



vision

THE OGAE UK MAGAZINE
SUMMER 2009 ISSUE 77
www.uk.ogae.net



FAIRYTALE COMES TRUE

Affiliated to Organisation Générale des Amateurs de l'Eurovision



Vision

INFORMATION

Gordon Lewis Editor-in-Chief
Hassan Yusuf Editor

Vision – The OGAE UK Magazine
51 Greenfields Avenue
Totton
Southampton SO40 3LU

Editorial Team: 023 8066 1104
E-mail: editor_vision@hotmail.com

For all general OGAE UK enquiries,
please contact:

Paul Marks-Jones (President)
33 Woodlawn Court,
Whalley Range,
Manchester M16 9FL
E-mail: presidentogaeuk@btinternet.com

For all membership and subscription enquiries,
including change of address, please contact:

OGAE UK Membership Dept.
101 D Clarendon Road,
London
W11 4JG
E-mail: ogaeuk@gmail.com

DEADLINE

All contributions for issue 78 of **Vision** should reach the Editor no later than
6 September 2009

BACK ISSUES

Issues 19 onwards cost £3.00 each (£4.00 overseas) inc. P&P.
Write with your requirements to the Editor-in-Chief.
All others, plus issues 28, 29, 31 and 76 are now out of print.

OGAE INTERNATIONAL

OGAE UK is affiliated to OGAE International with branches across Europe.
For details of full and associated members please write to the President,
enclosing a SAE/IRC.

DATA PROTECTION ACT

OGAE UK retains membership details on computer solely for club use.
The club will not release this information to any other person without your
written permission. If you object to your details being held in this manner,
please write to the OGAE UK Membership Department accordingly.

DISCLAIMER

Views expressed in **Vision** are not necessarily those of OGAE UK or the Editor.

No unauthorised reproduction of this magazine in whole or part is allowed
without the express written permission of the Editor.

www.uk.ogae.net

© OGAE UK 2009

ED LINES

It may be more than two months ago, but what a night that was in Moscow. Young fiddler Alexander Rybak gained an unprecedented victory for his adopted country, Norway, whilst the United Kingdom found itself in the Top 5 and even heard the sound of 'douze points' again! With Graham Norton taking over the commentary reins from Sir Terry, critics and fans were unanimous in agreeing that the 2009 Eurovision Song Contest was one of the best ever!

With Oslo recently confirmed as the host city for 2010, the Norwegians are already planning what will be an equally spectacular show but, before then, OGAE UK will be holding its very own Eurobash in Birmingham this October. As I write, tickets for the event have just sold out, but I know a 100 or so of our members will be enjoying a day and night where the talk of town will be all things Eurovision.

After that it will then be time to look out for the 2009 Junior Eurovision Song Contest which will be broadcast from Kiev, but the planned third Eurovision Dance Contest that was to be held in Azerbaijan during September has been postponed until next year due to lack of interest. Thankfully that isn't the case for the main contest, which is simply getting bigger and better with each passing year!

Gordon Lewis

Editor-in-Chief
editor_vision@hotmail.com

CONTENTS

A Fairytale Begins	2-3
How Europe Voted	4-5
Rushin' In Russia	6-19
Our Time With Jade	20-21
Whatever Happened To...	22-24
Euro Quiz/Eurobash 2009	25
The Day I....	26-28
OGAE Song Contest 2009	29
Retrospective 2009: Part One	30-36
President's Page	37
ESC09 Analysed	38-39
Eurovision 2010 Tickets	40
Vision News	Inside back cover

Cover photo copyright © EBU
All other images are copyright © their respective owners

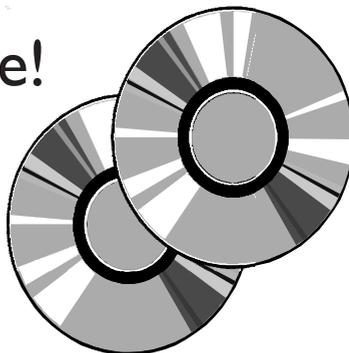
Eurovision CD's ... and much more!

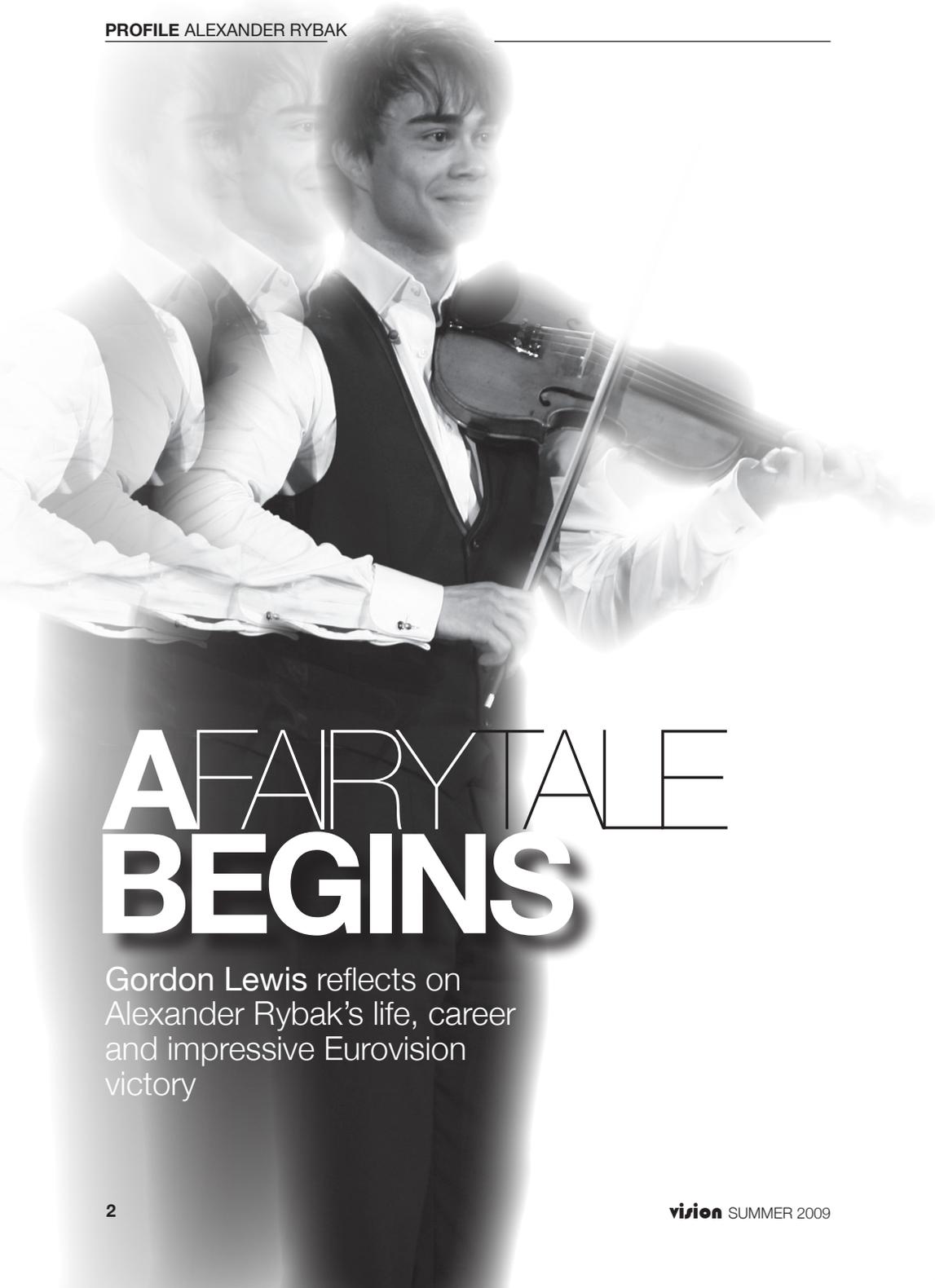
For full list send IRC to:

Bea de Vrind
Van Boisotring 41
2722 AA Zoetermeer
The Netherlands

Website: www.bearecords.com
Tel: 00 31 79 34 31 518

E-mail: bea@bearecords.nl
Fax: 00 31 79 33 14 74





A FARYTALE BEGINS

Gordon Lewis reflects on
Alexander Rybak's life, career
and impressive Eurovision
victory

Although born in Minsk, Belarus, which was then part of the former Soviet Union, on 13th May 1986, Alexander Rybak has spent most of his 23 years living on Norwegian soil. Growing up close to Oslo, the young boy was introduced to music by his classically trained parents, following in their footsteps by learning piano and violin at the age of five. He confesses that the violin has always been his favourite instrument, claiming that it has contributed to “nearly 20 years of an exciting life”.

Soon after his tenth birthday, Alexander’s parents enrolled him at Oslo’s Barratt Due Institute of Music, where he soon became a leading student within the young talent section that has provided musical instruction to teenage students for more than 60 years. He then progressed to the institute’s senior department, where he is currently taking a study break from his Bachelor’s degree in Music.

Never one to shy away from competition, Alexander’s first break came in 2004 when he was awarded the highly respected Anders Jahre Culture Prize for his obvious and genuine talent. One year later and he took part in the Norwegian version of ‘Pop Idol’, easily reaching the semi-final but failing to gain the overall prize. Undeterred, Alexander then entered NRK’s talent show, ‘Kjempejansen’, which he won with his own composition, *Foolin’*.

This led to him collaborating with A-ha’s Morten Harket and former Eurovision winner, Hanne Krogh (Bobbysocks), as well as securing a leading role in the Norwegian version of

‘Fiddler on the Roof’ where Alexander, needless to say, starred as the Fiddler! Towards the end of 2008 he submitted the traditional folk inspired *Fairytale* to NRK for the 2009 ‘Norsk Melodi Grand Prix’ where he performed in the third semi-final.

The accomplished singer, songwriter and performer made the final show without any hesitation, where he impressively gained the top score from each voting region to become the Norwegian Eurovision representative in Moscow. There was little doubt that Alexander would then qualify from the second semi-final, but no one was prepared for his unprecedented overall victory where he scored nearly 400 points and more than 160 points over his nearest rival, Yohanna, from Iceland.

Modestly reflecting on his achievement, the young man who celebrated his 23rd birthday just three days before winning the Eurovision Song Contest, simply said that he “always liked to entertain and somehow that is my vocation”. Within days, and helped by the modern day download age, *Fairytale* had reached Number One in several countries, and became the first non-British winner to enter the UK’s Top Ten since Johnny Logan in 1987.

Alexander Rybak’s first album, *Fairytales*, has recently been released across Europe and continues to reflect the folk style that is rapidly becoming his trademark. Songs such as *Roll With The Wind*, *Kiss And Tell* and his cover version of Secret Garden’s *Song From A Secret Garden* can only testify that this is one “Fairytale” which is only just beginning. ●



HOW EUROPE VOTED

FINAL

	Albania	Andorra	Armenia	Azerbaijan	Belarus	Belgium	Bosnia & Herz.	Bulgaria	Croatia	Cyprus	Czech Republic	Denmark	Estonia	Finland	France	Germany	Greece	Hungary	Iceland	Ireland	Israel
Norway	7	10	8	8	12	10	10	2	8	10	3	12	12	8	8	12	10	12	12	8	12
Iceland	6	8	5		2			5	2	5	2	10	8	10		7	4	7		12	10
Azerbaijan	4		1		10	3	3	8	10	8	10	8	7	2	1		8	10			6
Turkey	10		4	12		12	7	10	1		1	6		5	12	10	3	5			3
UK	8	4	7		3		4	7	4	7	6	3			4	8	12	1		10	4
Estonia				4	4				6	3		5		12		1	5	6	10	6	
Greece	12		10		5	5	5	12	7	12						6		4			
France	2	3	6		7	1	6					2		4		3	6		6	3	5
Bosnia & Herz.	5			2				4	12					6		2			2	2	
Armenia					1	7		6		4	12			1	6				5		8
Russia			12	6	8					1	8		10			5					7
Ukraine			3	10	6						5							8			2
Denmark		5								6					5			3	4	4	
Moldova			2	7		4			3												1
Portugal		6				6	1				7		3		7				7		
Israel		7				8	8				4		5		10						
Albania									5				1				7	2			
Croatia				5			12										2		1		
Romania				3						2										2	
Germany	3					2	2					7			3					1	
Sweden	1	2										4	6	7	2				3		
Malta		1												3		4				5	
Lithuania				1				1				1	2							7	
Spain		12															1				
Finland								3					4					8			

SEMI-FINAL ONE

	Andorra	Armenia	Belarus	Belgium	Bosnia & Herz.	Bulgaria	Czech Republic	Finland	Germany	Iceland	Israel	Macedonia, FYR	Malta	Montenegro	Portugal	Romania	Sweden	Switzerland	Turkey	UK	Total	Placing
Iceland	10	12	12	7	7	6	10	12	6		12	4	12	7	12	10	12	7	8	8	174	1
Turkey	5	10	6	12	12	12	5	7	12	7	6	12	10	8	5	12	7	12		12	172	2
Bosnia & Herz.		6	5	5		7	8	8	8	3	3	10	7	12	7	5	8	8	12	3	125	3
Sweden	7	8	7	4	4		6	10	4	10	7	3	8		8	4		4	4	7	105	4
Armenia			10	10	1	8	12	1	10	2	10	2		4		8	5	1	10	5	99	5
Malta	6	3	8	8	5	3	7	3	3	5	5		1	6	6	4	3		10	86	6	
Israel	8	7	4	3		4	4	6	5	6		1	4	5		3	6	5	3	1	75	7
Portugal	12			6	3	2	2	2	7	8	2					7	3	10		6	70	8
Romania	4	2	1	2	6	5			1	4	8	7	2	6	10				7	2	67	9
Macedonia, FYR					8	10	3							10		2		6	6		45	10
Montenegro	1	5	3		10				2		1	8	6		1			2	5		44	11
Finland *	3			1						12			5	3	3	1	10			4	42	12
Belarus		4				1	1	4		1	4	6	1	2			1				25	13
Switzerland	2		2		2			5						2		2					15	14
Andorra												3		4					1		8	15
Bulgaria											5								2		7	16
Belgium		1																			1	17
Czech Republic																					0	18

Countries in bold qualified for Final * Qualified by jury vote

HOW EUROPE VOTED

Latvia	Lithuania	Macedonia, FYR	Malta	Moldova	Montenegro	Netherlands	Norway	Poland	Portugal	Romania	Russia	Serbia	Slovakia	Slovenia	Spain	Sweden	Switzerland	Turkey	Ukraine	UK	Points	Placing
12	12	8	8	8	10	12		12	5	5	12	10	10	12	12	12	8	3	12	10	387	1
8	8	2	12	3	5	7	12	1	8	10	3		6	5		10	5	2		8	218	2
4	5	3	1	10	6	10	10	6	4	7	4	4	4	1		8	12	10	3		207	3
		12	5		3	8	7		3	6					2	6	12		12	10	177	4
2	3	6	10	1		3	2	4	10		6	8	7	3	10				6		173	5
10	10			7				8		1	8		12		7				4		129	6
			7		2	1				8	4	6		4	1	2	2			5	120	7
5	6				1	6	1				10	3		7	3		7		3	1	107	8
		10			12	4					12	8	10		5	4	8				106	9
		1				5		2	4	7	5		3		4	3		6	2		92	10
6	7			6				3										4	8		91	11
4	4		2	4			5	10	6		2		1		6				2		76	12
3	2		6	5			8	7		2		1		8					5		74	13
							3	5	12	12	1				5			7	7		69	14
													2		8		10				57	15
					4								5				1		1		53	16
		7			7									2		1	6	10			48	17
		4		2	8							5		6							45	18
		5		12					2			2			7			5			40	19
						2	6		1										1	7	35	20
			4				4														33	21
1	1									3		7								6	31	22
7																				4	23	23
									7												23	23
			3													4					22	25

SEMI-FINAL TWO

	Albania	Azerbaijan	Croatia	Cyprus	Denmark	Estonia	France	Greece	Hungary	Ireland	Latvia	Lithuania	Moldova	Netherlands	Norway	Poland	Russia	Serbia	Slovakia	Slovenia	Spain	Ukraine	Points	Placing	
Norway	8	12	8	8	12	12	3	8	10	8	10	10	12	8	6	10	10	8	10	8	12	10	201	1	
Azerbaijan			6	10	8	10	10	7	12	6	8	10	12	8	6	12	12	6	12	6	7	12	180	2	
Estonia			3	4	5	4		8	4	7	4	12	8	7	5	8	8	6	4	8	1	2	7	115	3
Greece	12	4	3	12	2	5	6		6		4	4	6	10	1	2	4	10	5	4	6	4	110	4	
Moldova		7	5	7		2	7	6	5	5	2		4	10	5	8	7	7	3	8	8	106	5		
Ukraine			10		6		3		3	8	3	6	2	8		7	7	1	6		10		80	6	
Albania			5	10		6	5	10	4		5	1	5	6	2			4	7			3	73	7	
Denmark	5	2	2	3		8		2	3	7	3	5		7	12	1				5	4		69	8	
Lithuania			6		1	5	7	2		12	7		4		7	4	5				1	5	66	9	
Serbia				12	4			12	5	2				6	2					12	5		60	10	
Ireland	7		1		10	4	1				5	7	2	3	4	3		3		2			52	11	
Poland	6	1			3	4	1		10		3	1	2	3					3			6	43	12	
Croatia *	1			2					1				3				3	12		10		1	33	13	
Cyprus					7	6	12		2	1	1							2	1				32	14	
Hungary	3	8																	2		3		16	15	
Slovenia	2		7															5					14	16	
Netherlands	10				1																		11	17	
Slovakia	4									1							1					2	8	18	
Latvia						1					6												7	19	

Countries in bold qualified for Final * Qualified by jury vote



The Olympic Arena: Big and bright



The iconic St Basil: Big and bright

Ah...Terminal 5 - what a fab place! So easy to go through and less busy than the rest of Heathrow. It was a real hassle getting this trip organised. Booking hotels was expensive and complicated - especially for two weeks. Then there was the hassle of getting a visa.

Anyway, I met up with my friend and fellow OGAE member David Elder. The flight on BA was smooth and comfortable. David and myself already made up our minds that we would be in Oslo the following year - but we both couldn't believe we were actually going to Moscow. God bless Eurovision!

Moscow's main airport was big and seemed quite busy when we arrived - though the plane was delayed disembarking as it had to be checked for signs of swine flu. Two officials came on board and pointed a strange device at some passengers. Anyway, we whizzed through customs - to be confronted by hordes of taxi drivers (mainly unregulated) offering their services. We declined and instead took the 30 minute express train into the centre of town. It actually took 50 minutes, but never mind.

We thought it might be wise to get a taxi from the train station to take us to our respective accommodation. Finding a taxi this time was however not easy. All visitors are warned to avoid unregulated

taxis like the plague - and we soon found out why! The price for our journey went up from 1,000 rubles to 2,000 rubles in the space of three seconds! We decided to take the underground metro instead.

Their underground system is marvellous. It's very deep (to act as nuclear bunkers if necessary) - using the escalators takes forever - but better than trying to walk up or down them! At the bottom of each escalator is a small booth usually occupied by bored middle-aged women trying desperately to keep awake. The trains run every one-two minutes - no matter what time of the day. One major problem - most stations don't have any signs! You have to remember to count your stops. Any signs that were there were also all in Cyrillic. The Latin version was very rare to be seen.

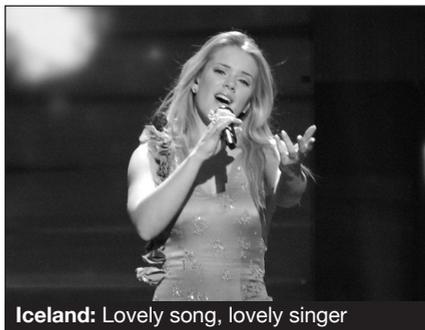
Anyway, when I came to my stop and got outside, I had no idea where I was! All stations have two entrance/exits - quite a distance away from each other. So I ended up taking a taxi for a few hundred metres - but it was worth it. I was grateful to get to my four-star Holiday Inn. A lovely clean and modern hotel where the staff spoke English. I would be staying here for one week and then transferring to a three-star hotel for the second week.

Moscow seems quite clean - but you had to watch where you stepped - everywhere you looked, the ground

ALL PHOTOGRAPHS (UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED) WITH THANKS TO DAVID ELDER



Armenia: Dazzling



Iceland: Lovely song, lovely singer

was full of human spit - gob, gob, gob everywhere! Disgusting habit.

Now I was here for two weeks to cover the whole Eurovision experience for **Vision** - to go to the rehearsals, press conferences, official parties - and importantly to produce the daily blog for our website - an insider's view so to speak. To receive this special privilege I had to be accredited, and being the editor of this fine magazine, I got my accreditation from the BBC without much hassle.

And getting my accreditation badge was the first order of things on the first day. I easily found the metro from my hotel - just a few minutes walk! I also found the Olympic arena where Eurovision would be held easily.

Ah... let the madness begin. And madness it was - there was complete chaos with handing out the accreditation badges to the journalists. Even though the press centre was meant to open at 8.30am - and some were there then, they didn't open up until two hours later. It really isn't a good idea to upset us poor journalists like that - won't say nice things about Moscow.

Anyway, everyone eventually got their badges - and I met up with another fab OGAE colleague, Robin Scott. The next thing to do was to go and see the stage. And what a magnificent stage it was. The biggest and best in many years.

Everything seems to be running smoothly on the first day of rehearsals and most of the performers seemed happy with the stage and setting. I thought there's still a problem with the sound - there always is with these sports complexes - they weren't built for live music - but everything usually sounds okay on TV.

I always try to go to as many rehearsals and press conferences as possible. On the first day I went to the Armenian one - which was nearly all in Russian. I asked Malena Ernman representing Sweden if she thought there would be a backlash if Sweden didn't get through to the final - last year they only got through by the wildcard awarded by a special jury. I was just curious as Sweden always put a lot of effort into their Melodi Festival show (which selects their Eurovision entrant). Anyway, no, it wouldn't matter to them. They'll be back as usual - so Swedish lovers can relax.

Food would prove to be a big hassle - but luckily for lunch, there was a McDonald's near the arena! But in the evening, David, Robin and myself found a small street full of decent restaurants. After the meal we headed down to Red Square - the iconic area that really symbolises Moscow. Seeing the famous cathedral, St Basil, all lit up in its bright colours in the night was a wonderful sight. On opposite sides of



Malta: Chiara loves Eurovision



Finland: Turning up the heat

St Basil was the Kremlin area and on the other a Harrods-like shopping building all lit up with thousands of light bulbs.

I took the start of the second day of rehearsals nice and easy. Missed the first few rehearsals and press conferences - but I would catch them the second time round (everyone gets to rehearse twice). Saw Iceland rehearse. It was amusing to see one of the performers miming playing the cello - it probably hadn't arrived yet. At the press conference, their singer Yohanna, told us that she released her first record at aged ten. She's a lovely girl - only 18, and called her song "simple, honest, sweet and humble".

The Russian journalists did have a habit of asking awkward questions - apparently the gay community in Moscow were trying to get support from journalists and everyone attending Eurovision, about a gay pride march near the end of the Eurovision period. The Mayor of Moscow had banned such a demonstration, but Yohanna was asked what she thought. She just replied that people should be free to do what they like. What was the point of putting her on the spot like that? What was the poor girl going to say?

After the ballad from Iceland it was time for the hard rock sound of Macedonia. It's nice to have variety in Eurovision. And strangely enough

this was one of the songs that I didn't rate that much before coming to Moscow - but watching the live performers made it very enjoyable. The same with Portugal, which really began to grow on me. A really pleasant sound - and it had some great graphics in its stage backdrop.

It's worth mentioning that the graphics for some of those backdrops were amazing - the Swiss one in particular - but not if you suffered from vertigo! However, not all the backdrops were to everyone's liking. The Maltese didn't find their one suitable - it featured an underwater scene - a sort of sunken Atlantis. It actually looked very nice, but it was the last we saw of that. Chiara, representing Malta for the third time was as usual fabulous. She just loves the whole Eurovision experience and recognised many faces since her last foray.

The rest of the rehearsals seem to go well. Watched the bare-chested fire jugglers during the Finnish performance. But you tend to think, what next? Stilts? Oh, that was already done (France, ESC 2004). Never mind Bulgaria.

Most of the press conferences sailed through quickly, until the last one of the day by Bosnia - which did drag on. You could see the press conference moderator getting somewhat annoyed when everyone on the Bosnian delegation gave a speech. The song, however, was really powerful and a favourite of mine.



Goose-stepping: Get those legs up lads!



Bosnia: Such drama!

That evening, heading for dinner with David and Robin, we came across rehearsals for the Victory Day celebrations. The main road going into Red Square was fenced off, but it was impressive seeing all those tanks, armoured vehicles, anti-missile carriers and such driving down the road. Lots of Moscowites were out with their cameras.

Day three: Three days but it felt like three months! There was far too much to do. The first set of rehearsals for the second semi-final began today (the first nine songs).

Some songs are really coming across very strong - I was quite impressed by the Croatian performer - much better than I expected. And Ireland were also impressive - though if you suffered from epilepsy, you had to avoid it! Lot's of flashing lights and such.

The Croatian singer was actually planning to become a priest, but the calling for music was far too strong. But as we're all sinners (don't deny it) he probably prayed for our souls, bless him. He was actually on a musical version of Big Brother - and didn't mind being filmed in the shower. But before you all dash to YouTube, all naked shots were edited out before transmission.

As for Ireland - the girls revealed that they had Dustin the Turkey (from last year) for Xmas dinner. A fitting end...

The Latvian singer was a bit of a

strange chap - but entertaining. He went out of his way to please the home crowd speaking and singing in Russian.

The biggest crowds for both the rehearsal and press conference went to Norway. Alexander Rybak's *Fairytale* was the predicted winner - and you could see why. A great song with lots of great dancing. The dancers by the way managed to damage the stage (ala Ruslana in Istanbul). Apparently young Alex got the idea for the song while travelling around the Norwegian countryside. He would knock on people's door asking for a place to sleep and in return he would play them the fiddle. He wouldn't get away with that in North London. ("Y'what guv? F*** off out of it!")

The whole party season kicked off in the evening. It was the official opening of the Euro Club - where only journalists and the delegations could attend. The far more friendlier Euro Cafe opened the next day which would act as the main meeting point for most fans. (And was meant to open 24 hours - but often wasn't.) One thing that became clear is that Moscow actually seemed like a very safe city. You saw lots of lone women and families out late at night.

Back to Euro Club: Well the Russians were determined to do everything big - and this was by far the most impressive Euro Club ever produced for Eurovision.



It was in a massive exhibition centre near Red Square. It covered three floors with a dance area and stage on the ground floor. On the top there was a small cafe that sold food! The Russians brought along loads of old ex-Eurovision stars to entertain us, along with the Ukrainian Ani Lorak (runner-up last year). We left just after midnight and luckily avoided Dima Balan (last year's winner who I never warmed to). What made the night however, besides the free drink, was meeting some of the Eurovision performers in a more relaxed setting. I decided that the nicest people this year were the Macedonian twin bothers. They were really friendly chatting away and being photographed by the fans and journalists - just nice down-to-earth people. They didn't go round being followed by camera crews all evening. And besides the Macedonian song had grown on me. That's the trouble with these rehearsals - you get to hear the songs over and over again - and before you know it, you want their CD!

The whole area around the Euro Club and Red Square was very impressive by the way. Most of Moscow, like most major cities is a bit grotty, but the central area has had a lot of money poured into it. Walking around this area is a great way to spend a few hours with lots of photo-opportunities. Oh, and there's a near-by McDonald's as well.



Day four: I saw of one my favourites perform first - Slovenia. The lead singer was an old hand at Eurovision, but had never lead up front before. She said she had more freedom now than when she was a backing singer. So you see boys and girls, if you work hard you can get to the top! Martina was supported by the string quartet Quartissimo - who were complaining that they were not allowed to play live on stage! It's all backing tracks these days. And to prove they could actually play, they performed part of Norway's winning entry of some years ago by Secret Garden.

The Hungarian singer was a seasoned performer, having sung on various musicals and is currently in the Hungarian version of 'Joseph', and has also appeared in 'Cats'. He must be a favourite of Lloyd Webber's. His song was good, but I thought might be forgotten because of some of the following acts. He's a bit of an amateur psychologist, so he'll be able to comfort himself if he didn't do well. He looked great for a 33 year old - healthy eating and lots of sleep will do the trick. So that's where I've been going wrong!

Azerbaijan had a great rehearsal and were also tipped to win. It had everything you need to win Eurovision - a nice stage act, along with a modern sound with a bit of ethnic tune thrown in as well.

Sakis from Greece (seen as the main



Hungary: The dream didn't come true



Azerbaijan: Dynamic duo

challenger to Norway) was also on good form - but he slipped off his special prop during the first rehearsal! (He did the same at the closing ceremony of the Athens Olympics.) He seems to have his head screwed on properly though despite falling all over the place. He was asked what he thought of various songs at Eurovision. He replied that he really had no opinion, because the public would decide what is and what isn't a good song. Well that doesn't always happen at Eurovision, but he's got the right sentiment.

The young singer from Lithuania likes to wear hats. He gets annoyed though that he's always being compared to Dima Bilan - which did surprise him as he looks nothing like the Russian singer - nor dresses like him, or even sings or sounds like him. What an awful thing to put up with!

A lot of these press conferences were being held in Russian - we did have translation earphones, but I couldn't be bothered to go and fetch any for the Moldovan press conference - and to tell you the truth I nearly dozed off a few times. Well I didn't have much sleep so far in Moscow. Eurovision is more or less a 24-hour experience y'know.

I did however put on my earphones to hear what the Ukrainian singer had to say. I'm afraid I took a completely irrational dislike for Svetlana Loboda.

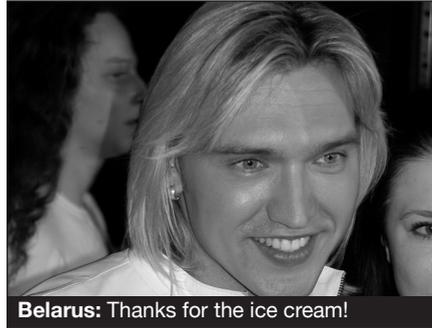
She and her posse strutted into the press conference as if they owned the place. I don't like big-heads - it's not the British way. The Ukrainians do seem to have a habit of trying to hog the limelight. Still - she did have a good stage act and appeared on stage with three big wheel/cog things - most of them failed to function properly the first time round. And I admit, I really liked the song. The journalists back in the Ukraine dubbed them 'Devil's Wheels', but she prefers to call them the 'Wheels of Fortune'. But despite my dislike for her, she must be given credit for coming to Eurovision in the first place. Apparently Ukrainian TV couldn't afford to send her over, so she's paid for everything herself. She got the inspiration for the lyrics of her song *Be My Valentine (Anti-Crisis Girl)* while being licked by a cow on a beach in India. Strange way to get a tan.

Couldn't get to any more rehearsals or press conferences. At least everything is in one venue this year, but it was still impossible to fit everything into the day. Didn't make it to the opening of the Euro Cafe as I wanted to, but spent a bit of time in the late evening at the Euro Club being entertained by gold-painted dancers. It's a tough life, but someone's got to live it!

Day five: Another busy day. Thirteen countries had their second rehearsals,



Ukraine: Too confident?



Belarus: Thanks for the ice cream!

and things were running smoothly. Managed to catch some rehearsals and press conferences that I missed the first time round.

I quite liked the Czech song before I arrived in Moscow, but it looked a bit messy on stage. The lead singer actually seemed like a nice guy and did have a sense of humour. His idol used to be the late great Freddie Mercury - and yes I can see the similarities. Radoslav 'Gypsy' Banga said at the press conference he tried hard to balance the humour and seriousness of his act.

Being follically-challenged I should have hated the Belgian singer, Copycat, with his Elvis-like quiff. He combed it all the way back, but it still sprung into shape! If it wasn't real - hair-piece technology certainly has moved on. Wasn't sure how well he'll do in the contest, but it's nice to see some good old fashioned rock'n'roll.

The Belarussians are ice-cream mad. They were forcing it down us for days - yes - my sort of promotion! The cornettos were nice, but they also produce these sort of 'ice-cream cakes', which leave a bit to be desired (very rich). Their press packs were also very impressive - containing chocolates and alcohol! Where are they getting their money from? Even though their singer Petr Elfimov is a bit of a rocker, dressed in white leather, he says Andrew Lloyd Webber was a great

influence on him - especially after seeing 'Jesus Christ Superstar'.

Malena of Sweden had actually been flying to and from Stockholm, Vienna and Moscow the past week due to prior commitments she couldn't get out of - which seemed to irritate one particular Swedish journalist. She's actually an international opera star - and certainly sounds marvellous - as well as being one of the nicest people in the contest.

The Turkish song seemed very popular. Being a Turk, I of course had to support it (though it was a bit unadventurous for my liking). One of their dancers actually fainted just after a rehearsal - her blood pressure was a bit low, but soon recovered. Anyway, the singer Hadise had surrounded herself with a truly international team including Belgians, Dutch, Russians as well as Turks. It was suggested that part of her dance routine was similar to Turkey's winning act of 2003, but she insisted that as a professional she and her choreographer have never tried to copy anyone.

Now I was never impressed with the Israeli song, but at the press conference, both the Jew (Noa) and the Arab (Mira Awad) came across very well. I actually thought the darker skinned singer was the Arab, but she's actually the Israeli - just goes to show how wrong preconceptions can be! Noa probably impressed me more than any other



Turkey: What a delight!



Israel: Black is best

person at Eurovision. She's been a peace activist for many years and goes on many demonstrations besides chairing various peace organisations. She also has a great sense of humour. The singers were asked why they're both wearing black on stage - as black isn't supposed to be a colour of hope (which their song is all about). Noa replied that she and Mira are ordinary women and not super-models, so to look good on stage it's safest to wear black. It's a trick we all know.

The rehearsals and press conferences were going on quite late, but you could only do so much. After having another expensive meal I went with Robin and David to the Belarussian party at the Euro Club. Again, no expense seem to have been spared. The Belarussians had many of their ex-Eurovision stars on stage (including a Junior Eurovision winner) and later on many of their competitors from this year also performed - Malta, Armenia, Netherlands, Ukraine, Moldova, Lithuania, Greece, Macedonia and Latvia. Not a bad turn out.

Day six: Didn't do too much - spent most of the day in the press working area e-mailing and stuff while watching rehearsals on stage via a live link on a lovely big screen. The whole background and infrastructure for Eurovision is much bigger than anyone can imagine.

There was one bit of controversy however - the Irish were not at all

happy with their rehearsals. They said the Russian TV crew didn't listen to anything they asked for after their first rehearsals. And unfortunately they had no more rehearsal time until the dress rehearsal the following week. A walk-out was even rumoured! And apparently the Ukrainians weren't too happy either. One suspects there was a bit of resentment against the Ukrainians by some of the Russians due to the recent gas supply conflict. Just as well Georgia decided not to attend!

That evening I planned to go to the Icelandic party at their embassy, but couldn't make it, so instead went to the Turkish party at the Euro Club. Didn't realise there were so many fellow Turks in Moscow! The Turkish singer was in good form on stage - she even did her hair for the occasion. Loads of fellow competitors appeared on stage throughout the party. The Belarussian singer seems to go to any invite at a drop of a hat. After the Turkish party, it was time for the Bulgarian party with more Eurovision stars on stage.

Day seven: Well, what a week!

Russian Prime Minister and former ex-President Vladimir Putin walked into the press room to have a little roam and check things out (though we suspect he was after free CDs). For such a powerful man, he seemed quite short - or looked it compared to his seven-foot tall body guards. Size indeed doesn't matter.



Ireland: Did their country proud



Putin: "I'm looking for that Slovenian CD"

Saw more rehearsals and press conferences. The Greeks did go 'overboard' with their prop this year. Their singer, Sakis, was asked if there were going to be anymore surprises on stage and replied he hoped to breathe some fire out of his mouth and lightning from his ears! Hmm.. something to look forward to, I thought. He was asked by a Greek Cypriot if he preferred being in Turkey (when he first entered the contest in Istanbul, 2004) or now in Russia. Always a diplomat, Sakis said each experience was different and as he lives for the moment, he was enjoying himself in Moscow.

I didn't realise the French singer, Patricia Kaas was such an international star. But she really is mega. It turns out that she probably wouldn't have entered the contest if the 50 per cent jury system wasn't part of the voting this year. But nevertheless she was in the show to participate and not just to win. It was a fabulous song so I was hoping she would do well. The French have realised that English is the international language and had actually produced their promotional material in English.

The German singer, Oscar, is an offspring from a Mexican/Native American marriage. I'm never sure if Europe actually appreciates the swing sound, but it's nice of them to try. One female reporter asked him if he was

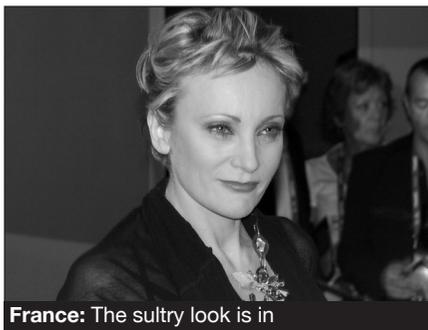
going to appear bare-chested on stage, but Oscar was very vague with his answer - the tease!

The Spanish singer was very proud to be in Moscow representing her country. Soraya wanted to invite everyone to her home for dinner. I hope she realises I don't like onions or parsley. Still waiting for the invite Soraya.

I didn't get to the Russian rehearsal or press conference - but of course I was there to see our Jade perform! Everyone in the UK should be proud of Jade Ewen - her first rehearsal was perfect! She came across beautifully - so much so that within the hour the odds of the UK winning went up! The only thing to worry about was the prop - a small staircase which took ages to put up. She was accompanied on stage by a piano player (sitting in for Andrew Lloyd Webber during rehearsals) and four violin players - and lots of dry ice. It was a lovely and simple routine. Everyone in the hall watching her got goose-bumps. She did slightly scare me at her rehearsal though - she jumped up and down (in excitement) with her high heels on that dangerous glass stage!

She handled the press conference expertly - obviously her acting experience has helped. Apparently she starred in 'The Bill' for a stretch.

Day eight: The last of the rehearsals today. Watched Jade again - but the



France: The sultry look is in



Greece: Careful Sakis - don't fall off!

THIS PHOTO BY ROBIN SCOTT

next UK press conference would be on the following Friday with her, Andrew Lloyd Webber, Diane Warren and Graham Norton.

In the evening it was the special Welcoming Party, so I would be dressing up in my Union Jack outfit and media-whoring. And spreading the word for everyone to vote for the UK of course!

But before that I had to change hotels - went from a 4-star Holiday Inn to the 3-star Hotel Cosmos. It was more convenient and more Brits were staying there. And I actually got to see a bit more of Moscow via the taxi ride. It was more greener than I imagined. The people in Moscow also seem quite pleasant - and generally keep themselves to themselves. And one thing I've noticed was the lack of chavs! You could actually use your mobile on the metro system in Moscow - despite the depth - but I didn't hear any loudmouth chav going on (loudly) about their boring lives as I do everyday in London on the buses and trains.

The Welcoming Party was being held at the Euro Club - but tonight it was literally the red carpet treatment. My Union Jack outfit and young Paul Jordan's kilt drew a few glances! Inside we found others dressed in special Brit garb including Iain Hambling and Elaine Dove. Elaine and I went arm-in-arm in our Union Jack outfits spreading the word for everyone to vote for the UK. (You may have

spotted us in the opening credits of the BBC3 first semi-final show.) We didn't manage to speak to Jade herself - the BBC PR crew were being very protective, but we did chat with her backing group - a nice bunch of guys.

Monday saw the arrival of OGAE UK's new ticket co-ordinator David Ransted. I was assisting David in his role this year and had previously picked up and sorted the OGAE UK tickets. I gave out as many tickets to accredited members as I could, but we set off to the Euro Cafe to meet and give out tickets to the non-accredited Brits. The Euro Cafe wasn't the easiest of places to find - but luckily on route we came across OGAE UK's secretary and treasurer Simon Bennett who has a very good sense of direction (and map)! Euro Cafe was meant to be open 24 hours - but today it wasn't! But it eventually opened up for us and we managed to give out a few more tickets. David did a great job organising our tickets and sorting out where we should sit for the three shows.

Monday finally saw the first of the dress rehearsals. I went to the one in the evening with David R. I thought the presenters were...er... loud, but the show was great. I made a prediction as to who would get through: Turkey, Malta, Bosnia, Armenia, Iceland, Finland, Sweden, Portugal, Belarus, Switzerland. I got eight out of ten correct when the actual first semi-final aired the following



Spain: Inviting us to dinner



Germany: Chests galore!

night - the two I mentioned last didn't get through. I was most upset about Switzerland as it was my favourite of the whole contest - a great Brit-rock sound. I guess my Kiss of Death strikes again!

Wednesday saw the first of the dress rehearsals for the second semi-final. I predicted who would go through: Croatia, Norway, Denmark, Azerbaijan, Ukraine, Estonia, Greece, Moldova, Serbia, Hungary. Got eight out of ten again with the last two countries mentioned missing out.

Before I went to the dress rehearsal in the evening, I did see more of Moscow during the day. Went on a free visit (the joys of having accreditation) to the area within the Kremlin walls - full of great looking buildings and churches.

The whole trip was beginning to wear me down though (getting old). Had a bit of a bad experience the previous night. After the press conference for the winners of the first semi-final ended at 3.00am, I tried to take the coach to my hotel. The coach going there was packed, so the supervisor put a few of us on another coach and told the driver to go to our hotel as well. Unfortunately the driver decided to have a 'Mr Jobsworth' moment and abandoned six of us in the middle of nowhere! Four of the other journalists took a taxi to their hotel and I was left with a female Belgian reporter (by a spooky coincidence she was staying

next door to me at the hotel). If I wasn't there, she would've had to have hailed a taxi in the middle of the night by herself! What sort of person abandons vulnerable women in the middle of nowhere? We eventually managed to hail a dodgy-looking cab, narrowly missing a pack of wild dogs!

So I'm afraid my visit was somewhat marred by that incident - and sadly I have to admit that I hope Russia do not win the contest again while I'm still attending it live.

But on the nicer side of things, even though my second hotel, the Cosmos was only three-stars I had a much nicer stay - mainly because many of my friends were also staying there - very nice having breakfast with someone. It was great spending time with my old friends Rita Coombs and Jan Dominey and getting to know Anita Newport and Howard Newport a lot better as well. And also over the two weeks I met up with many old faces and new ones as well (but too many to mention). Many delegations were also staying there - saving money no doubt! I came across the Belgian rocker in the elevator gulping down cough medicine! And those Albanian mime acrobats were always practicing their hand-stands outside the lift area on my floor.

And right next door to the Cosmos was a massive park with a monument

THIS PHOTO BY HASSAN YUSUF



Cosmonaut: From Sputnik to Eurovision!



UK: Proud to be British!

and museum dedicated to Russia's space programme. I've always been fascinated about space, even as a kid. I would've explored the museum more with David R, but all the literature was in Russian! Nevertheless we were both very impressed.

Besides the hotel being very near to a metro station, it was also had a mono-rail station, so one afternoon David R, Jan, Rita and myself just took it to see where it would take us. We discovered a little local market as well as shopping district. We had a nice cheap lunch at a fabulous large canteen! This certainly wasn't a touristy area - but a slice of real Russia. It made up for the miserable coach driver.

On the Friday I gave an interview to Sky News which went quite well - not that I got to see it. Just one awkward moment when I forgot Diane Warren's surname - hah! She wrote the lyrics to our song *My Time*. But she, Lloyd Webber, Jade and Graham Norton gave a press conference after the first dress rehearsal for the final in the afternoon. It was great to see the BBC pulling out all the stops.

Finally after two weeks, Eurovision day arrived! And at last there was a nice atmosphere in Moscow! Before the show starts, there's usually lots of activity outside the arena with all the fans mingling, waving their flags, etc. There

wasn't much of that for the semi-finals, but tonight was different - everyone was out in force - including the police. Dressed in my Union Jack again - and also joined by Elaine, we couldn't move more than few feet before being stopped to be photographed by loads of fans! Ah, the price of fame - and looking 'silly' I suppose.

Anyway, everything went smoothly on the night. Great show with much better presenters. Shame the outcome was so clear-cut - but better a good song wins - and importantly, a western country! I was in Oslo just a few months ago to attend the Norwegian Eurovision selection final, so I know I'll have a fab time there. I thought Jade Ewen gave a great performance - and at long last we were in the top five again!

Overall, I had a good two weeks - well I was with good friends (thanks everyone - always a pleasure) and I love the whole Eurovision experience - but I can't really say I warmed to Moscow. Too many police asking for identity papers - and the roads were impossible to cross - usually eight-ten lanes (had to use underpasses all the time), and the people generally just didn't seem that happy - pleasant, but somewhat repressed I felt. And I was glad to finally stop all that rushing about.

Of course, I'm missing it now! Oh well, roll on next year and Oslo! ♣

BRITS (AND FRIENDS) INVADE MOSCOW!

If you were there, but not shown here - then you managed to escape being snapped!



Elaine Dove was the life and soul of Moscow!



Not content with giving her knickers away to Latvian pirates last year (see her feature elsewhere), now she wants Iain Hambling's patriotic bloomers!



And here she is with pal John Stanton



Media-whoring with Hassan Yusuf



Promoting Irn Bru with David Elder and Andrew Main



Having a dance with Paul Jordan



And finally - having a Isadora Duncan moment!

PHOTOGRAPHS THIS PAGE BY DAVID ELDER, ROBIN SCOTT AND HASSAN YUSUF

OUR TIME WITH JADE

Taking time out from her hectic schedule in Moscow, Jade Ewen gave **Vision** a brief interview

How has the whole experience gone for you in Moscow?

Jade: I feel that I am part of something special. I was quite worried about coming across to Russia, but the people have been lovely and told me that they would be voting for the UK. And win or lose, what I do on the night is what really matters.

I think Eurovision is very important and I feel very privileged to be in Moscow representing my country, and my main aim is to put in as much effort as possible to make people back in the UK proud of our entry. But this has been a real team effort.

PHOTOGRAPH BY ROBIN SCOTT



As someone who does not come from a wealthy background, what does all this mean to you?

Jade: Well I grew up in an area which was very poor. I had all these dreams that I didn't feel I could ever achieve. However, with my success in getting this far, I would like to show to all those youngsters out there that if you want to follow your dreams, it's not impossible. Nothing is out of reach.

When you are up on stage, what do you try to think about to keep yourself focussed?

Jade: I personally try to block everybody out of my head. In that way I don't feel nervous and can focus solely on the song. I go back to panicking once the performance is over!

Do you think *My Time* has a chance of doing well?

Jade: Well we have a fantastic team here with Andrew, Diane and Graham, and everybody has given their all. Singing close to the end should also give us an advantage. I feel like it's our time and things are falling nicely into place.

In all honesty, when you have no other option left you have to make it work. I don't want to travel back home and for people to say the song struggled. In my opinion it's a terrifying three minutes, but it's still three minutes to make a mark. 🗣️

DIANE WARREN - EXCLUSIVE

Much was written about Andrew Lloyd Webber's efforts to get Jade Ewen and the UK into the top half of the Eurovision Song Contest final, but little has been written about Californian based song writing legend Diane Warren. Here she speaks to **Vision** about her involvement with Lloyd Webber in writing *My Time*.

How did you become involved in the musical partnership?

Diane: I was first approached by Andrew Lloyd Webber in December. I remember feeling very nervous because at that stage all we had was the melody but no words or title. I started out by singing the melody and the words 'My Time' just came to me almost instantly out of that. With music that is often what happens - the words come out of it - and then there is no way they can be changed. I remember as I was writing it I had Jade in mind, because she's got an amazing voice. This song was her story and I just tapped into it. Once the title of the song had been determined the rest was just a matter of filling in the blanks. I believe the song is really great because it expresses sentiments that come out from inside of all of us. I just kept honing it and it was eventually recorded in England. The song could almost become a standard and it is one of those songs which could be one they use at the Olympics, it transfers very easily.

What do you think about Jade's future and how does she chime in with the sound of Celine Dion?

Diane: Win or lose Jade will come and work with me. Both Celine and Jade are great vocalists but they also have a different take on their recordings which makes them special in their own ways.

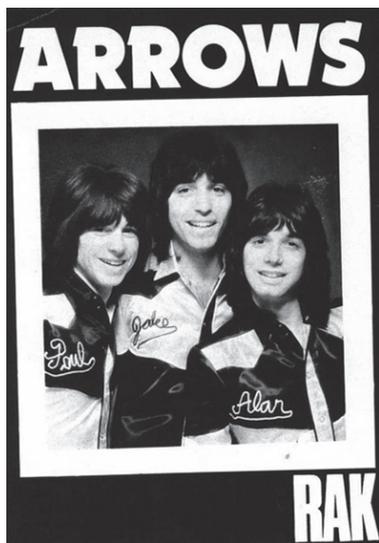
What is the one line to sum up why you have been so successful as a lyricist?

Diane: I show up! I do the work, the work is great, I am like a sponge and soak up new ideas and come up with lots of new lines, but at the end of the day - I show up!

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO ALAN MERRILL AND JAKE HOOKER

Marcus Keppel-Palmer
looks at the careers of the
writers of Co-Co's first
Song For Europe entry

Cheryl Baker is a UK Eurovision icon, being one of the few people to have represented the UK on more than one occasion. Her first Eurovision performance was with Co-Co in 1978, but of course the group previously attempted to win the pre-selection in 1976 with *Wake Up*. It was almost success first time out, but a mere two points separated Co-Co and the winners, Brotherhood Of Man. Inanely catchy, *Wake Up* is one of those great Song For Europe songs that fans still adore, although it narrowly failed to chart. A look at the single and the records attributes the song



to David Hayes and Phil Dennys. But for reasons unknown, this masks the fact that the real songwriters were Alan Merrill and Jake Hooker.

Jake Hooker was born as Jerry Mamberg in Haifa, Israel in 1953, but his family soon moved to America and he grew up in New York where as a teenager he met Alan Merrill. Son of a jazz singer, Helen Merrill, Alan was born in New York in 1951. His first love was not surprisingly jazz, and from the age of 15 Alan was playing in bands professionally in New York's famous Greenwich Village district. But in a seemingly curious move, Merrill relocated his career to Japan with the band The Lead, who

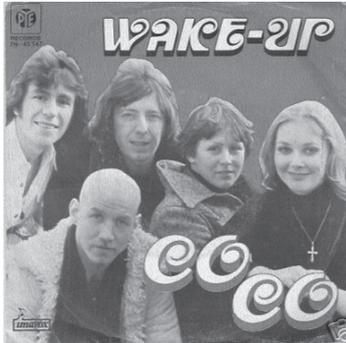
had one hit single, *Aoi Bara (Blue Rose)*, but the project soon fell apart when two American members of the group were deported. In 1969 Merrill recorded one album with the Atlantic label, *Alone In Tokyo*, which yielded one hit single, *Namida (Teardrops)*.

From this, Alan started acting in a Japanese TV soap opera 'Ji Kan Desu Yo', and also appeared regularly on 'Young 720,' a morning show for teens. He was also the principal model in ads for Nissan cars, Jun clothing, and GT Jeans. In 1971 he released an LP of his own compositions titled *Merrill 1*, also released in Japan. On a hiatus, back in New York, Merrill linked up with Jake (currently known as Jake Falsworth) to form the group Streak. As a trio, the group recorded a demo, but Merrill had to fly back to Japan, and with a name but no group members, Hooker moved to London.

Back in Tokyo, Alan formed the band Vodka Collins, who became Japan's top glam rock act. The band included Japanese stars of the Beatles-inspired "Group Sounds" era, Hiroshi "Monsieur" Kamayatsu and Hiroshi Oguchi. Vodka Collins recorded one successful LP in 1972-1973 titled *Tokyo-New York*, which produced three hit singles. In the meantime, Hooker resurrected Streak as a three-piece with drummer, Paul Varley, and singer, Ben Brierley, in London, releasing a single *Bang Bang Bullet*, but without success. Brierley left, eventually marrying Marianne Faithfull, and Hooker asked Merrill to join the group. Disillusioned with Japan, Alan jumped at the opportunity and Jake, Alan and

Paul changed the name of the group to The Arrows.

In 1974, Mickie Most signed the Arrows as his new glam-pop band to RAK and put them in touch with Nick Chinn and Mike



Chapman, songwriters for The Sweet and Mud. Although The Arrows wanted to write their own songs, Most insisted that the first releases were songs written by other songwriters and with *Touch Too Much* reaching the Top Ten in June 1974, this strategy was vindicated. However, a follow-up *Toughen Up* missed the charts. Hooker

and Merrill were writing songs and in November 1974, Most suggested that they try to write something for Eurovision. The group wrote and recorded *Wake Up*, but it was never released and not submitted to the 1975 Song For Europe.

February 1975 saw a minor return to the charts with *My Last Night With You*, but the follow-up *Broken Down Heart* failed to chart. Tucked away on the B-side was a Merrill-Hooker composition that would be their lasting memory, *I Love Rock'n' Roll*, which in years to come would be a huge hit for Joan Jett and later Britney Spears and sampled in 5ive's *Everybody Get Up*, and provide a steady stream of income for the boys. RAK saw sense and switched the single, but due to lack of promotion it failed to chart.

It is clear in hindsight that the Arrows-RAK relationship was disintegrating, but in late 1975 a new single *Hard Hearted* was released to support The Arrows' tour with Showaddywaddy. At the time, ITV were looking for a band to host a tea-time show to succeed the Bay City Rollers and set upon The Arrows. This would seem

to be a dream come true, but because the band signed with another management company, Mickie Most refused to release new Arrows singles. In 1976, the album *First Hit* was released under the guidance of Bill Martin and Phil Coulter, but without supporting singles. Perhaps as part of his displeasure, 1976 saw Most enter *Wake Up* in Song For Europe, under the names of his brother, Dave, and one of RAK's producers, Phil Dennys. Certainly, Merrill did not know about this until he saw the song performed on Song For Europe.

The Arrows TV show was a success in 1976 and a second series ran in 1977, during which, ironically, the show featured the Arrowvision Song Contest. However, with no singles released, the band lost the opportunity to build on the momentum. Inevitably, the band split up shortly afterwards in 1977. Jake Hooker had recently married Lorna Luft, daughter of Judy Garland, and decided to move back to America. A short-lived band project, Gigolo, with Paul Vigrass marked Hooker's last foray into performing and he moved into the business side of the music industry. As a manager, he has looked after artists like Edgar Winter, Hilly Michaels, The Knack and Rick Derringer. Hooker still writes songs - some of which

have featured in films over the years, including Charley's Angels, Flashdance and Rocky 4.

After leaving The Arrows, Alan Merrill spent the 1980s performing. At first he formed the short-lived hard rock band Runner, before moving to America where he joined the Rick Derringer Band, and thereafter releasing a solo album in 1984. He then joined Meat Loaf's band, before taking a role in a television series. However, in 1990 Alan's career turned full circle as he returned to Japan and Vodka Collins reformed and the original members recorded four more albums throughout the decade. In the new century Alan Merrill's sights returned to a cornucopia of solo activity releasing, so far, six albums in a variety of styles, while touring all over the world.

The Arrows material has recently been re-released and, in the case of their original of *Wake Up*, released for the first time ever on CD. Sadly, the third member of the group, Paul Varley, died in July 2008, but both Hooker and Merrill continue to be very active in the music business. Reluctantly, they acknowledge their previously unattributed part in the history of Song For Europe, but in writing *Wake Up*, Jake Hooker and Alan Merrill will have a place in many fans' hearts. ♣



EURO QUIZ

Martin Faulkner and Marcus Keppel-Palmer show their ages and go back 50 years in this 1959 special!

1. Where did the 1959 Contest take place?
2. Presenter Jacqueline Joubert was mother to which Channel 4 presenter?
3. Which country withdrew from the contest in 1959 having appeared in 1958 and which country made its debut?
4. Jacques Pills finished last in 1959 with *Mon Ami Pierrot*. Why did he have cause to celebrate in 1960?



Brita Borg

5. Brita Borg sung *Augustin* for Sweden. But which singer had won 'Melodifestivalen' singing the song, but would have to wait for their opportunity to perform at Eurovision?

6. Domenico Modugno represented Italy with *Piove* and finished 6th. But by what name would the song be known when it became an American hit record?



The Kessler Twins

7. What first did The Kessler Twins achieve for Germany (apart from being relatives)?
8. Who became the first two time winner in the 1959 contest?
9. How many times does the French song contain the word "oui"?

10. Teddy Johnson was succeeded as UK representative in 1960 by his brother. But which of the two was older?



Teddy



Bryan

11. Bob Benny was the Belgian representative. In which other year did he sing for his country at ESC?

See inside back cover for answers



**Eurobash will be held
on Saturday,
3rd October 2009**

The host city and venue will again be in Birmingham - but is now fully booked!

If you would still like to attend, you can add your name to the waiting list in case of cancellations. Please e-mail the organisers at eurobash@btinternet.com



THE DAY I... GAVE MY **KNICKERS** AWAY TO **PIRATES!**

Elaine Dove confesses all during her first Eurovision experience

When I made the decision to go to Belgrade for my first ever Eurovision experience, on the back of a great night at the Birmingham Bash in October 2007, little did I know just how big an impact the whole event would have on me. With no real idea of what I was letting myself in for, I just decided I was going to embrace every opportunity that came my way. Having sealed my UK accreditation, something I am pretty proud of, I set out to sample the full two weeks of Eurovision in the only way I know how – with enthusiasm and an open mind!

It proved to be one of the best decisions I have ever made. I was taken under the wing of many veterans of Eurovision, aka – John Stanton, Iain Hambling, Glen Webb, Dermot Manning, etc, and hope that my inexperience, excitement and exuberance were as instrumental in their enjoyment of the experience, as their knowledge and information was in mine.

Once I had navigated the process of obtaining my press pass, I was introduced into the wonderful world of press conferences and rehearsals. This was where I first felt overawed. I spent

a few days surrounded by hundreds of journalists going about their business in a most professional manner and confidently questioning participants about their chances within the competition – obviously with the odd cheeky questions thrown in for good measure. I was sat thinking “I could never have the confidence to get up in this forum and ask a question” when Dustin the Turkey and his entourage rolled in and all of a sudden the press conferences took on a whole new light for me. I realised these conferences could be entertaining as well as informative if you picked your timing appropriately – and all of a sudden I knew when my time was!

I had loved the Latvian song (*Pirates Of The Sea* by Wolves of the Sea) since I had first heard it. It was fun – not to everyone’s taste I know, but fun all the same and the Pirates did not disappoint. Everything about them exuded fun and enjoyment so I decided if I was ever going to break my press conference duck then it had to be with Roberto (lead singer of Wolves of the Sea) and the gang - and boy, did I break my duck. I don’t really know what possessed me to

Elaine parties with the Pirates



stand up and present Roberto with my lucky Scottish Saltire pants, but in my wildest dreams I never imagined that he would climb onto the press conference desk there and then dance around in them! To this day I don't know how to tell my mother the lead singer from the Latvian contingent was in my underwear the first time I ever met him. The historic event certainly seemed to have made a memorable impression on people, as it was shortly after this occurrence that I was offered the most amazing Eurovision opportunity.

Whilst getting ready for the night of the first semi-final I was phoned and asked if I would like to sit up in the commentary box for the live show and be interviewed by Paddy O'Connell! I mean, come on – does Dolly Parton sleep on her back? Of course my answer was Yes! Yes! Yes! I was so excited – and poor Glen Webb on the end of the phone may to this day regret telling me to wear something bright for the cameras. Put it this way – while I was live on air I received several

text messages asking what the heck I was wearing and had I mugged Joseph for his technicolor dream coat!

Anyhow, once my excitement had settled we set out for pre semi-final drinks where I was introduced to the legendary concept of “the serviette of death”. Basically we all had to make our predictions on who we felt the ten qualifiers would be – winner takes all. An overall average of all of us taking part was produced and I took these results up to the commentary box with me thinking that it may make a great conversation piece at some point and

how right I was.

We made our way to the arena and my anticipation was mounting all the way. I left the guys at the arena door and was met by some BBC officials who took us up to the box area. We entered the commentary box and were met by Paddy O'Connell and Kimberly Fleck. They could not have been lovelier – well until we got in the way in the bathroom when Kimberly needed to touch up her

“I don't really know what possessed me to stand up and present Roberto with my lucky Scottish Saltire pants”

make up (ha ha). They showed us to where we would be sitting and we had an amazing view – just a shame that the arena was so empty but it could not dampen my spirits at all. Just when I thought the night could not get any better, Andy Abraham, his wife and some of his band came in to join us for the evening. It was the most bizarre feeling ever. Dermot Manning got a frantic text from me telling him

to get over and get my picture taken with Andy and company and, as he is a darling, he duly obliged just making it back to his own seat in time for the opening music which sent shivers up my spine. The night had finally begun – my first live Eurovision show.

I spent the evening sat next to Nathan, the drummer from Andy's band, who did not really seem to have a clue what he had entered. He kept me amused with questions such as "What do we have to do to get into the final"? And the look on his face during some of the entries, particularly Estonia and Moldova, was a picture. Obviously the young soul man had not quite done his homework on all things Eurovision. Andy's wife Denise seemed very interested in our Serviette of Death results and was continually using the list in discussions with Andy over the various different entries and seemed most impressed that we were right on nearly every song. I think Andy was more impressed with our knowledge than he was with some of the actual entries, but hey - I was having a blast and the company of the UK entourage was adding to it.



My TV moment finally came during the break whilst waiting for the results to be announced. It could not be described as an interview. We were more like little pawns in Paddy's game of chess while trying to explain to the viewers of BBC3 just how the voting was going to work this year over the two semi-finals. It was a total hoot and

I also discovered just how many of my friends back home watch the contest as my phone did not stop ringing over the next two hours.

The evening was more amazing than I ever could have imagined and was a damn good start to what proved to be a thoroughly entertaining week of live shows. I don't think anyone in my position could have wished for a better start to their Eurovision journey and I will be eternally grateful for all the wonderful friends I made who enabled it to happen for me.

There were many, many highlights for me over the course of the two weeks, but if I had to pick one stand out moment it would have to be when Latvia made it through to the final. I had championed them from the start, but deep down I had to admit that I did not really think they would make it. In saying that, I don't know if I believed that I would ever make it through the two weeks either, but I came out the other end still grinning, still smiling and with only one question on my lips: "Where do I buy that Russian phrase book"? 🇷🇺

OGAE SONG CONTEST 2009

UK Selection

Earlier this year, members and friends of OGAE UK took part in a contest to select which song will represent the United Kingdom at the forthcoming OGAE Song Contest that is due to be held in Croatia towards the end of 2009. 40 songs were chosen, which were then whittled down to 18 that went forward to a final vote. With two songs from Take That in the running, many predicted that the Mancurian foursome would represent their country for a third successive year, but it was not to be. Turning away from one of Britain's finest bands, voters went for another band of similar stature and, as a result, it is Coldplay who will represent the UK with their British Number One and international hit, *Viva La Vida*. If you would like to find out more about OGAE's very own song contest, please send a stamped addressed envelope to Martyn Clarke, 237 Argyle Road, Ealing, London W13 0AY or e-mail martyn237@yahoo.co.uk



Non Qualifiers

Song	Performer
Smiling	Bryn Christopher
Mountains	Biffy Clyro
Fool For You	Duffy
Stepping Stone	Duffy
Grounds For Divorce	Elbow
Back In Love	Estelle
Geraldine	Glasvegas
What's It Gonna Be	H2O feat. Platnum
Three For The Road	Case Hardin
Pour Me A Drink	Edwina Hayes
Spiralling	Keane
The Hurlers	Seth Lakeman
Stay	Kelly Lee
The Age Of The Understatement	LSPs
Tap At My Window	Laura Marling
You Make It Real	James Morrison
Take Back The City	Snow Patrol
Dance Wiv Me	Dizzie Rascal et al
Wire To Wire	Razorlight
Stop! I Don't Love ...	Sharleen Spiteri
In My Arms	Teddy Thompson
Let It Go	Will Young

OGAE Song Contest UK Results

Song	Performer	Points
Viva La Vida	Coldplay	177
The Boy Does Nothing	Alesha Dixon	158
Up	Saturdays	153
The Promise	Girls Aloud	139
Breathe Slow	Alesha Dixon	113
Broken Strings	James Morrison feat. Nelly Furtado	109
Greatest Day	Take That	108
The Fear	Lily Allen	106
Grace	Will Young	101
We R One	Same Difference	98
Rain On Your Parade	Duffy	92
That's Not My Name	Ting Tings	81
Just For Tonight	One Night Only	80
All The Times I Cried	Sharleen Spiteri	79
Up All Night	Take That	64
Perfect Symmetry	Keane	57
American Boy	Estelle feat. Kanye West	45
Make You Feel My Love	Adele	Disqualified

RETRO

SPECTIVE

2009

PART ONE

Darren Jenkin's annual irreverent look at the recent Eurovision Song Contest. Darren also provides his own personal ranking after each song, in which there really is a method in the apparent madness!

So Eurovision's largest country finally got its chance at staging the contest. For most of the three shows their efforts were pretty spectacular too. With a new judging system in place, the 2009 contest was set to be a more open show, at least geographically speaking, with the West optimistic of doing well once again and the Big 4 seemingly taking things a lot more seriously.

The worst aspect of the two semi-finals was the sheer hopelessness of Natalia and Andrey as the hosts. There was absolutely no attempt at a charm offensive display to us, the viewers,



The shining Dutch

into convincing us as to their competence as comperes. Instead, we witnessed too many fluffed lines, awkward pauses and a weak grasp of both English and French. I won't even start on their stupidity during the announcements of the finalists. Just push the button will you!

Given their big ballad failure last year, it was no surprise to see a totally different approach from the Hungarians this time around. The song was pretty standard, but relegated to a laughable shambles thanks to the annoying performance from Zoli, who seemingly chose to disregard his vocals completely. The routine was pretty

PHOTOGRAPHS WITH THANKS TO ROBIN SCOTT

plastic as well and just about the worst of all the entries. (42nd)

To be fair though, Zoli did face some stiff competition to be my least favourite. Belgium's participation at Eurovision seems to get worse every year. Another hopeless entry by a guy who looked more like Mark Lamarr than Mr Presley. Patrick was pretty poor vocally, seemingly slurring his words at times and, lyrically, I thought it was a bit rude too and certainly didn't come across as complementary. Elvis may have died a premature death at home, but better that than onstage in Moscow like Patrick did. (41st)

Shine? Hardly. And so another failure for the Netherlands and rightly so. This dated shambles of a performance meant that for the fifth year in a row the Dutch weren't represented in a Eurovision final. It was such a stupid performance, what with the silver suits and the pointless lady wandering about. Novelty is fine when you have a decent song, but otherwise you end up looking daft. Come back Luxembourg. Benelux needs you!! (40th)

I detected a hint of Shiri Maimon about Lidia Kopania's performance. She was pretty good vocally and really went for it towards the end of her song. The 'all in white' theme worked; though the two dancers were somewhat distracting and added very little really. Just a low placing from me because it was all a trite dull. Sorry Poland. (38th)

The Slovakian coupling looked the best of all the entrants in 2009. There was some very powerful singing too, especially when Nela hit those extraordinary notes at the end of the

song. Eurovision is about making an instant impression though, and it took many listens before I sounded out the tune so, although quite a nice song, it's placing wasn't a shock at all. (31st)

I felt very sorry for the Irish this year. *Et Cetera* was a rowdy slice of Euro rock in the style of 80's girl band The Bangles. The staging was superb too. It lost some of its vastness due to the girl's excellent performance. Given the lack of diaspora voting for Ireland, I would also say that 11th in their semi was an excellent achievement and this would have been more welcome in the final than Croatia. Thank heavens Sinéad Mulvey didn't wear the silver cat suit though. (28th)

Another group which really utilised the stage most commendably were the Macedonian group, Next Time. This song grew on me from my first initial listening, and Stefan was assured vocally throughout. It all reminded me of Slovakian debutantes, Tublatanka, at times, but I guess rock is one musical genre that doesn't really update itself. A fair result and just about FYRoM's best effort so far. (27th)

The sheer frenetic visual performance by Intars Busulis, though akin to Rik Mayall's acting in 'The Young Ones', worked so well as an aid to the lyrics of *Probka*. Once again I thought the staging was spot on and, whether I have a masochistic streak in me or not, I found this wholly enjoyable. Frenetic during the up-tempo sections, yet melancholy during the slow bits. Good stuff. (26th)

Whilst I'm in the zone, then next up is the Czech Republic. I wish this could have had a later draw, as the daftness of it all happened way too early in the first



semi-final. For all its stupidity though, the song did have a message and, in Eurovision terms, the Czech's have now produced three completely different sounds in their first three years. This was the best of them so far. So sad to see it pointless. Very undeserving. (25th)

And so to poor old Cyprus and another country that must be forgetting what it's like to be in a Euro final. Annoyingly, I think *Firefly* was one of the best songs in the contest. Its youthful, anthemic style was so engaging, and even the revolving sugar lumps added some visual stimulus. Within moments of the song starting though, the patronising applause of the audience had begun. Christina, you may be lots of things, but an experienced singer you are not. The last refrain was excruciating. Such a shame. (24th)

I tend to wait until all the songs are chosen before I download and start listening. I couldn't wait to hear Belarus' entry, as the negative and downright evil comments about Petr online led me to believe he was a child killer or something. Yet he was one of the few who gave a really strong account of himself vocally against a very loud backing track. The song wasn't too bad either. Just a pity he didn't have time to change after judo ... or get a haircut. (23rd)

So will this be the end of Andorra in ESC circles? I wouldn't blame them if they upped sticks and backed away slowly, never to return. I'm not proclaiming this to be a musical messiah or a bona fide qualifier, but it was quirky, catchy and Susanne gave a really good performance. Yet only eight points were registered on

the scoreboard. If I were Andorran, I wouldn't bother anymore. (22nd)

A Eurovision final without Serbia? Who would have predicted that a couple of years ago? I thought this was fantastic! Marko worked the performance really well and it was never too much. The graphics behind were very Junior Senior in the style of their *Move Your Feet* video. Good to see some Serbian humour, but I guess it'll be back to a mournful ballad next year. (19th)

Bulgaria didn't come quietly to Eurovision this year! I'm not sure where to start really. I loved the duo on stilts who were very good - as for Krassimir he started well enough, but the last minute was just awful. The whole sound degenerated into a caterwauling fiesta. I love the studio version of this, hence my high placing, but I knew this performance was never going to be seen at the final. (17th)

I expected the Swiss to get the jury pick from its semi-final. I thought it had a strong Brit pop sound, and you could see the Lovebugs had been together for a long time with such an uncontrived performance. Three years and three strong Swiss entries have fallen by the semi wayside now, and again I wonder how much longer this country will continue competing. This really should have been in the final. (14th)

The concept of Slovenia's entry met with my approval. The long introduction gave Quartissimo a chance to play to their classical strong point and I thought it was a very melodious piece musically as well. Martina played her part very strongly too, hitting a couple of high notes. She had a hint of Kate Ryan



about her facially, which is no bad thing. Again, I knew it would be touch and go as to its qualification, but to finish below Hungary was just wrong. (7th)

Montenegro took a big leap up the scoreboard this year just falling short of an automatic spot in the final. The first of all 42 songs to be performed Andrea immediately highlighted the vastness of the stage, and she and the pointless dancer looked very lost. I liked the dated Euro pop sound though and think this deserved a Saturday night slot. (5th)

Generally it seemed a good geographic mix had qualified from the two semi-finals. For next year I would like to see the 50/50 jury/televote split for all three shows. The diaspora element would be halved then, and countries such as Ireland, Andorra, Belgium and the Netherlands could enter songs that really do have a chance of making the Eurovision final if they are worthy enough. However, the final itself certainly wasn't lacking many ingredients. This time the hosts, Alsou and Ivan, were far more relaxed and natural with the audience. Dima's opening almost became a cropper in his harness and he looked lost without his two sidekicks from 2008. Edvin was too busy teaching a Norwegian Belarussian how to fiddle, whilst Evgeni looked like he was singing for Belarus himself!

The Russians came up with a fantastic idea of how to stage their own entry. It was the only high point of the song though. Vocally she was quite strained at times and, given that the song demanded some top-notch vocals, it was very noticeable. I wanted my own mum by the end of this. (39th)

It was disappointing to learn that the experts had promoted Croatia above both Ireland and Serbia into the final. This was just a standard Balkan ballad with little magic about it. Hence it's poor final placement. (37th)

Lithuania got the final off to a rip roaring start with its tongue twistingly lyrical ode to children's pain and suffering. Unlucky to have drawn first, especially with such a strong subject matter, Sasha did his best and his flaming hand gesture was memorable I suppose. A

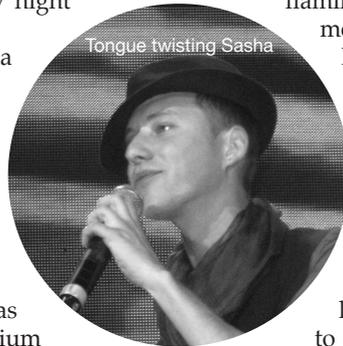
lot more than the song anyway. He did remind me of Annie Lennox in a hat ... (36th)

The popularity of Estonia's entry has completely eluded me. I hate having to review songs and performances like this, as there is little to criticise. The vocals were good and they all dressed in

their Sunday best, but the song was just sooooooooooooo boring. To me anyway. I know it will do very well in my poll and, ending positively, it was great to see them back in the final. (35th)

I didn't like Sakis's song in 2004, but he was back this year with a much stronger sound. This was knocking on the door of my top 10 before the contest, but what on earth went wrong? Well, I will tell you. Lovely guy, great Eurovision host in 2006, but vocally as competent as a newborn baby and choreographically as useful as John Sargeant. He was out of breath, out of tune and totally out of his depth in Moscow. Greece really needs to find vocalists to match the demands of their often-elaborate Eurovision stage shows. (34th)

Graham Norton, I think, was wrong over the mysteriously blue dressed



woman in the Romanian ensemble. Elena mostly did pretty well with the lead vocals, and the performance was not too fussy, really suiting the song and the lyrics. Unfortunately, it just wasn't strong enough and I would've preferred it to be eliminated on the Tuesday night. (33rd)

So why does Eurovision have its critics? They would point to Moldova. A frenzied Balkan romp exuberantly belted out by a woman dressed as a lamp shade, with four blokes involved in some prancing ritual, whilst by the side another man furiously shouted and waved a stick. So why does Eurovision have its fans? I think you know where this is going ... three minutes of lustful Euro joy. Any more than that would probably get on my Nelly ... (32nd)

The Ukrainians, like Greece, really buy into the whole elaborate staging idea to accompany their entries every year. Last year's *Shady Lady* was spot on, but there was way too much fuss going on this year. The Trojans, hamster wheels and moving drums just detracted from what was really an average song, although credit must go to Svetlana for her great faith in the whole production, and for some good quality vocals in amongst the stage gymnastics. (30th)

There was nothing spectacularly different from Turkey. They really seem like the country that is guaranteed a top seven or eight placing every year, regardless of what they send. Hadise was okay vocally. Not quite the car crash of some others, but some seriously dodgy steering at times. The men's outfits didn't compliment the ladies at

all, and the dancer tumbling on at the end seemed unnecessary. (29th)

Brinck gave a couple of strange performances in Moscow. He appeared to be singing through his teeth and never really let go vocally, and the relief was there for all to see after his final showing. The Danish entry was certainly easy on the ear, especially on the shift from slow to mid tempo. Not sure why Danish men are turning up in Dickensian attire all of a sudden. See! I never mentioned that Boyzone chappy! (21st)



If ever there was a love child between Pink and Sarah Harding, then Soraya has to be it. It all seemed set up for Spain this year. A strong track ticking lots of boxes, and they certainly embraced the huge stage. Drawn last, all she had to do was get her vocals out, and thereby

lie some of the answers. They weren't that poor as to justify 24th place, but she really should've done a lot better. I bet the Spanish fans were gutted. (20th)

I had Israel as my second favourite going into Eurovision week. There was an honest freshness to the song and the harmonies were some of the best in recent times. It all fell a little flat with this more acoustic led version, which just didn't feel so strong to me. As with many Israeli entries, you can't argue with the songs sentiments as troubled times still dominate their land. It was good to see this in the final as well. (18th)

Azerbaijan's second entry was certainly a lot better than their debut. One of two entries with the perfect blend of ethnic and European pop, I especially enjoyed Arash's enthusiastic performance, although neither were

the greatest vocalists and it was just a tad too repetitive for the last half minute. He looked like he could be Lewis Hamilton's dad whilst she bore a striking resemblance to 'Strictly Come Dancing's' Lidia Kopylova. (16th)

What a wonderful result for Iceland this year. Yohanna was in excellent form all week, delivering perfect renditions of her song, but Iceland was beaten into second place again by another Nordic neighbour, although spectacularly so this time. Iceland has been the focus of some bad press over the past six months or so, but maybe Europe was punishing them into footing the bill for next year's contest as hosts!! The stylist seriously needs to be sacked though; having turned such a beautiful teenager into a middle aged frump. (15th)

I much preferred Germany's 2009 swinging to that of Roger Cicero a couple of years ago. The sing back part of the song was very much in the "Minnie the Moocher" style, and I was hoping that this would have done a little better. Not so sure about the inclusion of Dita von Teese, who didn't really seem to bring anything to the song at all. Bit of a waist really ... (13th)

So what can be said about France then? I'm sure many of you are reading this in disbelief at my high ranking of her, whilst others will be furious at such a low position. The ultimate performer of 2009. Now this was a stage presence. Self assured, but no trace of arrogance. Emotive, haunting and utter belief in every word she sang. Piaf-esque against the lilting melody. Patricia Kaas. Always class. (12th)

I was happy to see Portugal qualify

for the second consecutive year. Whilst not as powerful as Ms Fernandez in 2008, Flor-de-Lis still had a charm of their own, complementing this quaint folksome song. They were another act who spread themselves well across the stage and, later that night, were seen holding hands and skipping through a field full of poppies and daisies. (11th)

Sadly no third time lucky for Chiara this year. Definitely the weakest of her three entries so far, Malta must take comfort in the fact that they qualified for the final in pretty impressive style.

Vocally I would say Chiara was the best singer of the contest. Some of the notes she hit were just perfection. (10th)

How great it was for us poor hard done by UK fans not to get vertigo this year by searching for ourselves on the scoreboard. It

was a deserved top five finish too. Jade was a wondrous ambassador for our nation, and her warmth and enthusiasm will stand her in great stead for whatever journey she next embarks on. Not pitch perfect on the night to be fair, but a difficult song to master. Heartfelt thanks Jade, and to you Mr Lloyd Webber. (9th)

Is the Balkan grip on Eurovision loosening do you think? I really thought that Bosnia & Herzegovina would be in the top three again this year, as it was by far the most vote worthy song of this region. Probably the best Balkan performance too, with strong ethnic content and clever staging. (8th)

So it was a close call, but Norway just edged it. Europe seemed to totally unite for once in song approval and already this has become the biggest winner in years. Alexander definitely wasn't at his



best and there were more than a few duff notes, but musically it was catchy and if the performance works in the national final the Scandinavians stick with and perfect it. Other countries could learn from this. Congratulations. (6th)

Armenia had a cool preview video accompanying *Jan Jan* and really should have gone with that vibe in Moscow. Instead, sisters grim looked downright terrifying and the staging was too dark for this stunning song. Like Azerbaijan, they went for the ethnic/modern pop sound and, boy did this song deliver. I would've preferred it if this was in third place, but top ten with juries input still signifies another great Armenian result. (4th)

By rights, of course, Finland shouldn't have been in the final and I was very surprised that this had won the expert spot over the likes of Switzerland and Andorra. However, it's a big favourite of mine. I enjoyed Waldo's rapping and the chorus was as catchy as any of this years songs. The star of the show has to be Karoliina Kallio, who was belting out some huge notes throughout the song. Best Finnish entry since 1987. (3rd)

If you haven't died of boredom reading this yet, then I'd like to refer you to my review of Moldova. I could promote a similar response with the Albanian entry. To say it was bizarre would be doing it an injustice. Those two dancers have to be the most spectacular on any Eurovision stage. Kejsi coped admirably with all the shenanigans surrounding her, and the song and vocals were top notch too. Three absurdly wonderful minutes. (2nd)

I didn't expect Sweden to qualify this year, but was mighty glad when they

did. Quite simply my favourite from the first time I heard it to my time of writing this. Malena was, of course, a hugely experienced singer, but quite out of her comfort range during the verse of the song. Worryingly for the Swedes it was a third consecutive poor placing but, just like the bottom of her dress, I thought it was plucking wonderful. (1st)

I was delighted with the favourable press garnered after this years show.

Graham Norton was also on great form, and seemed to do a lot

more research into the songs and artists than the other

Irish bloke that preceded

him. A little cruel about

Chiara, but apart from

that there were some

shrewd analytical

comments, my favourite

being his take on the

Armenian outfits. As for

all involved in the Russian

staging, huge congratulations

must be offered. Some of the

sets were stunning. Portugal, Russia

and Iceland spring to mind, and as for

the interval act Fuerza Bruta... simply

amazing, especially to have a performance

in the green room too.

So far I've had over 100 sets of votes to

add towards the Retro poll. Of course,

there is still time for you to send me

your votes and comments. Remember

that I need your top 10's for both semi-

finals, the final itself and a top 10 of

all 42 competing songs. Send these,

along with comments on any or all of

the songs, to me, Darren Jenkin, at 11

Fairfield, Ludgvan, Penzance, Cornwall,

TR20 8ES, United Kingdom or you can

e-mail me at ahotspur@hotmail.co.uk

Looking forward to hearing from

you soon, and a huge thank you to all

those who have already sent votes and

comments. ♡



Wonderful Swede

PRESIDENT'S PAGE

A word from OGAE UK President Paul Marks-Jones

Thank you all for your good luck messages and well wishes after my first page appeared in the last issue – hopefully already you'll be experiencing some of the changes and plans that I mentioned last time!

It was nice to catch up with many of you at the 'event of the year' in Moscow. I am sure we can all agree that it was one of the best experiences ever and all our best wishes go to Norway for their 2010 plans.

And Jade Ewen finishing 5th certainly felt like a win for those of us lucky enough to be in the audience (although I was a little deaf after sitting next to the Norwegian contingent!!)

Whilst in Moscow I had the opportunity to chat at length with the BBC delegation and assisted them with various tasks, including the organisation of the UK press conference featuring Andrew Lloyd Webber, Diane Warren and Graham Norton. The team were very friendly and approachable and were very willing to chat at length about how the BBC can involve the fans more at Eurovision. So, some headway was made and hopefully it will result in more support and involvement from now on.

One of the new experiences I had there was attending an OGAE President's meeting. Aply accompanied by Simon Bennett we met with many of the other President's from across the OGAE network. Various issues were discussed such as OGAE membership, tickets, membership cards and the different

contests organised by OGAE every year. Unfortunately the UK won't participate in the 'Second Chance' contest as we only had one song in our selection this year. We are encouraged to enter the OGAE Video Contest though – so if anyone out there would like to volunteer for that, please contact me for further details.



Jade and Paul

Although I don't like to speak about negative things here, I feel that some events in Moscow need to be mentioned. Being granted press accreditation carries certain benefits and this should also mean that individuals behave in a certain manner. Some of the behaviour I witnessed by UK

accredited people – greedily grabbing promotional material with a view to selling on at a later date - made me feel ashamed and sad. People should remember that there is enough for everyone and that by taking more than you should, other people will miss out. I know that the EBU have been monitoring such actions and will be reporting those individuals to the respective television companies who issue accreditations. These individuals will hopefully have future accreditations rejected. I just hope that none of our members fall into this category.

So, the next time I will see many of you will be at the Eurobash in October. This is already fully booked. But if you would like to be placed on a waiting list, you will find details elsewhere in this issue. ♡

ESC09 ANALYSED

Hassan Yusuf looks at the voting of this year's Eurovision

Even though I never enjoyed the city as much as I thought I would, Moscow did put on a fabulous show. Well, they were hell-bent on winning it last year, so they couldn't dare disappoint.

And many countries seemed to put in that little bit extra. As usual there was a wide variety of sounds available to the listeners and viewers – hard rock, rock'n'roll, pop, classical - and of course the bizarre! And it looked like the Big Four were pulling out the stops as well – and met with limited success.

Now, I wasn't too pleased last year when I heard that the jury system was going to make a partial return. I thought it was a step backwards and an act of appeasement for the western nations.

I remember many years ago when the juries in their infinite wisdom were so obviously prejudice and tone-deaf – and probably corruptible! Even though 25 years have passed I still can't believe the frivolous *Diggi-Loo Diggi-Ley* (which put Eurovision back ten years) won over such classic sounds as Italy's *I Treni Di Tozeur* in 1984 (my all-time favourite Eurovision song by the way)! And yes, I do realise that most of our victories were through this system - but we did had fab songs!

Eurovision is now watched by more viewers than ever before – so let the people decide. They're real experts – because they decide what's good and isn't, what's hot or cold. Of course we may not agree on the results – but that's just tough! And I know all about suffering – for the last three years now my favourite song of the contest has failed to progress out of the semi-finals. Surely Switzerland's *The Highest Heights* was good enough to qualify.

I've never been one to worry about diasporas or block voting. What's so terrible about wanting your country of origin (providing you're an immigrant) to do well? It's a matter of national pride. But in the end does it really matter? Eurovision these days is a winner takes all situation. Where you end up on the scoreboard doesn't matter a hoot (just your national pride might be hurt). And surely everyone must realise that to win Eurovision you have to have votes right across the continent, and not just your neighbours.

But nevertheless I was willing to have an open mind about the 50/50 jury/televoting experiment. At the very least it would keep some critics quiet. But surely the real 'problem' levelled out was

Final results

Jury and Televoting	Jury only
1 Norway (387)	Norway (312)
2 Iceland (218)	Iceland (260)
3 Azerbaijan (207)	UK (223)
4 Turkey (177)	France (164)
5 UK (173)	Estonia (124)
6 Estonia (129)	Denmark (120)
7 Greece (120)	Turkey (114)
8 France (107)	Azerbaijan (112)
9 Bosnia & Herz.(106)	Israel (107)
10 Armenia (92)	Greece (93)
11 Russia (91)	Moldova (93)
12 Ukraine (76)	Bosnia & Herz. (90)
13 Denmark (74)	Malta (87)
14 Moldova (69)	Germany (73)
15 Portugal (57)	Armenia (71)
16 Israel (53)	Ukraine (68)
17 Albania (48)	Russia (67)
18 Croatia (45)	Portugal (64)
19 Romania (40)	Croatia (58)
20 Germany (35)	Lithuania (31)
21 Sweden (33)	Romania (31)
22 Malta (31)	Sweden (27)
23 Lithuania (23)	Albania (26)
24 Spain (23)	Finland (12)
25 Finland (22)	Spain (9)

the countries that always qualified from the semi-finals regardless of their quality. Like a colleague said to me in Moscow "(said country) could fart on stage and qualify." I would've thought the jury/televoting system would be fairer at the semi-final levels to ensure that the best songs did go through. If, of course, these so-called expert juries were really made up of experts and people in the know, maybe the Lovebugs might have got through after all! And if you are going to have a jury decide on a wildcard – at least they should have the foresight to pick songs that should've done a lot better in the final. Both Finland and Croatia did miserably at the expense of poor Macedonia and Serbia. No wonder the former is thinking of withdrawing from the contest - it's happened to them twice now! But the western nations can't really complain, as in the past few years many of the old guard have been successful in getting through.

Looking at the score tables, if the expert juries had the whole say, the outcome would've been the same – Norway was always going to win. The rest of the positions don't really differ too much – but it's nice to see the UK edge up into third place.

If we look at the top of the jury table both Azerbaijan and Turkey still do well – so much for neighbourly and diaspora voting then. The only big discrepancy is Denmark - the jury had it at number six, while it eventually ended up in 13th position.

And if we look at the bottom of the tables - they're quite similar again except that Malta which ended up in 22nd position made it 13th from the jury. And that actually is the biggest discrepancy of the whole contest - I thought Chiara deserved a much better placing.

But despite the third placing for us, I'm afraid I still remain unconvinced of

the jury system. If the public are going to pick up their phones and spend good money voting for their favourites – or fellow countrymen - then they should have the complete say.

Expert juries? The jury's still out!

Still, it'll be interesting to see what happens next year where, hopefully, we'll have a more exciting contest where the outcome isn't so obvious. And maybe my favourite will progress to the final!

Congratulations to Norway though. I was in the audience of Melodi Grand Prix on that cold February evening – but Alexander Rybak's performance was red hot. It came as no surprise that he won that contest and Eurovision as well. And not wanting to take anything away from his fabulous victory – he may have gained the most points ever (well 41 countries were voting for him), but the record for the highest percentage of votes received still goes to our own Brotherhood of Man with 80.4% of the final tally. So there.

It's a shame this fact wasn't available to Graham Norton during his commentary, but didn't he do well? I'm afraid Terry Wogan had started to get a really bad reputation all across Europe. So another reason why we did so well (besides having the best UK entry in my opinion since 1970) was that most of Europe knew that Sir Terry was no longer part of the UK's team.

Anyway, I thought Norton did a superb job. My only reservation when I first heard he was taking over from Sir Terry, was that Eurovision was camp enough – but he took it seriously and was witty when he had to be – quite funny in places – and he never spoke during the performances! And there was no moaning or bitterness to be heard – just a lot of fun, wit and encouragement – like Sir Terry in his heyday! Let's hope the BBC retain Norton's services for a few more years at least. ♡

TICKET INFORMATION FOR EUROVISION 2010

Members of the OGAE UK Committee recently held a meeting to discuss the Ticket Policy for next year's Eurovision. There was a lengthy discussion on a 'loyalty' system that would guarantee long-standing OGAE UK attendees a ticket. However, this was deemed unfair to new members. Therefore, it was agreed that all members have fair and equal access to any tickets that become available provided that they have demonstrated a degree of commitment to OGAE UK.

The following eligibility terms and conditions were agreed by OGAE UK and will apply to all members taking part in the 2010 Eurovision Ticket Ballot:

- All OGAE UK members who commenced continuous membership on or before 15th May 2009 will be eligible to take part in the ballot.
- Honorary members will not be eligible to participate.
- All members will be treated as individuals for the purposes of the ballot, irrespective of whether an individual or joint membership is held.
- Members must be in possession of a current OGAE photo ID card or provide an appropriate passport photograph to take part in the ballot.
- The first two places in the ballot will be reserved for OGAE UK's Ticket Co-ordinator (currently David Ransted) and one other alternating official representative to ensure that administration and distribution can take place in the host country without restriction.
- All new members who joined on or after 16th May 2009 may request entry to the ballot, but will only be offered tickets in the event of additional quantities being offered to OGAE UK.

Deposit requirements and arrangements

- Deposit set at £50 per person to be paid by 31st October 2009. An additional £2 per person handling charges must be added to the total amount for those making payment via Paypal.
- Deposit becomes non-refundable after 28 February 2010.
- Deposit to be refunded in the event that individual is unsuccessful in obtaining a ticket through OGAE UK or in the unlikely event that tickets are not offered to OGAE UK.

All members wishing to take part in the 2010 Eurovision Ticket Ballot must complete the required application form.

If you would like to take part in the ballot, please e-mail OGAE UK Ticket Co-ordinator, David Ransted, at [**djranners@yahoo.com**](mailto:djranners@yahoo.com) and request an application form together with full terms and conditions'

Membership cards

Membership cards are essential if you want to be entered into the ticket ballot. Each card is valid for one year and must then be renewed.

Current OGAE UK cards were valid for two years and will expire in November 2009.

To avoid replacing OGAE cards during the Eurovision period, it was decided that the new membership year should run from 1st February to 31st January to allow time for renewals and production of new cards with an annual expiry.

OGAE UK cannot be responsible for cards not being available at short notice if any member has previously refused to apply for one or has mislaid any card already issued that remains valid.

*Please note the deadline for OGAE UK to receive completed application forms is 31st October 2009, so e-mail David Ransted on [**djranners@yahoo.com**](mailto:djranners@yahoo.com) today!*

Vision news

Vision is expanding!

No, we're not going A4 (yet) – but you'll be seeing more of your favourite Eurovision magazine in a new format.

Vision magazine will continue to come out four times a year, but to give our members more value for money, there will be regular editions of a new product called **Vision Update**. This new product will be produced in electronic formats – PDF and jpeg (or gif) files and will be distributed via e-mail only!

Vision Update will appear between issues of **Vision** magazine and will contain up to date information about tickets for Eurovision, Eurobash, all the latest from the national finals, etc. While we're not out to compete with all the great websites such as *esctoday.com* or *eurovision.tv*, we want to offer our members a condensed run-down of all the latest news and events.

To receive **Vision Update** we must have your e-mail address. If we haven't got your e-mail address already, you can register for **Vision Update** by writing to ogaeuk@gmail.com

Vision Update will not be replacing **Vision** magazine. The magazine will still continue to offer all the usual great features with facts and figures from our regular bunch of expert writers.

Watch out for the first edition of **Vision Update** soon – but remember, we need your e-mail address. Needless to say, your details will not be passed onto any other party.

The frequency of **Vision Update** will vary and depend on events, but here's your chance to keep up to date with everything involving OGAE UK and Eurovision!

Note: To open or read a PDF file you will need to have Adobe Acrobat Reader installed on your computer. This can be downloaded free. The advantage with PDF files is that they can contain weblinks. If you don't want or can't install Acrobat Reader, then you can receive **Vision Update** as a normal jpeg or gif file.

In the next issue of **Vision**, we will give you a report of activities and finances. If you have any questions to ask about the club, please e-mail OGAE UK's Member Rep, Dean Asker on ogaeukrep@btinternet.com

Euro Quiz Answers

1. Palais Des Festivals, Cannes
2. Antoine De Caunes of 'Rapido' and 'Eurotrash'
3. Luxembourg and Monaco
4. His daughter, Jacqueline Boyer, won the 1960 contest with *Tom Pillibi*
5. Siw Malmkvist
6. *Ciao Ciao Bambina*
7. First performers from East Germany who appeared at Eurovision. They escaped from East Germany in 1954
8. Willy Van Hemert (who co-wrote *En Beetje*)
9. 51
10. Teddy (born in 1920 - Bryan was born in 1926)
11. 1961 (with *September, Gouden Roos*)

THE 'LAST' PAGE



Finland 2009 - Final

"Lose Control"

Waldo's People

Received 22 points

(8 from Iceland, 4 from Estonia and Sweden,
and 3 from Malta and Bulgaria)