape over, in order not to miss any of the songs.

April 3rd came and a hundred school children and three teachers boarded the ferry in Hull that afternoon. We were shown to our cabins and told to behave ourselves and not go near the bar, but that we were free for the rest of the day. The teachers would meet up with us again after breakfast. Inevitably, the very first thing I

did was go to the bar. In 1976 if you knew how to ask for a pint, you got served.

The bar was in a concert hall with a big stage and two screened off areas to the left and the right. I wondered what was behind the curtains so went to have a look and - I think my heart actually stopped - it was a television room! I had no idea that you could get television on the North Sea, but there it was - with a note stuck to it saying 'ITV'. So I rushed across to the other side where, to my delight, other television was 'BBC1'. I went to the bar, ordered a pint, and sat down on the first row of seats in front of that television, guarding it, in case anyone tried to change channel.

ELECTRIC

I watched the film, as I always did, unable to concentrate, willing it to finish, then there was only the news and then the Eurovision would strike up. Gradually, more and more people joined me, until by 9.00pm it was standing room only. A room full of people from all corners of Europe, sailing from Hull to Rotterdam just as Eurovision was about to take place, live, in Den Haag. The atmosphere was electric - the audience was very enthusiastic and by the time the contest started we were all cheering and clapping. The reception was dreadful, but



Pumping away!



Spy specs!



She ended up Deux...

that didn't matter. The Brotherhood of Man came on first, gave what was surely a winning performance and the audience was on its feet.

The contest in 1976 was full of fun songs, from Freddie and his hippety-pump pump, to Anne-Karine Strøm and her *Mata Hari* sunglasses, to Catherine Ferry with her bouncy *Un, Deux, Trois*. There must have been someone in the audience on the boat from almost every country taking part, and each song got a rousing reception.

CHAMPIONS

The Brotherhood of Man had already been at Number One in the British charts for two weeks (on its way to being the biggest selling song of the year) and surely it was their contest to lose. But for half of the voting, that is what seemed was going to happen. France took an early lead and held it until almost two thirds of the way through, when the UK took the lead and never lost it again. The audience was on its feet and singing along to the reprise, and we would be sailing into Rotterdam as Eurovision champions.

Meanwhile, I sneaked back to my cabin, said nothing to the other boys. I hoped that nobody had spotted me watching Eurovision and even though I was desperate to talk about it, I didn't mention a word. It simply wasn't something you could admit liking to other teenage boys.

The next day we arrived in Münster and were introduced to our exchange families. I was shown to my bedroom and given time to make myself at home. I turned on the

main radio station and Eurovision songs were playing, something that would never have happened in the UK. I went downstairs to meet the rest of the family. The mother said "Now, before we go any further, we would all like to congratulate you on winning Eurovision. And I would like to apologise personally for the German entry, which was an embarrassment to my country."

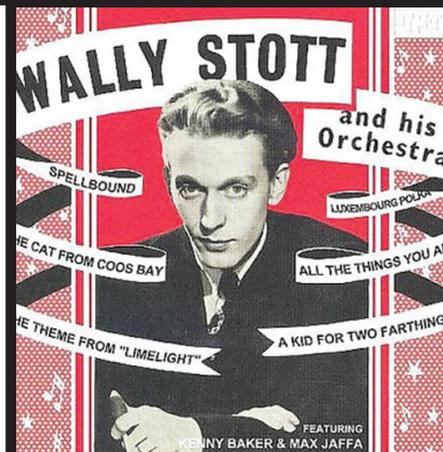
I had a wonderful, eye-opening time in Germany. Compared to the rather drab country I had left behind it seemed so modern, affluent, cultured and open. I wanted to stay in Germany forever. But at least there was one compensation to coming home. I could listen to the whole contest again, and concentrate on the voting properly. Almost the first thing I did on returning home was to ask my brother for my tapes. Red faced, he admitted that had taped over Eurovision 'by mistake' and would I like to listen to the new albums by Queen and Genesis instead? No, I would not! Luckily for me (and for my brother) my best friend had also recorded the contest. You could never be too careful.

I made my second trip to Rotterdam in February 2000 for the *Nationaal Songfestival*, held in the Ahoy Arena. That contest was won by Linda Wagenmakers with *No Goodbyes* and a performance that wouldn't have been out of place in the 1976 contest. And so, this May, 44 years after my first visit to Rotterdam, I will be in the city once again [*hopefully next year - Editor*], this time for a whole week of Eurovision excitement; fingers crossed and hoping for a second British victory on Dutch soil. ■

"AND THE CONDUCTOR IS..."



Continuing our series profiling some of the conductors who have graced the Eurovision stage over the years, **David Ransted** outlines the extraordinary life and achievements of a truly pioneering musician. And the conductor is... Wally Stott and Angela Morley.



Wally at Eurovision 1962



The composer, arranger and conductor, Wally Stott, arranged both of the United Kingdom's Eurovision entries performed by Ronnie Carroll, *Ring-A-Ding Girl* in 1962 and *Say Wonderful Things* in 1963, and he conducted *Ring-A-Ding Girl* at the contest in Luxembourg, his only appearance on the rostrum at Eurovision. The 1962 contest was held in the concert hall of the Villa Louvigny, then the headquarters of Compagnie Luxembourgeoise de Télédiffusion, the forerunner of RTL,

and the UK took to the stage 13th in the line-up of 16 countries. (As the UK hosted the 1963 contest, our entry that year was conducted by the show's musical director, Eric Robinson.) Ronnie Carroll is the only solo artist to represent the UK in two consecutive Eurovisions and his 1962 and 1963 entries finished joint fourth and fourth respectively.

Wally worked closely with Ronnie Carroll, arranging and accompanying many of his recordings, including *April In Paris*, *Moonlight Becomes You*, *Roses Are*

Red (My Love) and *The Wonder Of You*, and some were even released under the name of 'Ronnie Carroll with Wally Stott And His Orchestra', so he was a natural choice to arrange and conduct the singer's Eurovision entries.

HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

Wally Stott was born in Leeds on 10th March, 1924. Though his parents were not professional musicians, they had a keen interest in music - his mother sang and his watchmaker father played the ukulele-banjo - and Wally's earliest musical memory was of playing the records of Jack Payne and Henry Hall on the family's huge wind-up gramophone. Wally began piano lessons at age eight when the family acquired a new piano but these were cut short by the sudden and early death of his father. Later, a brief flirtation with the violin was followed by the accordion, winning several competitions until a BBC judge advised that a more orchestral instrument would be a better bet for a future career in music. Wally took up the clarinet and then the alto saxophone, which he taught himself to play.

The young Wally Stott began playing - unpaid - with Bert Clegg's band at the Empress Ballroom in Mexborough, Yorkshire, before leaving school at age 15 and going on tour with Archie's Juvenile Band for

the princely sum of ten shillings a week. During World War II many dance bands lost members to the armed forces and Wally, a 15 year-old musician who could sight-read music, soon became a hot property - earning his living from music from that point on - progressing to lead alto with Oscar Rabin's Band and venturing in to broadcasting and recording. Working with several bands in quick succession, in 1944 Wally joined arguably the UK's top band of the era, the Geraldo Orchestra, the de facto resident 'house' band for the BBC at the time. Increasingly drawn to arranging as well as playing, the steady working schedule of several radio shows each week and the variety of repertoire the band was required to play proved an ideal training ground and Wally augmented his musician and arranger skills by eagerly studying composition and completing a conducting course.

THE BIG TIME

From his mid-twenties Wally decided to give up playing to focus on writing. He became musical director of Philips Records at only 29 years old, arranging and conducting for many top artists and releasing his own albums of light orchestral music (what today would be known as 'easy listening'). He tentatively began ghost-writing film scores in 1950, launching what would later become

an outstanding career scoring movies, as well as writing the musical cues for *Hancock's Half Hour*, the BBC's top comedy show, and conducting on another icon of British comedy, *The Goon Show*. Increasingly gaining a reputation for his exceptional talent, and in particular the deft lightness of touch that he brought to his arrangements, in 1953 Wally began scoring films for Associated British Picture Corporation at their Borehamwood Studios.



Although later renowned for lush orchestral accompaniments to movies, Wally Stott's skills were honed in the tough and competitive world of mood music. Accompanying music and sound effects were required for documentaries, comedies, dramas, public information broadcasts and the 'shorts' that were often shown in cinemas before the main feature, and Wally excelled at getting the mood just right. One of his recordings, *Rotten Row*, with its clip-clop cadence, was perfectly suited to the horse riding theme of the footage of London's Hyde Park for which it was commissioned, while

there was no mistaking the winter theme of *Snowride*, which accompanied a news piece on *Operation Hay Lift* in the harsh winter of 1949, and the breezy *Canadian In Mayfair*, a tribute to his musical hero, Robert Farnon, captured the optimism of 1950s London.

As the decade drew to a close, Wally worked with some of Britain's top recording stars, providing the backing arrangement for Shirley Bassey's single *As I Love You* - her first UK Number One in February 1959 - and he similarly worked with Dusty Springfield and the Walker Brothers and on albums by well-known British stars including Diana Dors, Roy Castle and Harry Secombe.

The 1960s saw Wally turn from movies to TV, writing, arranging and conducting for entertainment shows - including for Benny Goodman, Nelson Riddle and Mel Tormé - and for documentaries, but he returned to films at the end of the decade, scoring *The Looking Glass War*, *When Eight Bells Toll* and *Captain Nemo And The Underwater City*. Among the British public, perhaps the most recognisable Stott composition from the era was the simple but highly memorable ten-second jingle, known as *Ident Zoom-2*, that was used by ATV from 1969 - when it launched its colour TV service - as a link between programmes.

HOLLYWOOD BECKONS

In 1972 Wally underwent gender reassignment treatment and began a new life in Los Angeles as Angela Morley. Warmly embraced by Hollywood, professionally Angela went from strength to strength, writing adaptation scores for *The Little Prince* and *The Slipper And The Rose* (being nominated for an Academy Award for both movies), and in 1977 Angela scored almost all of the animated movie *Watership Down*. Angela frequently returned to her homeland, acting as a regular conductor of the BBC Radio Orchestra in between



Angela with her awards

scoring television for Warner Brothers and working with composer John Williams - who was a big fan of Angela's style of musical arrangement - with the orchestration of his scores for *Star Wars*, *Superman* and *The Empire Strikes Back*.

The late-1970s and early-1980s saw Angela in strong demand both from the Hollywood studios and for TV. She scored many episodes of some of the hit series of the era, including *Dallas*, *Dynasty*, *Falcon Crest*, *Hotel*, *Wonder Woman* and *Cagney & Lacey*, winning three Emmy Awards (and three more nominations), and she continued to collaborate with John Williams, writing arrangements for his Boston Pops Orchestra and on the scores for *E.T.*, *Schindler's List*, *Home Alone I and II* and *Hook*. In addition to her close cooperation with Williams, Angela's growing reputation saw her work on the movie scores of other composers, including Bill Conti, André Previn, Sol Kaplan, John Mandel, David Shire and Richard Rodney Bennett. Amid this hectic schedule Angela found the time to write arrangements for artists such as Julie Andrews and Mel Tormé and for opera stars, including Plácido Domingo.

LATER LIFE

In 1994 Angela left LA for the relative tranquillity of Scottsdale, Arizona, but professionally the 70 year-old was in no mood to slow down. She continued to collaborate with John Williams and she

contributed three arrangements to his album *The Hollywood Sound*, recorded with the London Symphony Orchestra, and a further three arrangements for his album with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, *Cinema Serenade*, adding five more for a follow-up, *Cinema Serenade II*. Additionally, Angela continued to write scores for the Boston Pops and arranged a medley of the five nominated film scores, played by Itzhak Perlman and Yo Yo Ma, at the 74th Academy Awards ceremony in 2002. She went on to write over 30 arrangements of French songs, recorded a cappella by the Chorale of the Alliance Francaise of Greater Phoenix, which she founded in her adopted home state.

In 2001 the John Wilson Orchestra released *Soft Lights & Sweet Music*, recorded at Abbey Road Studios, a collection of some of Angela's earlier arrangements, and two years later he recorded *The Film & Television Music Of Angela Morley*.

Angela Morley passed away in Scottsdale, Arizona, on 14th January 2009, aged 84. A hugely successful and influential Emmy award-winning composer whose prodigious body of work has left a lasting legacy, her journey had taken her from the Empress Ballroom in Mexborough, via the Eurovision stage at the Villa Louvigny in Luxembourg, to Hollywood and in to the homes of millions of people around the world. ■

EURO QUIZ



A longer quiz this time by **Alasdair Rendall** with one question about every country that was meant to be in this year's Eurovision. Not all questions refer to this year.

- Albania:** How many times has Albania taken part in Eurovision?
- Armenia:** What is the only Armenian entry to have been sung entirely in Armenian?
- Australia:** What is Montaigne's real name?
- Austria:** Who sang the first ever Austrian entry, in 1957?
- Azerbaijan:** What is the name of the TV company that broadcasts Eurovision in Azerbaijan?
- Belarus:** How many times has Belarus qualified for the Eurovision Grand Final?
- Belgium:** Before their win in 1986, what was the most successful Belgian Eurovision entry?
- Bulgaria:** Who sang Bulgaria's 2009 entry, *Illusion*?
- Croatia:** What is the name of the contest traditionally used to select the Croatian entry?
- Cyprus:** Which singer represented Cyprus on three occasions, 1992, 1994 and 2007?
- Czech Republic:** Who is the lead singer of Lake Malawi?
- Denmark:** Philip, Nikolaj, David and Emil were members of which Danish Eurovision group?
- Estonia:** From which Caribbean island does Dave Benton (2001) hail?
- Finland:** Which fan favourite did Aksel beat in the Finnish final this year?
- France:** Which two singers represented France in the very first Eurovision in 1956?
- Georgia:** What is the missing word in this lyric from this year's Georgian entry? How do you want me to talk like an xxxxxx?
- Germany:** Germany has only failed to make the Grand Final once, in 1996. Who was their representative that year?
- Greece:** Who hosted the contest in Athens 2006 alongside Sakis Rouvas?
- Iceland:** Iceland ended up in the same position for the first three entries – which position?
- Ireland:** What was the surname of Ireland's 2005 representatives Donna & Joe?
- Israel:** Which four languages appear in Eden Alene's song?
- Italy:** After 1993, Italy only took part in one contest until their return in 2011, which one?
- Latvia:** How many times has Latvia come in the Top Ten?
- Lithuania:** In which city was the grand final of the 2020 Lithuanian national final held?
- Malta:** In which year did Destiny win Junior Eurovision?
- Moldova:** Natalia Gordienko was selected to represent Moldova in 2020, but who did she sing alongside when she last represented Moldova in 2006?
- Netherlands:** Jeangu Macrooy grew up in which country?
- North Macedonia:** Who was Macedonia's entry in their first ever contest, which failed to get through the pre-selection?

- Norway:** Who were the songwriters of Ulrikke Brandstorp's *Attention*?
- Poland:** Why were Poland briefly threatened with disqualification in the 1994 contest?
- Portugal:** What is the name of Salvador's sister, who wrote his 2017 winning song?
- Romania:** In which year did Romania make it in to the Top Ten at Eurovision for the first time?
- Russia:** Who was Russia's 1997 representative Alla Pugacheva married to between 1994 and 2005?
- San Marino:** Which rapper accompanied Jessika on San Marino's 2018 entry?
- Serbia:** Which two Serbian acts have won the infamous 'Barbara Dex Award'?
- Slovenia:** Slovenia was the first 'new' country to grace the Eurovision stage in 1993 – who represented them?
- Spain:** Who were the last two acts to come second for Spain?
- Sweden:** Who are the members of The Mamas?
- Switzerland:** In which year did Switzerland perform a song in the Romansch language?
- Ukraine:** Andriy Danylko was on the jury for the 2020 Ukrainian national final, but what is he better known as?
- United Kingdom:** In its long Eurovision history, the UK has only come fifth once; in which year?

THE ANSWERS

- 19
- 2
- Jessica Cerro
- 4 Bob Martin
- 5 Ictimai TV
- 6 Five
- 7 1978 (Second)
- 8 Krassimir Avramov
- 9 Dora
- 10 Evidiki
- 11 Albert Cerny
- 12 Anti Social Media
- 13 Aruba
- 14 *Ciccolina* by Erika Vikman
- 15 Mathe Altery & Dany Daberson
- 16 Englishman
- 17 Leon
- 18 Maria Menounos
- 19 16th
- 20 McCaul
- 21 English, Hebrew, Amharic and Arabic
- 22 1997
- 23 Four (2000, 2002, 2005, 2015)
- 24 Kaunas
- 25 2015
- 26 Arsenium & Connect-R
- 27 Suriname
- 28 Kalopi (1996)
- 29 Kjetil Mørland and Christian Ingbrigtsen
- 30 She sung part of the song in the dress rehearsal in English
- 31 Luisa
- 32 2002
- 33 Filip Kirikorov
- 34 Jennifer Brening
- 35 Milan Stankovic and Moje 3
- 36 IX Band
- 37 Anabel Conde (1995) and Betty Missiego (1979)
- 38 Ashley Haynes, Loulou Lamotte and Dinah Manna
- 39 1989
- 40 Verka Serdutchka
- 41 2009

10 ESSENTIAL DUTCH ENTRIES

With Eurovision returning to the Netherlands, this seems an appropriate time to celebrate the entries of one of the original entrants. As always this is a personal opinion of **Marcus Keppel-Palmer**, so it's time for the Gouda songs from the Tulip country!

Ruth Jacott
Vrede 1993

A contemporary soul song about climate change sung by the formidable Ruth Jacott hoovered up enough points to finish sixth. Questions might have been raised about her dress sense, but it hasn't stopped Ruth going from strength to strength. She has just finished a 2020 theatre tour and released a new single called *De Jaaren Gaan Vorbij*.



9

Hind
Your Heart Belongs To Me 2008

Hind Laroussi was actually born in Gouda and so justifies the awful pun in the introduction. She missed out on a place in the final in 2008, but went on to greater success with her 2010 album *Crosspop*, launching a new music style called, cleverly, *crosspop*. More recently she has moved to Los Angeles to record and perform.



Thérèse Steinmetz
Ring-Ding-Ding 1967

Clearly a forerunner to the Dutch winner in 1975, this lyrically challenged effort - Therese felt such joy that she feels it's a ring-a-ding-ding-day, whatever that may be - only garnered points from the UK and Ireland and finished 14th. But it was onwards and upwards for the Amsterdam songstress as she went on to win the *Golden Stag Festival* in Brasov. She moved to Cannes to run an art gallery.

8



Duncan Laurence
Arcade 2019

We can't ignore the reason Eurovision 2020 is being hosted by the Dutch, this emotional ballad that was mesmerisingly performed at the piano by Duncan. His live show in London in December showed that the lad has talent in abundance, evidenced by winning big at the Dutch BUMA awards, being slated as being part of the interval act for Eurovision 2020, and he is to be the subject of a new documentary film.

7



Marcha
Rechtop In De Wind 1987

After years in the wilderness, the Dutch returned to the Top Five at Eurovision with this slice of 1980s upbeat joy sung by a quintessential 1980s looking Marga Bult, big hair included. Marcha was asked to sing all the six songs in the pre-selection and the public voted *Rechtop In De Wind* top. After Eurovision, Marcha teamed up with Maggie MacNeal and Sandra Reemer to form the Dutch Divas and delight the gay circuit for years after.

6





5

Linda Wagenmakers
No Goodbyes 2000

Remembered mainly for the spectacular dress that Linda wore, out of which seemingly an entire troupe of dancers emerged, *No Goodbyes* was a gem of a song that finished undervoted in 13th place. Linda has had a successful career in musicals acting in *Mulan*, *Les Miserables*, *Miss Saigon*, *Phantom Of The Opera*, *Spamalot* and more.



2

Willeke Alberti
Waar Is De Zon 1994

This classic song was again badly undervoted with only Austria giving points to Willeke. Born in 1945, Willeke is an icon of the Dutch schlager industry, starting aged just 13 when she made her first recording with her father. Married three times, star of television and film, Willeke is also known as a gay icon for her music and her charity work. If you are in Rotterdam, go to the Schiedamsedijk where you can see Willeke's handprints on the walk of fame.



4

Rudi Carrell
Wat Een Geluk 1960

This may have come second last at Eurovision, this typical chanson of the time, but Rudi went on to become one of the biggest Dutch TV stars of the 1960s, particularly in Germany. *The Rudi Carrell Show*, a mix of comedy and pop, ran through to the 1990s and even caused a diplomatic spat between Germany and Iran.

Saskia & Serge
Tijd 1971

Having narrowly missed out on taking part in 1970, Saskia & Serge were selected for Eurovision 1971 where they finished joint sixth. The song is more notable as being the final entry conducted by Dolf van der Linden who conducted 13 times for the Netherlands. Trudy and Ruud, as the duo were really known, married, became successful in the country music field and were the first Dutch performers to appear in the *Grand Ole Opry* show in Nashville.



3

Teach-In
Dinge-Dong 1975

Was there ever any doubt that this tremendous winner would feature on this essential list? Getty Kaspers and the boys carried all before them despite being drawn to perform first. 152 points meant that the group from Enschede took the crown. In recent years, Getty has been a regular fixture on the Eurovision circuit, and she still sings about picking a flower every hour! What a trooper!



1

VISION PANEL YOUR TOP 3

In this special edition of the Vision Panel, the word went out for your three favourite songs, from this year's entries. Here are the results from regular and new readers. Scores were awarded in the usual 12, 10 and 8 points. Panel chairman, Alasdair Rendall, leads the way.



IRELAND: Refreshing and punchy



Alasdair Rendall

8 FRANCE I'm all about the male ballads this year. Yes this song isn't musically the

most original but it's one of those songs where all the right notes are in all the right places and the last 30 seconds really give me goose bumps!

10 ESTONIA A traditional ballad but Uku really sells this song and lifts it to new levels. I have a sneaking suspicion that this would have done better than a lot of polls were predicting as it's an all round attractive package.

12 SWITZERLAND It's such a shame that this absolutely beautiful song won't be performed on a Eurovision stage. Gjon has such a haunting voice and the song is mesmerising - this song is different enough to have really given Switzerland a chance of a dark horse victory.



Martin Phillips

8 NETHERLANDS Another non-Eurovision song that is crafted beautifully, and a slap across

the face for Eurovision haters like my family members, who think of anything Eurovision as "crap". Real quality CAN be forced into three minutes.

10 ICELAND I misjudged Dadi as a novelty act in previous appearances at *Songvakeppnin*. He and his team are novel, but the song is very touching and meaningful. And, I am always well disposed to Iceland's entries, craving Eurovision Reykjavik asap.

12 SWITZERLAND Gjon Muharremaj, has an amazing, transfixing voice and style - unlike anything ever heard at Eurovision. If he can pull it off live he will score VERY high on originality with a huge jury vote.

GERMANY: Fantastic voice



Dean Asker

8 IRELAND Hooray for pure pop. Katy Perry meets Kelly Clarkson, this is instantly memorable. In

a year where there are quite a lot of angst ridden songs this is refreshing and punchy.

10 GERMANY Germany is back, back, back! After last year's disaster Germany returns with a brilliant, modern pop song. This is the kind of thing I want the UK to enter: catchy and contemporary. Their approach in choosing this song seemed almost scientific: but who cares, this is great!

12 LITHUANIA I love this quirky, catchy song. Sadly Lithuania rarely feature near the top of my scoreboard but this is the best entry ever - by far. The presentation at the national final was spot on. This would be/have been a worthy winner.

ESTONIA: Attractive package



Theresa Krajewski

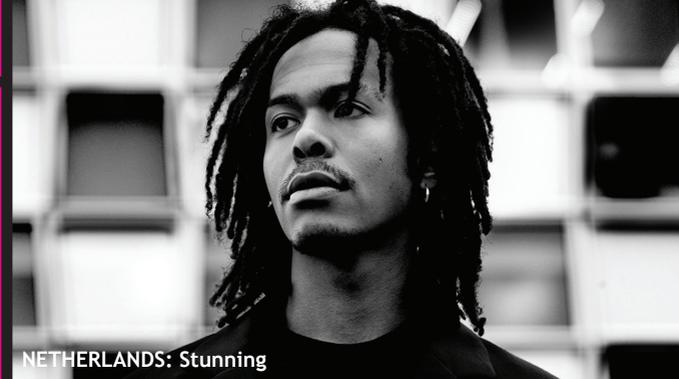
8 GERMANY Absolutely love this song. So catchy and a fantastic voice. I still think the title has nothing to do with the spirit of the song though! Can just imagine this being played in clubs all over Europe. This would have done so well, I'm sure. Hopefully we will see what he is capable of next year.

10 AUSTRALIA Wow, the national final performance was fascinating and showed that a good dancer does not have to be graceful all the time! I thought Montaigne's performance was absolutely brilliant, great voice and hypnotic song that you just can't help hum along to. Even if I always end up subconsciously merging this with Julia Samoylova's *I Won't Break* whenever I sing it!

12 NORTH MACEDONIA I absolutely loved this captivating and bouncy song from the first listen. Great voice and a melody that you just can't help swaying along to.



ARMENIA: Groove



NETHERLANDS: Stunning

**Robin Scott**

8 ARMENIA The Eurovision version of the song makes me want to groove. (Yes, I just about remember!) This version is so much more than the national final version. It has a middle-eastern-meets-rap sound. I am not a rap fan but it's really a song with rap rather than rap with some singing. I would rather be able to judge a stage performance but it is a great video! On that basis it gets third place!

10 BULGARIA We have a class song, beautifully arranged with a choir and strings which simply ooze quality. After their year off this was worth waiting for. This is a song to drift away to a happier place but listen to the words and you hear a tale of moving on from a bad relationship. It's not dissimilar to the Belgian entry but much, much more. Cinderella meets La la land!

12 ICELAND If something can have quirk, then this song does, in spades. It's the second time that Daði Freyr has tried to be chosen as Iceland's Eurovision entry and they have lost nothing in their style or their way of making me smile. Everything is just right from the vocals to the fabulous dance routine. Now to the words. It's easy to miss them but it's a love story, and in one place it mentions that there are three of them. Hmmm. This was to be their time to shine and maybe bring the trophy to the most North-Western member of the family. What a pity.

**Darron Copeland**

8 LITHUANIA *On Fire* is contemporary and unique in a sea of mediocre songs this year.

With a solid stage performance it could take the title.

10 RUSSIA *Uno* is absolutely absurd. But that is not necessarily a bad thing. It's a nonsensical pop song that is catchy. Who could ever have guessed that Russia could win the contest going with a 1970s Spanish theme and sound?

12 ICELAND *Think About Things* is just the song Europe and world needs during a pandemic. Daði og Gagnamagnið are fun, ordinary, quirky and so memorable. How can you not love these anti-rockstars?

**Marcus Kepple-Palmer**

8 ITALY Classy ballad well sung and a good live performer.

10 NETHERLANDS Stunning live performance. Could they have repeated?

12 SWITZERLAND Gjon has the best ballad in the contest and it would be nice to have had a French winner after so long.

**Richard Frost**

8 GERMANY
10 BULGARIA
12 ICELAND



BULGARIA: Beautifully arranged



RUSSIA: Absolutely absurd



ITALY: Lots of emotions



NORWAY: Goose bumps

**Shau Chan**

8 LITHUANIA This for sure would have been the most talked about entry from this year's contest. Those dance moves and that catchy tune certainly would provide enough distraction. It's daring, experimental, super catchy and memorable all at the same time. What's not to love about this song.

10 ICELAND *Think About Things* is an insanely quirky tune, has a catchy funky rhythm, as well as a very catchy chorus. Loving the quirky dance moves too, which makes it more memorable. The staging at the *Söngvakeppnin* was somewhat special, especially the wind machine half way through that performance.

12 ITALY I loved this song from the first time I heard this at *San Remo Festival*. I'm so pleased it won but sad that I won't be able to hear the shortened version at Eurovision. I absolutely love everything about this entry. Diadato's stunning vocals. A very dramatic ballad with a very powerful chorus and great melodies. A truly beautiful song, with lots of emotions.

**Scott Murphy**

8 LATVIA An acquired taste, make no mistake, but I'm a sucker for this frantic, electro

beat. Samanta has great attack and it's no wonder she's become a Twitter hit. I hope Latvia give her a free pass next year.

10 BULGARIA I love how Symphonix have no fixed sound and yet still manage to craft brilliantly slick songs and with heart, every time. This really gave me the winning 'itch' and it's heartbreaking to see a real contender be denied their first win. I'm at least delighted that Victoria has agreed to turn up again for 2021.

12 GERMANY There's so much to pull apart about why this is my firm fave of 2020. The funky guitar, the horns and that falsetto by the clearly very talented Slovenian-born chap. The three minutes just fly by! This will long be a staple at every Euro party, for sure.

**John Hodgkiss**

8 MALTA She certainly has a pair of lungs on her and should be amazing live.

10 ICELAND It's quirky, fresh and captivates from the very beginning.

12 RUSSIA It's as catchy as hell. It will definitely divide opinion, but I LOVE it!

UNITED KINGDOM:
On your feet

**Martin Palmer**

8 LITHUANIA Of all the fun entries (this, Iceland and Russia), this is the one that sticks in my head the most! From the moment I saw this performed in *Pabandom Iš Naujo!* I was praying that it won but it wasn't your usual Lithuanian national final - there were at least three other entries as worthy of the title. *On Fire* was the one for me though, with its thoughtful lyrics delivered in such a quirky vocal style, together with THAT dance routine, all topped off with magnifying glasses! Even I can move my hands in that way! Such a tragedy (get it?) that this wasn't able to be seen on a Eurovision stage as The Roop would have given Lithuania their best ever result...

10 ROMANIA There may have been five songs for Roxen to sing and the Romanian voters to pick from but for me there was only one choice available and that was *Alcohol You*. This teen with the incredible voice and the song chosen for her are the perfect match as every note and bar is perfectly emoted vocally and Roxen has the stage persona of a singer 20 years her senior - I was hanging on every word and every movement. They then went and improved it even more with the revamp! As long as the dress had been changed for Eurovision, this would have been perfection and Romania's strongest chance of a win...

12 NORWAY Every year there is one entry that grabs me by the ears, the eyes, the brain but most importantly by the heart - in 2020, that entry was *Attention*. *The Melodi Grand Prix* jury obviously knew they were onto something by putting Ulrikke into the direct finalist group - they were proved right with this incredible power ballad that is not only perfectly sung live, her tone and emotional delivery is spot on for the lyrics, Ulrikke directs every feeling right down the camera and the minimal staging allows the song as a whole to be the ultimate focus. This gives me goose bumps every time I hear it played and I am convinced that we would have been going to Norway in 2021 bar for what is happening across the planet at the moment. A song that will make it into my Top 20 Eurovision songs of all time if I can lose one of the others and convince myself that *Attention* doesn't miss out on that list by a technicality!

**Russell Aitken**

8 UNITED KINGDOM Cliche maybe, but I just want to give him some exposure. I love this song, who knows how it would have done in Rotterdam, but I'd be on my feet for the first time in years.

10 RUSSIA Infectious, ridiculous even, but can't stop listening to it. A merry televoters dream.

12 NORWAY I keep coming back to this. While it reminds me of *Undo* in parts, it's current enough to lift it to my top spot with hopes of a Dami-esque staging, pre cancellation. Goose bumps.



LATVIA: A bit bonkers

FRANCE: Beautiful voice

**David Elder**

8 FRANCE I don't get the disdain for this entry across the fan community. Many Eurovision entries have been written by composers from other countries over the years in the same way that artists have represented, and won, the contest for countries which are not their countries of birth. This is a classic Euro chanson, sung strongly, which builds well to a powerful crescendo.

10 ITALY The passion and emotion shine through in Diodato's performance of this classic canzone Italiana. It builds nicely and is convincingly sold, which is presumably why he was awarded the top prize at *San Remo*. I expected another solid Top Ten finish for our Italian friends.

12 BULGARIA This sounds like Billie Eilish singing a song from a 1950's classic Disney film. The simplicity and subtlety are beautiful and the melody is just breathtaking. This grabbed me at first listen and each time I've listened to it subsequently I've been moved to tears by Victoria's delicate vocal and the ethereal harmonies this special song offers. If we saw another ballad take the crown this year then this would've been your winner.

**Paul Marks-Jones**

8 LATVIA Aminata can do no wrong really. This is modern, bit bonkers and has a really good message on the video. Plus Samanta really can belt it out! It would have seen Latvia back in the Top Ten I'm certain.

10 UKRAINE I love a bit of authentic waling and so this was always gonna feature highly for me. This is what we need more of in Eurovision!

12 AUSTRIA As soon as I heard this I knew it would be my fave. It's totally danceable and funky - completely different to anything else in the contest.

**Pete Lambert**

8 GERMANY Honestly, besides my top two, it's the only one that I can remember.

10 SWEDEN Perhaps there is a vicious cycle playing out that means Europe's legions of soul fans aren't likely to spend four hours on a Saturday watching

Eurovision. After so many near misses, I think The Mamas really could've done it this year.

12 ICELAND Would this have made the jump from fan favourite into the general public's affections? Daði has the charisma in his own mellow way, and this would have really really stood out among the other entries.



SWEDEN: Repeating on the brain

**Patrick Mougín**

8 AUSTRALIA SBS waited until the very last moment to reveal the last song for

Australia Decides 2020, and for me it was the only song that had that Eurovision vibe to it (probably because it was written by DNA, of Sound Of Silence fame). It gave me goosebumps, and I instantly knew it would win.

There is perhaps a little home country bias in there, but honestly it's one of those songs that is understated and does take you on a bit of a journey.

10 ITALY When a song is so pure and raw, and actually makes me so emotional that I cry, I know it's a winner in my books. The last

Eurovision song that did that was *Amar Pelos Dois* in 2017 (and it won that year funnily enough). I don't listen to it much at the moment because I know I will burst into tears every time I do. And yet, it's in my Top Three for that very reason. Bravo Italia!

12 SWEDEN This was Song #1 in Semi Final #1 at *Melodifestival* 2020, and thus flew under *everyone's* radar. It was *not* my favourite to win *Mello*. But when it did, and thus confirmed its place for Sweden in Rotterdam, it was forever etched on repeat in my brain. Dancing on my feet to it at the Swedish Church in London after it won is one of my all-time favourite Eurovision-related memories.

**Selina Hargreaves**

8 FRANCE A simply beautiful, gentle love song. He has such a beautiful voice and it's so catchy and easy to remember.

10 NORWAY Such a polished song with lots of interest. It builds well as the song goes on and the visual effects reflect this, which makes it even more dramatic.

12 DENMARK This was my absolute favourite right from the start! It is such a positive song which the singers sing well together. A very easy listening and enjoyable song, which is so catchy you will want to sing along. Love it and it is now firmly stuck in my head!



MALTA:
Moved to
tears



Carol Ritson

8 IRELAND I really love both Katy Perry's and Avril Lavigne's music. Close my eyes, and I'm easily convinced I'm listening to the two of them mixed together into one song! Its a fun and lively "I don't care what they say, and who are they anyway" anthem.

10 BELGIUM This song is catchy and has been my earworm for weeks. This has come as a surprise to me as I wouldn't have thought I'd like this sort of sound but I love the beautiful jazz undertones. The soft and gentle music matches the sad lyrics perfectly.

12 GEORGIA I adore this song so much! It will definitely be added to my "Favourite songs" playlist. I've already listened to loads of Tornike Kipiani's songs and really love his voice. I would have loved to have heard him singing live on the night. I like the sound of the woman's voice mixed with his in the chorus, and the clever use of "I love you" in the various languages he's just mentioned in the previous verses.



Joanne Powell

8 ITALY Gorgeous ballad, with a catchy chorus, powerful message and sung really well. Just one of those songs I keep on singing, beautiful.

10 ICELAND Such a catchy song, singer with loads of charisma, backing singers that were such a huge part of the performance. This song brings the comedy element back to Eurovision, but rather than being silly and laughable, the song not only has a lovely message but is actually rather good as well.

12 NORWAY I may be biased as I was there at the national final, however this lovely personable lady with a powerhouse voice was a clear winner for me. Had everything, great songwriters, unforgettable chorus and sung just wonderfully.



Nico Pittórtou

8 SAN MARINO Hoorah for delightful disco diversity. It was a tough one between this and the emotional probable winner from Switzerland, but ultimately I'll be listening to this a lot more. Freaky bum shaking fun that would make a marvelous Pride anthem. Definitely their best yet.

10 UKRAINE I love Slavic white noise singing and this modern fusion of the style is hypnotic, beautiful and somehow entrances your body to dance. You watch Eurovision to discover this kind of magic.

12 MALTA I've heard that people were moved to tears by some of the more morose songs this year. This one elevated me to tears of joy. Catchy, classy and delivered with a powerful ease that touches your soul. The kind of elating light we really need in these murky uncertain times.

UKRAINE:
Hypnotic
melody



Steve Toora-Binks

8 SWEDEN Last year The Mamas reminded me of Eurovision's very own Dreamgirls so I was so glad to see them break out from behind their very own Jimmy Early. They may not have been everyone's favourite Melo act this year but the pure joy of *Move* can win over even the most ardent critic. I suspect this would have done very well!

10 GREECE I love an act that embraces ethno-pop and this entry felt fresh and new. I could imagine this being in the charts and I enjoyed the very catchy rift from the unusual instrument. While this would certainly not have been a winner on the night it is one of this year's songs that I can instantly play in my head without effort.

12 ICELAND At first the whole situation involving Netflix and the bizarre celebrity endorsements (Russell Crowe!?) annoyed me and I felt that our beloved competition was being used to plug a movie. However, as we've all been stuck working from home recently I have had this on Spotify and the quality of the song has shone through.



David Ransted

8 UNITED KINGDOM Best UK entry for years: contemporary, chart-friendly, with a strong, memorable anthemic hook. James Newman was an inspired choice - a confident, charismatic performer. With good staging this could have done well for us.

10 MOLDOVA This one builds beautifully from its understated electronica opening to a soaring, passionate chorus with a great vocal delivery. With a stellar songwriting pedigree this one delivered as much as it promised. Ms Gordienko has come a very long way since *Loca*. Seriously good song.

12 UKRAINE For me this one was miles ahead of the competition. A driving, insistent beat, hypnotic melody that just keeps going around inside your head and authentic, ethnic vocal style. The perfect blend of ethnic and modern, this is electro folk at its mesmerising best! The silver lining in a very cloudy sky is that Go_A will be representing Ukraine next year.



MOLDOVA:
Seriously
good song

DENMARK:
Happy clappyNORTH MACEDONIA:
Sexy and uplifting**Fiona Guest**

8 CROATIA I struggled to separate at least six songs for this spot, but this just squeezed out Finland, Bulgaria, Norway, Romania, the UK and a couple of others. Ok, so I know it's another Balkan ballad, but can you ever have too many? It has that full dramatic sound that punches me every time and the tune is both catchy and sung in 'foreign'. What more can anyone ask?

10 FRANCE A power ballad sung (partly) in French anyone? What a beautiful tune that builds and develops nicely over the three minutes. It is such a gentle song but sung in an emotional way, that I'm struggling not to press repeat each time I hear it.

12 DENMARK From the first listen I was hooked! I love a happy clappy anthemic song, and I can't stop stomping my foot every time I hear this. Add in a duet with harmonious voices, and I'm in there, hook line and sinker. Would it have won? No, probably not, but who cares: I'll say YES anytime to hearing this upbeat tune.

**David Plews**

8 NORWAY Her voice is amazing, a power ballad full of angst, this would easily have been my winner in any of the last five years.

10 LITHUANIA Fun, crazy, catchy, a unique dance craze, it's got the lot and would probably have won the contest.

12 AZERBAIJAN The ideas for staging this song are endless, it would have been amazing. The ancient chanting effect and that sassy ending to Cleopatra in the chorus are sublime.

AZERBAIJAN:
Sassy ending**Caroline Griffin**

8 ESTONIA What would Eurovision be without the power ballad? Third time lucky for singer-song writer, Uku Suviste, who has entered Estonia's National Finals twice previously. I love this guy's rich vocals, and like so many Eurovision entrants, he has a solid technical foundation, being a graduate of the Estonian Academy of Music and his uncle is an opera singer.

10 ICELAND This quirky little number from Iceland was a hot favourite with the Bookies to win. It's such a feel good song with a catchy rhythm and I love the group's matching outfits in a tasteful green (or it is turquoise?!), each with a personal emoji.

12 SWEDEN If you want a lesson on how to do Eurovision well, then look to Sweden. The Swedes always deliver and The Mamas are no exception. John Lundvik's backing singers from last year, these ladies are excellent singers with a superb stage presence. I have no doubt this would have done really well.

**Gary Speirs**

8 ICELAND Could have been Iceland's first winner. Another innovative presentation and a cracking song. This is one I feel will become a Eurovision classic, even if we'll never know if it would have won... whacky!

10 LITHUANIA Quirky, lively, innovate and fun. This is the kind of modern, inventive song that our beloved contest needs... rip-roaring!

12 NORTH MACEDONIA I love the rhythm, the freshness, the solid production and the flow of this song. It appeals to my inner dancer which is best left on a shelf these days... sexy and uplifting!

LITHUANIA:
Rip-roaring

SWITZERLAND:
Mesmerising



ICELAND:
So quirky



Lesley Sim

8 ICELAND Because it is so quirky, they are so quirky and there is even a quirky dance!

10 UKRAINE I know it is not everyone's cup of tea, but I just love her voice and all the ethnic bits.

12 SWITZERLAND This has potential to be my favourite Eurovision song of all time, his voice is so beautiful and the song so mystical. I burst into tears the first time I heard it, and that continues still, I'm even welling up writing this right now!



Gordon Lewis

8 SWEDEN Although I am in the minority, my biggest regret is that I did not place any money on The Mamas winning *Melodifestival* with *Move*. This is a strong gospel number with a Motown sound that the ladies perform with an infectious confidence. Furthermore, The Mamas have already experienced the Eurovision stage having provided backing vocals for Sweden's 2019 entry performed by John Lundvik. The video, recorded at the national final, reveals some disgruntled audience members refusing to show any enthusiasm for this song, but I am certain that it would have got people singing and dancing had it been performed in Rotterdam. And in these uncertain times, it is certainly one of the feel-good songs on my current playlist.

10 GERMANY With the exception of Michael Schulte (Germany 2018), Germany hasn't done particularly well since winning the contest ten years ago. However, that was about to change in 2020 with the contemporary sounding *Violent Thing* performed by Ben Dolic. Slovenian born Ben is no stranger to competition, having previously taken part in 2016's *EMA* with his band D Base, before coming second in *The Voice Of Germany* in 2018. His vocals are completely amazing and, without watching the performance, listeners could be forgiven in thinking that there were two people on stage. I have no doubt that this would have given Germany another top five placing and may have even taken the top spot.

12 MALTA As soon as I knew that the Maltese public had chosen Destiny as its representative, I also knew that this was possibly Malta's best chance of victory since Chiara came second in 2005. It's incredible to think that she is still only 17-years-old, as her vocals and appearance both reveal a maturity beyond her years. Destiny also has musical form, having won Junior Eurovision back in 2015 with *Not My Soul* and, two years later, appearing as a semi-finalist on *Britain's Got Talent* where she came sixth. Last year she supported fellow Maltese singer, Michela Pace, at the Tel Aviv contest, announcing her intention to take part in *X Factor Malta* soon after. She then went on to win the show and the opportunity to represent her country once again. Destiny's song for Rotterdam was revealed in March and is another feel-good song with gospel overtones. Sadly, no one will ever know if *All Of My Love* would have brought victory to the Mediterranean island.



Hass Yusuf

8 ITALY Yet again an Italian song finds itself in my top three - and always justified of course. Maybe it's all to do with the drama and the lovely language. And this year is no exception. Diodato really brings out the emotion of this song with his impressive vocals. There's a magical feel to the whole thing.

10 SWITZERLAND It wasn't long ago when the Swiss produced my favourite song year after year. This year's entry is up there with the best. For one thing, it's sung in French - the best language for song besides Italian - but the whole haunting sound is mesmerizing. Gjon has a great delivery and gets right into the soul of the composition.

12 FRANCE All my top three were quite tight, but I surprised myself by this choice. Not that I should be surprised - the French hardly let the team down. Maybe this is a bit too traditional for its own good, but Tom's performance is also one of drama and emotion. But the tune and beat of the composition is superb. I appear to be a one-track pony this year with all three choices being of a similar style, but there you are.

HOW DID OUR PANEL VOTE?

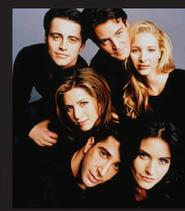
Points	Country	Score
12	ICELAND	126
10	SWITZERLAND	58
8	GERMANY	56
8	ITALY	56
8	LITHUANIA	56
5	NORWAY	54
4	SWEDEN	50
3	FRANCE	46
2	BULGARIA	42
2	UKRAINE	42

As you can see Iceland was a runaway winner obtaining more than twice the score over its nearest rival. Well done Iceland! Would it have won in Rotterdam? Many of you thinks so, but alas we will never know.

Even in count-back, Germany/Italy/Lithuania and Bulgaria/Ukraine drew with each other thwarting our usual Eurovision points awarding!

WITH LINDA WILSON

David Ransted posed the questions



Occupation: CEO of Mental Health Charity Moodswings.

Favourite Eurovision year: 2018 because I was there.

Which Eurovisions have you attended? Just 2018 in Portugal.

Favourite Eurovision entry: *Take Me To Your Heaven* has always been my favourite. I love the pink outfit too but I'm also partial to a bit of *Digiloo*.

Favourite UK entry: Well it has to be Nicki French!

Favourite winner: I also *Love Rise Like A Phoenix*. I was thrilled when Concihta won.

Favourite city or place: My favourite city is Manchester, my adopted home but I love Hawaii. I spent my 40th there and my tenth anniversary, it's a special place.

Least favourite place!: The countryside in the rain - it's very miserable.

What are your interests/hobbies outside

Eurovision: Theatre, particularly musical theatre has always been my biggest interest. I am a trustee of Hope Mill Theatre in Manchester which focuses on reviving musicals. I also love to read and watch films and socialise a lot with my group of friends. I have the best friends in the world!

When were/are you happiest? When my other half Tom got his OBE, the proudest day of my life.

Which living person do you most admire, and why? I'm going to say Jason Donovan because everyone knows I love him!

What trait do you most deplore in others? Selfishness. I can't bear it when people are so self obsessed that they ignore the needs of others.

And what trait do you most deplore in yourself? I'm prone to laziness! I am never bored and could sit on the sofa for days amusing myself.

How do you relax? Lying in bed watching Netflix with a bag of crisps.

What was your most embarrassing moment? I once accidentally tipped someone out of a wheelchair in public and I was 'pranked' on a TV programme shown prime time on Saturday night ITV1.

What is your most treasured possession? My teddy bears and my Irish wedding ring.

What did you want to be when you were growing up? A nurse. I had the outfit and everything.

Favourite movie: *Tootsie*. I can recite much of it!

What advice would you give your 16 year-old self? Care less what other people think and revel in how odd you are, throw glitter at it because one day people will love you for it. (I wouldn't have listened though.)

What is the worst job you've done? Delivering parcels around Hartlepool. I

lasted two weeks doing 12 hour days. Every night I'd go to bed and there were 200 more parcels in the garage the next morning.

Do you have any superstitions? No.

Who would play you in the film of your life? A younger Julie Walters or Angela Lansbury.

What is top of your bucket list? There are places I'd like to visit but I've also always wanted a try on a bucking bronco.

Favourite non-Eurovision song: A huge number of musical theatre songs and in terms of pop music *Together In Electric Dreams*.

Apart from Eurovision, who was the last music act you saw perform live? I think it was Barry Manilow.

Guilty pleasure: My mother's chicken and gravy pie. You can never have too much gravy.

Tell us a secret: It's my job to keep secrets. I never reveal them! ■



SILVER LININGS

COMING SECOND



2011 ITALY
Raphael Gualazzi
Madness Of Love



2012 RUSSIA
Buranovskiye Babushki
Party For Everyone



2013 AZERBAIJAN
Farid Mammadov
Hold Me



2014 NETHERLANDS
The Common Linnets
Calm After The Storm



2015 RUSSIA
Polina Gagarina
A Million Voices



2016 AUSTRALIA
Dami Im
Sound Of Silence