



vision

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YES WE CAN!

SINGING THE BLUES FOR THE UK

Affiliated to Organisation Générale des Amateurs de l'Eurovision



Vision

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ED LINES

The Eurovision season is here once again and Germany has the honour of hosting the 56th annual contest. For the first time since 1957, when Lys Assia competed for a second successive year, the current holder of the Grand Prix will be defending her title in a show that will see not one but two former winners competing against each other.

This is only the second time that two winners have appeared in the same year as one another, the last occasion being in 1958 when Lys Assia, returning for a third year, competed against 1957 winner Corry Brokken. Neither Lys nor Corry were able to claim a second victory, so if Lena or Dana International were to succeed they would be the first performer to do so since Johnny Logan in 1987.

Of course, British viewers will be watching recently re-formed boyband, Blue, to see if *I Can* will bring Europe's prestigious music trophy back to the United Kingdom. It is 14 years since Katrina & The Waves, another established band, gained an impressive victory in Dublin and the BBC are to be commended for once again selecting a proven act that has already achieved international success.

So while we may have been feeling blue in recent years due to a poor showing in the voting stakes, we can be confident in the knowledge that Blue can, we can and *I Can* bring Eurovision home.

Whether you are in Germany, the United Kingdom or watching elsewhere, enjoy the show.

Gordon Lewis

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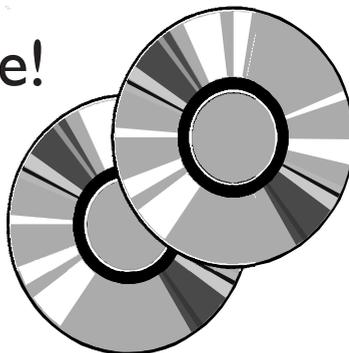
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The 56th Eurovision Song Contest

Düsseldorf - Germany

Hassan Yusuf endured countless national finals to review all of the 43 hopefuls for this year's Eurovision

1st Semi-Final		Tuesday 10th May 2011
Running order	Performer	Song
1	Poland	Magdalena Tul <i>Jestem</i>
2	Norway	Stella Mwangi <i>Haba Haba</i>
3	Albania	Aurela Gaçe <i>Feel The Passion</i>
4	Armenia	Emmy <i>Boom Boom</i>
5	Turkey	Yüksek Sadakat <i>Live It Up</i>
6	Serbia	Nina <i>Caroban</i>
7	Russia	Alexey Vorobyov <i>Get You</i>
8	Switzerland	Anna Rossinelli <i>In Love For A While</i>
9	Georgia	Eldrine <i>One More Day</i>
10	Finland	Paradise Oskar <i>Da Da Dam</i>
11	Malta	Glen Vella <i>One Life</i>
12	San Marino	Senit <i>Stand By</i>
13	Croatia	Daria <i>Celebrate</i>
14	Iceland	Sigurjón's Friends <i>Coming Home</i>
15	Hungary	Kati Wolf <i>What About My Dreams?</i>
16	Portugal	Homens da Luta <i>A Luta E Alegria</i>
17	Lithuania	Evelina Sašenko <i>C'est Ma Vie</i>
18	Azerbaijan	Ell & Nikki <i>Running Scared</i>
19	Greece	Loukas Giorkas feat. Stereo Mike <i>Watch My Dance</i>

Also voting: Spain, United Kingdom

2nd Semi-Final		Thursday 12th May 2011
Running order	Performer	Song
1	Bosnia & Herzegovina	Dino Merlin <i>Love In Rewind</i>
2	Austria	Nadine Beiler <i>The Secret Is Love</i>
3	Netherlands	3JS <i>Never Alone</i>
4	Belgium	Witloof Bay <i>With Love Baby</i>
5	Slovakia	TWiiNS <i>I'm Still Alive</i>
6	Ukraine	Mika Newton <i>Angels</i>
7	Moldova	Zdob si Zdub <i>So Lucky</i>
8	Sweden	Eric Saade <i>Popular</i>
9	Cyprus	Christos Mylordos <i>San Aggelos S'agapisa</i>
10	Bulgaria	Poli Genova <i>Na Inat</i>
11	Macedonia, FYR	Vlatko Ilievski <i>Rusinka</i>
12	Israel	Dana International <i>Ding Dong</i>
13	Slovenia	Maja Keuc <i>No One</i>
14	Romania	Hotel FM <i>Change</i>
15	Estonia	Getter Jaani <i>Rockefeller Street</i>
16	Belarus	Anastasia Vinnikova <i>I Love Belarus</i>
17	Latvia	Musiqq <i>Angel In Disguise</i>
18	Denmark	A Friend In London <i>New Tomorrow</i>
19	Ireland	Jedward <i>Lipstick</i>

Also voting: France, Germany, Italy

Eurovision Song Contest			Saturday 14th May 2011	Voting order
	Performer	Song		
1	Qualifier			1
2	Qualifier			2
3	Qualifier			3
4	Qualifier			4
5	Qualifier			5
6	Qualifier			6
7	Qualifier			7
8	Qualifier			8
9	Qualifier			9
10	Qualifier			10
11	France	Amaury Vassili	<i>Sognu</i>	11
12	Italy	Raphael Gualazzi	<i>Madness of Love</i>	12
13	Qualifier			13
14	United Kingdom	Blue	<i>I Can</i>	14
15	Qualifier			15
16	Germany	Lena Meyer-Landrut	<i>Taken By A Stranger</i>	16
17	Qualifier			17
18	Qualifier			18
19	Qualifier			19
20	Qualifier			20
21	Qualifier			21
22	Spain	Lucía Pérez	<i>Que Me Quiten Lo Bailao</i>	22
23	Qualifier			23
24	Qualifier			24
25	Qualifier			25
				26
				27
				28
				29
				30
				31
				32
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				42
				43

The voting order hasn't been announced at the time of printing, so just write in the countries as they are announced

ALBANIA

Performer: Aurela Gaçe**Title:** *Feel The Passion***Songwriters:** Shpetim Saraci, Sokol Marsi

After two semi-final shows, 18 lucky hopefuls made it to the final on Christmas Day. The winner was chosen by a special jury – and Santa's present of a ticket to Düsseldorf went to Aurela Gaçe. This was the third time Aurela has won Festivali I Kenges (previously in 1999 and 2001), but the first time she will represent her country at Eurovision (Albania first entered in 2004). As usual the country worked on the song to give *Feel The Passion* more appeal – and decided that it will be sung in English. Aurela is a seasoned performer and a striking figure with bright red hair who sings this uptempo offering with much passion! So much so, that those sitting in the front rows will surely feel the experience! It has a good chance of reaching the final.



Festivali I Kenges 25th Dec 2010

Song	Performer	Result
<i>Kënga Ime</i>	Aurela Gaçe	82
<i>Ende Ka Shpresë</i>	Alban Skenderaj & Miriam Can	66
<i>Shtegëtar I Jetës Time</i>	Saimir Braho	48
<i>Rastësi</i>	Xhejси Jorgaqi	44
<i>Një Dashuri</i>	Enkeleda Arifi	36
<i>Mirëmbërma Engjëlli Im</i>	Dorina Garuci	34
<i>Mirë Se Vini Ne Shqipëri</i>	Dorian Nini	29
<i>E Bukura Dhe Bisha</i>	Besa Kokedhima	13
<i>Kemi Dasëm'o</i>	Françesk Radi	13
<i>Jetova Për Të Dy</i>	Kamela Islami	12
<i>Me Cilin Rri Ti Dashuri</i>	Hersiana Matmuja	7
<i>Mbi Xhaketen Time</i>	Denis Hasa	6
<i>Ëndërr Kosovë</i>	Selami Kolonja	6
<i>Pasuri E Pasurive</i>	Maria Prifti	5
<i>Mari</i>	Orges Toçe	3
<i>Vetëm S'jemi Në Botë</i>	Marsida Saraçi	2
<i>Në Krahët E Tua</i>	Goldi Halli	0
<i>Dritë</i>	Albi Xhepa & Sam Jaupaj	0

ARMENIA

Performer: Emmy**Title:** *Boom Boom***Songwriters:** Hayk Harutyunyan, Hayk Hovhannisyan, Sosi Khanikyan

Emmy was preselected to represent her country. At the national final she sang four songs, the titles of which wouldn't bother the least non-linguist among us. The voting was 50/50 jury and televoting. After a large number of fans complained about the outcome – *Ayo*,



being their favourite, the broadcaster announced the results which revealed that both sets of voters paralleled each other. *Boom Boom* has a very Latin feel to it with unchallenging lyrics – “Your kiss is like a boom boom, chaka chaka”. Armenia has a lot of support around the continent, so expect them in the final.

Armenian Final 5th March 2011		
Song	Points	Position
<i>Boom Boom</i>	3,219	1st
<i>Ayo</i>	2,422	2nd
<i>Hi</i>	1,535	3rd
<i>Goodbye</i>	539	4th

AUSTRIA

Performer: Nadine Beiler

Title: *The Secret Is Love*

Songwriters: Thomas Rabitsch, Nadine Beiler

After a national sulk of several years, Austria is thankfully back and running. With full enthusiasm restored a semi-final of 30 acts was held where ten made it to the final. The voting was all by televoting. The winner was chosen in two rounds of voting – the first to select the top three acts and the second to select the winner. Nadine Beiler won by a comfortable margin. *The Secret Of Love* is a strong power ballad and a worthy effort to return by. Cue dry ice. Let’s hope they get to the final otherwise we may not see them again...



Austrian National Final		25th February 2011
Song	Performer	Result
<i>The Secret Is Love</i>	Nadine Beiler	47% 1st
<i>Oida Taunz!</i>	Trackshittaz	33% 2nd
<i>Paris, Paris</i>	Klimmstein feat. Joe Sumner	20% 3rd
<i>Bigger Better Best</i>	Richard Klein	4th
<i>I Will Be Here</i>	Eva K. Anderson	5th
<i>Wir San Do Ned Zum Spaß</i>	Alkbottle	6th
<i>10 Sekunden Glück</i>	WG	7th
<i>Good To Be Bad</i>	Charlee	8th
<i>There Will Never Be Another You</i>	Leo Aberer & Patricia Kaiser	9th
<i>Let Love Kick In</i>	Oliver Wimmer	10th

AZERBAIJAN

Performer: Ell & Nikki

Title: *Running Scared*

Songwriters: Stefan Örn, Sandra Bjurman, Iain Farquharson

The Azeris don’t believe in a simple life. But luckily they do love the contest. After seven quarter-finals, nine acts made it through to the semi-final. Over four days they

sang an international hit, an Azeri hit, a Eurovision hit and finally a song of their choice. The top five were chosen by the 50/50 jury and televoting method, who then went on into the final. The final was only meant to find a representative to Düsseldorf. But two acts tied – Nigar Camal and Eldar Qasimov. It was decided that they would perform a duet. The Azeris got together a set of experienced writers who have produced one of the country’s strongest entries yet. The duo, now going by the name of Ell & Nikki perfectly perform *Running Scared*, a love ballad, with their distinctive voices meshing well together. While they may not have perfect body chemistry on stage, the song and expert performances will sail them into the final and probably challenge the top slot.



Azeri Final 11th February 2011

Performer	Position
Nigar Camal	1st
Eldar Qasimov	1st
Aynisan Quliyeva	
Ilqara Ibrahimova	
Ilhama Qasimova	

BELARUS

Performer: Anastasiya Vinnikova
Title: *I Love Belarus*
Songwriters: Eugene Oleinik, Svetlana Geraskova

Don’t you just love politics in Eurovision? Belarus preselected their singer and song in the form of Anastasiya Vinnikova and *Born in Belorussia*. This happy patriotic ditty was clearly meant as a bit of appeasement for ‘mother’ Russia after recent diplomatic spats between the two nations. The song remembers the good old days of the USSR and during the time when the country was called Belorussia. However, this blatant bit of propaganda for some strange reason seems to have upset the EBU, hence the lyrics of the song were changed to *I Am Belorussian*. But the saga didn’t end there. On the eve of final submissions for songs, Belarus announced a brand new entry, the far more politically correct *I Love Belarus*. And probably a wise idea as this new song is believed to be better than the former. It’s an upbeat pop song with nice ethnic overtones – very catchy indeed. It could very well make the final. And it’s nice to know that Anastasiya is proud of her country.



BELGIUM

Performer: Witloof Bay**Title:** *With Love Baby***Songwriters:** Benoît Giaux, RoxorLoops

Tom Dice restored the nation's pride last year when he took the country into the final after a break of many years. Will the ethnically divided country be able to do it again? After a huge internet selection process, 30 songs made it to the semi-final, where 14 of them progressed to the final via the televoting and jury method. The same 50/50 voting style was used at the final which saw the group Witloof Bay (made up of singers from all parts of the country) gain the top spot. The group are all polished singers – they need to be as *With Love Baby* is sung acappella. A brave choice as this style of singing has never gone down well with Eurovision viewers – they seem to like 'real' music with their songs. Widely tipped to do badly, let's still wish the Belgians good luck on a brave choice and remember that Eurovision should embrace diversity.



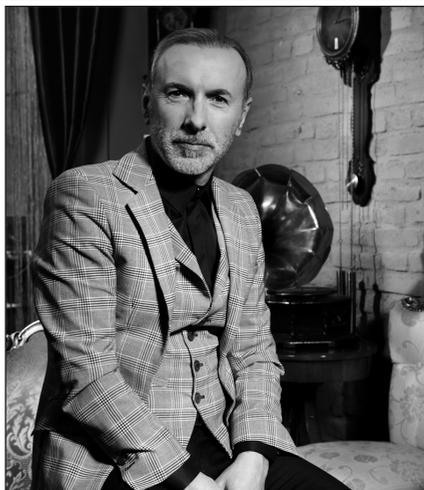
National Final 12th Feb 2011

Song	Performer	Result
<i>With Love Baby</i>	Witloof Bay	24
<i>Rien En Apparence</i>	Sarina Cohn	18
<i>Yes I Know</i>	.Fen	15
<i>Elle Merveille</i>	Alexandre Deschamps	11
<i>C'est La Musique</i>	Steve Linden	10
<i>Claquer Les Portes</i>	Clac et les Portes	7
<i>Be My Friend</i>	Nelza	7
<i>Our Way</i>	The Blazing	6
<i>Reset</i>	Kaptain Oats	5
<i>Just One Chance</i>	Chloé	4
<i>Addiction</i>	Gautier Reyzy	4
<i>Dans Ma Chanson</i>	J Cool	3
<i>Simple Love</i>	Syla K	2
<i>Somewhere With You</i>	Thayss N' Bau	0

BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA

Performer: Dino Merlin**Title:** *Love In Rewind***Songwriter:** Dino Merlin

Dino Merlin is a much loved musician in the Balkans. He has already competed for Bosnia in 1999 along with Beatrice Poulot and also wrote the country's first entry in 1993. He was preselected as the country's representative this year. In a special show called BHEurosong 2011 – which included many guest stars including Beatrice Poulot and Italy's Jalisce – he premiered his song *Love in Rewind*. The song has an upbeat charm about it. Definitely final material – so get ready to clap your hands! And it's good to see people of a certain age represented in Eurovision.



BULGARIA

Performer: Poli Genova

Title: *Na Inat (In Defiance)*

Songwriter: Sebastian Arman, David Bronner, Borislav Milanov, Poli Genova

Let Poli Genova be an inspiration to us all! If you don't succeed once, try, try and try again. After three previous attempts at the Bulgarian national finals, Poli won this year's contest. The winner was decided by the 50/50 jury (referred to as the Academy) and televoting method, but only the top three positions were announced. A nice way of not upsetting the losers. *Na Inat* is a uptempo rock/pop number performed with much gusto from Ms Genova.



National Final		23rd Feb 2011
Song	Performer	Result
<i>Na Inat</i>	Poli Genova	1st
<i>Fire In My Hair</i>	Milena Slavova	2nd
<i>Teen Life</i>	Mona	3rd
<i>On Air</i>	032	
<i>Take My Hand</i>	5-te Sezona	
<i>Nestinari</i>	Boyan Mihailov	
<i>Glorious Twist</i>	D2	
<i>Mome Hubava</i>	Elmira Kostova	
<i>Plenyavash Me</i>	Emiliya Valenti	
<i>Wicked Way Of Love</i>	Jakob	
<i>Smile</i>	Jerihon	
<i>Zamestitel</i>	Lazar Kisiov	
<i>Bez Teb</i>	Plamena Petrova	
<i>Fever</i>	Rut Koleva	
<i>The New Earth</i>	Simona Sivanio & Spirit	
<i>I Know</i>	Stanny Brown feat. N.A.S.O.	
<i>Luxury Hotel</i>	Tsvetelina Chendova	
<i>Syanka</i>	Vladi Dimov	
<i>Blue Cotton Levi's</i>	Wikedá	

CROATIA

Performer: Daria

Title: *Celebrate*

Songwriters: Boris Djurdjevic, Marina Mudrinić

After six shows, two performers, Daria Kinzer and Jacques Houdek, were eventually chosen to go to Dora, the Croatian national final. The show was in two parts. The first was to establish the song, and the second part to decide the singer. A tie between two songs was announced after both singers sang the chosen three songs. Even though the voting was by jury and televoting, the



jury vote took precedent and *Celebrate* was the song chosen to be sung in Düsseldorf. In the second part, the female singer clearly came out on top. The song has however undergone a change to make sure it gets to the final at Eurovision. As the title suggests it's an upbeat sing-a-long number. Ought to get those hips moving at Euroclub.

CYPRUS

Performer: Christos Mylordos

Title: *San Aggelos S'Agapisa (I Loved You Like An Angel)*

Songwriters: Andreas Anastasiou, Mihalis Antoniou

This is a worthy entry for the south part of the island – in that this year, the Greek Cypriot entry actually sounds Greek! But before the song was chosen there was a talent show called Performance to chose their entrant for Düsseldorf – and where Christos Mylordos was a clear outright winner. Preselected, *San Aggelos S'Agapisa* is a powerful love story full of angst, angst and more angst! The singer and song certainly mesh well together, but Cyprus has only gotten into the Eurovision finals by using British performers! Let's hope the talented Christos can break the trend.

DENMARK

Performer: A Friend In London

Title: *New Tomorrow*

Songwriters: Lise Cabble, Jakob Schack Glæsner

MGP (Melodi Grand Prix) was another grand affair this year. Ten acts fought to represent the nation in Düsseldorf. The winner was chosen in three rounds of voting. In the first round, the top four performers were chosen by jury/SMS voting. In the second round, the

Dora		5th March 2011
Song	Performer	Result
<i>Lahor</i>	Daria Kinzer	9,030 1st
<i>Lahor</i>	Jacques Houdek	5,060 2nd
<i>Još Ima Nas</i>	Daria Kinzer	
<i>Još Ima Nas</i>	Jacques Houdek	
<i>Stotinama Godina</i>	Daria Kinzer	
<i>Stotinama Godina</i>	Jacques Houdek	



Performance		10th Sep 2010
Performer	Result	
Christos Mylordos	11,004	
Louis Panagiotou	5,924	
Annita Skoutela	4,244	
Stella Stylianou	3,851	
Dafni Sissou	3,232	
Marios Charalambous	1,476	
Malvina Charalambidou	1,338	
Kostas Ioannides	989	
Nicole Nikolaidou	852	



acts competed in two pairs to select the top two. And after a playoff, the winner was decided by SMS voting. The Danes chose wisely with A Friend In London. They're a popular band having won a previous international contest and are huge in Canada. And how can the UK not support a band with the, *ahem*, coolest city in the world in their name?! Lovers of Britpop will go for this in a big way. *New Tomorrow* would fit perfectly in any UK Indie chart with a very nice anthemic feel to it. This could very well be another contender for Denmark.

MGP 26th February 2011		
Song	Performer	Result
<i>New Tomorrow</i>	A Friend In London	1st
<i>Sleepless</i>	Anne Noa	
Round Two qualifiers		
<i>25 Hours A Day</i>	Le Freak	
<i>Hvad Hjertet Lever Af</i>	Stine Kinck	
Non-qualifiers from Round One		
<i>Let Your Heart Be Mine</i>	Jenny Berggren	
<i>Emma</i>	Christopher Brandt	
<i>Hollywood Girl</i>	Lee Hutton	
<i>Black And Blue</i>	Kat & Justin Hopkins	
<i>Drømmen</i>	Jeffrey	
<i>You'll Get Me Through</i>	Sine Vig Kjærgaard	

ESTONIA

Performer: Getter Jaani

Title: *Rockefeller Street*

Songwriter: Sven Lõhmus

After two semi-finals ten acts decided by the 50/50 jury and televoting method, went through to the final. The winner was chosen by two rounds of voting. In the first round the top two songs were chosen by jury/televoting, while the public vote decided on the overall winner. Getter Jaani was certainly a worthy winner – *Rockefeller Street* is a very colourful uptempo contemporary pop effort. It should sail into the final and is a potential dark horse winner.



Eesti Laul 2011		26th February 2011	
Song	Performer	Result	
<i>Rockefeller Street</i>	Getter Jaani	17	62%
<i>I Wanna Meet Bob Dylan</i>	Outloudz	17	38%
First round non-qualifiers			
<i>Valss</i>	Orelipoiss	16	
<i>Don't Want Anything</i>	Jana Kask	13	
<i>Hopa'pa-rei!</i>	Ithaka Maria	12	
<i>Baby Had You</i>	Victoria	11	
<i>Smile</i>	MID	9	
<i>All & Now</i>	Rolf Roosalu	8	
<i>Be My Saturday Night</i>	Noorkuu	4	
<i>The Storm</i>	Mimicry	3	

FINLAND

Performer: Paradise Oskar**Title:** *Da Da Dam***Songwriter:** Axel Ehnström

After three semi-finals, ten acts (nine chosen by televoting and the tenth as a wildcard decided by a jury) went through to the final. The winner was chosen in two rounds of televoting – the first to select the top three acts, and the second round to decide on the winner. Obviously hoping to emulate Belgium's Tom Dice from last year, the Finns chose a solo male singing a simple song with his guitar (and subtle background music). Maybe they connected with the weirdly named Paradise Oskar. The song, *Da Da Dam* has an ecological theme. Let's hope PO can help save our poor planet. Yes, a pleasant little tune, which has been beefed up musically to give it more 'oomph'. But fret not, the message is still there. Make sure you switch off the lights when this is on and light a candle instead. Might as well get in the mood. (Wonder if Anna Bergendahl has any glow-sticks left?)



Laulukilpailu 12th Feb 2011

Song	Performer	Result
<i>Da Da Dam</i>	Paradise Oskar	47%
<i>Blessed With Love</i>	Saara Aalto	41%
<i>Good Enough</i>	Father McKenzie	12%
<i>Rapture In Time</i>	Cardiant	
<i>Täältä Maailmaan</i>	Sami Hintsanen	
<i>Luojani Mun</i>	Johanna Iivanainen	
<i>Dancing In The Dark</i>	Eveliina Määttä	
<i>Synkän Maan Tango</i>	Marko Maunuksela	
<i>Sydämeni Kaksi Maata</i>	Milana Misis	
<i>Pamela</i>	Stala & So.	

FRANCE

Performer: Amaury Vassili**Title:** *Sognu (Dream)***Songwriters:** Daniel Moyne, Quentin Bachelet, Jean-Pierre Marcellesi, Julie Miller

Blimey, the French are taking the show seriously again this year! They preselected a young operatic singer to present them in Düsseldorf – and he's rather good. Amaury Vassili has already had a hit album in France aged just 21. *Sognu* will be sung in Corsican (an Italian dialect spoken in the French island of Corsica) and is apparently a bolero-style composition. And it's a very impressive song indeed – as is the performance. It's widely tipped as a winner, but it should be remembered that opera-style songs haven't done that well in Eurovision before. And who knows what your ordinary Eurovision viewer will make of this. But it deserves all the success it gets (France haven't won since 1977). Bravo!



GEORGIA

Performer: Eldrine

Title: *One More Day*

Songwriters: DJ BÈ\$\$, DJ Rock, Mikheil Chelidze

Ten songs were selected for the Georgian final, but only eight acts performed. The winner was decided by the 50/50 jury and televoting method. Only the winner was announced, which turned out to be the group Eldrine singing *One More Day*. Soon after, however, the group's management choice to replace lead singer Tako Vadachkoria with Sopho Toroshelidze. A wise choice as Sopho seems a more polished singer, with definitely less screeching. The song is very much a modern electro-rock offering with a bit of rap thrown in for good measure. But even that can't spoil this rather impressive catchy effort.



Georgian Final 19th Feb 2011

Song	Performer	Result
<i>One More Day</i>	Eldrine	1st
<i>Rejected</i>	Nini Shermadini	
<i>Am Akhal Dghes</i>	November & Dito Lagvilava	
<i>Love</i>	Salome Korkotashvili	
<i>Jariskatsis Simghera</i>	Temo Sajaia	
<i>Loved, Seen, Dreaming</i>	The Georgians	
<i>Face To Face</i>	Sweet Pills	

GERMANY

Performer: Lena Meyer-Landrut

Title: *Taken By A Stranger*

Songwriters: Gus Seyffert, Nicole Morier, Monica Birkenes

She's back! Germany's heroine from last year hopes to do the double. Six songs, three from each of the two semi-finals, were selected by televoting to go to the final. Lena performed all of the songs and the voting took part in two stages. The first stage was to select the top two songs that would compete with each other. The German public voted by a substantial majority to send *Taken By A Stranger*, an uptempo-electro style offering as their entry to Eurovision this year. While the song may not have the appeal of last year's winner, *Satellite*, it does have a certain uniqueness that is very much Lena's trademark. Many think that Lena can produce the double – never say never at Eurovision!



Final 18th February 2011

Song	Result
<i>Taken By A Stranger</i>	79% 1st
<i>Push Forward</i>	21% 2nd
<i>A Million And One</i>	
<i>Mama Told Me</i>	
<i>Maybe</i>	
<i>What Happened To Me</i>	

GREECE

Performer: Loucas Yiorkas feat. Stereo Mike

Title: *Watch My Dance*

Songwriters: Giannis Christodouloupoulos, Eleana Vrachali

The Greeks have had great success at the contest this century and no doubt they're hoping their good luck will continue. The winning song was decided by the 50/50 jury and televoting system with only the winner being announced. *Watch My Dance* is a strange combination of powerful classic Greek style, sung by the talented Loucas Yiorkas, with rap performed by London-based music tutor Stereo Mike. The jury is out as to whether the mesh of the two genres works (it doesn't), but there's no denying the song will have wide appeal, so should get to the final. Despite the title of the song, there isn't much dancing really – but sit back and enjoy the ethnic parts of the song.



Greek Final 2nd March 2011

Song	Performer	Result
<i>Watch My Dance</i>	Loukas Giorkas feat. Stereo Mike	1st
<i>Come With Me</i>	Kokkina Halia	
<i>I Don't Wanna Dance</i>	Nikki Ponte	
<i>It's All Greek To Me</i>	Antigoni Psychrami	
<i>The Time Is Now</i>	Valanto Trifonos	
<i>Hamogela</i>	Triimitonio	

HUNGARY

Performer: Kati Wolf

Title: *What About My Dreams?*

Songwriters: Viktor Rakonczai, Gergő Rác, Péter Geszti, Johnny K. Palmer

And welcome back to Hungary after a year's absence. And boy are they back! The national broadcaster preselected via a special panel their performer and song in the shape of Kati Wolf singing *What About My Dreams?* The song is a powerful rock/pop number that gets better with every hearing. It ticks all the boxes of being a classic Eurovision tune and Kati Wolf, on the evidence of the official video, knows how to deliver the song. If all goes to plan, this song should give Hungary a good placing in Düsseldorf, though you can never expect the viewers to do the right thing!



ICELAND

Performer: Sjonni's Friends**Title:** *Coming Home***Songwriters:** Sjonni Brink, Thorunn Clausen

Three semi-finals were meant to have produced two songs each to go forward to the national final. However, with the death of composer/singer Sjonni Brink, three songs from the third semi-final went through – with Sjonni's composition being sung by a group of his friends. The winning song was decided by televoting, and was indeed convincingly won by Sjonni's Friends. Only the top two places were announced. Many observers think that the Icelanders voted with their hearts rather than their heads, but *Coming Home* is a cheerful swing/showtime style of song, which will offer some diversity in Düsseldorf.

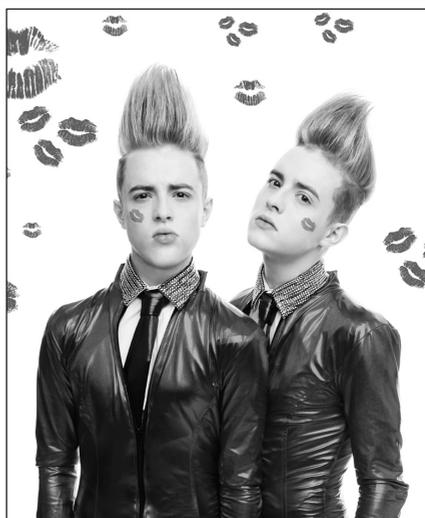
Icelandic Final		12th Feb 2011
Song	Performer	Result
<i>Aftur Heim</i>	Sjonni's Friends	25,449
<i>Ég Trúi A Betra Líf</i>	Magni Ásgeirsson	18,506
<i>Ástin Mín Eina</i>	Erna Hrönn Ólafsdóttir	
<i>Ef Eg Hefði Vængi</i>	Haraldur Reynisson	
<i>Nótt</i>	Jóhanna Guðrún Jónsdóttir	
<i>Ég Lofa</i>	Jógvan Hansen	
<i>Eldgos</i>	Matthías Matthíasson & Erla Björg Káradóttir	



IRELAND

Performer: Jedward**Title:** *Lipstick***Songwriters:** Daniel Priddy, Lars Halvor Jensen, Martin Michael Larsson

Eeeeeek! Yes, it's true! Those wacky twins from X Factor are representing Ireland! They narrowly won their final which was decided by two-thirds of regional jury voting with the remaining third by televoting. Nikki Kavanagh led the regional juries, but the viewing public overturned that decision. It shouldn't have come as a surprise as the gruesome twosome are immensely popular with younger viewers. And their singing isn't that bad! Another truth is that *Lipstick* is a catchy contemporary pop song that should get the



lacquered-haired wonders to the final. They've had plenty of experience performing live on X Factor, and their mentor Louie Walsh has always claimed that he recognised a Eurovision song. For once he may be right. Let's wish our nearest neighbours the best of luck – but not enough to win of course. (We want that honour!)

Irish Final		11th February 2011
Song	Performer	Result
<i>Lipstick</i>	Jedward	98
<i>Falling</i>	Nikki Kavanagh	96
<i>Talking With Jennifer</i>	Don Mescall	68
<i>Send Me An Angel</i>	The Vard Sisters	54
<i>Shine On</i>	Bling	44

ISRAEL

Performer: Dana International

Title: *Ding Dong*

Songwriters: Dana International

Ding Dong! Dana calling! All hail the Queen of Eurovision! The ultimate diva is back! The Israelis have a very different style of voting for their national final. 48 percent of the voting is decided by the public, 40 percent by a professional jury and 12 percent from three sets of 'fans' – Israeli Defence Force Soldiers, Israel Song Fan Group and OGAE Israel. The voters decided to reward a previous Eurovision winner with the golden ticket to Düsseldorf with her self-penned *Ding Dong*. Perhaps not the most sensible of titles, but it does suit the simplicity of the lyrics and music of this uptempo pop number. Emotion seems to have been the reason why Dana International won this contest, as the show featured many fine and more serious songs. Still, nothing can beat a happy melody. It remains to be seen if the diva can repeat a winning performance, but she should reach the final with ease. And the years have been kind to Ms International!



Kdam		8th March 2011
Song	Performer	Result
<i>Ding Dong</i>	Dana International	270
<i>It's My Time</i>	Idit Halevi	235
<i>Al Ahava</i>	Adi Cohen	219
<i>Or</i>	Chen Aharoni	142
<i>Amri Itach</i>	Niki Goldstein	137
<i>Tu Du Du</i>	Michael & Shimrit Greylsummer	131
<i>Hako! Sababa</i>	Hatikva 6	105
<i>Ohev Et Ze</i>	Knob	80
<i>Nosa'at El Ga'agu'ay</i>	Carmel Eckman	66
<i>Kach Oti</i>	Sivan Bahnem	65

ITALY

Performer: Raphael Gualazzi**Title:** *Madness Of Love***Songwriters:** Raphael Gualazzi

Eurovisionland was shocked, stunned and pleased when it was announced that Italy was returning to the contest after 14 years! Originally it was thought that their X Factor winner was going to represent the nation in Düsseldorf, but this wasn't so. It was then thought that the winner from the hugely popular San Remo Festival would be the representative. Fans across the continent were glued to the final of the show for the result. The San Remo show was a strange affair – somewhat overlong and seemingly stuck in the 1970s in its presentation style. Throughout the evening performances came and went, before out of the blue it was announced that Raphael Gualazzi had won the newcomers jury vote (and apparently the televoting as well) and would be going to Eurovision with his self-composed *Madness Of Love*. As you would expect from Italy, the song is well crafted and serious, but it's in a genre that will challenge the majority of Eurovision viewers – jazz. But let's hope it does well to convince the nation that they should come back to the fold permanently. As least they qualify straight to final as the new Big Five, on account of the funds they contribute to the EBU. Bentornato!



LATVIA

Performer: Musiqq**Title:** *Angel In Disguise***Songwriter:** Marats Ogleznevs

After three semi-finals 11 hopefuls went through to the final. The winner was chosen by the 50/50 jury and televoting method – and just to confuse the rest of us, points were awarded in terms of placing; eg. first place got one point etc. The voting was in two rounds. The first to choose three acts that would compete with each other for the top prize. And that prize – a ticket to Düsseldorf – went to Musiqq, a sort of R'n'B/Hip-Hop duet. *Angel in Disguise* is actually quite poppy and does have that Latvian pop sound that we've used to. It may struggle to get to the final, but who knows – it's trendy enough.



Eirodziesma		26th February 2011	
Song	Performer	Result	
Second round			
<i>Angel In Disguise</i>	Musiqq	3	2
<i>Banjo Laura</i>	Lauris Reiniks	3	4
<i>You Are</i>	Pienenu Vins	7	6
First round results			
<i>Daylight</i>	D-Family	11	
<i>Don't Stop The Dance</i>	Evija Sloka	11	
<i>Let It Be Me</i>	Janis Stibelis	11	
<i>Hop</i>	Blitze	13	
<i>Look Back At Me Again</i>	Elina Krastina-Grence	17	
<i>Cinderella</i>	Ivo Grisinš-Grislis	17	
<i>Live On!</i>	Oksana Lepska	17	
<i>Summer Night</i>	The Secretz	22	

LITHUANIA

Performer: Evelina Sašenko

Title: *C'est Ma Vie (It's My Life)*

Songwriters: Paulius Zdanavičius, Andrius Kairys

After three semi-finals, 13 acts went through to the final. The show was in two stages. In the first part three acts were put through to the second round by the 50/50 jury and televoting method, but the winning act was selected by the jury. They were probably more impressed by Evelina Sašenko's powerful voice than, perhaps, the song. *C'est Ma Vie* is a simple classical style ballad – pleasant, but nothing really special to guarantee it reaching the final. Still, Evelina comes from Polish/Ukrainian stock, which can only be an advantage.

Lithuanian Final 24th Feb 2011		
Song	Performer	Result
Second round		
<i>C'est Ma Vie</i>	Evelina Sašenko	24 168
<i>Floating To You</i>	Linas Adomaitis	18 134
<i>Break Free</i>	Ruta Šciogolevaitė	14 118
First round results		
<i>Days Go By</i>	Monika	12
<i>Let Me</i>	Donny Montell	10
<i>Lauki</i>	Liepa	9
<i>The Slogan Of Our Nation</i>	Sasha Song	6
<i>Candy Baby</i>	Urte Šilagalys	6
<i>7th Bus</i>	The Independent	5
<i>Freedom Of Mind</i>	Vigroses	4
<i>Best Friends</i>	Donny Montell & Sasha Song	3
<i>Tomorrow And After</i>	Martynas Beinaris	3
<i>Be My Baby</i>	Viktorija Ivaškevičiute	2



MACEDONIA, FYR

Performer: Vlatko Ilievski

Title: *Rusinka (Russian Girl)*

Songwriter: Grigor Koprov, Vladimir Dojchinovski, Marko Marinkovikj-Slatkaristika, Jovan Jovanov

Skopje Fest		27th Feb 2011
Song	Performer	Result
<i>Rusinka</i>	Vlatko Ilievski	24
<i>Ram Tam Tam</i>	Martin Srbinoski	13
<i>Sekoj Den</i>	Offside	11
<i>Ne Mi Trebaš</i>	Natalija Slaveva	10
<i>Ludost</i>	Zdravka Mircevska	10
<i>Znaeš Li</i>	Angelina Stojanoska	8
<i>Božji Pateki</i>	Lidija Kocovska	7
<i>Greška</i>	Nataša Malinkova	7
<i>Te Krade Toj</i>	Bobo Mojsoski	7
<i>Posledna Pesna</i>	Amir Ibrahimovski & Art Sound	6
<i>Košmar Moj</i>	Ile Spasev	6
<i>Sekogaš Nekoј</i>	Filip Jordanovski	3
<i>Poveke Vredi</i>		
<i>Lažeš Deka Ne Boli</i>	Goran Kargov	3
<i>Na Kraj</i>	Olivera Gorgoska	1
<i>Kukuriku</i>	Rok Agresori	0
<i>Paranoja</i>	Emilija Gievska feat. Andrej Miske	0
<i>Kockar</i>	Ivan Jovanov & Denis Ex	0
<i>Ne Se Menuva</i>	Riste Tevdoski	0
<i>Ljubovta</i>		
<i>Ostavi Politika</i>	Skipi & Tajzi	0
<i>I Pojacaj Ton</i>		
<i>Ne Vrakaj Se</i>	Vodolija	0

As one Facebook commentator noted online “Watching the show is like being on Survivor!” Yes, the Macedonian final was a rather long affair (four hours and counting), with 20 acts. But eventually a winner emerged by the tried and tested 50/50 jury and televoting method. The former Yugoslav republic has put their trust in actor/composer/TV presenter/singer – the obviously versatile Vlatko Ilievski. *Rusinka* is an uptempo rock pop effort. It’s quite catchy and, as the title would suggest, it has a certain ‘Russian’ beat to it.



MALTA

Performer: Glen Vella

Title: *One Life*

Songwriters: Paul Giordimaina, Fleur Balzan

The small Mediterranean island held a semi-final where a jury (two-thirds of the vote) and televoters (one third) sent 16 acts from the 24 hopefuls to the final. The same voting percentage also chose the winner, but the jury this time consisted of international juries. It was a close contest, but Glen Vella got the golden ticket to Düsseldorf. He’s



Eurosong Final		12th February 2011
Song	Performer	Result
<i>One Life</i>	Glen Vella	90
<i>Finally</i>	Richard Edwards	88
<i>Over And Over</i>	Kurt Calleja	69
<i>No Surrender</i>	Fabrizio Faniello	57
<i>If I Could Do It All Again</i>	Raquela	46
<i>Moon Dance</i>	Baklava	45
<i>This Love</i>	Klinsmann Coleiro & Benjamin Darmanin	32
<i>Everybody Sing</i>	Wayne Micallef	23
<i>Movie In My Mind</i>	Claudia Faniello	19
<i>Numb</i>	Ally	15
<i>Topsy Turvy</i>	J. Anvil	15
<i>Hypnotized</i>	Eleanor Cassar	15
<i>Catch 22</i>	Amber	7
<i>He's A Demon</i>	Marilena feat. Michael	1
<i>Down Down Down</i>	Jessica Muscat	0
<i>Love Me Like Your Money</i>	Kelly Schembri	0

seems a very enthusiastic young man. *One Life* is very much an upbeat uptempo dance number. Sort of tires you out after a while! Malta is one of those countries that Eurovision fans would love to see win the contest. Probably may have to wait another year though.

MOLDOVA

Performer: Zdob și Zdub

Title: *So Lucky*

Songwriters: Mihai Gincu, Marc Elsner, Andy Schuman

There were over 90 songs in the Moldovan preselection process – and many of them weren't bad at all. 25 of them, voted online by the public, went through to the final. The winning act was chosen by the 50/50 jury and televoting method. Their representative in 2009, Natalia Barbu, was the runner up, but the winner of this year's final went to their first ever representative in 2005 – Zdob și Zdub. You may remember them for having 'grandma' on stage. She was nowhere to be seen in this performance though. Hopefully she's still alive. Anyway, will *So Lucky* turn out to be lucky for the band again? The song certainly contains lots of interesting elements – essentially a rock number – highlighting the diversity of the band. It definitely grows on you. The rockers ought to do well in their semi-final.



Moldovan Final		26th February 2011
Song	Performer	Result
<i>So Lucky</i>	Zdob si Zdub	20
<i>Let's Jazz</i>	Natalia Barbu	19
<i>Dorule</i>	Pasha Parfeny	16
<i>When Life Is Grey</i>	Karizma	13
<i>In Memoriam</i>	Millenium	13
<i>Break It Up</i>	Boris Covali & Cristina Croitoru	11
<i>This Is My Life</i>	Valeria Tarasova	7
<i>Înca Indragostit</i>	Aurel Chirtoaca	4
<i>Mi Rey!</i>	Mariana Mihaila	4
<i>Night Reflection</i>	M-Studio	3
<i>Ma Pierd Când O Vad</i>	Dumitru Socican	3
<i>Every Day Will Be Your Day</i>	Cristina Scarlat	2
<i>Si Tac</i>	Corina Cuniuc	1
<i>You And I</i>	Anisoara Balmus	0
<i>Viata</i>	Doinita Gherman	0
<i>Cu Fanfara Pina Dimineata</i>	Formatia Ion Krasnopolski	0
<i>Just Your Friend</i>	Nicoleta Gavrilita	0
<i>It's My First Dance With You</i>	Denis Latisev	0
<i>Always</i>	Vadim Luchin & Tamaz Djgarcava	0
<i>Lucky You Lucky Me</i>	Dana Marchitan	0
<i>Daca Dragoste Mai E</i>	Natan	0
<i>Doina, Dor Nemarginit</i>	Odry	0
<i>Love Song</i>	Diana Staver	0
<i>Lumina Mea</i>	Ruslan Taranu	0
<i>I Can Win The Game</i>	Adriana Volosenco	0

NETHERLANDS

Performers: 3JS

Title: *Never Alone*

Songwriters: Jaap Kwakman, Jan Dulles, Jaap de Witte

You have to feel for the Dutch – what do they have to do to get to the final?! After some light-hearted attempts in recent years, this time they've opted for

Dutch Final 30th January 2011	
Song	Result
<i>Je Vecht Nooit Alleen</i>	1st
<i>De Stroom</i>	2nd
<i>Ga Dan Niet</i>	3rd
<i>Weelderig Waardeloos</i>	4th
<i>Toen Ik Jou Vergat</i>	5th



a serious band – the popular 3JS – their name is based on the first letter of the band members' names. For the final they sang six self-composed songs. Using the 50/50 jury and televoting method *Je Vecht Nooit Alleen* was the choice of both voting groups. Since then, it was decided that the song should be sung in English (though some argue that it sounded better in Dutch). Listening to *Never Alone* you might feel slightly disappointed, as previous efforts by the band have sounded more impressive. The song does grow on you – it's a decent rock pop number – but might struggle on first listening to get out of the semi-final. It's a serious effort by the Dutch – and it would be good to see them in a final again.

NORWAY

Performer: Stella Mwangi

Title: *Haba Haba (Little By Little)*

Songwriter: Big City/Beyond51, Stella Mwangi

Four semi-finals produced eight songs for this year's Norwegian Melodi Grand Prix. The winner was chosen in two rounds of voting. In the first round televoting produced the top four songs. In the second round, the winner was chosen by the audience in the Spektrum (venue of the final), televoting and four regional juries. The beautiful Stella Mwangi emerged victorious in a landslide result. And you can't blame the Norwegians. *Haba Haba* is a contagious pop number that's going to get everyone in Düsseldorf on their feet. If you're going – wear sensible shoes! Stella's Nigerian roots are clearly evident in the song with the nice African rhythms. Another fairytale victory for Norway isn't beyond the realms of possibility.



Norsk Melodi Grand Prix

12th February 2011

Song	Performer	Result
<i>Haba Haba</i>	Stella Mwangi	280,217
<i>Dance Tonight</i>	The BlackSheeps	155,059
<i>Fire Below</i>	The Lucky Bullets	115,793
<i>Alt Du Vil Ha</i>	Sie Gubba	94,884
<i>Not That Easy (Ah-Ah-Ah-Ah)</i>	Åste & Rikke	
<i>Depend On Me</i>	Babel Fish	
<i>Vardlokk</i>	Helene Bøksle	
<i>You're Like A Melody</i>	Hanne Sørvaag	

POLAND

Performer: Magdalena Tul**Title:** *Jestem (I Am)***Songwriter:** Magdalena Tul

Ten acts fought it out with much love on St. Valentine's Day at the Polish final. The event was held in a large shopping mall full of young hipsters. The outcome was decided entirely by televoting with Magdalena Tul winning by a landslide with her self-composed *Jestem*. The song is a pleasant bouncy dance number – and is all the better for being sung in Polish. Magdalena is an accomplished performer (and very good-looking) who ought to do well in her semi-final.

Krajowe Eliminacje		14th Feb 2011
Performer	Song	Result (%)
Magdalena Tul	<i>Jestem</i>	44.47%
Anna Gogola	<i>Ktos Taki Jak Ty</i>	22.57%
Alizma	<i>Bow To The Bow</i>	12.76%
The Trash	<i>Things Go Better With Rock</i>	4.56%
SheMoans	<i>Supergirl</i>	3.56%
Ajda Fijal	<i>Hot Like Fire</i>	3.30%
ZoSia	<i>Scream Out Louder</i>	2.92%
Roan	<i>Maybe</i>	2.20%
Formula RC	<i>Ja, Ty I Ty I Ja</i>	1.80%
IKA	<i>Say</i>	0.76%



PORTUGAL

Performer: Homens Da Luta**Title:** *Luta É Alegria (The Struggle Is Joy)***Songwriters:** Vasco Duarte, Jel

An online semi-final was held in Portugal where the public could vote for one out of 24 acts. 12 acts were meant to go through to the final, but two were disqualified for breaching the rules. At the final the winner was decided by 50 percent of votes from the public and 50 percent cent from 20 regional juries. Yes, it was a long night. Viewers of the show might have wondered why the frontrunners from the juries were perhaps the least impressive of the choices. However, all that was about to change when the public vote came in. Out of the blue, Homens Da Luta leapfrogged to the top! Obviously *Luta É*



Alegria – The Struggle Is Joy – touched a cord with the public, who seem to have a sense of humour. *Homens da Luta* which means ‘Men of the Struggle’ is described as a collective of traditional Portuguese music of an interventionist style. Basically a good-humoured protest song – a tribute to the country as it emerged out of fascist rule in the 1970s. Widely rumoured to do badly at Eurovision, Portugal has had success reaching the final these past few years. The song actually has a good feel about it with a fine toe-tapping anthemic tune. Viva la Revolution!

Festival da Canção 5th March 2011		
Performer	Song	Result
<i>A Luta E Alegria</i>	Homens da Luta	18
<i>São Os Barcos De Lisboa</i>	Nuno Norte	17
<i>Em Nome Do Amor</i>	Rui Andrade	15
<i>Embaló Do Coração</i>	7 Saías	10
<i>Tensão</i>	Filipa Ruas	10
<i>Quase A Voar</i>	Henrique Feist	10
<i>Deixa O Meu Lugar</i>	Inês Bernardo	10
<i>O Mar, O Vento E As Estrelas</i>	Ricardo Sousa	10
<i>Chegar A Tua Voz</i>	Wanda Stuart	10
<i>Se Esse Dia Chegar</i>	Tânia Tavares	7
<i>Sobrevivo</i>	Carla Moreno	5
<i>Boom Boom Yeah</i>	Axel	1

ROMANIA

Performer: Hotel FM

Title: *Change*

Songwriter: Gabriel Băruța, Alexandra Ivan

The Romanian final featured 13 songs – unlucky for some, but not for Hotel FM who won the contest – on New Year’s Eve in fact! What a way to start the year! They were the clear winners from the 50/50 jury and televoting system. Hotel FM tried their luck last year, but obviously *Change* had that little bit extra for them. There’s nothing uniquely special about this eco-message pop song, but its strength lies in its simplicity and toe-tapping catchy tune. It should get to the final without much difficulty. And if you think the English sounds good, that’s because the lead singer, David Bryan, is British y’know. That’s right – British. Just a hint as to who you may consider voting for...



Romanian Final		31st December 2010
Song	Performer	Result
<i>Change</i>	Hotel FM	22
<i>Cinema Love</i>	Directia 5	17
<i>Open Your Eyes</i>	Distinto, Ianna & Anthony Icuagu	17
<i>Bang Bang</i>	Mihai Alexandru feat. B-Body & Soul	16
<i>We Can Change The World</i>	Laurentiu Cazan	12
<i>Dreaming Of You</i>	Leticia	10
<i>It's So Fine</i>	Blaxy Girls	6
<i>One By One</i>	Adi Cristescu	4
<i>My Facebook Girl</i>	Dan Helciug	4
<i>Song For Him</i>	Dalma	3
<i>I Want U To Want Me</i>	Claudia Pavel	3
<i>I Can't Breathe Without You</i>	Silvia Stefanescu	2
<i>Take Me Down</i>	Rallsa	0

RUSSIA

Performer: Alexej Vorobjov

Title: *Get You*

Songwriter: Alexej Vorobjov, RedOne, AJ Junior, Bilal "The Chef", Eric Sanicola



Ah yes, time for one of the heavy hitters. For a while it looked like Russia would be holding a big final as usual, but the broadcaster decided instead on an internal selection. Hence, rising star Alexej Vorobjov was chosen to represent Eurovision's largest country in Düsseldorf. Besides being a singer/composer, young Alexej is also a well-known actor. He's been placed under the care of famous international record producer, RedOne. *Get You* is a decent uncomplicated pop song, which probably relies more on Alexej's personality than perhaps on the music. Nevertheless, this will naturally do well.

SAN MARINO

Performers: Senit

Title: *Stand By*

Songwriter: Radiosa Romani



It's good to see the tiny nation back after a short absence. The national broadcaster preselected their entrant, Senit, an experienced international singer with Eritrean origins. *Stand By* is an interesting composition – a rock pop ballad, nicely interpreted by Senit. However, traditionally this style of song has found it difficult to get out of the semi-finals, but the singer's professionalism should shine through.

SERBIA

Performers: Nina

Title: *Čaroban (Magical)*

Songwriter: Kristina Kovač



Only three acts took part in the Serbian final this year (but featured loads of guests from the Balkans). The runaway victor was decided by SMS voting. Nina is a good looking performer with decent vocal control. The song doesn't seem

easy to sing, but she does a convincing job. The song isn't exactly 'magical' as the title suggests, but has an interesting psychedelic feel to it. It's probably one of those songs that you either love or hate!

Serbian Final		26th Feb 2011
Song	Performer	Result
<i>Caroban</i>	Nina	14,900
<i>Idemo Dalje</i>	Aleksandra Kovac	5,994
<i>Ring Ring Ring</i>	The Breeze	4,049

SLOVAKIA

Performers: TWiiNS

Title: *I'm Still Alive*

Songwriters: Bryan Todd, Sandra Nordstrom, Branislav Jancich

Are the EBU trying to make us see double? If one set of twins wasn't enough, here we have another! Will it be fisti-cuffs at dawn? No offence to Jedward, but the smart money would be on Daniela and Veronika! Slovakia has produced some classy products for Eurovision these past few years (last year's in fact was a firm fan favourite), but they struggled to get to the finals. Hence this year, they've gone for an internal selection – well it saved money, as the country nearly withdrew from the contest because of budget restraints. But they've selected wisely – because these twins are very good singers, and their chosen song *I'm Still Alive* should see them to the final this time as it's very much a contemporary ballad with a nice melody.



SLOVENIA

Performers: Maja Keuc

Title: *No One*

Songwriters: Matjaž Vlašič, Urša Vlašič

Ten songs entered the Slovenian final, and the winner was chosen in two rounds. In the first, a professional jury put through two acts to go head-to-head, where televoting decided on the winner. And that came in the form of Maja Keuc who convincingly won with *Vanilija*, but will now apparently be sung in English. Bit of a pity as this powerful sung ballad with a soul influence sounded better in Slovenian. Anyway, Ms Keuc certainly can belt this song out – certainly a classy act, but it does lack originality, so may struggle at the semi-final. The country hasn't had much luck getting into the final of late, so let's wish them good luck.



EMA		27th February 2011
Song	Performer	Result
<i>Vanilija</i>	Maja Keuc	28,908
<i>Ladadidej</i>	April	11,993
<i>Disko Raj</i>	Feliks Langus	
<i>Slovenka</i>	LeeLo,Jamais	
<i>Bilo Lepo Bi</i>	Nina Pušlar	
<i>Bistvo Skrito Je Ocem</i>	Omar Naber	
<i>Time For Revolution</i>	Rock Partyzani	
<i>Ti Si Tisti</i>	Sylvain, Mike Vale & Hannah Mancini	
<i>Moje Luci</i>	Tabu	
<i>Pravi Cas</i>	Time to Time	

SPAIN

Performer: Lucía Pérez

Title: *Que Me Quiten Lo Bailao - They Can't Take The Fun Away From Me*

Songwriter: Rafael Artesero

After two quarter-finals and a semi-final, three performers progressed to the final to battle it out for the grand prize. The winner was chosen in two rounds of voting. In the first round a professional jury selected the best song for each singer. In the second round the winner was chosen by televoting. Lucía Pérez was the preferred performer singing *Que Me Quiten Lo Bailao*. The acts and songs were of a high standard, and the winning song is your usual Spanish fare - fun and bouncy. One of the better dance numbers to have come out of the country in ages. And when Lu sings you can't take the fun away from her, she probably means it! It'll be nice to see Spain get a good result this year.

Spanish Final 18th February 2011		
Song	Performer	Result
Superfinal		
<i>Que Me Quiten Lo Bailao</i>	Lucía Pérez	68%
<i>Eos</i>	Melissa	
<i>Volver</i>	Auryn	
First round non-qualifiers		
<i>El Sol Brillará</i>	Auryn	
<i>Evangelyne</i>	Auryn	
<i>Diamonds</i>	Melissa	
<i>Sueños Rotos</i>	Melissa	
<i>Abrázame</i>	Lucía Pérez	
<i>C'est La Vie! It's Allright</i>	Lucía Pérez	



SWEDEN

Performer: Eric Saade

Title: *Popular*

Songwriters: Fredrik Kempe

Melodifestival was as usual an event in itself! After failing to reach the final last year, there was probably a lot of anguish and despair. But it was back to business this year. After a quarter-final featuring a 'web-joker', two songs went through to the semi-final. There were five semi-finals in total, one show featuring second-chancers. Eventually ten acts made it through to the grand final. The Swedes were given a good mixture of songs to choose from this year – and of a reasonable standard. The winner was chosen by 50 percent of televoting, with



Melodifestival		12th March 2011
Song	Performer	Result
<i>Popular</i>	Eric Saade	193
<i>In The Club</i>	Danny	149
<i>Oh My God!</i>	The Moniker	124
<i>I'm In Love</i>	Sanna Nielsen	114
<i>Me And My Drum</i>	Swingfly	93
<i>The King</i>	The Playtones	79
<i>E Det Fel På Mej</i>	Linda Bengtzing	58
<i>Leaving Home</i>	Nicke Borg	57
<i>Spring För Livet</i>	Sara Varga	50
<i>7 Days And 7 Nights</i>	Brolle	29

the remaining 50 percent coming from 11 international juries. The winner turned out to be the popular Eric Saade singing in fact, *Popular*. Last year, the young lad came third in the national final, so he may have had the sympathy vote here. But nevertheless, the song is memorable and an excellent uptempo dance track. Schlager fans will be delighted with the result. But let's hope Eric is popular enough to pass through the semi-final stage.

SWITZERLAND

Performer: Anna Rossinelli

Title: *In Love For A While*

Songwriters: David Klein

The Swiss held the first national final to find a representative to Düsseldorf. 12 acts competed for that honour and the winner was decided by televoting. The lovely Anna Rossinelli has been charged with the task of getting the nation out of the semi-final doldrums (despite having fan favourites in recent years). She's certainly got a soulful voice and the song is best described as a breezy happy pop tune. It may however struggle to get to the final, but nothing is certain these days, so let's wish them luck. It'll certainly make Lys Assia happy!

Final 11th December 2010		
Song	Performer	Result
<i>In Love For A While</i>	Anna Rossinelli	23.93%
<i>Confidence</i>	Bernarda Brunovic	13.36%
<i>Home</i>	Ilira & The Colors	13.05%
<i>Gib Nid Uf</i>	CH	11.73%
<i>Come What May</i>	The Glue	8.21%
<i>Just Me</i>	Sarah Burgess	7.07%
<i>Sur Les Pavés</i>	Aliose	6.49%
<i>Up To You</i>	Polly Duster	4.36%
<i>Drop Of Drizzle</i>	Andrina	3.03%
<i>Barbie Doll</i>	Scilla	2.88%
<i>Waiting For Ya</i>	Duke	2.66%
<i>Il Ritmo Dentro Di Noi</i>	Dominique Borriello	2.33%



TURKEY

Performer: Yüksek Sadakat**Title:** *Live It Up***Songwriters:** Kutlu Özmakinaci, Ergün Arsal

Turkey have been impressive in this new century – first a winner and last year as runner-up. So who could possibly outdo the excellent maNga? The national broadcaster decided to go with another popular Turkish band, Yüksek Sadakat. They are basically a rock band but with pop and ethnic overtones. They have obviously gone a bit ‘populist’ with *Live It Up*, which is a decent effort. The country has never struggled to get into the finals, but they may possibly find the task a bit harder this year. Fans of belly-dancing may have to wait another year.



UKRAINE

Performer: Mika Newton**Title:** *Angel***Songwriters:** Ruslan Kvinta, Maryna Skomorohova

Oh boy, here we go again! After last year’s debacle, we could’ve expected a smoother ride this time, but the whole procedure got into a bit of a mess again. But before all that, the Ukrainian search for their representative to Düsseldorf was a long process. After five quarter-finals and three semi-finals and various withdrawals, 19 acts performed at the final. Two were actually disqualified, but out of the remaining 17, the winner was decided by a jury (45 percent of the vote), SMS voting (45 percent) and internet voting (ten percent). Mika Newton emerged as the winner singing *Angel*. Then the saga began! Two days after the final, one of the jury members asked for the votes to be checked. The televoting system apparently threw up some discrepancies. Smelling a rat, the broadcaster opted for another national final on 3rd March. Mika Newton in fact wanted to go to Düsseldorf with an entirely different song! So much for believing in your product! Anyway, the top three acts from the discredited final were instead set to battle it out again. However, both Zlata Ognevič and Jamala for various reasons withdrew. So, it was decided that Mika Newton would in fact be representing the country in Eurovision! And to keep her happy, *Angel* would be revamped. In all honestly it probably wasn’t worth it, as many agree that the original soulful version was better. Ms Newton is a powerful singer, but the song is a bit overpowering in places. It contains a strong message though.



Ukrainian Final		26th February 2011
Song	Performer	Result
<i>Angel</i>	Mika Newton	21.00
<i>The Kukushka</i>	Zlata Ognevich	18.04
<i>Smile</i>	Jamala	17.02
<i>Ave Maria</i>	Ivan Berezovskiy	14.00
<i>Infinity</i>	Dasha Medova	14.65
<i>Myself</i>	Matias	13.02
<i>Berega</i>	Eduard Romanyuta	12.09
<i>Action</i>	Anastasiya Prihodko	12.02
<i>Why Did I Say Goodbye</i>	Alyona Korneeva	11.65
<i>Goodbye</i>	Mila Nitich	10.09
<i>My Hope</i>	El Kravchuk	9.08
<i>Love</i>	Vladislav Levitskiy	9.06
<i>Eyo lmya</i>	Bahroma	8.55
<i>Aces High</i>	Denis Povaliy	7.55
<i>Superhero (U-La-La)</i>	Zaklyopki	7.00
<i>Hero</i>	Zhemchug	5.06
<i>Tsvetok</i>	Shanis	5.05
<i>My Expression</i>	Vitaliy Galay	DQ
<i>Vse Resheno</i>	Tetyana Vorzheva	DQ

UNITED KINGDOM

Performer: Blue

Title: *I Can*

Songwriters: Ciaron Bell, Ben Collier, Ian Hope, Duncan James, Liam Keenan, Lee Ryan, StarSign

vision has a policy of supporting our representative no matter the personal views of the editors, but this year we're pleased to say that we are extremely pleased with the act going to Düsseldorf. For the past few years the BBC has preselected the song written by well known personalities, but the public voted on the performer. This year, for the first time ever, the public had no choice over the song or performer. Perhaps wisely – as our track record, with one exception, hasn't been very successful in recent years. But the BBC's choice was inspired. They asked the recently re-formed singing group, Blue, to represent the UK and organise the song. The group took their time revealing the song, which was eventually debuted on the Graham Norton Show. The wait was well worth it. *I Can* is an uptempo anthemic contemporary song that ticks all the right boxes and hits all the right notes. Even those who have little time for 'boy-bands', have to admit that all the members of Blue know how to sing! Let's wish the band all the best for a successful result. Britain expects gentlemen, Britain expects!



Many thanks to eurovision.tv, esctoday.com and natfinals.50webs.com for additional source material. Please see the latter if you would like more details about the quarter-finals and semi-finals.

VIEWPOINT

Vision asked some old stalwarts their views on this year's entries

Hassan Yusuf

Okay, you've just read my (hopefully) unbiased views, but what do I really think about this year's contest so far? Having had to listen to the songs more than once, I'm pleased to say that this year has turned out to be quite decent. I always figure that if I like more than four songs per contest, then I consider it a success. And there are plenty I love this year. Personally I think the top three will be between the UK, Azerbaijan and France – hopefully in that order! I think they're all superb songs. I guess my personal favourite is probably Georgia – despite my dislike for rap. And if they removed the rap from the Greek song, it would be excellent. I also have to admit that, unlike many, I love the Portuguese entry! I would love to see it in the final. And I'm really impressed by Denmark, Norway and Hungary as well. Biggest disappoint has to be Italy, as I really haven't got much time for jazz. And let's not mention Belgium...

Anyway, what did fellow OGAE UK members think? Edited unfortunately for space reasons.

Robin Scott

The national finals have all taken place and the songs have been chosen. Watching as many as I could it seemed like a number of broadcasters decided to shortlist songs that were unlikely to win in Düsseldorf. Maybe the global financial problems have affected the quality of entries allowed to their finals as few will have the money to host the contest in 2012? It certainly seemed like it.

At one time I was struggling to find

any song that grabbed my attention, with nothing sending that tingle up my spine.

During the week following the submissions deadline I took a break, and then watched them all to get a fresh perspective and here are my thoughts.

Surprisingly the bad, questionable and good are almost equally divided. In the first category there are some that, to say the least, are not going to have appeal outside their own country. Surely lauding Belarus is never going to be huge in Lisbon and, transversely the Portuguese entry's sentiments will be a mystery to those in Minsk. Perhaps Eurovision is going back to its roots where a song isn't meant to have universal appeal but be a true representative of each country's musical taste, but do these even fit that mould? Switzerland chose a nice little ditty but I am at a loss as to why a composer has to fill an instrumental bridge with la, la and lots more la's? Why not hum, whistle or even enjoy the music instead?

Malta has chosen a very enthusiastic song and performer. Nothing wrong with that but this entry is for a female diva. Glen gets 100 percent for his performance so let's hope that the staging is suitably OTT to match.

From the opposite perspective my hopes for the Russian entry, from that original mobile phone video, were somewhat deflated when I saw the professional version. Nice boy, good song, but something is missing.

Those at the top of my pile meet most of the following criteria, but not

necessarily all: quality, staying power and that the performers look interesting and sound good.

Ireland just about squeaks in as the song is unforgettable, but the staging and vocals will be the deciding factor. The twins can sometimes be best in small doses. Romania is so well performed but maybe a little dated. Denmark is a throwback to the 1970s but makes me feel very happy. Not forgetting Estonia which is unique but I can't remember the song afterwards.

Finally my top two, both from the now Big Five:

The UK. This is one of the best Royaume Uni's entries for many years and I love it. The vocals need a little tweaking but this performance has quality written all over it. I missed a national final but maybe the public doesn't always know best! Well done Auntie Beeb.

France. WOW. This song and performance DID give me that missing spine tingle that I mentioned earlier.

So my winner is a match played between France and UK.

Paul Marks-Jones

There seems to be lots of disappointment around this year's song selections. I agree a lot of Europe were on another planet when they selected their songs, but still, there's a few diamonds in the rough!

When Switzerland chose in December I thought "Mmm, pleasant – a bit like Colbie Callait" and I still think it's one of the better songs in 2011. Albania have provided my ethnic dose this year and contrary to many, I like it!

Other highlights are Serbia - I always

enjoy this 1960's pastiche sound and she's a very confident performer, so I hope to see it at least qualify. Both Hungary and Poland have given us a slice of dance-pop which is very enjoyable. And it's great to see Austria back with a Euro-friendly power-ballad. Plus Slovenia deserves a slot in the final after a few years away.

As for the Big Five – Spain, Germany and UK have strong contenders. France and Italy are also great, I just don't like them as much.

And at the other end of the table. Well I think Belgium will struggle for points as will Portugal and Lithuania.

Overall, it's a varied bunch and there's bound to be some shocks and surprises!

Martin Faulkner

Delighted to see the BBC finally go for an internal selection, considering how often the British public has shown itself incapable of making the right choice. Let's hope Blue do well enough to justify the risk – the song is certainly strong enough, but the performance will live and die on Lee's vocals. If anyone sees him out drinking in Düsseldorf at 3.00am, call him a taxi!

Not a bad year song-wise – the Big Five in particular really seem to be making an effort, but beyond that, the centre of gravity among the contenders looks decidedly eastern again. Could it finally be Azerbaijan's turn?

Paul Jordan

Norway: Perfectly pleasant song, I can see myself dancing away to this fuelled by a splash of alcohol. Not the best singer in the world but then neither is



Lena. Not sure it will be Oslo 2012 but wouldn't be gutted if it was.

Gemany: I detested Lena's song last year, starting to like it now. Love *Taken By A Stranger*. It's very different and can see this either winning by a mile or falling flat on it's face.

UK: Well done BBC! They FINALLY get it! A good act who can sing a decent, contemporary pop song. I think this is the strongest entry we've sent in a long time and I think (and hope) that we will be rewarded with our best result for years. You never know, it might even win!

Azerbaijan: I like this but if they couldn't win with their entries in 2009 and 2010 then I can't see this doing better. I might put a sneaky each way bet on just in case!

Belgium: Can't stand this sort of stuff – I thought we had heard the last of it after Latvia 2006!

Italy: I must be one of the few fans who doesn't really rate Italy's entries much. Not keen on this at all – can't stand jazz either. It's like music for people who don't like proper music!

Israel: Why do previous winners come back? Especially ones with a very weak song! Disappointed in this and can see it missing out on the final. Still it will be good fun having her around in Düsseldorf!

Estonia: Okay, I'm biased and say that I love Estonia's songs every year. I really do this year! It's catchy and modern, I can see this doing very well indeed. Expect tears of joy from me if it's Tallinn 2012!

Elaine Dove

My Stand Out Songs 2011:

Must start with *I Can* – UK 2011 – I think this is an excellent song by Blue – it's catchy and a good contemporary pop song. The performance on Graham

Norton was very professional and with a few tweaks here and there, this could be amazing. Decent draw for the song too – Go UK!

I love Estonia – *Rockefeller Street*. It is another instantly catchy song – I loved it from the minute I heard it. It's punchy and funky and has been played many a time on my playlist.

What can I say about Amaury Vassili with *Sognu* – I LOVE HIM. This is a fabulous operatic number from France. He has an outstanding voice and is very easy on the eye too – I feel that Elaine Vassily-Dove has a nice ring to it. Vassilli-Dove sounds like a new brand of shower gel!

Other songs in my list of favourites have to be Bosnia, Norway, Hungary, Denmark, Sweden, Spain, Russia and Azerbaijan – not bad for a contest that many people have been slating as a bad one. I'm really excited about it. What's not to love with Blue, Jedward and Dana International on the scene? I love many of this year's songs and I am happy with quite a few floor fillers.

Songs to be dismissed in my book – Belgium – I just don't get it – perhaps watching it live may change my view. Moldova – I can't ride a unicycle therefore it can never be a contender for my Stars in Your Eyes gig at Eurobash. Albania – I did not like the original version and I think the English translation is even worse.

Best of luck to everyone in Düsseldorf. but UK – BLUE – YAY!

Sharleen Wright

After what seemed like the longest national final selection ever, and a string of seemingly disappointing choices at the finals, I was starting to despair like many fans that 2011 could be the worst year ever. The truth of the matter is though, once the whole field was

announced, a few revamped versions released and my own self-imposed exile from Eurovision for a week I saw the contest in a whole new light. 2011 may just stand as one of the best years ever.

It has such a wide selection of genres covered, and the talent on show (for the most part) is absolutely high quality. At least 70 percent of what is on offer is very commercial and stands a good chance of heavy radio play across Europe, and I feel that could be the legacy of 2010 and Lena's win in Oslo: commercial success. If that trend proves right and successful it should leave Eurovision in very good shape for years, nay decades to come.

My mother (who has a history of predicting the winners) says it's Ireland all the way. While I think Ireland may get its best result in a decade, I don't think it's time yet to book my ticket to Dublin.

Amongst the strong bunch, I'm rating Bosnia, Denmark, Estonia, UK and France as very good chances.

Bosnia: Hard to put my finger on it, but this song has something magical about it. When the stomping and clapping kicks in I find it hard not to smile and join in. If I'm right, it might be one of only two Balkan qualifiers for the finals field, which should put it well in the running. Completely joyous; the more I listen, the more I think it has the potential to be an Olsen Brothers surprise.

Denmark: In a year that seems to have guitars-a-plenty, this tune stands out with a very commercial sound. The fact

that it features a rather charismatic and photogenic frontman certainly doesn't hurt its chances either. The hook in the chorus is catchy, but I think it is just missing one more bit of oomph towards the end which could take it from a top spot.

Estonia: This stands as one of the few instant songs in 2011 and it certainly looked great on stage in the Estonian national selections (no mean feat). On first listen I already had the chorus down-pat, and that's a very good sign the public will follow suit and remember

to vote this straight into a top five position.

UK: Is this the song the UK has been waiting for? Frankly, yes it IS the song that should change the opinions of many that the country can take it seriously and produce a good song. But a winner? I'm just not so certain. Based

on their previous popularity, their ability to perform in stadiums, the promotion around Europe singing their old tunes (very smart PR move) and a decent final draw are all pluses that should see them sail into the to top five. At least that is a solid good start to build on come event time.

France: The first time I heard this song stands as my only jaw dropping moment from the 2011 selections. My feelings from that first listen still remain – either this is an out-and-out winner or complete flop. Opera is hardly the popular choice for Eurovision, but I have a feeling this could do it. Remember before you all scoff – who voted for Paul Potts? Who and how many people buy Josh Groban albums?



France: New brand of shower gel beckons

Howard Newport

Austria: Something original. It's been a long time since a simple, stripped back song has got to Eurovision, and after watching the Austrian national final, I'm glad this won as the competition was rubbish. Saying that though, it looks like I'm about the only person who likes this simple song, as everyone expects it to exit and not make the final – I hope not.

Croatia: It's a shame that they have totally re-written the track as some of the lyrics were actually quiet good. Saying that, this song could go the way of Hungary 2009: a good song, but a bad performance on the night. I hope it gets into the final.

Estonia: A dark horse for me. If Eurovision gets the young viewers tuned in, I think this could make the final with ease. Getter has a great voice, and the fact that this is a contemporary song, with a great sound and on stage look – don't count this song out.

France: Who would of thought that Eurovision would see opera? A great song, nice and simple, that could easily storm to a win!

Germany: The second of the Big Five that could win! Though the song is not very different from last year's track, it's so catchy, and will stick in the heads of viewers. There's a chance that Germany can to the double here and win again.

Ireland: Gotta love Jedward, who, with their last slot in the semi, might just make it to the final. I don't think that it will win, but well done Ireland for adding fun to this year's contest.

Israel: Ding-Dong-Dana! Great to see a familiar face. A quirky song that will get into the final, but won't win. I keep being drawn to this song as it's just different!

Italy: Jazz at Eurovision? I've never been a fan of Italian entries, so for me it's "Welcome back but better luck next year!"

Netherlands: Another dark horse. With 3JS's strong vocals, a catchy tune and hopefully no gimmicks – this could be another winner. The songs key change will be popular with fans and viewers alike, as this circa 1980s power ballad will hopefully get the high ranking that I think it should receive.

Norway: A difficult one this, as it really could go either way. It appeals to the football fans as it's like "Waka Waka" from last year's World Cup, but once again, the energy behind it should see it in to the final – I just hope the vocals improve from the Melodi Grand Prix version.

Serbia: I'm so glad that this song is to be sung in English. It's great! A real swinging sixties track and something that seems to have arrived at Eurovision 50 years too late. Serbia is a great country that always tries to win and, although they won't this year in my opinion, they have still sent a great stand out track.

Slovakia: Our second set of twins in this year's contest. Though I'm not bowled over by the track, I honestly think that there is something to this song, as I just keep playing it. I could see it getting into the final this year.

Sweden: I was disappointed in the quality of this year's Melodifestivalen songs, and for me Danny should have won. However the fast pace of this year's entry (and the smashing stage show) should see it do better than last year's national disaster which saw the first Sweden-less final for many years.

United Kingdom: THANK YOU BBC FOR LISTENING! I never thought that I would see the day when the BBC actually put effort into our entry – and boy, am I glad. A great artist selection in Blue, a half decent song that people aren't writing off already, and a real chance. A good performance on the night, and it could be London/Birmingham/Belfast/Glasgow/Manchester 2012.

Michael Duncan and Daniel Fay

So 2011 is finally complete, all the songs are known. The hilarious lyrics, the dodgy accents, the quirky and the formulaic are all there for our aural edification and pleasure.

We dumped all the songs in iTunes, clicked shuffle and hid the window, took a very large glass of wine and gritted our teeth...

First up was Ireland. Infectious pop at its very best, with a wicked hook that grabs you by the throat and jiggles your insides until you can't help but start to bop around the room. However, these two annoying youngsters will ruin the whole thing come May... oh well.

Germany wins the first Big Five moment in our draw. Wow, wow, wow. Fantastic song. Our attitude last year was, Germany won, great, but that song – yuck! What a turnaround this year – this parks itself right up our alley and refuses to move.

The best Balkan song by a mile next. Bosnia seems to be one of our pet love countries at Eurovision and they most certainly did not let us down this year. Went straight to the top of our 2011 chart the minute we heard it. And has more or less stayed there.

La Suisse. This plods and plods and plods and plods – you get the idea. Goes nowhere very slowly. Cute singer though with a nice voice. We have the sneaking suspicion that this may do rather well...

3JS. Not to be confused with the rather fabulous JLS from the UK. This is a very decent effort from the Netherlands. Finally. That said we think it's a mistake

to put this into English... but what do we know?

Central Europe gets the next slot with Hungary providing the very obvious Euroclub fodder. Love, love, love this. Dramatic vocals, disco-dolly synths, what's not to like?

This infectious pure 1980's revival pop masterpiece from Estonia would have us screaming from the rooftops should it win. Best song to have come out of Eurovision for a very long time. One downside is her live vocal abilities.

Not to everyone's taste at all but a superb entry from Georgia will inevitably fail big time at Eurovision, because it's not dolly, dancey, cheesy or Greek enough to qualify. Shame as it's brilliant.

On to Finland. Compared, rather unfairly, to Tom Dice this is quite a nice effort from Finland. None of the sheer class of their rock entries or

the outlandish kitsch of last year's effort. Still it's nice, if a little bland.

And at last we come to Dana International. All we can say is Ding-Dong she's not gonna win – what was she thinking serving up some second rate late 1990s inspired disco trash that we'd only ever dance to if drunk on holiday somewhere hot and Mediterranean?

Azerbaijan arrives on the shuffle. After the shenanigans from Safura last year and the 'will she, won't she win', this is a much better effort from them. Great song. Catches you off guard with its simplicity and works very, very well..

Blue, blue my heart is so Blue. At long long last a UK entry we can be proud of. Not quite what we were expecting from



them, but this is perfection and dare we hope that the UK might actually win this thing again?

Romania – one of our favourites this year. Simple jaunty pop song that has you singing along almost instantly. They also have the best video this year.

Another returnee now. Austria. Whatever you think of the song this girl has arguably the best voice in the competition this year. It's all a bit Disney-on-acid but that's not too bad a thing.

Armenia. Boom boom chaka chaka just about sums this up. Much more catchy than Norway and quite fun. We danced. We were drunk though.

So that's it. Come May 15th we will know who made it to the top of the pile this year. Let's face it, it's quite open and who knows it could be Manchester 2012. And if you enjoyed this then check out our full reviews and live ESC week blog starting 29th April 2011: <http://www.esckaz.com/new/en/blogs/mike-and-daniel>.

Liam Whelan

Poland: I do not think we could have asked for a better opening to the contest. Perhaps this is the most professional song of 2011. I love it. I feared it would be last year's *Horehronie* though and get left behind in the semi-final, but not with this draw and we saw what happened when she opened the show in Warsaw. Thank God for the Polish language. This is just gorgeous. *Jestem!*

Norway: Before Stella Mwangi won Melodi Grand Prix I predicted she would win in Düsseldorf. I do not like *Haba Haba*, she cannot stay in tune for the one line before the chorus but I feel it will be *Fairytale* all over again. I hope I am wrong. The only good thing I have to say about the song is that it brings a new language to the stage. Karibu!

Turkey: I love the fact that the contest

gets me listening to genres I would otherwise not think about. I love how some ethnic sounds are incorporated into *Live It Up*. I would not be surprised if Turkey achieved another second place and this is an entry I will listen to over and over again.

Russia: I was so excited when Buranovskiye Babushki were rumoured to represent Russia, but we end up with this Ken doll. Who else saw RedOne's video message to the Russian people? How much smarm can you fit into one (unedited) video clip? The press conferences are going to make my ears bleed. "We have Lady Gaga's songwriter!" Yeah, well I use the same hair gel as Heston Blumenthal but I don't brag about it!

Switzerland: I think this song is na na na na na na... Okay I have been through every word in the English dictionary beginning with na and it is none of them.

Hungary: This gives Poland stiff competition for the most professional entry. I love her voice, though live I am not so sure. I am so excited Hungary is back!

Bosnia & Herzegovina: This is not what I expected Dino Merlin to come up with. However I absolutely adore it. It is quaint. It is beautiful. It is many things (though a friend described it as pretentious and I cannot see why.) Dino Merlin is a genius – what a clever presentation show.

Belgium: I am not a fan of this song but I am quite protective of it. This could be the last ever entry from Belgium as a single nation and the members of Witloof Bay are from many different regions of the country so it is quite symbolic.

Slovakia: I was worried for Jedward when TWiiNS were announced as Slovakia's entry, guaranteed to perform before the boys in the first half of the second semi-final. I worried as I expected the Cheeky Girls II, a novelty act. Slovakia

stated participation would be better than a fine so I was far from optimistic as to the quality of the song. *I'm Still Alive* is a pleasant surprise. It is not a winner and I doubt it will make it to final. If it does it will be an injustice to the magnificent *Horehronie*.

Moldova: Those ridiculous hats remind me of Klu Klux Klan. "Bring back the granny!" everyone cheers. Yes indeed, bring her back, but the rest can stay at home. No, just no. This is wrong.

Cyprus: The only criticism I have for this song is I wish there was more positive news coming out of Cyprus the night we all tuned in to watch the song reveal. It is an amazing ballad, so strong.

Israel: I hope by now people know I am not a star spotter. However all bets are off when it comes to Dana International. Not since 1958 have we had two previous contest winners on one stage. How magnificent. Wow, I am going to see a legend live in Düsseldorf! I am so excited and if she burped on stage I would applaud. She is simply amazing.

Romania: What a fantastic way to spend New Year's Eve! Go United Kingdom! We have another singer in the contest. David Bryan is great; the song is great. I would not be surprised if Romania achieved its second consecutive bronze medal with this.

Spain: I do not hate this as much as others do. Yet again we had arguments at the national final. I wonder if we were all better off when the first time we heard the songs was at preview / on the night of the contest or if the controversy is good because it shows how much people care. It is pleasant and I will enjoy listening

to it but by no means will it win. What a lovely reward for the fans to appear in the official video.

David Elder

Norway: Who cares if Stella has slight tuning problems – this is Afro-Schlager and it's fabulously catchy! I think this will sail into the final.

Albania: Aurela is a statuesque lady who doesn't look like she's gonna tolerate any nonsense from anyone! She's also passionate in her vocal stylings...very passionate! Nice in a bizarre ethnic kind of way.

Turkey: Oh my - How the mighty have fallen! This is just cheap rocky trash of the kind you might have heard on a flexi disc given free with NME in 1978. Next!

Serbia: Oh, now I'm LOVING the whole 1960's psychedelic-Dusty vibe that Nina's got going on here! After years in the wilderness of song Serbia gets a kick in the Balkans and comes up trumps!

Finland: Bless! A contrite little ditty about one wee boy's mission to save the planet (possibly from Jedward). This is just simple and engaging enough to do great things in the final. A definite dark horse.

San Marino: Senit looks like she'd be a right old party girl down the Euroclub, and I'm loving the rock chic anthem. I like this one. Lots!

Croatia: Okay, so "Break A Leg" was a much funnier title, but you can't beat a good bit of Euro cheese, and Daria's serving up a veritable fondue of Croatian fromage with this jolly little belter!

Portugal: Oh Dear God! Next!

Greece: Oh how the (other) mighty have (also) fallen! This song reminds



me of Cheryl and Ashley Cole – a bad marriage following an ill-conceived idea generated to achieve maximum interest, but in the end no-one really cared...

Austria: Nadine looks like such a wholesome girl, full of natural goodness, rather like a bowl of Alpen. Pleasant harmonies and soulful Gospel influences make this a refreshing and different song.

Netherlands: Now you see, I hated this on first listening, but it's really grown on me – and therein lies its trouble – it's just not instant enough to grab voters on first hearing.

Ukraine: Poor Ukraine... 17 attempts at selecting a song and they still get it SO wrong! Whilst Mika might be a reasonable singer, her song is a woefully bad, dull as ditchwater rock ballad that deserves to go nowhere other than back to Kyiv by express delivery.

Cyprus: Ooh! Now this could be interesting. I think we may well have our first final for many years without either Cyprus or Greece being present. Again, there is just nothing instant or interesting enough about this ballad to make people vote.

Macedonia, FYR: Oh bless – Vlatko just fancied a couple of weeks drinking German beer at the expense of his TV company, didn't he? While some may consider his song to be turbo-folk with an ethnic twist, I consider it to be a waste of three minutes...

Slovenia: This is a great song, powerfully performed by an excellent singer – it's just such a pity that it takes almost two minutes for the song to really get into its stride.

Romania: Hoorah! An uncomplicated, instantly catchy song – well sung, great backing. Romania consistently do well in Eurovision these days, and no wonder, when they enter well pitched songs like this!

Belarus: Oh dear! This is going to be embarrassing, isn't it? I think we know which country will give this votes... and I think it will be the ONLY country to give it votes! I'm really not sure why such blatant propaganda is being allowed. The whole concept is just daft!

Denmark: We haven't had a good Eurovision anthem for a while now, and this is more than good. The band perform this feel-good track well and I expect to see this up in the Top Ten.

Italy: I like this in a nostalgic 1940's jazzy, bluesy kind of way – but for Eurovision in 2011 this just doesn't have a prayer.

United Kingdom: The first time I saw this performed on Graham Norton's show the hair stood up on the back of my neck... The last time that happened to me with a UK entry was in 1997... I think this is the PERFECT song for the UK after the past few years. I only hope it gets the result it deserves (which, secretly, I think it will!).

Germany: Wow! This is a fantastic slice of pure 1980's electro-pop which is just the right side of sinister to keep the audience transfixed. I thought *Satellite* was good, but this – this is SUPERB!

Spain: Joyful, harmless, Mediterranean fun from our Iberian cousins. This will have the punters downing the sangria and kicking up their flip-flops in all the tavernas of Benidorm!

Final thoughts: I think it's going to be a tight one this year, but I see the top five on the Saturday night comprising France, Denmark, United Kingdom, Estonia and Azerbaijan. If I was to predict how they will finish then I'm going to suggest the following: **5th:** Azerbaijan; **4th:** Denmark; **3rd:** Estonia; **2nd:** France; **1st:** United Kingdom

So there you have it. Dust down the Union flags and get ready to wave them proudly in Düsseldorf... I think Eurovision's coming home! 🇷🇺

EURO QUIZ

This issue's quiz, set by Alasdair Rendall and Ben Robertson, has a current theme

The answers to the quiz all make up - Düsseldorf

D: Which Eurovision four-piece group had to add a 'D' to the front of their name because another group in their country had the same name?

Ü: Only one Eurovision entry starts with this letter – can you name it?

S: Who formed a famous Eurovision duo alongside Natasja Crone Back?

S: Name both Eurovision debut countries to win the contest.

E: Which company has its headquarters in Kowloon, Hong Kong and Ratingen, Germany? It generates in excess of £3 billion/year in turnover, most from its fashion arm. This company should have featured in Eurovision 2011, but its

presence has been blocked officially by the European Broadcasting Union.

L: What is the name of the sister of 1992 Italian entrant Mia Martini, who herself has performed in the San Remo Festival on numerous occasions?

D: Who took to the stage in Dublin in 1994, despite receiving injuries in his country's civil war?

O: In which band would you find Panos Tserpes and Argyris Nastopoulos?

R: Which country failed to make it past the pre-selection stages in both 1993 and 1996?

F: Which sixties star was pipped at the post by Ronnie Carroll for the chance to represent the UK in 1962?

For answers see inside back cover

01.10.11

Eurobash 2011 – due to popular demand is back at Chancellors Hotel Manchester on 1st October. Places can be reserved from 1st June by sending an email to eurobash@btinternet.com.

But places are limited and are bound to sell out quick!!! We'll be announcing some very special guests too over the summer!



BLUE IS THE COLOUR

OGAE UK President Paul Marks-Jones was at the launch of *I Can*, the UK's song for Eurovision. Along with other journalists he set Blue, this year's hopefuls, a number of questions

People have lots of pre-conceived ideas of Eurovision. You must have questioned taking part. What were your initial thoughts and feelings?

Duncan: Definitely. We were approached by the BBC last year and it was a massive decision to make and the reason why we decided to do it was that it was a great opportunity for us to make a comeback. It's our tenth anniversary this year and we were a really established band in Europe and this is the biggest TV programme in Europe that goes out to 125 million people. Lena, last year's winner for Germany ended up having Number One's all over Europe, so as a launch for a comeback we thought this was a great opportunity. Also, the BBC wanted to change things this year – with an established act to represent the UK. We were privileged to be asked. And as Simon said to me once, how many opportunities do you get in your life to represent your country? When we made the decision we were 100 percent excited about it and we're really pleased to be representing the UK.

But you must have that feeling about the dreaded 'nil points' or coming last again?

Lee: I think the change in voting, with a 50/50 split between the judging panel and the public in each country, means we have a better chance this year.

Simon: I'm not getting 'nil points'.

What do you think about being up against the terrible twins (Jedward)?

Antony: I like Jedward, they are what they are. They're a novelty act, we're a vocal group. We sing live whenever we can. We've done so many shows over Europe and the UK and so if we come up against them – great – if they beat us, fine, but if we beat them – great.

Are you confident about beating them though?

Duncan: They've got a great song, it's a catchy song.

Lee: I think it's great – it's quite 'Britneyesque' – American pop kind of feel to it. But good on them, look what they've achieved. They've been very supportive



Blue: Antony Costa, Duncan James, Lee Ryan and Simon Webbe

of us and said some great things about us and we have no reason to say anything bad about them. I think in the UK we always have this thing about trying to create some competition, but it's healthy and fun.

You'll have a massive audience. Are you worried about how the nerves might hold up on the night?

Simon: Yeah I think we've had experience of performing to audiences of this size. But this time what we also have to concentrate on is the viewers at home and the cameras and stuff like that. So there's going to be a lot to think about – choreography, vocals, you know making sure we stay in control with all these people screaming. But this is what we live for!

We heard earlier how you've been getting advice in the documentary from people like Cliff Richard. What's

the best bit of advice you've been given?

Duncan: We've been lucky to have lots of advice from people. Everyone's been really supportive. We met Robin Gibb the other day and he said how excited he is that the UK is putting forward an established act that's got a good chance. He was saying that he used to love

Eurovision and really followed and supported it, but over the last few years he hasn't really. This year he's going to be back watching it. So to hear that from someone like Robin

Gibb was a really big honour.

You mentioned choreography – is there going to be a dance routine to accompany the song?

Duncan: Yes there is, but we haven't actually sorted out the choreography for the actual event yet, but there's going to be more staging than choreography – it's going to be very 'Blue'.

Lee: I think that's always been Blue's

“It was a great opportunity for us to make a comeback”

way – we’ve never ever danced around too much; we’ve always concentrated on singing live and giving a great vocal performance. We’ve worked with Paul Roberts who’s been with us since the beginning and it’s always been signature moves.

Duncan: And we’ve got a really great guy on board called Gary Lloyd who’s going to be staging the creative side of Eurovision in Düsseldorf, so he’ll create the whole look.

Have you shot a video for the song?

Duncan: We shot a music video for the song which will be sent to the EBU. But we haven’t shot a promo video yet - that happens in a couple of weeks.

Have you heard many of the other songs in the competition?

Antony: I’ve heard the Greek one, which is quite good. I’ve heard the Norwegian one – *Haba Haba* - which is a great Eurovision song, it’s got a great hook and a great chorus. I haven’t heard Lena’s one yet.

Duncan: I heard France’s last night – it’s really good actually. He looks like Marius out of *Les Misérables*, long hair kind of cute looking and he’s got this amazing operatic voice.

Are the lyrics inspired by you guys getting back together?

Lee: I think if you listen to the first opening lyric “We’re not the first ones to be divided, won’t be the last to be reunited” it is so poignant for us as a group, but *I Can* is also perfect for Eurovision

– with the UK not doing so well recently. It’s about getting up again.

It’s said that politically Britain doesn’t have as many friends in Europe as it used to. Do you think you may fall foul to the so-called ‘block voting’?

Simon: As Lee said before, the voting system has changed now so it’s 50 percent judging panel and 50 percent phone votes, so they’re shouldn’t be block voting.

Did you know that before signing up?

Simon: Yeah, of course.

“I believe if you have a great song and you perform well, then it’s not about politics”

Would you have signed up if it had been the old regime of voting?

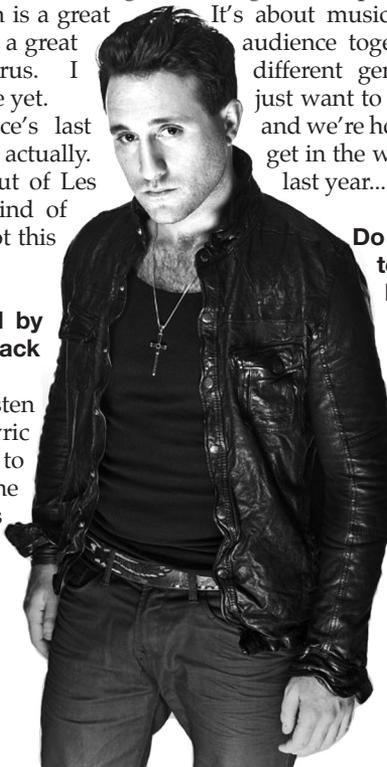
Lee: It helped us to make the decision.

Simon: I believe if you have a great song and you perform well, then it’s not about politics and I like to believe it’s about the song and our performance on the night.

It’s about music and bringing a wide audience together and people from different genres of music. People just want to have fun for that night and we’re hoping that politics don’t get in the way. And Germany won last year...

Do you think it’s going to help with you having had success worldwide?

Lee: Yeah I think that was our kind of thinking behind it. We’ve had Number One albums, toured in Europe and it’s a different kind of thing. And that was the idea of the BBC putting us forward –



knowing our history and our success in Europe and I think that's maybe what the UK hasn't tried recently.

You've made a lot about this being your tenth anniversary – how did you all get together in the first place?

Simon: Through the audition circuit when there wasn't X Factor!

Antony: We haven't been asked that question in ten years! I'd known Duncan since I was 15/16 and we kept in touch – he got into a band, I got into a band, it didn't quite work. We got together, founded the band – we knew Lee from the audition circuit and Simon and Duncan knew each other – so I was the last one to meet Simon.

Duncan: And what is crazy is the first time around we released our first single in May 2001 and we're going to release comeback next single in May 2011 which is exactly ten years later! We had the opportunity to work with people like Elton John, Stevie Wonder and all these amazing people. And I guess these last five years we've all gone our different ways and we really wanted to get an opportunity to get back together and work on our new album and that's what we're doing now, which is going to be released this year. This isn't going to be the end, whatever the outcome of Eurovision is – this is just the beginning and it's what we're really excited about for the future.

Duncan, you've been in the West End for a while. What's it like coming back to the pop world and being with the boys again?

Duncan: There was a point in my career when I just didn't want to

get back into Blue – it was so hard and so stressful and I guess with personal reasons as well, it just became a point in time when I couldn't even think about going back. I had the chance to go into the West End to do some great stuff there. But things change – you grow older, but now I'm just so excited to be back in the band and it feels great being together again, you never know what's going to happen with these lot. It's just fun and it feels right and you have to go with what feels right.

How will you celebrate if you do win?

Antony: To be honest with you, even to go out there and take part is enough. I personally am a massive Eurovision fan. I've watched since I was a kid supporting Greece, Cyprus and the UK, naturally. So for me to be able to go over and say "I've done it" which is fantastic and if we win it – even better. And what better way than to bring the Eurovision back here for the Olympics in 2012. Be amazing wouldn't it?

Do you think we don't take it as seriously as other countries?

Lee: The only analogy I can think of is that we're like the kid in the playground who never gets picked for football, so we hate football. And I don't think it's to do with being British. It's because we haven't put a great song in for a long time. However, Jade came fifth because it was a good song. It's an easy cop out



to say "We lose because we're British" when really it's because we put wrong songs into the contest. And hopefully we're putting a great song in with an established act and will give a great performance. That's the most important thing in this competition.

Antony: In Greece and Cyprus it's a massive thing – it's their chance to put forward established acts (ie. their winner of X Factor). It's a massive singing competition – it's all about the singing and the songs.

Duncan: We've been to countries around Europe and so far what we've been seeing is that it's a really serious competition. Countries do put established acts through and I think that a lot of people were quite surprised when they were told we were going to be doing it. But you know this is for us a great opportunity.

Can I ask what your favourite Eurovision songs are?

Antony: Have you got all day? Well I love anything by Anna Vissi, *Aspro Mavro* and in 1995 *Love City Groove*, which I absolutely adore, but it was a bit before its time.

Simon: Well for me I never really paid that much attention to Eurovision over the years, but I do remember catching a rock band, Lordi. What I liked about them was that the song was great, the performance was great and the fact that you don't know what they looked like. Can you imagine being famous, having a great song and being able to walk down the street and no one know who you are? Fantastic.

Lee: I like *Love Shine A*

Light. We're thinking of doing a little version of our own of that.

Duncan: Yeah it's a great song and the last time we won it. I like *Diva* and *Ooh Aah Just A Little Bit*.

So what's the plan between now and the contest. And do you think you'll be the first UK act to get a Number One single since Gina G?

Antony: Yeah that'd be great. We're going to tour Europe including places we've never been before as a group when we were first around, graft and work hard. It'll be nice to go back to places and see the fans. We're just going to work hard and if we get a Number One single – amazing.

Andrew Lloyd Webber offered to leave the country if we came last. If it all goes wrong will you carry on?

Lee: Yes of course, as Duncan said before, we're working on an album right now, the songs are sounding great, we're so happy with how it's turning out. But with *I Can*, I think the special thing is that it's anthemic and if you listen to it, you know it's Blue – it sounds like a Blue song. But the production is definitely a step up and it's an evolved version of us. I think that's a hard thing to do and I think we've achieved it well.

With the live performance, do you think the experience you've accumulated over the years between you, will improve your stage performance?

Simon: Definitely. Initially, I was never a



singer, but with these guys I've learned a lot, then going on to have success as a solo singer, working in the West End and learning how to sing emphatically as well and performing with a 16 piece orchestra every night it was just a different level.

At Eurovision you're allowed six people on stage – are you going to have two extra backing singers or dancers?

Duncan: Yes we're going to have backing singers to get across the vocal performance and make sure it hits home.

Lee: The reason we're doing that as well is that we don't want people to think we can't hold our own as a four piece, because we can.

Duncan: With the record you track things up and especially when the chorus kicks in – we want it to be really strong and powerful. At first we didn't realise you could only have six people and I was like "We can have a great big X Factor choir walking in". What's interesting for us is that it's completely live – not one recorded vocal allowed at all and that's another thing that appealed to us – the opportunity to go out there and sing completely live, without being able to hide from anything. There aren't many acts that can put themselves in that position.

Simon: The live version will be a more stripped back version. There will also be the single release, but at Eurovision it will be more harmonies.

"It's one of the things that appealed to us – a way to show that we are a live group"

What would you say to your former manager who put you together, described this move as "reckless insanity" and that you will have to win as anything less will leave your reputation in "tatters"?

Antony: We've got great respect for Daniel, he put us together and he's entitled to his opinion, full stop. We don't see this as career suicide. It's one of the things that appealed to us – a way to show that we are a live group and we're back after five years with a new album. When you're asked to represent your country you have to think about it, and weigh up the pros and cons.

Antony, you tried to represent the UK in 2006. Are you more confident now you're in a group?

Antony: Yes of course I am. When we went our separate ways in 2005, it was great to get the opportunity – the Making Your Mind Up team came to me so I jumped at the chance, but it wasn't to be that year. But I've been given a second chance and I'm a massive Eurovision fan, so I can't wait to get out there with the lads and represent the UK.

What's your look going to be like?

Simon: Very British! We have a great stylist called Gemma.

Anything finally?

Duncan: Watch the documentary for the full story and you'll see how hard we've been working! ♥

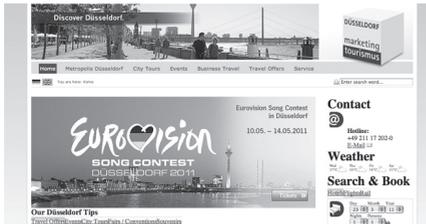


ESC ONLINE

Martin Faulkner seeks out everything that's Eurovision on the World Wide Web!

Bonsoir et bienvenue, as Sir Terry himself might put it, to this pre-contest edition of ESC Online!

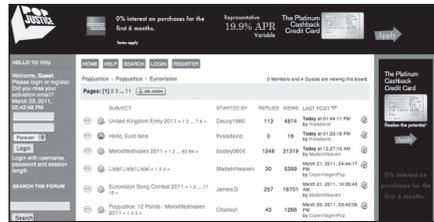
With things heating up as the on-season nears its climax, it would be remiss of me not to start by acknowledging this year's host city. Düsseldorf might not be everyone's dream venue for the contest, but as www.duesseldorf-tourismus.de/en/ shows, there'll be plenty to keep



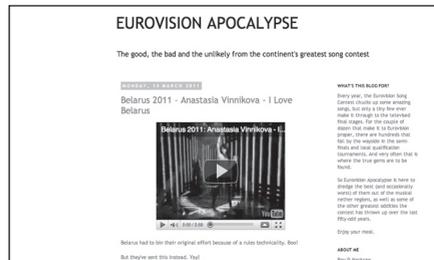
you entertained if you're in town for the big show. They should even be able to help out with last-minute accommodation if this issue of **Vision** gives you a sudden urge to head over for the occasion!

If you're staying at home instead, you'll no doubt be familiar with the various sites dedicated specifically to Eurovision chat and debate, but you might also want to check out the ESC sections of more general portals for a wider view – such as Digital Spy, which dedicates a section of its forum to the contest at <http://bit.ly/7tCU7>. It's rather active and, as you might expect, is occasionally overrun by Jedward and Blue fans, but that's nothing to be too afraid of. (Or is it...?) Meanwhile, the equivalent at Popjustice

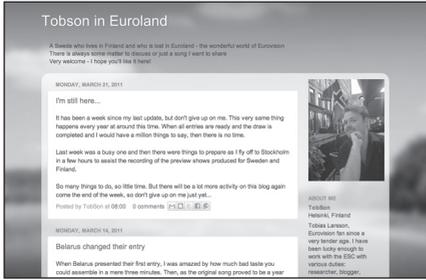
should be slightly safer territory in terms of one-track fandom, but there's plenty of sarcasm and sniping to accompany a seemingly widespread love of schlager among the forum's participants – check it out at <http://bit.ly/dST4uu>.



If you prefer to read than participate, it's not long since I plugged Roy Delaney from the OnEurope team and his blog on the wider world of wacky music, but this year he's gone one better and delved into the oddities that this year's national final season has thrown up. (And there were plenty of them – Rok Agresori anybody?) Written with a great deal of heart and no shortage of humour, check it out at eurovisionapocalypse.blogspot.com. And check out Roy's article elsewhere in this issue!



Navigating his way through the more mainstream side of the on-season – and doing so in superb style – is long-time fan and occasional Swedish-language YLE commentator Tobias Larsson (<http://tobsonineuroland.blogspot.com>),



whose intelligent writing will hopefully continue throughout the big fortnight in Düsseldorf. A more specifically Nordic focus is provided by news, gossip and review site Schlagerfiasko (<http://schlagerfiasko.nu>), which covers the



Scandinavian lands and beyond with great insight and just the odd hint of irony.

Looking back rather than forward for a moment, I can't believe I've gone this long without knowing about www.andtheconductoris.eu, a mind-bogglingly well-researched site dedicated – as the name suggests – to someone whose role on the Eurovision scene has long been usurped: the conductor. Although the 'About' section claims the site was created as a protest against the abolition of the orchestra, don't worry about it being too po-faced – at heart, this is an



affectionate and incredibly informative tribute to those grand old baton-wavers from years gone by, as well as providing general pieces on the orchestra itself and other matters.

And finally, I'm sure you don't need to be told about the existence of www.bbc.co.uk/eurovision – but with a high-



profile participant and plenty of effort being put in behind the scenes, it could be particularly worth checking out this year for the latest UK news from the Rhineland.

All of which gives me the opportunity to end by wishing you a thoroughly enjoyable Eurovision week, and here's hoping our boys in Blue can bring home the bacon. Until next time, happy surfing! 📺

THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UNLIKELY

Ten great oddities from this year's national finals

Roy Delaney, music journalist and editor of the Eurovision Apocalypse blog – a repository of all the most weird and wonderful happenings from the national finals – chooses those essential songs from the 2011 selection season

There are some strange people in Eurovision fandom who refuse to watch the national finals because they prefer to keep themselves fresh for all the songs that get to Eurovision proper. But take it from us, they're missing out on some rare treats from the weirder recesses of Europe. So let's celebrate a few of the more unlikely tunes that didn't quite make it to Dusseldorf this year – more's the pity.

Austria: Trackshittaz
Oida Taunz!



This cheeky rap duo darned nearly made it through with their hectic brand of Alpine Grime. Surely any act that enters the stage on a farmyard tractor deserves an international audience – and could you imagine dear old Ken Bruce churlishly having to announce their name on Radio 2? It may not be to everyone's tastes, but the Austrians missed a trick by not sending this.

Macedonia, FYR: Rok Agresori
Kukuriku



You may recall FallusAggressor and this unlikely act from his previous effort called *Ding Dong* a couple of years ago. You remember, it only had two words. Ding and Dong. Well,

this time he surpassed that madness in both word and deed with a delightfully unhinged song about eggs (a thinly-veiled reference to testicles in local Macedonian slang) while he tottered about the stage in a chicken suit. Pure situationist comedy joy.

Ukraine: Jamala
Smile

The song itself was potentially one of the best of the year. The singer, however, was a different matter. Jamala was a woman blessed with enormous on stage presence, but a voice reminiscent of someone repeatedly kicking a labrador. She claimed that she was the real winner, despite actually finishing third, but bottled out of the chance of singing in a



re-run. She has quite the personality, so I suspect this isn't the last we've heard of her.

Lithuania: Kas Jos Tokios?
Unbreakable



We've become used to incomprehensible staging concepts over the years in this funny old contest of ours, but this one has to be among the strangest. Kas Jos Tokios? are a band made up of three impossibly good-looking girls – so what do their choreographers do? Stick them in a massive big packing crate for the duration of the song. I can't remember what it actually sounded like because I was too busy spluttering in confusion.

Moldova: Doinita Gherman
Viața

How long can the Moldovans keep ignoring the fantastic Ms Gherman for Eurovision? Her effervescent



happy-go-lucky folk punk insanity is an unstoppable force of nature, and we're quite sure that if she ever did actually get to the international stage the whole of Europe would fall for her over-the-top charms. She sends pretty much the same song every year, but it's always thoroughly bonkers in the nut.

Slovenia: Rock Partyzani
Time For Revolution



The Slovenians are presently in the midst of a massive craving for old time Yugo-era nostalgia, and at the forefront of this movement are the fabulous Rock Partyzani. Decked out in Tito era uniforms, and marching slightly out of time to a marshal slice of turbofolk, they sadly didn't even get as far as the superfinal in what felt like a slightly dubious selection process. This year's Eurovision will be a slightly duller place without them.

Estonia: Orelipoiss
Valss



They always treat us to an interesting final, the Estonians, but this year they offered up one of the most diverse selections yet. And the star oddity among them was a bearded gent

of a fuller figure who rasped out a delicate piece of guitar folk, while a pair of dancers skipped a dainty reel around him. Then we saw a bloke in the corner tending a box of grass with a plastic watering can, before treating us to a half time grass solo. Blimey!

Iceland: Matthías Matthíasson & Erla Björg Káradóttir
Eldgos



What started off as a passable but unremarkable mid tempo rock tune suddenly took an unsettling turn for the better about halfway through, when the curiously coiffured Matthíasson suddenly began to work his way up his range in a breath-sapping ladder of aural violence. By the time he reached the impossibly high crescendo, and Erla pricked the intensity with her harsh operatic warble, the whole of Iceland's brains exploded.

Sweden: Le Kid
Oh My God



I reckon this colourful lot figured they had a berth in the Melodifestivalen final in the bag. An explosion of colour, their glorious Indie

schlager was stuffed with energetic sing-a-long fun, but about halfway through things started getting seriously weird. Giant dolly mixtures suddenly got up and started dancing about, before a pair of massive breast-like cupcakes descended from the roof and shot confetti from their cherries. I swear I thought someone had slipped something psychedelic into my tea.

Lithuania: Mino
Don't Go

The Lithuanian process was chock-full of curiosities this year. It was almost as if the folks at LRT were so hard up for songs that they gave the first couple of dozen oddballs who knocked on their studio doors a go on the telly. But stranger still was this oddity. Mino's song wasn't actually too bad, but a stage show that involved girls crouching on their knees dressed as cellos, being played by the tune's singers proved so distracting that not a soul voted for it. 📉



EUROCURIOS

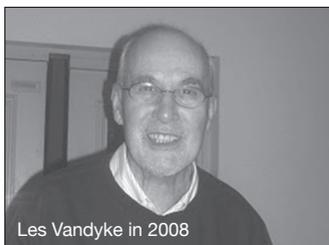
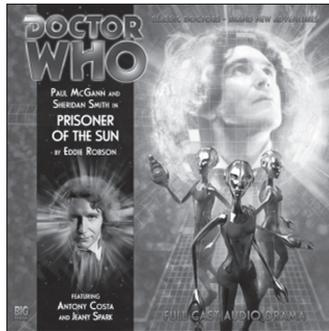
More Eurovision curiosities by Thomas Latham

Following the announcement of Blue as the UK's representatives at the 2011 Eurovision Song Contest in Germany, a number of curious facts and connections are bound to come out. Some of them have already emerged because of member Antony Costa's earlier attempt to represent the UK in 2006 with *Beautiful Thing* - a song previously recorded by Michelle Lawson and subsequently by German Popstars winners Queensberry. Of course, I've also mentioned Antony's exploits as an actor and his appearance in an episode of the Stephen Moffatt sitcom *Chalk*. However, a further connection between the singer and Doctor Who (for which Moffatt is currently the showrunner) was released in January 2011. Costa is one of the actors in a new audio play featuring Paul McGann as the eighth Doctor. Entitled *Prisoner Of The Sun*, the CD and download of the story have been produced by Big Finish (www.bigfinish.com), and Antony apparently plays the companion of a space pirate.

To coincide with

hosting the Eurovision Song Contest last year, a triple CD box was released with two discs collecting all the Norwegian entries between 1960 and 2010, together with a CD of songs from Norwegian finals. It's certainly nice to have all these

tracks in one place, but I think some might be disappointed in the selection of non-winning songs. Many have been taken from years when CDs of all the pre-selection songs were released, and although tracks like A1's 2010 *Don't Wanna Lose You Again* are good (and arguably better than *My Heart Is Yours* by Didrik Solli-Tangen) and were probably hits in Norway (A1 reached number four), I would have liked to see more of the rarer tracks from the 1960s and 1970s getting an outing. Still, collectors will want to add this one to their CD shelf. Please note that only the Deluxe Edition of *Norsk Melodi Grand Prix Gjennom 50 År* includes the third CD containing the pre-selection material (a double CD release with just the ESC entries is also available).



By contrast, a double-CD retrospective of the career of Norwegian songstress Anita Skorgan (NO 1977, 1979 and 1982) was also released recently, which includes her own rather lovely slow ballad version of *For Var Jord*. The song was written by Skorgan but performed in Dublin by Karoline Kruger in 1988 (it came fifth). Other tracks of interest are Eurovision entries *Casanova*, *Oliver* and *Adieu* (the latter a duet with Jahn Taigen), *Sterneskudd* which came sixth in the 1980 Melodi Grand Prix, *Karma* which was runner-up to Bobbysocks in the 1985 MGP, *Hjem* a duet with Karoline Kruger from 1989, as well as a few duets with Jahn Taigen recorded during their marriage. Look out for *Hele Veien* – 47 *Utoagte Sangen* (Universal 270148 7). Missing, unfortunately, are her pre-selection entries from 1976 and 1978 but don't let that put you off buying what is an otherwise excellent look back on her career.

I think I've mentioned before that Sammy Davis Jr. recorded two of Matt Monro's SFE songs from 1964 and that both have been released on CD. Recently I came across some extra snippets of information. Firstly, Sammy's version of the Lionel Bart composition *Choose* was released as a single on Reprise 0278 and reached number 112 in the American charts. Secondly, Richard Crane has let me know that it was also featured on an EP of songs by British composers, which also included his version of Leslie Bricusse's *Ten Out Of Ten*, making it an excellent way of getting both his SFE covers on vinyl in one go. The EP was eponymously titled *Sammy Davis Jnr.* on Reprise R30020 and also contains songs by Bricusse (with Beaumont) and Les Vandyke.



Vandyke is probably worthy of a Eurocurios column all by himself. Born Yani Panakos Paraskeva Skoradalides, as a vocalist he was a member of the Raindrops with Jackie Lee (SFE 1962) but soon turned his hand to songwriting. He wrote a number of songs as Les (or Leslie) Vandyke and had some big hits with Adam Faith in the early 1960s, but also used the pseudonyms Johnny Worth (including *A Day At The Seaside* for the 1963 SFE, when it was sung by Vince Hill, himself a former Raindrop) and John



Worsley (including co-writing *Jack In The Box* for Clodagh Rodgers in 1971). In 1986, he married Catherine Stock the sister of Mike, who was,

of course, the co-writer of the UK's 2010 ESC entry *That Sounds Good To Me*. In his time he had songs recorded not only by Eurovision-related artists like the Allison's, Jimmy Justice, Craig Douglas, Mark Wynter, Maureen Evans and Robb Storme, but also by international artists like Shirley Bassey, Petula Clark, Engelbert Humperdinck and Barbra Streisand.

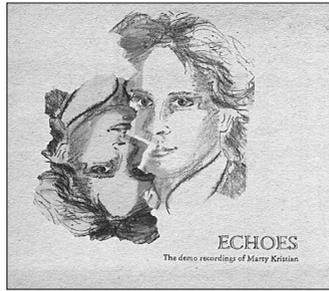
Speaking of the Raindrops and Jackie Lee, I recently discovered there are no less than two Japanese covers of her 1962 SFE entry *There's No One In The Whole Wide World*. *夜空に願いを* (which translates into English as *Wishes In The Night Sky* or *Wishes To The Sky*) was recorded by twelve-year-old Umeki Mali and released in July 1962 on her debut single as the B-side of *可愛いグッド・ラック・チャーム* (Toshiba JP-5137) and a version was then also released one month later by Gotou Kumiko (Nippon Columbia AL-385). Umeki Mali, who is best known in Japan for singing the theme to the American cartoon series Tom and Jerry,

UMEKI MALI

also released her version on an EP and LP (Toshiba JPO-1235) while it was later released on a CD compiling her recordings – on P-VINE PCD 1539 (PCDZ-1507).

Jackie Lee also has a track (the very excellent *The Town I Live In*) on the recently re-released compilation CD *Dream Babes – Vol 1 – Am I Dreaming* (Cherry Red – RPM 137). However, the main reason for buying this CD would be for The Track's *Cry To Me*. The Track were a Manchester-based vocal group, which included Eve Graham (The New Seekers – UK 1972) and Sandra Stevens (Brotherhood of Man – ESC 1976) among its members. Later The Track changed name to The Nocturnes and, when Stevens left, she was replaced by Graham's future fellow-New Seeker Lyn Paul (SFE 1977). *Cry To Me* is a delightful piece of 1960s vocal pop.

Speaking of the New Seekers, another founding member (alongside Eve Graham) was Marty Kristian, who on occasions was known to write the odd song for the group. A number of his demos from his song writing efforts have been collected together for a CD release. They include the demo for *Love On Your Mind* (with Marty's original vocals), which was performed by Audio to fourth place in the 1983 Song For Europe contest. Entitled *Echoes*, the CD can be obtained from www.thenewseekers.com/ and



Cathy Logan



comes with some very interesting comments on each track written by Marty. Check it out.

Incidentally, former New Seeker and member of Audio, Cathy Logan (aka Kathy Ann Rae) sadly died earlier this year on 11th January 2011 after a long battle with cancer. Our thoughts go to her family at this time. More information on Cathy and audio clips of her singing can be found at: www.cathylogan.co.uk/.

Finally some details of ESC-related CDs that may, or may not, be of interest. Roger Cook (SFE 1968) and Roger Greenaway (SFE 1968, 1974 and 1977) wrote a number of hits between them and a few SFE entries along the way. They started out as singing duo David and Jonathan and RPM has released a CD of their best bits (RPM 313).

Revola have released a revised CD from 1970s band Octopus - *Restless Night: The Complete Pop-Psych Sessions 1967-71* (CRREV 180). The Eurovision connection is that one member of Octopus was Paul Griggs, who later had success with Guys 'n Dolls (SFE 1979) and wrote *I'm Sorry* for the 1986 SFE.

Thanks this time round go to Richard Crane for his Eurocurios correspondence. If you have any information about releases that may be of interest to others, or even just questions, then please send me an email: eurocurios@hotmail.co.uk 📧

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO KIT HAIN

In the latest of his Song For Europe column, **Marcus Keppel-Palmer** turns his attention to Kit Hain to see if she is still dancing in the city



Kit Hain, singer-songwriter, has only participated in the UK pre-selection once, that being in 1999 when she co-wrote with Cheryl Beattie the song *Fly* – which the latter was to sing in that year’s Song For Europe contest, then called The Great British Song Contest. Unfortunately, the song failed to progress from the radio-only semi-final held on February 5th and so Cheryl was not seen on national TV.

Kit Hain was born in 1952 in Surrey, the daughter of opera singer Edward Hain – like many successful songwriters she came from a musical family. Kit attended Dartington Hall School in Devon, a progressive school majoring in arts and music. Lucian Freud was a former pupil, and another at the same time as Kit was future collaborator Julian Marshall. Kit then went to Durham University to study psychology where she also sang in folk clubs. In 1974, she moved to London working in the probation service and singing part time in a jazz-rock group.

In 1976, Kit met up with Julian Marshall and they formed the duo Marshall Hain, writing and playing together. Signing to

EMI’s Harvest label in 1977, Marshall Hain set about recording *Dancing In The City*, a song both Julian and Kit believed in, and were rewarded with an international smash hit in 1978, earning a gold disc. The album *Free Ride* followed, but both it and the follow-up single *Coming Home* failed to replicate the success of the opening single. The duo toured around the UK, but their music failed to find an audience, which perhaps expected more like *Dancing In The City* and not the jazzy stuff served up.

True one-hit wonder status was sealed when Marshall Hain split up in 1979, leaving Kit to pursue a solo career, while Julian Marshall formed the Flying Lizards (who had a hit with *Money*) and then duo, Eye To Eye with Deborah Berg, recording two albums in the mid-1980s. After a hiatus of 20 years the duo returned with a third album in 2009. Kit signed with Polygram and released a single *The Joke’s On You* and a couple of unsuccessful albums, *Spirits Walking Out* and *School For Spies*. But performing was becoming less and less important to Kit as she concentrated on songwriting. In 1982, she wrote much

of the musical score to the film *The Pirate Movie* and along with Terry Brittan and B.A. Robertson contributed songs to the score of the updated Gilbert & Sullivan operetta. The film, now a cult classic, was panned by critics and Kit won a Golden Raspberry award for the Worst Musical Score.

While Kit ignores that now, some of her songs were recorded the following year by Roger Daltrey. In the wake of that she moved over to live and work in New York. Some of Kit's songs were recorded by Kiki Dee and Barbara Dickson, but her currency was assured when Peter Cetera (of Chicago) and Chaka Khan had a top five US hit with



Shine with Cheryl Beattie

the duet of her song *Feels Like Heaven*. Shortly after Cher recorded *Fires Of Eden* and then for the next few years Kit worked with Aimee Mann, Heart and Fleetwood Mac. She also wrote for Latin-American singers, like Selena.

Languages are a passion for Kit and she gravitated back to Europe and particularly France. In 1995 she recorded and released her third solo album, *Cry Freedom* which only saw a release in Belgium. After that Kit collaborated with Trijntje Oosterhuis, one of the Netherland's leading jazz singers, who at the time was just starting to go solo after leaving Total Touch, and also with Caroline Henderson, then a fledgling Danish solo artist, who has now released nine jazz albums. The late 1990s also saw Kit collaborate with Cheryl Beattie, an Australian singer, and the main fruit from their partnership was the 1999

Great British Song Contest entry, which saw a recorded release in an Almighty remixed version. Cheryl eventually moved to New York working with Jason Nevins and Martha Davis (formerly of The Motels) and then recorded an album with Sting's backing band. She returned to Australia in the mid-2000s and is now fronting a band called Shine, based in Melbourne.

Kit moved on to work with producer Mike Thorne, who had worked with The Sex Pistols and produced Soft Cell's *Tainted Love*, and she sang lead vocals on a couple of albums produced in 2001 (*Sprawl*) and 2003 (*Contessa's Party*). Kit remained active in writing and had songs recorded by French artists, Francois Welgryn and Lauren Faure, while she provided hit songs in Belgium for Stan

van Samang (*Poison*) and also rising star Milow, who combines folk with acoustic pop elements. Kit wrote songs on his first two albums and even duetted on a couple. Meanwhile, in Germany Kit wrote songs for girl groups No Angels and also Monrose. Songs of hers have also appeared in films as diverse as *D-Tox* featuring Sylvester Stallone, and *Another Gay Movie*. As well as continuing to write songs, Kit has branched out into writing novels for teenagers, while *Dancing In The City* continues to be played and generate visibility for her, most recently in the TV series *Ashes To Ashes*. *Fly* did not take wings at Eurovision, and Kit Hain may seem to be an ultimate one-hit wonder, but as always this masks a lengthy and varied continuing career in the music industry. ♣

MARSHALL HAIN

The Vision Panel

Chairman Alasdair Rendall leads another panel where OGAE UK members give their views



Alasdair



David



John



Liam



Paul



Sharleen

AR: Alasdair Rendall (chairman)

DR: David Ransted

JB: John Bennett

LW: Liam Whelan (regular panelist)

PJ: Paul Jordan

SW: Sharleen Wright

AR: With Blue selected as the UK's entrant, is this a sign of the BBC being willing to pick 'big names', or is it another act just seeking a comeback, rather than a potential Eurovision success.

DR: I think that whatever the motives, it is a good sign and sends the right signals to other countries and to ESC fans that the UK is taking the contest seriously by sending established hit makers. Blue are certainly looking for a way back and may feel that they have less to lose than artists who are currently more successful, but it's still a risk for them.

I believe that if you represent your country in an international competition, whether as a songwriter, lyricist or performer, just as in sport, then your overriding objective should be to win, or at least to do your country proud, and that this responsibility extends to broadcasters and selection

panels. Hopefully last year's winner, a modern contemporary chart hit, as well as our last place, has prompted some kind of Damascene conversion for the UK.

PJ: It might be a bit of both. It is sad that a big current act like Take That would not consider it, although to be honest I can understand why. Saying that, if the song is decent and goes on to do well in Eurovision this year (which I really hope is the case) then it might encourage others to come forward. It might be seen as a springboard and an opportunity for acts to showcase their latest single as opposed to entering the ESC for lack of a better opportunity. Look at Lena this year – she doesn't need to do Eurovision again but it's given her massive promotion for her new album and indeed she's now got several songs in the charts at the same time as a result. She's not worried about how it will affect her in the future. I don't think we quite have that approach in the UK at the minute but I'm hopeful that we might in the future.

SW: I don't necessarily think its either. Its clearly a demonstration that the BBC are willing to do something different,



Blue: Striking the right pose for the UK

and I believe it was an opportunity that presented itself at the right time that was too good to refuse for lack of anything better. Blue won't win for being a 'big name' (while some European exposure helps, they are hardly a big name - Patricia Kaas didn't win despite being famous across Europe, nor did Andrew Lloyd Webber); it would be more about the song and performance. The band have made it clear they understand the opportunity Eurovision gives them, and perhaps its just media play, but I think they have also shown that they genuinely wish to represent their nation and have the UK's faith restored in the competition. Something different is always worth a go.

The very best and worst that could possibly happen would be the reformed Blue win, people think that it's a method that guarantees success, and countless defunct pop bands resurrect themselves for Eurovision and another shot at the charts. They will learn very quickly that there is no formula to winning Eurovision.

JB: In my opinion it's a bit of both. I think the BBC were aware of the strength of feeling after our poor showing last

year and they knew we had to choose something better. Blue are clearly looking for a comeback, but at least they seem to recognise the potential of Eurovision to help them do that - at least that's the way they seem to have come across in the interviews I've seen. The key thing for me is that they have done publicity around Europe, albeit without the song initially, which I think demonstrates the BBC's greater commitment this year. I know that if I had to choose whether to spend the BBC's Eurovision budget on a naff selection show or a publicity tour during selection season for a pre-chosen act, I'd certainly be going for the latter.

LW: I would assume it is a bit of both, BBC want a win and Blue want a comeback. Let me be naïve and say there are no pound signs in anyone's eyes, just patriotism. I am glad to read that the band recently referred to their comeback as a "UK comeback". Duncan James insisted that their comeback would not be affected by Eurovision if the worst were to happen. Okay. That's nice to know and helps me sleep tight at night. Then again at least he is being honest. *Better The Devil You Know* and all that.



AR: Meanwhile over in Ireland we see the infamous Jedward flying the flag. Some say Europe won't 'get' them... but could they in fact benefit from their notoriety? Or is the song ultimately the most important aspect?

DR: I don't think their notoriety extends much further east than Dover and they are going to have to rely on the song and on their ability to deliver it live. Recent years have shown that no amount of packaging can produce a winner if the song itself isn't strong enough (which is encouraging), whereas a really strong song – like *Molitva* – can win even when the live performance relies almost entirely on very strong vocals. A combination of a good song and a good performance – like *Believe* or *Fairytale* – can produce a runaway winner. I think this song could do very well, but they need to watch the vocal delivery.

PJ: It's a bit of a risk and Europe certainly didn't 'get' Dustin. Saying that there is the youth element of Eurovision and they are popular among kids in this country so I don't see why other countries would see them differently. As for the song I personally think it's

the most contemporary song Ireland have sent for a very long time. I think the performance will be striking and memorable. It just depends if the juries go for it – they did well with the Irish juries in the national final but Europe is another ball game. It'll either sink or swim, I can't see it qualifying and then coming mid-table. All or nothing I think.

SW: Hailing from Australia, I'm not really familiar with Jedward. I haven't seen the X Factor performances till now or music chart releases from them previously. So I rather think I'm in the position of most Europeans on this one – I don't really know who they are and what they actually represent. I don't think they have any real notoriety to speak of outside of the UK and Ireland, so I can't see them benefiting from it. Obviously Jedward are not the most talented of singers, but their PR machine seems to work hard and the song itself is catchy.

On stage I think the energy of performance is what will appeal most to viewers; they are colourful, and frankly have one of the catchiest and most memorable choruses in this years

contest. By accident or jokingly, Ireland may have actually sent a gem of a song to Düsseldorf. It's a song that certainly can't harm the Irish reputation win or not (or even qualify) – it's not another Dustin like I have heard people saying. These boys seem quite serious about competing and the song doesn't demean the contest.

JB: I think Jedward will do well at Eurovision for two main reasons. Firstly, they've got a distinctive look and style to them which I think will help them stand out (although who would have thought there would be two separate sets of twins taking part in Eurovision?!). Secondly the song and performance is actually pretty decent even if their own weak vocals (and I'm being polite there) benefit from having some strong backing singers. As for their notoriety, I'm not sure whether the people of Baku or Minsk took that much notice of X Factor 2009 and will have heard of Jedward before May!

LW: I think notoriety is about all they have as they certainly cannot sing. The notoriety exists only within the British Isles so they will not benefit from being extraordinary like other acts in the contest have in the past. For the sake of the prestigious history Ireland has in the contest I hope *Lipstick* flops. The press conferences will be a nightmare with their stupid tones and antics. Nikki Kavanagh would have been no better, trying to mimic Safura. The cult following she had before her song was announced was frightening. I will pay Ireland a compliment in that the selection process was superb and the special edition of *The Late Late Show* was a treat to watch. Mary Kennedy is a lady and is as humble and lovely as the day she presented. Rest in peace Gerry Ryan (I know that is off topic but it needed to be said!)

AR: We're seeing so many forms of methods to choose entrants across Europe, from open contests, to expert juries, to the public selecting the song and not the singer, and totally internal selection. Do you think there is one 'correct' way of selecting a country's representative?

DR: I don't think there is a single method that is so much better than all the others that it should act as a template – all of these methods have produced winners in recent years. While some countries, such as Turkey, have done well with internal selections, on balance I prefer a democratic public vote to select the song, but only if a selection panel has first weeded out all the novelty acts and singers whose vocals are not up to the task. I'd like to see a selection panel firstly shortlist the songs purely on hearing – but not seeing – them performed, and on the ability of the performers to sing live, before the public gets to vote. It will be interesting to see how the UK performs with its first internal selection of a song. I'm happy to give it a try following the disastrous public selections of acts like Scooch.

PJ: Not really – you could argue that the public should have the choice but then look at the times when they have and it's gone horribly wrong. Look at the success of Turkey with internal selections – they've finally 'got it'. Okay there are arguments about diaspora but on the surface countries like Greece and Turkey, traditionally seen as 'no-hopers' have sent some very strong entries over the past decade. I think the BBC did the right thing this year and I hope that we get a decent result as it might go some way to countering the 'Europe hates us brigade'.

I think the Swedish Melodifestivalen is amazing, as a spectacle but also in the

range of music that it showcases. Ideally something like that I think is perhaps 'the best' way however realistically could that work here given the image that Eurovision currently has in this country? I think the fact that there is so much diversity in the way that countries choose their entries helps to keep Eurovision in general more interesting. I think it would be boring if everyone did the same thing.

SW: I don't believe there is any one 'correct' way to select a song, although judging by the controversy in Ukraine for the past few years that must certainly stand as the main example of a 'wrong' way (even if the country's results are consistently good on the Eurovision stage). If there was a right way then surely countries would have adopted that process by now across the board; but Eurovision winners have come from a multitude of methods.

Many fans point to Melodifestivalen in Sweden or MGP in Norway as the best national final process, but not every country is in a position to host a huge touring selection festival financially, talent-wise, etc. While it's a fan favourite, it hasn't resulted in wins for the countries year after year but obviously it does affect the charts locally and for many artists, I believe selling records may be the focus rather than Eurovision itself. Overall I think it's a culmination of luck, opportunity, determination, the right talent and song at the right time.

JB: No, there isn't one correct method of choosing the song, otherwise everyone would be doing it! Although thinking about it, all the songs that have won the contest over the last few years have come through open contests. In terms of viewing pleasure I definitely prefer a

national final with different singers and songs rather than an internal selection. Except when it comes to the UK! Having said that I did like Spain's selection process this year with a mixture of expert jury and then televoting.

LW: The contest and many national selections are entertainment shows and often an essential ingredient in entertainment is variety. Perhaps this is why countries alternate the way their song is chosen, perhaps the reason is budget or other programme schedules. Maybe choosing internally is a good choice, if the correct professionals are commissioned and they make the right decision. Perhaps when approached, an established act may refuse to enter a national selection and might want to choose its own song.

A national final selection is an expensive process even though it provides pre-contest entertainment for its audience but in addition entering the contest comes with its fee and a broadcaster will want to get its money's worth. A televote could give a good indication of an audience's preferences. However, the preference of one nation may not necessarily be the same as that of Europe. The highest profile example of this not being the case recently is Anna (What am I going to do with twenty thousand glow sticks now?) Bergendahl. As much as I dislike Italy's entry for Düsseldorf I wonder if SanRemo took the correct approach. The winner of their festival might not be a winner of Eurovision Song Contest. Perhaps a dedicated committee, an international vote or other method should be used to select a country's Eurovision entry within a nation's established contest.

AR: A successful Eurovision hit, and a song with lasting chart and sales



Satellite was a sales success

success have not necessarily been the same thing. However given the success of *Fairytale* and *Satellite*, is it time to start thinking of Eurovision and sales successes as being one and the same?

DR: Lena's win last year, plus the good results for Turkey and Belgium and, unfortunately, the UK's last place, reflect the robust health of the contest and show that modern, contemporary, creative songs that have standalone chart potential are what appeal most to audiences. Writers and artists who seek to create a chart hit, rather than a Eurovision winner, are actually going to increase their chances of Eurovision success in the coming years. It's great to see the contest evolving in this way as this hopefully secures its future and forces everyone to up their game. The original remit of the contest was to find Europe's best new song, and I think *Satellite* really helped move the contest back in that direction.

PJ: I think so – certainly it's good for the contest. Eurovision has endured many changes over the decades and we need to be realistic – the contest needs a big hit. I personally was surprised that *Satellite*

only reached number 30 in the UK where as *Fairytale* got to number ten. I thought Lena's song was far more representative of current chart music in the UK. Saying that a top ten entry for a non UK Eurovision winner is quite astounding.

I really think it's time that record companies opened their minds a little and started to think of Eurovision as having potential and actually acknowledging that it's changed and is far more current. Look at the entries from Turkey, Germany, Estonia, Azerbaijan last year – I think they showed that Eurovision is starting to 'catch up' and reflect more current musical tastes. Of course I love Schlager and the more kitchy ones too, that's the beauty of Eurovision of course. I think with downloads and social networking sites being so widely used the potential for hit-making through Eurovision is immense and an opportunity which shouldn't be wasted.

SW: A contest that lasts the distance needs to keep up with the times, and sales are a big demonstration of this. I don't believe it's Eurovision necessarily creating or guaranteeing chart success – Eurovision is not a guarantee for sales – but perhaps it's more along the lines of giving exposure to songs that were good enough to be chart successes in their own right anyway.

What we have possibly seen in the past two years are countries moving away from the idea of producing a 'Eurovision' song, and just putting forward something they actually like that would ordinarily be heard on the radio. Finding songs and artists like Lena and *Satellite* which are huge chart hits not only in Germany or Europe but around the world certainly serves to increase interest in the contest and encourages bigger and better artists to support the contest. From that, interest from the public would swell and the

contest will continue to grow. It's a case that one feeds the other, and I think for the continuation of Eurovision for another 56 years will play an important part but they aren't one and the same.

JB: I think that Eurovision and chart success do go together these days. And personally I think that's happened for a while, ever since the introduction of televoting. For people to go to the effort of phoning/texting for a song demonstrates its popular appeal. So it would logically follow that songs which do well in televoting should also have chart success. More recently I think this has been helped by the ability to download songs rather than relying on them to be available in your local music store, making Eurovision songs much more accessible across Europe.

LW: Can I be naïve again and say the contest is about patriotism and not about selling records? I hope Eurovision and sales success will never be thought of as one. Money is the route of all evil. The contest is the route to loveliness.

AR: **The question that still divides many fans... the free language rule. Traditionalists hark back to the days when songs were only performed in the 'native' language of each participant, whereas others will point to the dominance of English in most recent winners. Is there still a need to hear songs performed in various languages, or should the dominance of English just be seen as the reality of the modern, global music industry?**

DR: I think that the native language rule – like the orchestra and the audience all dressed for a night at the opera – is a thing of the past. It's good to hear songs in their own country's language and that



have a distinctive national identity, and I respect countries like Spain and Portugal for sticking with it, but I wouldn't want it imposed as a rule. The reality is that, in the download age, English is the dominant force and is preferred by many aspiring performers and writers. Sales and download charts reflect this, and the contest needs to do the same if it is to remain relevant to modern audiences.

PJ: Like the disappearance of the orchestra, it's not an issue which I think a great deal about to be honest. The beauty of Eurovision is that there is so much diversity there – not only in terms of musical styles but also in opinions. I love hearing all sorts of languages. I'm glad that many countries still do sing in languages other than English. However if we are realistic I think Eurovision has had to adapt and I think it has done that very well over the past decade.

I personally like the fact that I can now understand the majority of the lyrics of the songs, even though some are still decidedly dodgy! I think Albania's entry last year was so much better when it was re-worked and they used English. On the other hand I liked Turkey's effort in 2008 which was in the native tongue. I think

the important thing here is choice, a country has the option of English or any other language. I don't think we can take away that choice from the entrants now or in the future.

SW: I am a great believer in the free language rule – as long as it stands and countries have the choice of how they wish to be perceived I say fair play to them whether they select to sing in English or not. For many smaller countries, Eurovision represents perhaps the one chance to be seen on a world stage all year, so being given the opportunity to expose their national language to the masses or rather choose to show their abilities to compete in the modern, global music industry should always be left as open. Dare I remind the traditionalists that singing in English isn't a guarantee of winning nor an unfair advantage; a good song is a good song no matter what language it is sung in - *Molitva* is high proof of this.

JB: As much fun as it is listening to an angst-ridden ballad sung in Hungarian, I'm more than happy to allow people to sing in whatever language they choose. There's no doubt in my mind that songs in English probably have wider appeal because more people can understand and appreciate the song. But for those of us who watch some (or all!) of the national finals you quite often get the best of both worlds with the song sung in the native language during selection, before being converted to English for the continental final. Although I'd quite happily have made up languages banned from Eurovision so I don't have to put up with drivel like *Sanomi!*

LW: May I answer this question in French? This is something that gets me on my soap box. What next? It must

all be in English? For goodness sake. Why don't we all speak English and spend the Euro? No thank you very much! What is the world coming to? I do not count myself as a traditionalist having this view. Expanding our minds to other languages is surely moving forward.

What happened to evolution? Never mind singing and speaking everything in English; the English language isn't even spoken or written properly anymore – u no m8 wiv txt n tha – and on that note thank God Claudia Pavel did not win the Romanian ticket with *I Want U To Want Me* (though I confess I did not listen to the lyrics and perhaps she tells of a love triangle between her, U and a consonant please Carol.) If we give in to this lyrics will soon become na na na na na na. It is a shame the songs that tried to break language barrier have been tacky or cringe-worthy in their efforts. *La, La, La. Reise Nach Jerusalem. Liubi, Liubi, I Love You.*

I think the European Broadcasting Union should have a language rule where at least half the song is in a national language. Andorra did this best, including at least one line in Catalan at a prominent part of each song. Here we are, here is our song, we want you to understand it but we don't want to forget our roots. Songwriters and singers I plead you not to take shortcuts thinking singing in English will win the contest. Get out there, promote the song, record it in other languages or print lyrics in other languages by all means but on the night get on stage with pride and sing in your mother tongue! Surely the way to celebrate Europe is through embracing the diversity of all its wonderful nations, not trying to merge them and what better way to celebrate than the Eurovision Song Contest? 🖤

PRESIDENT'S PAGE

A word from OGAE UK President Paul Marks-Jones



The excitement of the build up to the 2011 Eurovision Song Contest is in full swing and there is nothing like this time of year for bringing the enjoyment of the contest to the fore and being ready to cheer on our Blue boys!

I was lucky enough to be invited to the official press launch of *I Can* by Blue and it was a great honour to be among the first to hear our entry to Düsseldorf. The lads are so positive about the whole experience ahead of them and are genuinely excited about what awaits them. You can read more about the press conference in this issue.

In the meantime, I am sure you will all join me in wishing Blue and the BBC all the luck in the world as they bring us a good result on May 14th.

I was also delighted to be invited to the latest event by the Eurovision Research Network (www.eurovisionresearch.net). This took place in February and saw a number of academics gathered from around the world – all with one thing in common – an interest in Eurovision! However, it's not the sort of interest to which we are accustomed – in that this was an interest from an academic point of view. The papers and discussions

were fascinating and create another angle of interest that appeals to more people and broadens the horizons yet again on Eurovision.

I'm really pleased that OGAE UK is the first fan organisation to support the Eurovision Research Network, and it's something that will grow and gain momentum over the coming months and years. The EBU was present at the conference and was clearly deeply interested in the work, research and findings that the network is drawing on. It will be interesting to see how more involved the network can become and I hope you all find some asset in its work.



During the contest the network will be running a number of events in Düsseldorf and I hope that there will be something which appeals to our members in Germany.

And talking of this year's host city, we are planning a few special things for those travelling

to Düsseldorf – so keep checking your inboxes for more details. I hope as many of you as possible can participate and share in the fun and excitement of being at Eurovision!

So – it's all systems go. I am sure many of you will be doing local press interviews and promoting not only our entry but Eurovision in general. At home or abroad, have a fun contest and let's hope we do better than last year... ♣

VISION BITS

NEWS FROM DÜSSELDORF

During the two week Eurovision season, there will many websites and blogs giving you the latest news. However, if you want a more personal view, check out Hassan Yusuf's blog on our website www.uk.ogae.net. From Sunday, May 1st there will be regular updates throughout the day about rehearsals, press conferences and parties!

And if all goes to plan, we may even have a 'live' **Vision** Panel up and running. Just check our website from May.

DESTINATION: DÜSSELDORF

OGAE UK member Steven Juniper is producing a special 'road trip' documentary called **Destination: Düsseldorf**. To find out more details or even be part of the project, please go to www.juniperproductions.com. Good luck Steven!

BACK ISSUE BONANZA!



If you are looking to complete your collection of **Vision**, there is no better time than now

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NAME CHANGE COMPETITION

The Organising Committee are still looking at the options, and need to legally check any winning name. We hope to give you more information next issue.

Euro Quiz Answers

D: D'Nash – Spain 2007 **Ü:** *Über Die Brücke Geh'n'* **S:** Soren Pilmark **S:** Serbia and Switzerland **E:** Esprit **L:** Loredana Berte **D:** Dejan Lazarevic, as part of Alma & Dejan **O:** One **R:** Romania **F:** Frank Ifield

THE 'LAST' PAGE

Netherlands

De Vogels Van Holland

Jetty Paerl

Switzerland

Das Alte Karussell

Lys Assia

Italy

Amami Se Vuoi

Tonina Torrielli

Luxembourg

Les Amants De Minuit

Michèle Arnaud

France

Il Est Là

Dany Dauberson

Grand Prix
Eurovision
de la Chanson
Européenne
1956

Belgium

Messieurs Les Noyés

De La Seine

Fud Leclerc

Germany

Im Wartesaal Zum

Grossen Glück

Walter Andreas

Schwarz

Germany

So Geht Das Jede Nacht

Freddy Quinn

Italy

Aprite Le Finestre

Franca Raimondi

France

Le Temps Perdu

Mathé Altéry

Belgium

Le Plus Beau Jour

De Ma Vie

Mony Marc

Luxembourg

Ne Crois Pas

Michèle Arnaud

Netherlands

Voorgoed Voorbij

Corry Brokken

Despite various claims being made during the last 55 years, the European Broadcasting Union has never released any results for the first Eurovision Song Contest, meaning that any one of 13 songs may have come last