



THE OGAE UK MAGAZINE EUROVISION 2012 ISSUE 88

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# RELEASING THE LOVE!

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Affiliated to Organisation Générale des Amateurs de l'Eurovision

# VISION INFORMATION

**Gordon Lewis** Editor-in-Chief  
(Email: [editor\\_vision@hotmail.com](mailto:editor_vision@hotmail.com))

**Hassan Yusuf** Editor  
(Email: [hassan.yusuf@hotmail.com](mailto:hassan.yusuf@hotmail.com))

**David Ransted** Assistant Editor

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

For all general OGAE UK enquiries,  
please contact:

**Paul Marks-Jones** (President)  
33 Woodlawn Court,  
Whalley Range,  
Manchester M16 9RJ  
Email: [presidentogaeuk@btinternet.com](mailto:presidentogaeuk@btinternet.com)

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

**OGAE UK Membership Dept.**  
101 D Clarendon Road,  
London  
W11 4JG  
Email: [ogaeuk@gmail.com](mailto:ogaeuk@gmail.com)

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# EDLINES

ISSUE 88 EUROVISION 2012



Time flies when you're having fun, so we must have all been having lots of fun during the last 12 months because it only seems like yesterday when we were supporting Blue in Dusseldorf. Now it's time for the one and only Engelbert Humperdinck to represent the United Kingdom in Baku and, according to Amazon, he is already expected to achieve a Top Ten hit based on advance sales of the imminent CD single. The Hump deserves every ounce of support his army of worldwide fans can muster, and **Vision** looks forward to a successful outcome at Eurovision.

Of course, there are actually two other songs that British fans can support this year and, unlike our own entry, we will be able to vote for one if not both of these. Jedward return for a second successive year having first found fame on X Factor 2009 before representing Ireland in 2011. If *Waterline* qualifies from the first semi-final, it could do very well indeed for the Emerald Isle and Jedward's mentor, Linda Martin, is no stranger to winning Eurovision on her second appearance!

Germany has turned to the British songwriting team of Wayne Hector, Steve Robson and Jamie Cullum for Roman Lob's entry, *Standing Still*. Cullum needs no introduction as a successful singer-songwriter, but Hector & Robson have enjoyed an equally prolific career co-writing hits for Westlife, Take That, JLS and One Direction to name just four. In the past Hector has also unsuccessfully tried to represent the United Kingdom as a songwriter with Code Red (1996), Luke Galliana (2001) and City Chix (2006).

So while we look forward to celebrating The Hump's Grand Prix victory that will bring the trophy back to the United Kingdom in this Diamond Jubilee year, it also seems appropriate to send some British luck to the Irish and German teams... who are free to come joint runners-up to our very own Engelbert!

May the best song win!

## Gordon Lewis

Editor-in-Chief  
editor\_vision@hotmail.com

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**Treasurer & Secretary:** Simon Bennett  
**Editor-in-Chief:** Gordon Lewis  
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**Ticket Co-ordinator/Membership Liaison:** David Ransted  
**Editor:** Hassan Yusuf

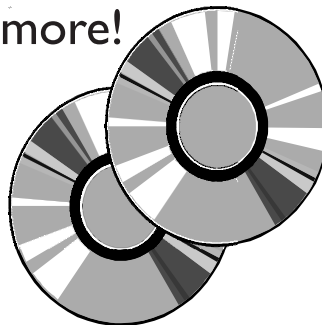
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# THE 57th EUROVISION SONG CONTEST

## Baku – Azerbaijan

Hassan Yusuf talks you through all of the 42 hopefuls for this year's Eurovision

### Semi-Final 1

Tuesday 22nd May 2012

Running order	Performer	Song
01 Montenegro	Rambo Amadeus	<i>Euro Neuro</i>
02 Iceland	Gréta Salóme & Jónsi	<i>Never Forget</i>
03 Greece	Eleftheria Eleftheriou	<i>Aphrodisiac</i>
04 Latvia	Anmary	<i>Beautiful Song</i>
05 Albania	Rona Nishliu	<i>Suus</i>
06 Romania	Mandinga	<i>Zaleilah</i>
07 Switzerland	Sinplus	<i>Unbreakable</i>
08 Belgium	Iris	<i>Would You?</i>
09 Finland	Pernilla Karlsson	<i>När Jag Blundar</i>
10 Israel	Izabo	<i>Time</i>
11 San Marino	Valentina Monetta	<i>The Social Network Song</i>
12 Cyprus	Ivi Adamou	<i>La La Love</i>
13 Denmark	Soluna Samay	<i>Should've Known Better</i>
14 Russia	Buranovskiye Babushki	<i>Party For Everybody</i>
15 Hungary	Compact Disco	<i>Sound Of Our Hearts</i>
16 Austria	Trackshittaz	<i>Woki Mit Deim Popo</i>
17 Moldova	Pasha Parfeny	<i>Lautar</i>
18 Ireland	Jedward	<i>Waterline</i>

Also voting: Azerbaijan, Italy, Spain

### Semi-Final 2

Thursday 24th May 2012

Running order	Performer	Song
01 Serbia	Željko Joksimovic	<i>Nije Ljubav Stvar</i>
02 Macedonia, FYR	Kaliopi	<i>Crno I Belo</i>
03 Netherlands	Joan Franka	<i>You And Me</i>
04 Malta	Kurt Calleja	<i>This Is The Night</i>
05 Belarus	Litesound	<i>We Are The Heroes</i>
06 Portugal	Filipa Sousa	<i>Vida Minha</i>
07 Ukraine	Gaitana	<i>Be My Guest</i>
08 Bulgaria	Sofi Marinova	<i>Love Unlimited</i>
09 Slovenia	Eva Boto	<i>Verjamem</i>
10 Croatia	Nina Badric	<i>Nebo</i>
11 Sweden	Loreen	<i>Euphoria</i>
12 Georgia	Anri Jokhadze	<i>I'm A Joker</i>
13 Turkey	Can Bonomo	<i>Love Me Back</i>
14 Estonia	Ott Lepland	<i>Kuula</i>
15 Slovakia	Max Jason Mai	<i>Don't Close Your Eyes</i>
16 Norway	Tooji	<i>Stay</i>
17 Bosnia & Herzegovina	Maya Sar	<i>Korake Ti Znam</i>
18 Lithuania	Donny Montell	<i>Love Is Blind</i>

Also voting: France, Germany, United Kingdom

# EUROVISION 2012: THE FINALISTS

Eurovision Song Contest		Saturday 26th May 2012
Country	Performer	Song
<b>1 United Kingdom</b>	Engelbert Humperdinck	<i>Love Will Set You Free</i>
<b>2</b>	Qualifier	
<b>3</b>	Qualifier	
<b>4</b>	Qualifier	
<b>5</b>	Qualifier	
<b>6</b>	Qualifier	
<b>7</b>	Qualifier	
<b>8</b>	Qualifier	
<b>9 France</b>	Anggun	<i>Echo (You And I)</i>
<b>10 Italy</b>	Nina Zilli	<i>L'amore E femmina (Out Of Love)</i>
<b>11</b>	Qualifier	
<b>12</b>	Qualifier	
<b>13 Azerbaijan</b>	Sabina Babayeva	<i>When The Music Dies</i>
<b>14</b>	Qualifier	
<b>15</b>	Qualifier	
<b>16</b>	Qualifier	
<b>17</b>	Qualifier	
<b>18</b>	Qualifier	
<b>19 Spain</b>	Pastora Soler	<i>Quédate Conmigo</i>
<b>20 Germany</b>	Roman Lob	<i>Standing Still</i>
<b>21</b>	Qualifier	
<b>22</b>	Qualifier	
<b>23</b>	Qualifier	
<b>24</b>	Qualifier	
<b>25</b>	Qualifier	
<b>26</b>	Qualifier	

## Voting order

The voting order will only be revealed during the live Final. Just write in the countries as they are announced

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**ALBANIA (SF1)****Performer:** Rona Nishliu**Title:** *Suus (Personal)***Songwriters:** Florent Boshnjaku, Rona Nishliu

After two semi-final shows featuring 14 participants each, 20 lucky acts made it through to the popular Festivali I Kenges. The winner was chosen by a special jury and the year ended on a high note (literally) for the striking Rona Nishliu. Rona, besides being a well-known pop singer in the Balkans, is also a renowned experimental jazz musician. She also wrote the lyrics to her entry, *Suus*, which is a powerful and somewhat loud ballad. Rona really sings the song with a lot of passion. Some will feel her angst and admire her vocal ability, others will call it a lot of screaming. Hopefully she'll tone down her voice during rehearsals otherwise she won't have anything left by semi-final time! Albania failed to make it into the final last year. Rona's passion may shine through this time - otherwise she may be justified to sing "cry...cry....cry..."

**Festivali I Kenges 29th Dec 2011**

Song	Performer	Result
<i>Suus</i>	Rona Nishliu	77
<i>Kristal</i>	Elton Deda	55
<i>Ajër</i>	Saimir Braho	50
<i>Zgjomë Një Tjetër Endër</i>	Samanta Karavello	47
<i>Kthehem Prapë</i>	Altin Goci	38
<i>Mbi Cdo Iluzion</i>	Endri & Stefi Prifti	25
<i>Mbi Yje</i>	Kamela Islamaj	25
<i>Personale</i>	Dr. Flori	21
<i>Pa Ty... Asnjë Sekond</i>	Iris Hoxha	19
<i>Të Zakonshëm</i>	Bojken Lako & Breza	18
<i>Më Lër Të Të Dua</i>	Mariza Ikonomi	13
<i>Ëndrra E Parë</i>	Toni Mehmetaj	10
<i>Lulet Mbledh Për Hënën</i>	Xhensila Myrtezaj	8
<i>Këngën Time Merr Me Vehte</i>	Bashkim Alibali	0
<i>Mijëra Vjet</i>	Elhaida Dani	0
<i>Oh... Jeta Ime</i>	Frederik Ndoci	0
<i>Pyete Zemrën</i>	Gerta Mahmutaj	0
<i>Aty Ku Më Le</i>	Hersi Matmuja	0
<i>Vlen Sa Një Jetë</i>	Marjeta Billo	0
<i>Më Kërko</i>	Rudina Delia	0

**AUSTRIA (SF1)****Performer:** Trackshittaz**Title:** *Woki Mit Deim Popo (Shake Your Booty)***Songwriters:** Lukas Plöchl, Manuel Hoffelner

Ten acts entered the Austrian final. The band that were runners-up last year made it one better this time round. The winner was chosen by two rounds of televoting – the first to find the top two, followed by the second to select the winner. It was a close call, with the Trackshittaz duo beating off a bearded lady. Austria probably isn't what you imagine it to be is it? Trackshittaz comprise of Lukas (G-Neila) Plöchl and Manuel (Manix) Hoffelner. They call their unique brand of music 'tractor gangster party rap'. *Woki Mit Deim Popo* translates as *Shake Your Booty* and judging



National Final 24th February 2012		
Song	Performer	Result
<i>Woki Mit Deim Popo</i>	Trackshittaz	51%
<i>That's What I Am</i>	Conchita Wurst	49%
<i>Augenblick</i>	3punkt5	
<i>Don't Turn Around</i>	!Deladap	
<i>Stand Up</i>	James Cottriall	
<i>Einsturzgefahr</i>	Krautschädl	
<i>How Can You Ask Me</i>	Mary Broadcast Band	
<i>Medicate My Blues Away</i>	Norbert Schneider	
<i>Vater, Father, Mon Père</i>	Papermoon	
<i>Comme Ça</i>	Valerie	

by the screams of the young ladies in the audience of the Austrian final, they probably wanted a piece of the duo's er... well, you get the idea. The backing pole-dancing ladies with

their fluorescent 'booties' ought to liven things up in Baku. The President's wife certainly wasn't expecting this! And nor will the majority of Eurovision viewers, though the neon part of the act may not happen due to technical difficulties at the Baku Crystal Hall. This sort of song, with the very strong rap influence, might struggle to get past the semi-final, but who knows! In a way it's good that the group won their national final – at least they got it out of their system! You almost wish Wogan was back just to hear him pronounce the name of this group. It's good of the EBU not to cause a fuss! The chaps sing: "Your booty wants to move, so shake it, shake it, shake it". But if you do decide to 'woki mit deim popo' – make sure you do so in the privacy of your own home...

#### AZERBAIJAN (FINAL)

**Performer:** Sabina Babayeva

**Title:** *When The Music Dies*

**Songwriters:** Anders Bagge, Johan Kronlund, Sandra Bjurman, Stefan Örn

The Azeris as usual took their time over a number of months to choose an entry to defend their title. From the end of November to the end of January they had eight quarter-finals. Each quarter-final, featuring eight or nine acts, was held over five days with a different style of song every day (Eurovision hit, Azeri hit, world hit, etc). Each Friday the winner was determined by an expert jury (50%) and by SMS voting (50%). The eight winners then went on to the semi-final, again singing a variety of songs over five days. The top five acts, voted again by a jury (50%) and by SMS voting (50%), proceeded to the national final. At the final only the expert jury was allowed to vote. And their choice to



sing for their country was the lovely Sabina Babayeva. The actual song, *When The Music Dies*, wasn't revealed until a few days before the deadline. The Azeris always try to tailor their song to their act – and once more they've succeeded. Sabina has a degree in vocal arts, hence her strong singing ability. She also holds a university degree in law – always good to have something to fall back on. She has a lot on her plate – defending the host country, but she should do well – despite the solemnity of this ballad – which comprises modern and ethnic elements. The 13th position she's singing in at the final will definitely not be bad luck for her. She sings: "But it's cold cold cold cold". What? In the land of fire?! Hopefully the heating in the Baku Crystal Hall will be switched on for her...

Final 12th February 2012	
Performer	Result
Sabina Babayeva	1st
Elton Ibrahimov	
Arzu Ismayilova	
Orxan Karimli	
Faqan Safarov	

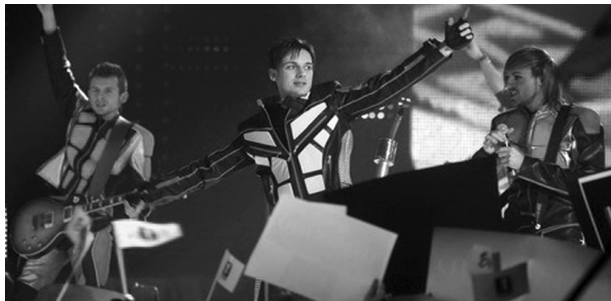
## BELARUS (SF2)

**Performer:** Litesound

**Title:** *We Are The Heroes*

**Songwriters:** Dmitry Kariakin, Vladimir Kariakin

The Belarussian semi-final featured 15 hopefuls, including last year's representative Anastasiya Vinnikova. Unfortunately Anastasiya wasn't one of the lucky five to go through to the national final. The winner was chosen by a jury (50%) and televoting (50%). Alena Lanskaya was the televote favourite, while the jury preferred Litesound, but the former got the higher points and won the golden ticket for Baku. But not for long. Eurovision wouldn't be Eurovision without a bit of controversy. Usually that's been left to Ukraine in recent times, but this time it's the turn of their neighbour, Belarus. The broadcaster discovered that there were certain irregularities with the televotes that Alena received. She was eventually disqualified for vote-rigging. What is the world coming to? But who can blame anyone wanting to enter Eurovision? Anyway, step forward runners-up, Litesound. The group had tried to win the national final



Final 14th February 2012		
Song	Performer	Result
<i>All My Life</i>	Alena Lanskaya	12
<i>We Are The Heroes</i>	Litesound	10
<i>Tell Me Why</i>	Gunesh	8
<i>Dream</i>	Viktoriya Aleshko	7
<i>The Winner</i>	Uzari	6

on several occasions. They can rightly claim to be international: joining the two group-founding Belarussian brothers Dmitry and Vladimir Kariakin (who penned their entry), is another Belarussian, a Russian and an Italian. By all accounts Litesound has achieved success all over Europe winning various awards. If they can win the contest for

Belarus the band will certainly live up to the title of their song, *We Are The Heroes*. It's a decent enough effort – a pop/rock anthem with a catchy beat. And the lads certainly look dapper in their techno-leather outfits. Litesound sing: "When the night is falling from the sky, just keep walking". Good advice. It'll be nice to see Belarus in the final again.



**BELGIUM** (SF1)**Performer:** Iris**Title:** *Would You?***Songwriters:** Nina Sampermans, Jean Bosco Safari, Walter Mannaerts

It was the turn of the Flemish part of Belgium to organise their Eurovision entry this year. Rather than have a contest to choose an act, the broadcaster decided to appoint the 17 year-old Iris to sing for them. It was by all means an unusual choice as Iris had never appeared on national television, but the youngster certainly has talent. She's bound to charm most of the viewing public. In the national final Iris was given two songs to sing, with the winner being decided by televoting. *Would You?* was a clear winner. It's a somewhat breezy sort of ballad – and young Iris performs it like an expert. Iris sings: "Come and find me, I've been hiding from you". Well let's hope the viewers spot Iris and award her with a place at the grand final.

Final 17th March 2012	
Song	Result
<i>Would You?</i>	53%
<i>Safety Net</i>	47%

**BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA** (SF2)**Performer:** Maya Sar**Title:** *Korake Ti Znam (I Know Your Steps)***Songwriter:** Maja Sarihodžić

Maya Sar was internally selected to represent her country in Baku. She's no stranger to Eurovision – as a backing singer in Dino Merlin's band, she performed in Dusseldorf last year. But she is a talented songwriter, composer and singer in her own right. And outside of music, Maya has founded a humanitarian project to fight cervical cancer. *Korake Ti Znam* is definitely a classy song – a haunting and powerful ballad with ethnic overtones. Maya penned this entry, where she sings: "Will you give me reason to live, 'cause I'm dying..." There won't be a dry eye in the hall.



## BULGARIA (SF2)

**Performer:** Sofi Marinova

**Title:** *Love Unlimited*

**Songwriters:** Krum Geopriev, Iasen Kozev, Donka Vasileva

Bulgaria held a semi-final to choose their entrant to Baku with 22 acts. The winner of the jury vote and winner of SMS voting went straight through to the final. As DesiSlava won both categories, the runner-up of the SMS voting, Sofi Marinova, went through. The other ten lucky acts were decided by the jury and SMS voting. At the national final voting was via a jury (50%) and SMS voting (50%). As there was a tie for first position, Sofi Marinova won the golden ticket to Baku as the public SMS vote took precedence. It was third time lucky for Sofi as she previously entered the Bulgarian national final twice – coming runner-up and third respectively. On previous occasions she entered with co-stars, but this time it's as a solo artist. Apparently she's a lady who doesn't like losing, so be prepared to expect the most of her in Baku. She however remains a big Bulgarian star. *Love Unlimited* is an uptempo techno-pop number with ethnic overtones. Decent enough, but might struggle to get through into the final. Sofi sings: "The love has no border, language or colour". How true.



## Final 29th February 2012

Song	Performer	Result
<i>Love Unlimited</i>	Sofi Marinova	20
<i>Chance For Better Life</i>	New 5	20
<i>Love Is Alive</i>	DesiSlava	15
<i>Still Love You</i>	Todor Gadzhalov	12
<i>The Way You See The World</i>	Go Week	11
<i>Searching For The Words</i>	Ivailo Kolev feat. Hipnotik	11
<i>Putyat</i>	Steliyana Hristova	9
<i>Keep Me Down</i>	Svetozar Hristov	8
<i>Love Goes Around</i>	Tsvetelin Atanasov-Elvisa feat. DZ	6
<i>Eternal</i>	Simona Sivanio	3
<i>Alone</i>	Rene Ranev	1
<i>Vyara</i>	Vyara Pantaleeva	0

## CROATIA (SF2)

**Performer:** Nina Badrić

**Title:** *Nebo (Heaven)*

**Songwriter:** Nina Badrić

Apparent lack of interest among Croatia's music community led to the cancellation of DORA – the annual contest to determine who will represent the country in Baku. So instead one of the Balkans' biggest stars for the past 20 years was internally selected to represent her country. The talented Ms Badrić performed her own composition, *Nebo*, which

is a passionate ballad about lost love with ethnic overtones that gets more uptempo near the end. Nina sings: "I will hide myself behind cold wet streets". Let's hope she doesn't get a chill before Baku! And good luck to Nina in her quest to get Croatia back into the final again.



**CYPRUS** (SF1)

**Performer:** Ivi Adamou

**Title:** *La La Love*

**Songwriters:** Alex Papaconstantinou, Bjorn Djupström, Alexandra Zakka, Viktor Svensson

Ivi Adamou was internally selected to represent the Greek Cypriots this year. The 18 year-old came to fame a few years ago in the Greek X Factor show. In the national final Ivi was given three rather superior songs to perform. The winner was decided by a jury (50%) and televoting (50%). Ivi is definitely a striking figure and the song is a lively dance number that will be popular in the EuroClub in Baku. It could be argued that the 12 points that Cyprus will receive from Greece will be justified this year! This could also be the year when a non-Brit qualifies Cyprus for the final. Ivi sings: "Feel the energy between you and me". We sure will, Ivi, we sure will!



Final 25th January 2012	
Song	Result
<i>La La Love</i>	24
<i>Call The Police</i>	18
<i>You Don't Belong Here</i>	18

**DENMARK** (SF1)

**Performer:** Soluna Samay

**Title:** *Should've Known Better*

**Songwriters:** Chief 1, Remee, Isam B

Denmark held its usual Melodi Grand Prix to find its Eurovision entry. Nine acts (after the tenth – Valen:Tine's *Nowhere* – was disqualified), fought it out for a ticket to Baku. The winner was chosen in two rounds of voting – the first to choose a top three, and then the eventual winner. In the first round the voting was 50/50 jury and televoting. In the second round (super final), the public televoting accounted for 50%, the jury had a 10% say, and the remaining 40% went to four international juries (Azerbaijan, Germany, Norway and Russia). The Guatemalan born Soluna

MGP 21st January 2012		
Song	Performer	Result
<b>Superfinal</b>		
<i>Should've Known Better</i>	Soluna Samay	110
<i>Take Our Hearts</i>	Jesper Nohrstedt	102
<i>Venter</i>	Christian Brøns & Patrik Isaksson	88
<b>Non-qualifiers from round one</b>		
<i>Best Thing I Got</i>	Aya	
<i>Overflow</i>	Ditte Marie	
<i>Reach For The Sky</i>	Kenneth Potempa	
<i>Universe</i>	Karen Viuff	
<i>Baby Love Me</i>	Philip Halloun & Emilia	
<i>Forever I B Young</i>	Suriya	





Samay was the Danes' choice to go to Baku – after a tight contest the public vote catapulted Soluna to the top position. She was discovered online by songwriters Chief 1 and Remee who were looking for a singer for their wildcard entry to MGP. Soluna, also a songwriter, developed her singing skills taught by her parents. During the summer months the family performed in the streets of Copenhagen and other big cities. Besides the guitar, the talented Soluna also plays the drum, electric guitar and upright bass. *Should've Known Better* is a charming folky-sounding pop song, but perhaps lacks anything really special – though nothing is certain with Eurovision. Soluna sings: "Nothing more beautiful than the way U use to breathe me to ya lungs and soul". Well Soluna will be holding her breath to see if she qualifies for the final. Let's wish her luck.

### ESTONIA (SF2)

**Performer:** Ott Lepland

**Title:** *Kuula* ([Listen](#))

**Songwriters:** Ott Lepland, Aapo Ilves

Estonia held two semi-finals where five acts (decided by the 50/50 jury/televoting system) from each show proceeded to the national final, Eesti Laul. The winner was chosen in two rounds of voting. In the first round the top two songs were chosen by a jury (50%) and televoting (50%). In the second round the winner was chosen by televoting. The winning act was in no doubt gaining two-thirds of the votes. Ott Lepland was a winner even before Eesti Laul, as he won Estonian Idol in 2009 and landed the lead part of *High School Musical* in 2011. Besides having a good voice, he's also a talented song composer – having co-written his own entry which he certainly sings with passion. *Kuula* is a rather pleasant ballad – a simple nice melody will offer diversity for this year's contest. By all accounts Ott is very down to earth and not a show-off – which is always good news. Ott sings: "Listen to what has fallen silent". Hopefully it won't be the applause for the talented Estonian.



Eesti Laul 2012		3rd March 2012
Song	Performer	Result
<b>Second round</b>		
<i>Kuula</i>	Ott Lepland	67%
<i>Mina Jään</i>	Lenna	33%
<b>Non-qualifiers from Round One</b>		
<i>Oblivion</i>	Tenfold Rabbit	16
<i>I Don't Know</i>	POP Maniacs	13
<i>Made Up My Mind</i>	Liis Lemsalu	12
<i>Valedetektor</i>	Loss Paranoias	8
<i>You're Not Alone</i>	Birgit Ölgemeel & Violina	7
<i>Tantsulõvi</i>	August Hunt	6
<i>City Nights</i>	Teele Viira	5
<i>NASA</i>	Traffic	5

### FINLAND (SF1)

**Performer:** Pernilla

**Title:** *När Jag Blundar* ([When I Close My Eyes](#))

**Songwriter:** Jonas Karlsson

The five semi-finals were a complicated affair with various qualifiers, eliminations and wildcards with voting by juries and televoting. Eventually six acts made it to the national final, the Finnish Contest for New Music (UMK). The winner was chosen in two rounds of televoting – the first to decide on a top three, and the second round to determine the winner. Pernilla Karlsson was the viewers' choice, receiving well over 50% of the votes. Her song, *När Jag Blundar*, is a bit of

a family affair, as it's written by her brother Jonas and is about their mother – who must obviously be honoured and proud. Coming from an ethnic Swedish background, the song will be sung in Swedish to make sure the sentiment is relayed properly. *När Jag Blundar* is very much an upbeat folky ethnic and emotional sounding song which will have you humming along. Pernilla sings: “Someone we see when we close our eyes, like an angel before us, someone who helps us to fly when we’ve forgotten how”. Remember your mum when you listen to this song – and while Mother’s Day may have already happened in the UK, for most of the rest of the world it’s on Sunday 13th May. Just a hint...

UMK		25th February 2012
Song	Performer	Result
<b>Second round</b>		
<i>När Jag Blundar</i>	Pernilla Karlsson	53.4%
<i>Lasikaupunki</i>	Ville Eetvarti	28.7%
<i>Laululeija</i>	Stig	17.8%
<b>Non-qualifiers from Round One</b>		
<i>We Are The Night</i>	Iconcrash	
<i>Habits Of Human Beings</i>	Kaisa Vala	
<i>Antaa Mennä</i>	Mica Ikonen	



## FRANCE (FINAL)

**Performer:** Anggun

**Title:** *Echo (You And I)*

**Songwriter:** Jean Pierre Pilot, William Rousseau, Anggun

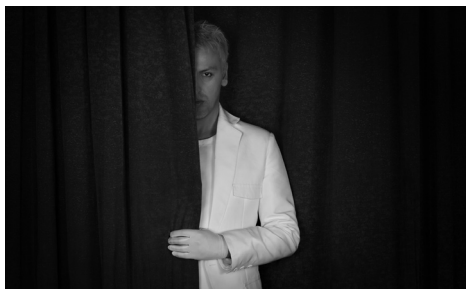
The French, rightly so, were disappointed at their result last year (which was a favourite to win), but they’ve come back fighting fit again. They internally-selected the well-renowned international star, Anggun. Originally from Indonesia, Anggun became one of the region’s biggest stars. In 1994 she moved to France to pursue an international career. After a few years she achieved her aim and is the first

Indonesian artist to break into the European and US markets. She helped pen the French entry, *Echo (You And I)*, which is expected to do well. It’s very much an uptempo song detailing the love between two people. It’s well sung by Anggun and is one of those songs that doesn’t need a second hearing to realise what a class act it is. Anggun sings: “I hear the echo of our steps to the beat, Always march in a new direction”. Will that direction be to the top slot?



**GEORGIA (SF2)****Performer:** Anri Jokhadze**Title:** *I'm A Joker***Songwriters:** Rusudan Chkhaidze, Bibi Kvachadze

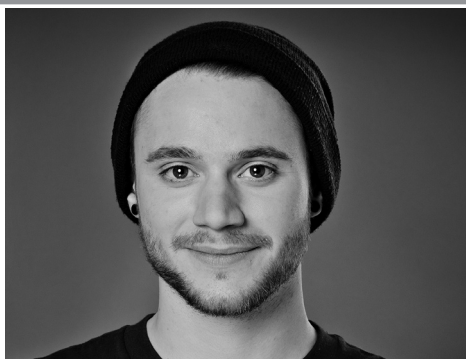
Nine songs were internally selected for this year's Georgian national final. The winner was decided by the 50/50 jury/televoting system. Only the winner was announced and the honour of popping down the road to Baku went to Anri Jokhadze. Obviously the song title was inspired by Anri's surname. He has the distinction of being Georgia's first solo male representative. *I'm A Joker*, like the title suggests, is a somewhat fun entry. It appears to be part opera, part funk, part ethnic and maybe even part something else. This ought to wake up anyone caught dozing off. Georgia is one of those countries that usually manages to get through to the final, but might struggle this year. Anri sings: I'm a joker, I'm a rocker, I'm a shocker, I'm a poker". Yes.

**Final** 19th February 2012

Song	Performer	Result
<i>I'm A Joker</i>	Anri Jokhadze	1st
<i>It's Life</i>	Boris Bedia	
<i>Hey You</i>	Edward Tatiani	
<i>Broken</i>	Industrial City	
<i>It's My Life</i>	Levan Jibladze (Leo Jee)	
<i>Feel Me</i>	REMA	
<i>Whisper</i>	Mirror Illusion	
<i>Letter To A Friend</i>	November	
<i>Breaking The Cage</i>	Vanilla Cage	

**GERMANY (FINAL)****Performer:** Roman Lob**Title:** *Standing Still***Songwriters:** Wayne Hector, Jamie Cullum, Steve Robson

Twenty acts went through various qualifying and elimination rounds over seven shows, which were all decided by televoting. Eventually two acts, Roman Lob and Ornella de Santis, made it through to the national final. The winner was chosen in two rounds of televoting – the first to select the favourite song for each singer and the second to select the outright winner. It was a hard-fought contest with a very tight result, but the German public chose the relatively unknown Roman Lob to represent them in Baku. *Standing Still* is a strong song about relationships and has a very British feel to it – not surprising looking at the names of the songwriters. This is a worthy effort for Germany. Roman sings: "Yeah, I'm standing still, I'm standing still, as you're walking out". \*Sniff\*

**Final** 16th February 2012

Song	Performer	Result
<i>Standing Still</i>	Roman Lob	50.7%
<i>Quietly</i>	Ornella de Santis	49.3%
<b>Non-qualifiers from Round One</b>		
<i>Alone</i>	Roman Lob	2nd
<i>Alone</i>	Ornella de Santis	2nd
<i>Conflicted</i>	Roman Lob	3rd
<i>Standing Still</i>	Ornella de Santis	3rd



## GREECE (SF1)

**Performer:** Eleftheria Eleftheriou**Title:** *Aphrodisiac***Songwriters:** Dimitri Stassos, Mikaela Stenström, Dajana Lööf

Four acts were internally selected for the Greek national final, with the winner being decided by a jury (50%) and televoting (50%). It definitely was a strong show, with all of the songs worthy winners, but in the end the Greek public went for the Cypriot-born Eleftheria Eleftheriou. Eleftheria first came to prominence on the Greek version of X Factor. She's studied music most of her life – and even attended the University of Surrey studying music and performing arts. A worthy 12 points from Cyprus this year as *Aphrodisiac* seems to tick all the right boxes for a Eurovision winner (in fact, it's not that dissimilar to Greece's Eurovision winner, *My Number One*). It certainly sounds Greek, which set it apart from its rivals in the national final. *Aphrodisiac* is a great example of a modern uptempo dance number. Eleftheria sings: "I'm craving for your touch, I want it way too much, I'm craving for your touch". Does anyone remember that being said to you? \*Sigh\*



## Final 12th March 2012

Song	Performer	Result
<i>Aphrodisiac</i>	Eleftheria Eleftheriou	1st
<i>Killer Bee</i>	Cassiopeia	
<i>Baby I'm Yours</i>	Dora	
<i>No Parking</i>	Velvet Fire	

## HUNGARY (SF1)

**Performer:** Compact Disco**Title:** *Sound Of Our Hearts***Songwriters:** Behnam Lotfi, Gábor Pál, Attila Sándor, Csaba Walkó

The Hungarians held two semi-finals, with four songs in each show (three decided by a jury and the other by televoting) proceeding to the national final. The winner was chosen in two rounds of voting – in the first round the top four were chosen by televoting and in the second round the winner was decided by the jury. The four-member band, Compact Disco, is one of Hungary's biggest bands – and won an MTV Europe Music Award for best local band. *Sound Of Our Hearts* has a very Britrock sound to it. A good uptempo electro-rock song. The group penned their song and they sing: "This is the sound of our hearts, If you listen". The group should get a few hearts beating. Another worthy effort from Hungary.



## Final 11th February 2012

Song	Performer	Result
<i>Sound Of Our Hearts</i>	Compact Disco	1st
<i>Vertigo</i>	Caramel	2nd=
<i>Learning To Let Go</i>	Gábor Heincz	2nd=
<i>Untried</i>	Linda, Ben & Viktor Király	4th
<b>Non-qualifiers from Round One</b>		
<i>Don't Save Me</i>	Gabi Tóth	
<i>Like A Child</i>	Juli Fábíán & Zoohacker	
<i>This Love</i>	Mónika Veres "Nika"	
<i>Back In Place</i>	Tibor Gyurcsik	

# ICELAND (SF1)

**Performer:** Greta Salóme & Jónsi

**Title:** *Never Forget*

**Songwriter:** Gréta Salóme

Jónsi is back! After three semi-finals, two acts from each show decided by a jury (50%) and televoting (50%), along with a jury-inspired wildcard, went through to the Icelandic national final. At the final the same voting system was used to determine the winner – and that turned out to be songwriter and violinist in the Icelandic Symphony Orchestra, Greta Salóme, singing with the 2004 Icelandic entrant, Jónsi. Their song, *Mundu Eftir Mér*, was composed by Greta and sung in Icelandic, but for Baku they're switching to English. *Never Forget* is a strong folk/ethnic song about lost love. The two voices work well together and convey the right sort of mood for the composition. This is probably the most ethnic-sounding song that Iceland has entered for Eurovision. The duo sing: "Morning will come and I know we'll be one, Cause I still believe that you'll remember me!" Hopefully the voters and juries will remember this song and put it through to the final.



## Final 11th February 2012

Song	Performer	Result
<i>Mundu Eftir Mér</i>	Greta Salóme & Jónsi	1st
<i>Stattu Upp</i>	Blár Ópal	2nd
<i>Hugarró</i>	Magní Ásgeirsson	3rd
<i>Aldrei Sleppir Mér</i>	Guðrún Árný Karlsdóttir & Heiða Ólafsdóttir	
<i>Hjartað Brennur</i>	Regína Ósk	
<i>Stund Með Pér</i>	Rósa Birgitta Ísfeld	
<i>Hey</i>	Simbi & Hrútsprungarnir	

# IRELAND (SF1)

**Performer:** Jedward

**Title:** *Waterline*

**Songwriter:** Nick Jarl, Sharon Vaughn

Eeeeeek! Is it déjà vu? Or are we seeing double again? Yes, it's true, those terrible twins – back from their success in Dusseldorf – are going to hit Baku by storm this time! Jedward's victory at the Irish final surprised nobody considering their massive fan base. Five



## Final 24th February 2012

Song	Performer	Result
<i>Waterline</i>	Jedward	114
<i>Here I Am</i>	Andrew Mann	94
<i>Mercy</i>	Donna McCaul	84
<i>Language Of Love</i>	Una Gibney & David Shannon	58
<i>Mistaken</i>	Celtic Whisper with Maria McCool	50

regional juries awarded 50% of the points, and the remaining 50% was via televoting. Donna McCaul, who represented Ireland in Eurovision 2005, was also in the line-up. The twins were superb ambassadors for their country last year – and will no doubt charm the pants off everyone in Baku. As you would expect, *Waterline* is a catchy and bouncy pop song and pitched very much in mind with Jedward's limited vocal range. While perhaps not as catchy as last year's *Lipstick* (which charted all over Europe), the lads should do well with this song. But is there no stopping them? Since Dusseldorf, they have welcomed US President Obama to Ireland and appeared on Celebrity Big Brother. For their final this year the twins were mentored by Eurovision 1992 winner Linda Martin who won the contest with *Why Me*. This year, John and Edward sing: "Here she comes, shut'em fast, better shut'em fast". Some would say shut them away – but let's wish our Irish cousins the very best of luck and an improvement on last year's excellent result.

#### ISRAEL (SF1)

**Performer:** Izabo

**Title:** *Time*

**Songwriters:** Ran Shem-Tov, Shiri Hadar

There was talk that Israel might withdraw from the contest due to a conflict of dates regarding a Jewish holy day, but good sense prevailed and the national broadcaster decided to appoint the band Izabo to represent the country in Baku. And what a good choice it was! Izabo is described as an alternative band with psychedelic rock, disco and punk influences – and by all means are gaining recognition all over Europe. *Time* certainly is a wonderful mish-mash of sounds – and probably the most original and unique song from Israel for the contest. It has a strong Britpop/1960s feel to it. The band sing: "Time time give me just a sign sign". Perhaps a 'v' sign for victory? Ought to do well in Baku.



#### ITALY (FINAL)

**Performer:** Nina Zilli

**Title:** *L'Amore È Femmina (Out Of Love)*  
(*Love Is Female (Out Of Love)*)

**Songwriters:** Christian Rabb, Kristoffer Sjökvist, Frida Molander, Charlie Mason, Nina Zilli

Well, why do things the simple way? Never underestimate the Italians! During the San Remo Festival final – a rather long show usually full of older gentlemen and beautiful young women – it was announced that one of the participants, Nina Zilli, would be their entrant for this year's Eurovision. Italy, of course, returned to the contest in 2011 after a



break of 13 years and achieved a remarkable and unexpected second place. After that result they could hardly go into another sulk. And luckily for the contest and Europe they're back in full force. While Nina didn't win the San Remo contest, she could very well have won Eurovision with *Per Sempre*, the song she sang at San Remo and which was also entered for Eurovision. It was a superb ballad beautifully sung by the rather striking Nina. So what did the Italians do? They changed their song! They went from a potential winner to... another potential winner! Perhaps a shrewd move, as *L'Amore È Femmina (Out Of Love)* may possibly have more universal appeal. It's a shame that it won't all be sung in Italian, but the song is a catchy uptempo number with a 1960s feel to it. Nina's stage presence and vocal ability will guarantee it a high placing. She sings: "Stop breaking up my heart, you kill me BoomBoomBoom". Well let's hope not! Rome next year anyone?

# LATVIA (SF1)

**Performer:** Anmary

**Title:** *Beautiful Song*

**Songwriters:** Ivars Makstnieks, Rolands Ūdris

Five acts each from two semi-finals, decided by the 50/50 jury/televoting system, were put through to the national final, Eirodziesma. The winner was chosen in two rounds of voting – both via the jury (50%) and televoting (50%) system. The first round determined the top three and the second round, the winner. The rather amusing Mad Show Boys (do watch them on YouTube where they take the proverbial out of Lordi and Dima Bilan among others), got through to the top three ahead of Ruta Duduma because of a better televoting score. And the winner itself could be described as making fun of Eurovision as well – with Johnny Logan, Mick Jagger and Paul McCartney all playing a part. Anmary is a good singer and her song, *Beautiful Song*, is certainly a very annoyingly catchy uptempo pop number. Once you hear it, it'll be stuck in your mind for ages. The song details the career of a singer just wanting humble riches and fame. Let's hope those dreams aren't shattered if she fails to progress to the final – but this is definitely a nice effort from Latvia. Anmary sings: "I was born in distant nineteen-eighty, the year that Irish Johnny Logan won". She's brave revealing her age in front of millions. Let's see now – that makes her 32. Yes, 32.

Eirodziesma 18th February 2012		
Song	Performer	Result
<b>Second round</b>		
<i>Beautiful Song</i>	Anmary	18 22
<i>I Want You Back</i>	Samanta Tina & Davids Kalandija	16 20
<i>Music Thief</i>	Mad Show Boys	14 18
<b>First round</b>		
<i>My World</i>	Ruta Duduma	14
<i>Disco Superfly</i>	PeR	13
<i>Pedejais Vards</i>	Andris Abelite	11
<i>Celebration</i>	Paula Dukure	11
<i>She's A Queen</i>	Roberts Petersons	11
<i>Stars Are My Family</i>	Trianas Parks	6
<i>You Are A Star</i>	Elizabete Zagorska	2





**LITHUANIA (SF2)****Performer:** Donny Montell**Title:** *Love Is Blind***Songwriters:** Brandon Stone, Jodie Rose

After four semi-finals, 12 acts decided by the 50/50 jury/televoting system made it through to the national final along with two wildcard acts decided by internet and mobile phone response. The winner was chosen in two rounds of voting. In the first the top three were chosen by a jury (50%) and televoting (50%). In the second round the winner was chosen solely by the jury – and they went with Donatas Montvydas – who goes by the name Donny Montell for easier pronunciation at Eurovision. Donny is well known in Lithuania, having appeared on various television shows such as *Dancing With The Stars*. The Lithuanians like to choose dramatic songs for Eurovision, and *Love Is Blind* certainly is that. They were obviously impressed by Donny wearing a blindfold for the beginning of the song – and then doing a hand-stand when he took it off. Well, who wouldn't want to celebrate after regaining your eyesight? The song is an uptempo dramatic love song, but may struggle to reach the final. Still, Donny's charisma might work to his advantage. He sings: "I can't believe I was the one who caused you pain, you should know deep down inside she didn't mean a thing to me". Two-timing scoundrel.

**Final** 3rd March 2012

Song	Performer	Result
<b>Second round</b>		
<i>Love Is Blind</i>	Donatas Montvydas	24
<i>Home</i>	Dar	20
<i>Happy</i>	Monika	15
<b>Non-qualifiers from the first round</b>		
<i>Why</i>	Beissoul	11
<i>Letter By Letter</i>	Bekešo Vilka	11
<i>Take It Back</i>	Vytautas Matuzas	11
<i>One Of A Kind</i>	Simona Milinyte	8
<i>Come Back Home</i>	Vigroses	7
<i>Amazed By You</i>	Alive Way	5
<i>Euforija</i>	Katažina	4
<i>The One</i>	Greta Šmidt	2
<i>Baby</i>	The Independent	2
<i>Light Is The One</i>	Sati	1
<i>Star</i>	Multiks	0

**MACEDONIA, FYR (SF2)****Performer:** Kaliopi**Title:** *Crno E Belo (Black And White)***Songwriters:** Romeo Grill, Kaliopi

Kaliopi was internally selected to represent the Balkan state this year in Baku. Last year's national final was so long it probably ate up a year's budget! But this isn't the first time Kaliopi has represented her country – before the era of semi-finals, she was in the pre-selection contest in 1996 but failed to qualify for the televised final. Kaliopi is one of Macedonia's biggest pop stars. And like quite a few Balkan stars, she does a lot of





humanitarian work. She started her career aged nine, so she has plenty of experience. *Crno E Belo*, which she co-wrote, is a powerful classical/rock number. It starts off just relying on Kaliopi's voice and a gentle piano, then erupts into a rock number. Her reputation will no doubt help her in the contest – and this is a worthwhile entry from the Macedonians. Kaliopi sings: "Everything's black and white, only one truth, only one lie, sharing the same delight, I choose to smile, you choose to cry". Heavy, but the world would be a sadder place without a few greys...

#### MALTA (SF2)

**Performer:** Kurt Calleja

**Title:** *This Is The Night*

**Songwriters:** Johan Jämtberg, Mikael Gunnerås, Kurt Calleja



Malta held a semi-final with 24 songs, 16 of them progressing to the final after being selected by the 50/50 jury/televoting system. The line-up included Fabrizio Faniello, who previously represented Malta in 2001 and 2006. The voting in the final differed, with the jury deciding on 75% of the vote, while televoting accounted for the remaining 25%. Kurt Calleja is a talented performer who also co-wrote his entry *This Is The Night*. As a youngster he sang in a special choir for Pope John Paul II. A few years back he moved to London for a year to work as an air steward, and in his spare time he practiced his music and sang in bars and clubs. Back in Malta he featured in various musical television shows. *This Is The Night* is a bouncy and energetic dance/pop number. Kurt will be on stage with his band in Baku. Kurt sings: "This is my life, this is my life, I've been waiting for, I'll be back with more" – but only if the public and juries put Malta into the final. Let's wish them luck – as a 'pure' pop song is somewhat rare in Eurovision these days!

Final	4th February 2012	
Song	Performer	Result
<i>This Is The Night</i>	Kurt Calleja	84
<i>Pure</i>	Claudia Faniello	78
<i>Answer With Your Eyes</i>	Amber	54
<i>Petals On A Rose</i>	Gianni Zammit	42
<i>Look At Me Now</i>	Richard Edwards	32
<i>I Will Fight For You</i> (Papa's Song)	Fabrizio Faniello	31
<i>In Your Eyes</i>	Lawrence Gray	29
<i>Autobiography</i>	Dorothy Bezzina	27
<i>7 Days</i>	Danica Muscat	25
<i>Mystifying Eyes</i>	Corazon Mizzi	18
<i>Take Me Far</i>	Francesca Borg	10
<i>Time</i>	Wayne Micallef	10
<i>First Time</i>	Kaya	9
<i>You Are My Life</i>	J. Anvil	8
<i>You Make Me</i> <i>Go Uh Uh</i>	Deborah C featuring Leila James	7
<i>No Way Back</i>	Klinsmann	0

#### MOLDOVA (SF1)

**Performer:** Pasha Parfeny

**Title:** *Lăutar (Fiddler)*

**Songwriters:** Pasha Parfeny, Alex Brashovean

The Moldovans like the public to have a big say in the initial selection to find that Eurovision winner. In a two-week period in February the public could cast their votes via the internet on 33 songs, with 21 of them progressing into the national final. And at the final the winner was selected by the usual 50/50 jury/televoting method. By a wide margin, Pasha Parfeny emerged

the winner. Pasha (real name Pavel) had entered the national final on a number of occasions and comes from a musical family. He's also a multi-award winner, so it's not surprising that he finally gets a chance to represent his country. *Lautar* (which Pasha co-wrote) is a somewhat showtime number with ethnic overtones – extremely catchy and toe-tapping. Its colourful style – with Pasha's energy – should guarantee it a spot in the final. Pasha sings: "I got blind, I got mad, not from the diamonds she had, but from the beauty that puts my heart on fire". Yes, but diamonds are forever Pasha...



Final		11th March 2012
Song	Performer	Result
<i>Lautar</i>	Pasha Parfeny	22
<i>Fight For Love</i>	Cristina Croitoru	16
<i>Open Your Eyes</i>	Dara	15
<i>Balkan Riders</i>	Transbalkanica	14
<i>Be Yourself</i>	Adrian Ursu	9
<i>Save A Little Sunshine</i>	Irina Tarasiuc & MC Gootsa	8
<i>Never Ever Stop</i>	Geta Burlacu	7
<i>Live The Show</i>	Akord	6
<i>Crazy Little Thing</i>	Nicoleta Gavrilita	6
<i>If You Leave</i>	Alexandru Manciu	5
<i>Moody Numbers</i>	Univox	5
<i>Live On Forever</i>	Mariana Mihaila	2
<i>Welcome To Moldova</i>	Doinita Gherman	1
<i>Ballad Of Love</i>	Anna Gulko	0
<i>Lights</i>	Inaya	0
<i>You Better Rush</i>	Ksenya Nikora	0
<i>A Ray Of Sun</i>	Leria	0
<i>Mole</i>	MC Mike & Human Place	0
<i>Open Your Eyes</i>	M-Studio	0
<i>Arde</i>	Paralela 47	0
<i>Blanche</i>	Ruslan Taranu	0

#### MONTENEGRO (SF1)

**Performer:** Rambo Amadeus

**Title:** *Euro Neuro*

**Songwriter:** Rambo Amadeus

Scary photo, huh? Well, what do you expect from someone called Rambo Amadeus? While he may look bizarre to most of us, in the Balkans he's a big cult figure known for his unusual jazz/funk compositions. So it wasn't strange when Montenegro internally-selected the star as their act to announce their return to the Eurovision stage. Rambo has the distinction of starting off this year's show, and let's face it, Eurovision will probably never be the same again! We should all expect the unexpected. How to describe the song? Maybe something to do with post-modernism? It certainly has a lively funky sound to it – a hotchpotch of unusual noises, but outside of the Balkans his popularity might not count for much, even though he is a self-proclaimed world mega Tzar! Leaving aside his ego, Rambo does do a lot of humanitarian work however. Anyway, he sings: "Euro neuro don't be dogmatic, bureaucratic, you need to become pragmatic, to stop change climatic, automatic". Yes, very eccent(r)ic.



**NETHERLANDS** (SF2)**Performer:** Joan Franka**Title:** *You And Me***Songwriters:** Joan Franka, Jessica Hoogenboom

The Dutch final consisted of six acts being paired off with each other. The three winners from the play-offs then battled it out. All voting was via the 50/50 jury/televoting system. Arguably one of the rounds contained the two strongest songs, but in the end the talented singer songwriter, Joan Franka, won. She caused some controversy dressed as a Native American, but apparently her song, which she co-wrote, is about a childhood memory when she and her first boyfriend played 'Cowboys & Indians', and wasn't meant to be a political statement. *You And Me* is a clap-along folk/country song that is immensely catchy. Joan herself is a charismatic figure. Once in a while a song comes along that does much better than anticipated. This could very well be the song that the Dutch have been waiting for to break them through into the final again. Joan sings: "In the morning I would wake, and my heart just couldn't wait to play in your backyard, in the evening I would go telling you I love you so and I couldn't wait to see you again". Ah, young love.



Final 26th February 2012		
Song	Performer	Result
<b>Winning acts from the play-off rounds</b>		
<i>You And Me</i>	Joan Franka	37.1
<i>We Can Overcome</i>	Pearl Jozefzoon	33.6
<i>Take Me As I Am</i>	Ivan Peroti	29.3
<b>Play-off rounds</b>		
<i>We Can Overcome</i>	Pearl Jozefzoon	68.9
<i>Undercover Lover</i>	Tim Douwsma	31.1
<i>You And Me</i>	Joan Franka	53.7
<i>Chocolatte</i>	Rafaëlla	46.3
<i>Take Me As I Am</i>	Ivan Peroti	51.6
<i>Children Of The World</i>	Kim de Boer	48.4

**NORWAY** (SF2)**Performer:** Tooji**Title:** *Stay***Songwriters:** Tooji, Figge Boström, Pelle Boström

The Norsk Melodi Grand Prix was, as usual, a big affair. But before the national final Norway held three semi-finals where three songs from each show were selected by televoting to proceed to the final. They were joined by a jury-selected wildcard. At the Grand Prix the winner was chosen in two rounds of voting – the first to select the top four acts (decided by televoting), and the second to select the winner. Voting this time was via three regional



juries and televoting. The Iranian-born singer, Tooji, was clearly the nation's choice, winning by a wide margin. *Stay* is unashamedly pure schlager – but with a Middle Eastern edge to it reflecting the singer/co-writer's background. Tooji became an overnight sensation, with *Stay* being a massive iTunes hit. But the young man seems to be well grounded. Besides his music, he is a supporter of refugees (his family fled Iran when he was a baby) and asylum seekers. He's also a child-protection consultant. He obviously sounds too good to be true! Tooji sings: "You know it's making me hot, and baby I don't stop, It's like a fire in my soul". He's obviously taken Baku's motto – Light My Fire – to heart, bless him. Norway failed to get to the final last year, but hopefully they'll be back there again this year.

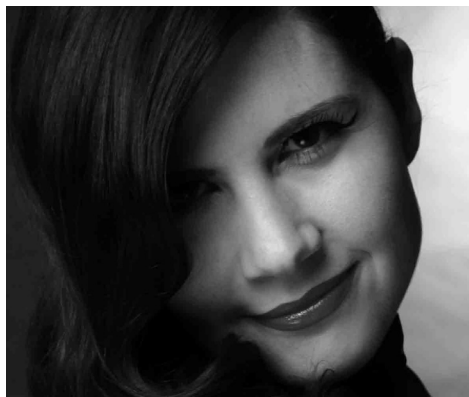
## PORTUGAL (SF2)

**Performer:** Filipa Sousa

**Title:** *Vida Minha (My Life)*

**Songwriters:** Andrej Babic, Carlos Coelho

The Portuguese national final was a long affair, with 'fado' – Portugal's traditional musical style – being the main theme. The show featured 12 acts, and the winner took a long time to determine – even as long as Eurovision – what with 20 regional juries all having their say. The juries represented 50% of the vote, while televoting accounted for the remaining 50%. Filipa Sousa proved to be a clear winner with her dramatic rendering of *Vida Minha*. The song is typical fado – dramatic and full of passion and angst – and it's rather good. Unfortunately this style of song has limited appeal outside of Iberia and for Eurovision fans who have been waiting decades for Portugal to win the contest. Unfortunately the wait will probably go on, but it would be great to see this song in the final to offer diversity – and Filipa performs it with much conviction. She sings: "If you were water, my love, you would be like pure water". Well let's hope this song isn't a wash-out for Portugal.



NMGP		11th February 2012
Song	Performer	Result
<i>Stay</i>	Tooji	155,480
<i>Somewhere Beautiful</i>	Nora Foss Al-Jabri	90,046
<i>Things Change</i>	Bobby Bare & Petter Øien	79,685
<i>Ola Nordmann</i>	Plumbo	61,868
<i>Don't Touch The Flame</i>	The Carburetors	
<i>Sailors</i>	Lise Karlsnes	
<i>Crush</i>	Malin	
<i>High On Love</i>	Reidun Sæther	
<i>Make It Better</i>	Tommy Fredvang	
<i>Sammen</i>	Yaseen & Julie Maria	

Final		10th March 2012
Song	Performer	Result
<i>Vida Minha</i>	Filipa Sousa	24
<i>Será O Que Será</i>	Cúmplices	16
<i>Amor A Preto E Branco</i>	Rui Andrade	14
<i>Gratia Plena</i>	Ricardo Soler	13
<i>Fica A Saudade</i>	Pamela Salvado	12
<i>Queres Que Eu Dance?</i>	Carlos Costa	10
<i>O Mundo Passa</i>	Vânia Osório	7
<i>Um Poema Na Bagagem</i>	Arménio Pimenta	5
<i>O Amor E Maior Que A Vida</i>	Joana Leite	5
<i>Outono Em Forma De Gente</i>	Pedro Macedo	5
<i>Amanhã Começa O Meu Futuro</i>	Tó Martins	4
<i>Redescobri Portugal</i>	Gerson Santos	1

## ROMANIA (SF1)

**Performer:** Mandinga

**Title:** *Zaleilah*

**Songwriters:** Costi Ionita, Elena Ionescu, Dihigo Omar Secada

A total of 15 songs contested the Romanian national final. Voting was via the 50/50 jury/televoting system. You never know what to expect from a Romanian final and this year was no exception. The winner turned out to be Mandinga, one of the most popular Latino bands in the country. Their unique sound blends traditional Romanian music with Cuban rhythms, and *Zaleilah* will certainly stand out in Baku. Alas, with seven members, one of them will have to sit it out in the green room (EBU rules only allow six people on stage). *Zaleilah* is an uptempo dance number with a number of key changes which will get anyone on their feet to have a quick wiggle. This song will easily get through to the final. The lead vocalist, Elena, sings: "Never doubt that I'm here just for you, come here, my sweet chocolate boy". Mmmm... chocolate.



Final		10th March 2012
Song	Performer	Result
<i>Zaleilah</i>	Mandinga	22
<i>Sun-Ta</i>	Electric Fence	19
<i>Call My Name</i>	Catalin Josan	18
<i>Girls Don't Cry</i>	Ioana Bianca Anuta	9
<i>I Walk Alone</i>	Ovidiu Anton	9
<i>If You Find Simple Words to Say</i>	Ana Mardare	6
<i>Twilight</i>	T&L	6
<i>Say My Name</i>	Tasha	6
<i>The Best A Man Can Get</i>	Lucian Oros	5
<i>Time Is On My Side</i>	Raluca Ocneanu	4
<i>If You Ever Feel</i>	Viky Red	4
<i>This Must Be Love</i>	Ana Mardare	3
<i>Don't Say Sorry</i>	Bianca Purcarea	3
<i>Rollin'</i>	Miss Mary	2
<i>Singura Care</i>	RPK	0

## RUSSIA (SF1)

**Performer:** Buranovskiye Babushki

**Title:** *Party For Everybody*

**Songwriters:** Viktor Drobysh, Timofei Leontiev, Iga Tuktareva, Marry S. Applegate

Headline: Humiliation to Dima Bilan! The Russians decided to have another national final, after internally selecting their candidate last year. And not doing anything by halves, they decided to make it as long as an average Eurovision show with 25 acts! Previous Eurovision winner Dima Bilan was back again for a third time, but this time he was duetting





with Yuliya Volkova, who represented Russia in Eurovision 2003 as one half of tATu. How could they possibly lose – especially with Bilan’s huge popularity. In the end the contest turned into a three-man battle, with votes by the 50/50 jury/televoting system. The awarded points were announced in order of appearance. No one scored more than 7% until Bilan & Volkova were awarded their points. Surely they had won it? Only Aida & Timati came close to them. All seemed safe until it was the turn of Buranovskiye Babushki (Buranovo Grannies) – when suddenly the hall erupted into much joy and happiness! The ‘grannies’ had done it! They had beaten the mighty Bilan! The look on his face during the Babushki’s reprise was priceless! And it looks like people power does work in Russia! The judges looked perplexed, but the audience were ecstatic. This was the second time the BBs entered the national final – two years ago they came third, with, frankly, a much better song. The grannies come from a village, Buranovo, in a region of Russia called Udmurtia. *Party For Everyone* has been a massive hit since its release. It’s essentially a dance song with a very traditional Russian feel to it. And how nice of the grannies to sing the title of the song (though badly) in English. Because it is a somewhat basic number (and the grannies aren’t really that good as singers), the juries may mark them down. However, they will take Eurovision viewers by storm. Who after all doesn’t love their granny? No one should be surprised if we end up in Moscow or St. Petersburg next year! The BBs sing: “And my cat is happy, and my dog is happy! The happiness is overflowing!” It is! It is! And hey, at least Engelbert will have contemporaries to talk about the good old days...

Final		7th March 2012
Song	Performer	Result
<i>Party For Everybody</i>	Buranovskiye Babushki	38.51
<i>Back To Her Future</i>	Dima Bilan & Yuliya Volkova	29.25
<i>Fantasy</i>	Aida & Timati	26.74
<i>Une Marionnette</i>	Syostry Syo	6.98
<i>Money Vs Love</i>	Mark Tishman	6.73
<i>Navstrechu Nebu</i>	4Post	6.32
<i>Michael</i>	Polina Smolova	5.79
<i>Do You Like</i>	Elena Ekimova	5.58
<i>Life's Beautiful</i>	Katya Savelyeva	5.32
<i>Sky</i>	Riff Action Family	5.09
<i>Breath Away Song</i>	Farinelli Balls	5.06
<i>Kiss</i>	The Ups!	5.00
<i>Brave</i>	Lena Maksimova	4.96
<i>High Up</i>	Chinkong & Karina	4.68
<i>Positive Emotions</i>	Olga Makovetskaya	4.52
<i>I Miss You</i>	Rene	4.28
<i>Mezhdu Nebom I Zemlyoy</i>	Mari Karne	4.24
<i>Woman's Heart Never Lies</i>	Irson Kudikova	4.15
<i>Ya Tebya Lyubila</i>	Efrosiya	4.06
<i>Close My Eyes</i>	Ksenona	4.02
<i>One Million Butterflies</i>	Pavla	3.93
<i>100 Minut</i>	Ed Shulzhevskiy	3.65
<i>Believe</i>	Sardor	3.46
<i>Oh Yeah</i>	Jet Kids	3.23

#### SAN MARINO (SF1)

**Performer:** Valentina Monetta

**Title:** *The Social Network Song (Oh Oh – Uh – Oh Oh)*

**Songwriters:** Ralph Siegel, Timothy Touchton, José Santana Rodriguez

It is good to see this tiny nation in Eurovision, despite just making up the numbers. Valentina Monetta was internally selected at the very last moment. The song was already chosen, but without a singer. The director of the national broadcaster came across her singing



and immediately signed her up to go to Baku. However, there was a bit of controversy about the Sammarinese song: its title and lyrics: *Facebook Uh, Oh, Oh*. The repeated mention of Facebook broke EBU rules on brand names and advertising, so was in danger of being disqualified. But no problem, all mention of Facebook was eliminated and hence the *The Social Network Song (Oh Oh - Uh - Oh Oh)*. The composer of the music by the way is Eurovision's old friend Ralph Siegel, who certainly gets around! As the title suggests, this bouncy funky pop number is all about meeting friends on the internet. And yes, the singer is a Facebook friend with **Vision's** editor! Valentina certainly seems to have a cheery disposition. This may struggle to get into the final, especially during this rather strong year, but let's wish San Marino good luck. Valentina sings: "Do you wanna be more than just a friend, do you wanna play cyber sex again, if you wanna come to my house, then click me with your mouse". Err.... has the EBU really checked the lyrics?

**SERBIA** (SF2)

**Performer:** Željko Joksimović

**Title:** *Nije Ljubav Stvar (Love Is Not An Object)*

**Songwriters:** Željko Joksimović, Marina Tucaković, Miloš Roganović

Željko Joksimović is a class act. He's one of the Balkans' biggest stars, so no surprise that the national broadcaster decided to internally select him for Baku rather than hold a national final. He came second in Istanbul in 2004 and composed other Balkan Eurovision successes. As soon as he was internally selected everyone was expecting Serbia to win the contest again and for Željko to finally achieve the top slot. He announced his song in a special television programme which featured many of his compositions and guest stars who have been lucky enough to sing his songs. *Nije Ljubav Stvar* was sung in both Serbian and English. The language to be sung in Baku was decided later on – and luckily it wasn't in English! It sounds so much better in Željko's native tongue. Many, however, were slightly disappointed with the song, in that it's not as powerful as his 2004 entry, *Lane Moje*. But all that aside *Nije Ljubav Stvar* is a typical - but excellent - composition, a powerful ballad full of great traditional music that Željko is famous for. He sings: "Go, just, just go, fly away, sing, give your heart to someone else, but know that goodbye is not the end". Well, let's hope this isn't goodbye from Željko. He is certain to qualify for the final and may even challenge the top positions.



**SLOVAKIA** (SF2)

**Performer:** Max Jason Mai

**Title:** *Don't Close Your Eyes*

**Songwriters:** Max Jason Mai

Max Jason Mai, in the guise of Miro Šmajda, came second in the Czech/Slovak version of Pop Idol in 2009, which is why Slovakia probably felt confident in internally selecting him to represent the country in Baku. Max is a talented chap, performing his own composition – and judging by

the photo likes to hit the gym a few times a week. Show-off. His song choice is somewhat radical as hard rock/heavy metal songs (Lordi doesn't count) don't usually fit well with Eurovision audiences. But it is good to see this style of song in this year's contest to offer some diversity. Something for everyone is essential and *Don't Close Your Eyes* has a decent enough melody. And Max may challenge Italy's Nina Zilli for this year's best hair in Eurovision award. Max sings: "Let me get out of here, let me get out of here, let me get out of here, let me get out of here". Hopefully they won't be the thoughts of the juries and public, as it would be nice to see Slovakia in a final again.



## SLOVENIA (SF2)

**Performer:** Eva Boto

**Title:** *Verjamem (I Believe)*

**Songwriters:** Vladimir Graić, Hari Mata Hari, Igor Pirkovič

The country went a bit Eurovision mad this year with the Mission Eurovision project being held over 12 heats. Thirty-two singers started in the contest, all singing cover songs. After various rounds where winners were decided by televoters, juries or sing-offs, two acts finally made it to the final. Eva Boto and Nika & Eva Prusnik were given three songs each to sing. The eventual winner was chosen in two rounds of voting. In the first round the favourite song for each act was chosen by a jury (50%) and televoting (50%). In the second round the winner was chosen solely by televoting. The public made the right choice with Eva Boto. Despite being just 16 years old, Eva packs a powerful punch with a well-developed voice. And her song, *Verjamem*, is a dramatic ballad which also relies on excellent backing singers. This is a serious effort from Slovenia that should do well for them. Eva sings: "A silent voice sings in a minor key, but there won't be a wind, to rustle white flags". Well let's hope Slovenia don't wave a white flag of surrender, but rather breeze through to the final.



## Final 26th February 2012

Song	Performer	Result
<i>Verjamem</i>	Eva Boto	28,385
<i>Konichiwa</i>	Nika & Eva Prusnik	12,884
<b>Non-qualifiers from the first round</b>		
<i>Run</i>	Eva Boto	
<i>Malo Sreče</i>	Nika & Eva Prusnik	
<i>A Si Sanjal Me</i>	Eva Boto	
<i>Love Hurts</i>	Nika & Eva Prusnik	

**SPAIN** (FINAL)**Performer:** Pastora Soler**Title:** *Quédate Conmigo (Stay With Me)***Songwriters:** Antonio Sánchez, Thomas G:son, Erik Bernholm

Spain took a different approach to decide their singer for Eurovision this year. They internally selected the popular and experienced singer Pastora Soler to go to Baku for them. At the final she sang three songs – one selected via the internet and the other two chosen by Pastora herself. The show was a grand affair hosted by the lovely Anne Igartiburu and featured various guest stars such as Sergio Dalma (Spain 1991). Pastora looked very glamorous, wearing a different outfit for each song. One was ripe for a wardrobe malfunction, but all Pastora revealed was a superb voice – her experience obviously shining through. All of the songs were ballads – and all of high quality. But the jury (50%) and televoters (50%) decided upon *Quédate Conmigo (Stay With Me)*. It starts off quietly but soon builds into a powerful love song. Spain has struggled to make any impact for quite a while now, but this song might do it for them if the juries and viewers want something classy. Pastora sings: “My heart didn’t belong to me, stay with me, stay with me”. Everyone is bound to stay for the end of this song.



Final		3rd March 2012
Song	Result	
<i>Quédate Conmigo (Stay With Me)</i>	72	
<i>Tu Vida Es Tu Vida</i>	56	
<i>Ahora O Nunca</i>	52	

**SWEDEN** (SF2)**Performer:** Loreen**Title:** *Euphoria***Songwriters:** Thomas G:son, Peter Boström

Eurovision wouldn't be Eurovision without the Swedish Melodifestival! A big affair as usual and the action started early with a 'web joker' quarter-final on the internet. The winner made it to one of the five semi-finals. Each of the first four semi-finals put through two finalists. The fifth semi-final featured second-chancers, two of which also went through to the final. Melodifestival offered a good mixture of songs and performances. The winner was decided by 11 international juries (50%) and televoting (50%). It was an exciting show as usual, with the last televoting results being quite dramatic when announced. By a



convincing margin, the golden ticket to Baku went to Moroccan-born Loreen. She could be described as a Kate Bush for the 21st century, but of course has her own individual style. *Euphoria* is quite a unique dramatic uptempo song with schlager overtones. Will Loreen be the fourth performer to win Eurovision barefoot? She certainly has presence and will be quite memorable in Baku. If she does win, all of Sweden will certainly be euphoric! Loreen sings: "Forever, 'til the end of time, from now on, only you and I we're going u-u-u-u-u-u-u-u". All the way to the top? Never rule Sweden out.

Melodifestival		10th March 2012
Song	Performer	Result
<i>Euphoria</i>	Loreen	268
<i>Amazing</i>	Danny Saucedo	198
<i>Shout It Out</i>	David Lindgren	88
<i>Soldiers</i>	Ulrik Munther	88
<i>Why Am I Crying</i>	Molly Sandén	77
<i>Baby Doll</i>	Top Cats	68
<i>Mystery</i>	Dead by April	52
<i>Jag Reser Mig Igen</i>	Thorsten Flinck & Revolutionsorkestern	43
<i>Why Start A Fire</i>	Lisa Miskovsky	39
<i>Mirakel</i>	Björn Ranelid feat. Sara Li	25

## SWITZERLAND (SF1)

**Performer:** Sinplus

**Title:** *Unbreakable*

**Songwriters:** Gabriel Broggini, Ivan Broggini

A semi-final of seven songs was held, with two songs going forward to the final where they joined 12 other acts. The Swiss turned out to be an unsentimental lot – as their contest featured the winner of the first Eurovision way back in 1956, Lys Assia. Her song was expected to do well – it was a simple ballad well suited to Ms Assia's aging voice. The guest judges described her song as missing modern elements. True, but sometimes an old-fashioned song can do wonders. And Lys's presence in Baku might have guaranteed them a place at the final. Still, the Swiss public decided by televoting to send a far more modern song to Baku. Sinplus are two brothers who composed their song, *Unbreakable*. And the song is a worthwhile entry. It certainly has elements of Britrock about it – a good effort with an energetic catchy tune –good toe-tapping rhythms.

Sinplus sing: "Today without a doubt, a good vibe is in the crowd". As the chaps will find out, there's always a good crowd at Eurovision.

Final		10th December 2011
Song	Performer	Result
<i>Unbreakable</i>	Sinplus	17.87%
<i>Peace &amp; Freedom</i>	Ivo	16.02%
<i>Anima Nuova</i>	Chiara Dubey	13.82%
<i>Fragile</i>	I Quattro	10.56%
<i>Wrong To Let You Go</i>	Katherine St-Laurent	9.91%
<i>Real Love</i>	Patric Scott feat. Fabienne Louves	9.81%
<i>The Song In My Head</i>	Raphael Jeger	5.96%
<i>C'était Ma Vie</i>	Lys Assia	5.46%
<i>Shining</i>	Macy	3.49%
<i>Black Symphon</i>	Atomic-Angels	2.36%
<i>Baby Baby Baby</i>	Guillermo Sorya	1.19%
<i>L'autre</i>	Ze Flying Zézettes Orchestra	1.17%
<i>Quand Je Ferme Les Yeux</i>	Sosoflao	1.08%
<i>She</i>	Emel	1.03%





## TURKEY (SF2)

**Performer:** Can Bonomo

**Title:** *Love Me Back*

**Songwriter:** Can Bonomo

After last year's disaster when for the first time Turkey failed to qualify from a semi-final, they certainly weren't going to let it happen again – especially in the land of their Turkic brothers! The national broadcaster as usual carried out an internet poll to see who the general public would like to see at Baku. And as usual, they seem to have ignored the poll and selected someone of their own choosing. This process has usually served them well and will no doubt do so again – as this year's choice, Can Bonomo, is a very talented chap. He combines traditional Turkish music with modern elements. His seafaring ditty, *Love Me Back*, which he also composed, even has Yiddish elements reflecting his ethnic background (maybe a few points from Israel then). *Love Me Back* is an extremely catchy toe-tapping tune – and along with Can's (pronounced 'Jun') charisma, should hopefully sail this entry into the final. Can sings: "I'm a lonely sailor, drinking the night away, my ship is made from hope, she's searching for your bay". All together now – and don't deny you want to say it – "Hello Sailor!"



## UKRAINE (SF2)

**Performer:** Gaitana

**Title:** *Be My Guest*

**Songwriters:** Gaitana, KIWI Project

There are three very important international events this summer – besides Eurovision, there's the Olympics and the UEFA Euro 2012 Football tournament. Poland and Ukraine are co-hosting the football, and unfortunately the



Final 18th February 2012		
Song	Performer	Result
<i>Be My Guest</i>	Gaitana	41
<i>Dance</i>	Max Barskih	38
<i>Mondo Blu</i>	Oksana Nesterenko	35
<i>Just A Dream</i>	Nerealnye	34
<i>I'll Never Let Go</i>	Eduard Romanyuta	28
<i>I Close To You</i>	Masha Sazonova & Tikhon Levchenko	27
<i>Love In Sunlight Rays</i>	Renata	27
<i>Lepestok</i>	Olya Polyakova	23
<i>Ti Ne Odin</i>	Ulyana Rudakova	23
<i>You're My Life</i>	Igor Tatarenko	22
<i>Are You Waiting For Me</i>	Andriy Bogomolets	19
<i>My Heart Is Sorrowing</i>	Marta	19
<i>Rainbow</i>	Marietta	19
<i>I Don't Know Why</i>	Bondarchuk	18
<i>New Day</i>	Treorange	18
<i>Dream</i>	Shanis	16
<i>Ya Tak Iskal Tebya</i>	Mihailo Gritskan	17
<i>Let It Out</i>	Lena Voloshina	14
<i>Get Over</i>	Rapira	12
<i>I Want To Love</i>	Vitaliy Galay	7
<i>MegaMix</i>	Lyogkiy Flirt	5

former pulled out of Eurovision as the national broadcaster couldn't cover the cost of Euro 2012 and Eurovision. Luckily, their neighbours decided to embrace both events. The Ukrainian final featured 21 acts and the winner was decided by the 50/50 jury/televoting system. With football in mind, they decided to send to Baku one of Ukraine's most popular singers – Gaitana. She co-wrote her composition *Be My Guest*, which welcomes the world to Ukraine to watch the football. After some really uneventful songs, Ukraine are back in action this year – and could do very well here. The song is loud and fast, has a great beat, and is extremely powerful – as you would expect from Gaitana's lungs. This is the perfect football anthem – and Eurovision winner. And still with the football theme Gaitana has also composed a song for the UEFA tournament as well! Gaitana sings: "Welcome! Stay with me, be my friend, you are free to live your life, to share your love with the world". Very welcoming indeed. Let's invite ourselves to dinner with plenty of mojitos. Yes?

#### UNITED KINGDOM (FINAL)

**Performer:** Engelbert Humperdinck

**Title:** *Love Will Set You Free*

**Songwriters:** Martin Terefe, Sacha Skarbek

Well it looks like we've saved the best to last again! Those lovely people at the BBC kept us guessing for months as to who we would send to Azerbaijan this year. Rumours suggested the recently reformed Steps, or even Atomic Kitten. Then there was Charlotte Church. All worthy candidates, but out of the blue they chose someone who Eurovision fans would never have guessed in a million years – Engelbert Humperdinck! Engelbert – or The Hump, as he is affectionately known, was a huge star in the 1960s and 1970s. Those of us of a certain age will remember him as a popular singing guest on numerous television shows. He disappeared from our screens in the mid-1970s. But as you will discover in a profile on Engelbert elsewhere in this issue of **Vision**, he was extremely busy elsewhere. Initial shock soon turned into admiration, especially after the UK song was revealed. *Love Will Set You Free* is a simple but classic ballad written by award-winning songwriters. Its simplicity could be the winning formula, and starting the final will set a benchmark for the rest of Europe to follow. Engelbert sings: "Trust in your dreams, run with no fear, and if you should stumble, remember I'm near". The whole of the UK will trust Engelbert to do his best! We couldn't ask for more. Good luck to The Hump!



Many thanks to [eurovision.tv](http://eurovision.tv), [esctoday.com](http://esctoday.com) and [natfinals.50webs.com](http://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: 2012

**Vision** asked its regular contributors their personal top three favourite songs and the one they were disappointed with, along with their overall impression of this year's contest so far. Here are the views of those who replied...

## Hassan Yusuf

Okay, you've just read my previews for the 42 entrants for this year's contest – a hard slog, but someone had to do it. But it made me listen to all the songs carefully and more than once – which isn't necessarily a good thing, because you can soon start liking genres that aren't usually your cup of tea. Slovakian hard rock? Bring it on!

Anyway, my top three: In prime position it has to be **Italy**. Couldn't understand the popularity of the song last year, but this year it's a different matter. I loved the original choice *Per Sempre* – such a great and powerful ballad – and was so cheesed-off when I read it was being replaced! I was all set for Rome next year. However, I still think we have a good chance of going there with the replacement song, *L'Amore È Femmina (Out Of Love)*, as well. It's uptempo with a 1960s feel to it – one of my favourite eras for music. And Nina Zilli just looks and sounds the part.

If Italy doesn't win it, then my other favourite might – **Ukraine**. Hurrah! After a few years of really miserable and excruciating songs in my opinion, the country is back with a fantastic football anthem tune. It's got a great background melody and Gaitana (I keep calling her 'Giganta') is just going to own that stage. The last football anthem song in Eurovision (France 2010) didn't do that well, but I have better hopes for this. Kiev was a great place so a return visit wouldn't be unwelcome.

There was a lot of competition for my third choice, but I had to go with **Turkey**. After last year's car crash, choosing Can Bonomo was an inspirational choice. He seems like a very likeable young man – definitely has a nice personality, and the song he's written really hits the right buttons. Perhaps a bit too ethnic to

win, but I think all the traditional Turkish and Yiddish sounds set against a modern score just sound great. Maybe the lyrics are a bit basic, but that makes English easier to understand for the rest of Europe.

The contest is really of a high standard this year. Cyprus and Greece's 12 points to each other will be well-justified. Who will not want to vote for the Russian grannies? One of my favourite Icelandic singers, Jónsi, is back duetting with a great ethnic sound. And most of their Scandinavian neighbours will be big hitters in the contest. Israel have their best song in years – full of lovely sounds. In fact all the Big Five have great songs – Spain have their best entry in a long time – such a classy ballad. Hopefully France won't disappoint again. And as for the UK – well, having Engelbert start is going to set a high benchmark. If Europe decide to go for a great straightforward song sung by an expert, then I see no reason why next year's contest won't be held in Manchester or Cardiff.

And what a difference a year makes. Last year Georgia produced my favourite entry, this year it's among my least favourites. Montenegro amuses and confuses me, but it's going to start off Eurovision in a unique way! But every single song in the contest has merit – and I'm glad there's some diversity for Eurovision viewers.

Hopefully it will be a close contest – certainly any number of songs could win it. I think it will all depend on the performance on the night.

## Mandy Norman

I have to say that picking a top three has been a rather difficult task and I'm responding after listening to most of them only once, which I



**Georgia:** It's that cool looking joker...

think is probably more realistic for the night.

**Georgia:** If people can get past that intro, they're going to love the eclectic musical styles in this song – pseudo opera, funk, Middle Eastern touches. It's funky and just a tad bit weird. I like!

**Netherlands:** Now then, I watched this video and was like 'what?!' I then tried listening to it with my eyes closed and it was a totally different experience – an acoustic, folky, catchy kind of number. For the Netherlands' sake, let's hope the whole of Europe has their eyes closed.

**Sweden:** I've been trying not to like this song, but it's catchy, is going to rock on stage and have Euro Club jumping. If we're not in Sweden in 2013, I will eat my hat!

I'm also liking Germany and Moldova, and Italy has a touch of Amy Winehouse about it, so overall I think it could be a vintage year.

As for the top three of the contest – well then, Position three – UK (the song does stand out), Position two – Russia – Europe is going to go with the granny vote. As for the winner – it's going to be Sweden. I would put money on it if the odds weren't so rubbish!

### Robin Scott

Before I give my top three I must congratulate the BBC on a very clever choice. I am sure that Engelbert will do us proud. I do hope that first position won't harm our chances, but only time will tell.

Third Place: **Estonia** – Ott Lepland with *Kuula*. As usual there are lots of ballads but this simple and powerfully sung song is just magic. No frills, no effects, just beautifully constructed and performed. I rest my case!

Second Place: **France** – Anggun with *Echo*

(*You And I*). At last I have a favourite from la belle France. Even before I saw the video I loved this song. It changes its character once and once again. It's the perfect mix of two languages. I would love to have heard it sung 'live' as that will be the telling performance, but based on the video and studio audio, it's fab.

First Place: **Italy** – Nina Zilli with *L'Amore È Femmina* (*Out Of Love*). This song is familiar on first listening. It's current, catchy and well-constructed. Such a good singer, full of charisma. Well done Italy on your second entry back in the contest.

Originally I thought that this year would be boring, but I have thought that before and been proven wrong. Watching the songs in order was a really enjoyable experience with very few omissions.

The Big Five have all come good, unfortunately for them, at the same time. When most people hear them in the final for the first time they will remember all of them.

Yet again Norway and Sweden have produced quality entries. Totally different. Both exceptionally well performed. Ireland's studio performance is great but the national final vocals were woeful. Last year's song was better and it remains to be seen if Europe will be charmed again by the twins. I fear, perhaps not.

I have surprised myself with my changing opinions of some songs. I've become a Georgian fan. Watching their final I was cringing, but the performance is now slick, as are the vocals. Slovakian rock isn't usually my style either but I'm almost playing my imaginary electric guitar to it. Why? I have no idea!

The Balkans are almost back at their best. Slovenia saw sense when they dumped the twins in favour of this powerful ballad. Serbia is good but not as good as I expected from Željko Joksimović. Croatia's Nina Badrić, Macedonia's Kaliopi, Bosnia's Maya Sar – are all excellent performers. Only Montenegro will be totally lost, but at least it's going to be a fun start to their semi. Semi-final two will be hard fought between four of these countries.

As for Austria, what were they thinking of? I prefer Trackshittaz's unsuccessful song from

last year's national contest but this is shouty – some of the words sound phonetically rude – even though they are not really, and it's such a change from the beautiful entry in Eurovision 2011.

Turkey has such a memorable performance. This cheeky chappie called Can Bonomo knows how to naturally infect the audience with charm. On the other hand Greece has a factory type, conveyor belt song. I can't see anything original in this but it's bound to get at least one douze points, if not two!

And finally – the Grannies. What can I say? I am sure that they are lovely Babushkis. They have made world headlines by winning their national final on the second attempt... but... the song is a bad follow-up to 2010. The slow start shows that they can't really sing... but are they supposed to be able to? No! Do I like it? NO. Do I think that it will qualify? Yes. Will it win? I really hope not!

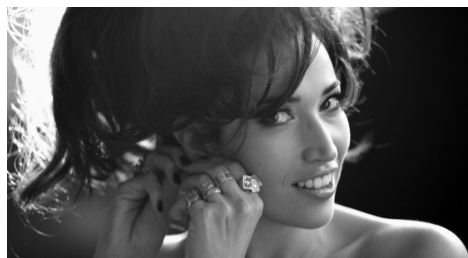
### Alasdair Rendall

My favourite by a mile is **Hungary**. A combination of electronic sounds with anthemic rock was always going to be a winner for me. Hungary is a country that always seems to under-achieve. Let's hope this year things will be put right.

Taking my silver medal this year is **Sweden**. What can be said about *Euphoria* that hasn't been said already? One of the most contemporary efforts ever heard in Eurovision, the fact that this is shooting up charts across Europe means this is appealing far beyond the hardcore fans.

In one of the strongest contests in years it has been hard to pin down a third placed song, but I'm going for what, for me, is a real dark horse, namely **Germany**. This doesn't seem to have been on many peoples' radar, but it's got a lovely melody, a decent singer and staged well this could be a big surprise.

Who's going to win? Haven't a clue. There are about 12 songs that I'd be happy with. It's hard to see anything beating the Loreen bandwagon, but this is Eurovision and stranger things have happened!



Italy: 'Ear, 'ear for Nina Zilli!

### Howard Newport

I've picked one song from each semi-final, and one from the final to make it fair as there are a few songs I like this year.

Semi-final one: **Hungary** – Many people were never fans of the Hungarian entry in 2007 – that blues song about the bus stop – but I was, and yet again, I'm shocked by just how good this year's entry from this country is. Compact Disco always looked set to win, and when I heard the live version I thought it was rubbish, and that they would kill the song live. Then the final arrived, and it was several times better. It's a dark horse, and could go either way, but with a late draw, I think this will make a great impression in the final. Others to watch in semi-final one: Iceland, Austria, Ireland and Belgium (I know it's rubbish, but I like it).

Semi-Final Two: **Ukraine** – Alright, it's a blatant plug for Euro 2012, but my god it's catchy, and I find myself humming it at work. The live version with the 'X-Men' was very random, and I hope that the staging gets a much better version for Eurovision (I know it will as Ukraine loves winning), but overall it's a great European dance song, and will get everyone in the hall on their feet. Others to watch in semi-final two: Serbia (I'm not sure why though!), Malta, Belarus, Bulgaria, Norway, Lithuania and Sweden (although Danny should've won – not this arty rubbish).

Final: **France** – alright, every year I have said "I don't like the French entry" – but not this year! I don't know what it is, the fact I can understand the chorus, the whistling, or the tune, but something in my head keeps bringing me to this song, it's just different for the French.





**Sweden:** Loreen embraces the love

I think after last year, and the fact that France was a sure fire winner and it failed, they have pulled out all the stops for a win. It stands a chance, but I don't think it will go all the way.

Just a quick note on The Hump - GO UK! WE CAN WIN IT! \*calms down\*

### Gordon Lewis

**Russia:** Someone has to like the Russian Grannies and that someone has to be me! From the moment I heard the song and saw the performance, I could not help falling in love with the genuine enthusiasm that was shown by the six vintage ladies. It might not be the best song or the most musical of Eurovision entries, but it is nonetheless totally infectious and compelling. Watching the preview video, even those dismayed members of the Russian audience were converted within three minutes and I would not be surprised to see similar success replicated in Baku. Buranovskiye Babushki have vowed to use any money raised from their song contest appearance to build a church in the village where they live and, if the grannies do happen to win, there will definitely be a *Party For Everybody*.

**Bosnia & Herzegovina:** Having eagerly anticipated the Serbian offering from Zeljko Joksimovic, it was the revelation of Maya Sar's *Korake Ti Znam* that grabbed my attention in the Balkans. A great piano ballad that exhales classical purity and simplicity without disappointment. With a gentle rise and fall melody, Maya's vocals complement the song without sounding harsh when the song builds at times. This entry has captured my heart, as I dream of warm summer evenings

sat on a balcony with candles burning as the sun sets in the distance. Whether my dreams will come true remains to be seen, but I would personally be very happy to see Bosnia & Herzegovina win the contest so that Sarajevo can mark the 20th anniversary of its first entry when the 2013 Eurovision season arrives.

**Italy:** Having heard that the original San Remo song would be replaced for Eurovision I was, at first, alarmed, but Nina Zilli's *L'Amore È Femmina* did not disappoint. I love the saxophone intro, and that is from someone who usually finds the saxophone to be one of the most annoying instruments ever! Italy has always provided consistently strong Eurovision contenders which was proven when the nation achieved second place following its return 12 months ago. What I also like about Nina is her strong vocals that are comparable with Duffy and, perhaps more importantly, Adele. If the Italian songstress can emulate even half of Adele's amazing success when she performs in Azerbaijan, then Italy are assured of another high placing and a possible victory too!

### Liam Welan

My top three:

**Albania:** The reason God made music. Impeccable. I am covered in goosebumps with tears in my eyes clicking the replay button. It is just a shame it cannot be four minutes long with a live orchestra like in *Festivale I Kenges*. Latin title, Albanian lyrics. Pure class. And even if Kosovo has just been refused entry to the contest they are still represented by this magnificent lady.

**Slovenia:** Layer after layer of sheer beauty. I just want to shout "Yes! Yes! Yes!" and punch the air after every level. And if the song from the same writing team as *Molitva* wins we all get to go to lovely Ljubljana and enjoy Klemen Slakonja presenting Eurovision, responsible for *One Man Bandid* and *Slovenia Will Win* and *Wadde Hadde Ichde Da*!

**Italy:** My prediction for the win. Very addictive yet also instant. Gorgeous singer, gorgeous lyrics, gorgeous voice. And if you are worried

about Azerbaijan being disorganised then wait until we are in Italy next year. Mister Naef! Mister Naef!

My bottom one:

**San Marino:** The singer is like a Sally from *Home And Away* circa 1990 and her overacting in that video that should only be played once made me believe that, yes, the whole thing was a hoax.

It is so incredibly unfair that internet campaigns like that for *Fire* (look it up on YouTube, singer Sankil Jones) fuelled with proper song writing and singing get nowhere, yet songs like this and that from Latvia get to go to the contest. It makes my blood boil. Light Your Fire? I will if I am handed either entry in the final in Baku.

### Marcus Keppel-Palmer

My top three songs this year:

**1. Norway:** Contemporary, well-performed and memorable. This shone through at the Norwegian national final and is catchy. Should do well. I know Sweden is favoured over this, but I prefer Tooji. In the end, I think neither will win.

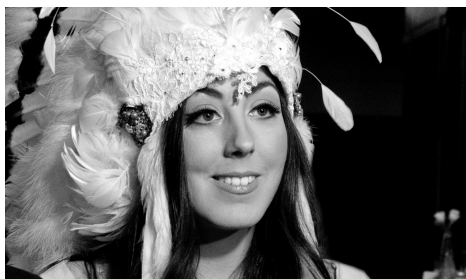
**2. France:** Insanely catchy with the whistling, and a song that will have everyone tapping their feet. I wonder if the vocals will be strong enough on the night. All the Big Five have good songs this year. Reminded me of a Bob Sinclair song.

**3. Switzerland:** Selected early and forgotten about since. Again, a good contemporary song. Again, like many Swiss songs, it will need to be well performed as they don't have natural voting partners. I would be most surprised if this ended up this high.

### Elaine Dove

Three of my top songs – as yet in no particular order!

I'm loving the kookiness of some of the songs this year. Indiana Joan with *You And Me* from the **Netherlands** was an instant favourite of mine when sent to me by David Elder. He was correct that this song was just screaming out my name. I defy anyone to listen to this song without



**Netherlands:** It's Indiana Joan!

smiling. It is a simple country and western song and some may say the outfit distracts from the performance, but I actually believe it adds to the whole concept. Simple song sung by a great singer with a totally bonkers outfit to make the song instantly memorable – love it. This will be my fifth year at Eurovision and I have every faith that for the first time I will see the Netherlands in the final.

**Romania** and Zaleilah is just utterly fabulous. A mix of Cuban rhythms infused with a Latin feel and just makes you want to dance your little socks off. It reminds me a lot of Shakira's World Cup song – *This Time For Africa*. Guaranteed to be a summer smash and will have the Euroclub dancefloor in Baku buzzing. In my humble opinion you can never have too many bagpipes and accordions at Eurovision and this song gets big thumbs up for me.

Anmary from **Latvia** with *Beautiful Song* is just a little belter of a song. I will be the first to admit I was gutted that The Mad Show Boys never got through in the Latvian final, but this little gem has more than made up for it. I love the simplicity of it. It is every girl's dream to grow up and be famous and have a song on the radio that everybody loves. This song is unbelievably catchy and I love the tongue in cheek performance that Anmary gives – one of my hot favourites.

I feel that this is a particularly good year and have lots of songs that I really like. Other countries to make it into my favourites category are of course the UK, Sweden, Turkey, Austria, Serbia, Switzerland and last but by no means least Russia!

The disappointments for me were Finland with *Nar Jag Blundar* – total ‘Blundar’ in my opinion. It takes about one minute and forty seconds for me to realise what song I am listening to – instantly forgettable I am afraid. Also Albania with *Suus* – Rona Nishliu wails through this song sounding like I do when I have run out of prosecco. I can’t deny her passionate performance – I can be passionate about many a thing, but no one would let me go on the Eurovision Song Contest and share that passion with the world!

So excited for Baku! May the best song win!

### David Elder

Here’s my top three in reverse order: I fully expect that I will be the only person with this particular song in their top three, but my third fave this year is the bombastic and overtly camp *I’m A Joker* by Anri Jokhadze from **Georgia**. The pompous re-worked beginning and the Eastern influences introduced into the final version of the song turned this into my absolute ‘guilty pleasure’ of the 2012 season. It is, of course, completely barking – but then that makes it all the more endearing!

My runner-up is the **Norwegian** ‘Prince of Persia’, Tooji. Brilliant energy in this song, and I think the superb fusion of ‘East meets West’, with more than a hint of Eric Saade, will see this on the left side of the scoreboard come the big night.

My personal favourite this year, however, is the sublime *You And Me* by ‘Indiana Joan’ from the **Netherlands**. Awww, this is just SO sweet! I see it having the quirkiness of Lena, the catchiness of Rybak and the madness of Ruslana, and for that reason think it’s a potential winner. The look of surprise and then sheer delight on her face as she realised she’d won the Dutch selection was my absolute highlight of the nationals season.

I think the standard of songs this year is possibly the highest in well over 20 years! There are so many excellent tunes to look forward to in Baku, and very little that I really don’t have any time for. I’m disgusted with

the Austrian song. Yes, boys, we know very well exactly what you’re singing in the chorus – yuk! I see a number of possible winners including the aforementioned Netherlands, Romania, Russia (LOVE the Babushki!), Italy, Serbia and, of course, Loreen from Sweden. I really wouldn’t be surprised if we get a shock winner... Tbilisi 2013 anyone?

### Paul Jordan

Here are my top three:

**1) Estonia:** Okay, I know I say it’s my favourite every year, but this year it is. I love this song! I like his voice, the lyrics are really nice and I like the way it builds into a passionate performance. I think it’s going to have a tough job qualifying from that semi-final though, but hopefully the juries will see justice done!

**2) Cyprus:** In a ballad-heavy year this is a breath of fresh air. Initially I thought this was average at best, but I actually now think it’s pop perfection and, if performed well, could score high marks from around Europe. I am looking forward to cutting some shapes to this on the dance floor!

**3) Russia:** Okay, as a song it’s not great and they’re not exactly Girls Aloud but this is fun and I can’t help but smile whenever I see the video. I think it’s one to watch and could well see us ending up in St. Petersburg next year.

As for the winner, as usual I’m completely clueless. I think it’s Russia’s for the taking but can see Romania and Italy fighting it out too. It could well be Germany, Netherlands or Norway. It might be something left-field like Ukraine – the song is repetitive but she’s a good performer and that country knows how to polish a poor song as the past two years have shown!

Overall I think the standard is good this year and once the more dirgy songs have been eliminated I think we are in for a good final. The Big Five have all pulled decent songs out of the bag and I am preparing for a few upsets in the semis! I have a feeling Baku will be a year to remember and I am so pleased that I will be there!

## David Ransted

### 2012 summary:

Well, what a vintage year! A whole host of great songs, with something for almost everyone in this year's line-up, from schlager to hard rock, Fado to electronica, rap to ethnic ballad. There's a winner in there somewhere, but I can't spot it. If the result were based purely on televoting I would predict Russia to win, but I'm not sure the juries will be so keen. For me there are at least a dozen contenders for the title, including Italy, Russia and Denmark.

I'm really proud of the United Kingdom entry: It's great to have a seasoned professional who we can count on to deliver the live performance, and the song writing pedigree really stands out. I love the understated and sparse arrangement of Spanish guitar and strings, which reminds me of Al Stewart, with the emphasis on the rich melody of the vocals. The first place in the running order isn't great, but we've won from the front before and the song is easily strong enough to leave a lasting impression as the evening progresses. The juries, I hope, will love it: no gimmicks, no props, no flashy dance routine, just an honest-to-goodness great song. Hopefully the televoters will agree.

Further afield, here are my three favourites:

**1. Hungary:** For me this is the perfect three-minute song: an irresistible melody, strong backing track (uniquely, in this year's line-up, electronica-based), and uplifting and original lyrics with a chorus that is anthemic and memorable. The vocals in the national final were almost as strong as on the recording. It may struggle to qualify for the final (like a previous favourite of mine, *The Highest Heights*), but it's a modern, intelligent, grown-up song, strong enough to be a hit in its own right. I absolutely love it.

**2. France:** I must admit that often in the past I've been more than a tad jealous of the French entry, which so often for me stood out as creative, innovative and unusual. Once again this year France has delivered a standout song loaded with character: modern, refreshing, quirky. I love the unexpected twists and turns of the melody and the foot-stomping beat of



**Hungary:** The perfect three-minute song

the chorus. The mix of French and English works seamlessly. A real class act and about time France had a result to celebrate. Vive la différence!

**3. Finland:** This gentle ballad has hidden depths: Having listened to all the entries many times, with so many strong songs this year, the simple, repeating, almost hypnotic melody of the chorus of this one really comes back to haunt you. It's another unpretentious delivery style, with inspiring but not overly sentimental lyrics. It may get lost in the heat of battle on the night, but it's a beautiful song all the same. Nice to hear Swedish in the Finnish entry too.

I hate to criticise any of the songs, because each one represents a journey of hard graft by performers and songwriters crafting their songs, but the brief was to include the least favourite too.

Georgia: It's a shame that in a year with so many good songs, Georgia, a country with a great track record in its short Eurovision history, would enter this. It really has nothing going for it: Melody, lyrics, vocals and backing are all really poor. It's basically a three-minute ad for the other 41 songs.

*And there you have it. Lots of agreements and disagreements. Someone's favourite is someone's least favourite! Just the way it should be. Italy and France seem to be the most popular favourites, followed closely behind by the Netherlands and Hungary. And there's a lot of belief in the UK entry as well – which is always a positive sign. There also seems to be general agreement that this will be a fabulous year for the contest. Let's hope so – and may the best song win! HY*

# EUROQUIZ

In a tribute to The Hump, this issue's quiz, compiled by Ben Robertson and Alasdair Rendall, is all about 'Young & Old'

1. What instrument was Jivan Gasparyan, an 83 year-old musician, playing in the song *Apricot Stone*?
2. What are the age limits for the Junior Eurovision Song Contest for all the entrants on stage?
3. Natalya Pugachyova will become the oldest Eurovision entrant as a part of the Russian act this year in the first Eurovision semi-final, but who holds the record?
4. Lys Assia, the first winner of the Eurovision Song Contest, attempted to enter Eurovision 2012, but failed to win the Swiss national final. She would have broken even the record of the Russians this year – but how old is she?
5. Which nine year-old boy was sung about during the 2011 Eurovision Final?
6. Who is the youngest person to represent the UK?
7. In which year was Engelbert Humperdinck born?
8. Which two countries sent child singers in 1989, leading to a change in the rules on minimum age?
9. How old was Katie Boyle when she presented her final Eurovision in 1974?
10. Which country featured a child on stage during the 1985 Eurovision?

See inside back cover for answers

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# RELEASING THE LOVE

Gordon Lewis profiles Engelbert Humperdinck, the UK's singer for this year's Eurovision



**F**ollowing months of speculation, during which Charlotte Church, Steps, Joe McElerry, Katherine Jenkins and Atomic Kitten were mentioned, the BBC made an announcement on 1st March 2012 that few were expecting to hear: Veteran singer Engelbert Humperdinck had been chosen to represent the United Kingdom at the forthcoming Eurovision Song Contest in Baku. Those of a certain age could remember several well known hits of the 1960s, including *Release Me*, *The Last Waltz* and *Quando, Quando, Quando*. Younger people were simply asking "Engelbert who?" while some were even surprised to learn that the singer, who celebrated his 76th birthday at the beginning of May, was still performing... or even alive!

Born on 2nd May 1936, Arnold George Dorsey, as he was then known, spent his early years in Madras, India where his father was serving in the British Army. Being one of ten children, the young Arnold was no doubt raised with military discipline by his parents, who returned to England with their family in 1946 and settled in the city of Leicester. Soon after Arnold began to learn the saxophone, but did not begin singing until the age of 17 when some friends encouraged him to enter a pub contest impersonating American singer Jerry Lee Lewis.

Within minutes of his performance ending, Arnold was already being called 'Gerry Dorsey' by those who had heard that first rendition.

Despite having to carry out National Service with the Royal Corps of Signals during the mid-1950s, the newly named Gerry Dorsey received a recording contract with Decca following his military discharge in 1958. His first record was the Tony (I Love The Little Things - UK 1964) Hatch composition *Crazy Bells* released at the beginning of 1959, but Dorsey signed to Parlophone soon after. Towards the end of the same year *I'll Never Fall In Love Again* appeared as the second single, but neither the Decca nor Parlophone release received chart success. Parlophone issued *Big Wheel* in 1961, but by 1964 Dorsey was with Pye for his fourth single, *Take Your Time*, and Hickory Records one year later for *Baby Turn Around* which was his last recording as Gerry Dorsey.

## Inspiration

Left without a contract, Dorsey was encouraged to change his name and sought inspiration from the 19th century German composer, Engelbert Humperdinck. Re-signing to Decca, Humperdinck's first single, *Stay*, appeared in 1966 during a year that also saw him represent England at the Knokke Song



Contest in Belgium. His biggest break, and perhaps most successful song, came in 1967 when *Release Me* reached Number One in the British charts and enjoyed similar success around the globe. The song has since become inseparable from Engelbert and even those who cannot remember the original release (*no pun intended!*) instantly recognise and can even sing what must be Humperdinck's biggest hit.

The Decca years continued until 1974, including songs such as *The Last Waltz*, *The Way It Used To Be*, *Sweetheart* and *Another Time Another Place* which was a cover of one of six songs performed by Clodagh Rodgers for Song For Europe in 1971. Sadly, Engelbert's own popularity was already in decline and, despite regular single releases, he failed to see any chart success between 1972 and 1974, resulting in the termination of his contract with Decca. EMI gambled with his popularity by releasing a further four singles in the late 1970s, with a final attempt made through Epic in 1981 after which Humperdinck chose to concentrate on album releases only.

Having developed a strong and loyal fan base at the height of his career and performing an average of 200 concerts each year, his album sales and earlier re-releases have

kept Engelbert at the forefront of musical talent and he is undeniably one of the most successful recording artists of the last 50 years. With a natural flamboyance accompanied by lavish stage productions, Humperdinck was considered a natural performer for the glitzy world of Las Vegas and, amid some criticism from his British fans, decided to concentrate on the American market, receiving Grammy nominations and a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. In 1989 he also worked in partnership with German songwriter, Dieter Bohlen, who had co-written the Austrian and German Eurovision entries that year; *Nur Ein Lied* by Thomas Forstner and *Flieger* by Nino de Angelo respectively.

With three Eurovision connections through Tony Hatch, Clodagh Rodgers and Dieter Bohlen, perhaps it should be no surprise that the BBC has appointed the one and only crooner, Engelbert Humperdinck, to be the latest in a long line of Eurovision entrants for the UK. At the age of 76 he will become the oldest male singer to have entered the contest, but the honour of being the eldest singer has been taken away from him by Russian singer Natalya Pugachyova who, as part of Buranovskiye Babushki, celebrated her 76th birthday a few months before Engelbert reached the same milestone.

Performing a song that has been written and composed by the team of Grammy award winning producer Martin Terefe and Ivor Novello winner Sacha Skarbek, *Love Will Set You Free* was finally revealed on 19th March 2012 on the BBC's Eurovision website. Described as "a tale of heartbreak with a simple, sparse arrangement of plucked Spanish guitar and melancholy strings", the song even includes the obligatory key change that is a feature of so many classic Eurovision tunes. One day after its revelation, the UK were drawn first to perform at the grand Eurovision final in Baku causing even the experienced and accomplished Engelbert Humperdinck to say "I'm nervous about that" before adding "but it's also a good position to be in. I think it's a great song". Whatever happens on 26th May 2012, Engelbert has promised to "come out fighting". ♥

# THE GOOD, THE BAD

Don't have the energy to sit through 14 Bulgarian heats? Not able to watch Albania's pre-festival selections? Worried you might have missed something? Well worry no more as **Roy Delaney** of the Eurovision Apocalypse blog gives you those must see national finals songs that cold wet evenings are made for. Take it away Roy...

**E**very year the national final season throws up songs of such heroic splendour that you really wished that the rest of Europe could get to see them. Sadly, in pretty much every case there is something just a little bit wrong, unusual or disturbing about them that blocks their path to wider recognition. So here's ten of the best of this year's nearly wares. But be warned, there's some rare gems on display here...

## 1 Russia: Syosty Syo *Une Marionette*



The Russian final was dominated by the lovable nans, Dima Bilan & Yulia tATu's ill-advised ballad, and the slightly-too-cool rapper Timati doing an unlikely stab at opera. But way back in a distant fourth place came this curious little ditty. I'm not entirely sure what was going on, but it appeared to be a pair of teenage sisters arguing about an accordion. In French. Just when you think you've finally understood the Russians...

[tinyurl.com/syosyo](http://tinyurl.com/syosyo)

## 2 Bulgaria: Tsvetelin Atasanov-Elvisa featuring DZ *Love Goes Around*



Now I never quite fathomed whether the big black floppy quiff and deep drawling voice of the principal male singer had any connection to the word Elvisa, but it certainly seemed that he had just a dash of Presley in his soul. Although judging from his shuffling, ham-fisted performance here, it was the pill-popping, lard-addled Elvis from his mid-1970s Vegas period. You can't fail to watch this without wondering what they thought they were doing – let alone how it got to the Bulgarian final.

[tinyurl.com/elvisab](http://tinyurl.com/elvisab)

## 3 Slovenia: Eva & Nika Prusnik *Konichiwa*

It might have rather clumsily got its Chinese and Japanese imagery mixed up, been appallingly styled and was at times bordering on blasphemy, but there was something inexplicably likeable about this tune. The sisters' boundless energy was incredibly infectious, and had Eva Boto not come to the table with such an incredibly

# AND THE UNLIKELY



strong ballad, this glorious piece of nonsense would have sailed through to Baku. Although I suspect that this may not be the last we see of this pair.

[tinyurl.com/prusnik](http://tinyurl.com/prusnik)

## 4 Ukraine: Olya Polyakova *Petal*

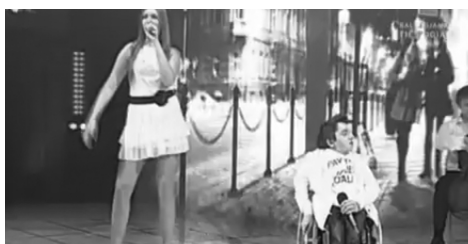


A big, buxom blonde in a cutie-pie sailor's outfit coquettishly pouting to a Crimean-flavoured Andrews Sisters shuffle? What could possibly be more Eurovision! A sad loss to the good people of Europe.

[tinyurl.com/ukpetal](http://tinyurl.com/ukpetal)

## 5 Lithuania: Vytautas Matuzas *Take It Back*

The boy Vytautas was one heck of a talented rapper, and tried his luck in the Lithuanian final with an uplifting and optimistic hip hop anthem. He also happened to be severely disabled and confined to a motorised wheelchair. Not that this should define such an incredibly gifted



artist, but it would have been interesting to have witnessed Azerbaijan's attitudes to such a differently-abled contestant... and to see if they'd have had to hastily knock up a few access ramps in the still yet-to-dry Crystal Hall in Baku.

[tinyurl.com/vytaut](http://tinyurl.com/vytaut)

## 6 Italy: Gigi D'Alesso & Loredana Berté *Respirare*



Gigi is from Napoli, and used to be a puppet performer for the Gamorrah. Loredana used to be a model, and was briefly married to Bjorn Bjorg – until her erratic behaviour reputedly led to his failed suicide bid. Together they made fascinating car crash telly. Devoid of the merest whiff of rapport, she appeared bored when it wasn't her turn, looking every bit like Sylvester Stallone's mum Jackie after 15 rounds with Apollo Creed and sounding like she smokes a thousand ciggies a day. He just looked like he'd rather be anywhere else. Such ill-matched pairings are what makes the San Remo festival such a fabulously uninged spectacle.

[tinyurl.com/bugly](http://tinyurl.com/bugly)

**7 Latvia: Elizabete Zagorska**  
***You Are A Star***



Their semi-final performance was drenched in so much fire that even Lordi would have thought it a tad excessive. Indeed, so worried were the organisers that they barred them from using their pyro-heavy show in the beautiful old Ventpils theatre that held the final. So what did Elizabete and her boys do? They donned firemen's outfits and replaced the flames for hosepipes in one of the funniest nose thumbings to officialdom of the year.

[tinyurl.com/iceyfire](http://tinyurl.com/iceyfire)

**8 Austria: Conchita Wurst**  
***That's What I Am***



Eurovision's trans-gender performers are famous for making the more masculine geezer a trifle uncomfortable in their trousers. But darling Conchita got us all just a little bit confused. We all had to take our shoes and socks off to fully calculate exactly what she was. A bearded lady with a fabulous figure and the voice of an angel? I think I've got her configuration sorted, but it was a truly fantastic attitude-confronting performance – and her song was a cracker, too. It'd be a tragedy if Ms Wurst doesn't get to tread the Eurovision boards before too long.

[tinyurl.com/sausmix](http://tinyurl.com/sausmix)

**9 Latvia: Mad Show Boys**  
***Music Thief***



Although many short-sighted fans derided this one for its dressing-up-box appearance, it was in fact packed to bursting with crafty musical pastiches and knowing Eurovision in jokes, and possessed much more of a brain than its detractors gave it credit for. A far more effective attempt at post-modernism than that limp thing that actually won the Latvian final. Any song that visually references The Pet Shop Boys, The Beatles, Marilyn Manson, Dima Bilan, George Michael and Lordi in three minutes is alright by me.

[tinyurl.com/masboys](http://tinyurl.com/masboys)

**10 Switzerland: Ruth Juon & Evi Juon**  
***Joy Of Paradise***



The early stages of the Swiss contest were scattered with hapless performers and home-made horrors, but even the strangest of them paled in the presence of this indescribable wonder that saw one middle-aged sister singing about the painting the other middle-aged sister had painted. I've been closely following the nether regions of this contest for many years, and this one had even me lost for words!

[tinyurl.com/ruthjuon](http://tinyurl.com/ruthjuon)

See more wonders at Roy Delaney's blog:  
[www.eurovisionapocalypse.blogspot.com](http://www.eurovisionapocalypse.blogspot.com)



# PRESIDENT'S PAGE

A pre-contest word from OGAE UK President Paul Marks-Jones



It's hard to believe that another Eurovision is soon to be upon us! After weeks of patiently waiting and battling off rumours of who would represent us we were finally rewarded to much fanfare with Engelbert Humperdinck. And Engelbert's fame has led to far more interest by both TV and radio who wanted to hear the views of OGAE UK and its fans to The Hump's selection.

Over the last few months, I have been in constant communication with other OGAE Presidents around Europe, the EBU and the BBC to ensure that this year's Eurovision experience for our members is as enjoyable as possible. As I am sure many of you are aware, it's not been as straightforward as in previous years! I must also give special thanks to everyone who is beavering away behind the scenes. It's impossible to list all the tasks involved and attribute them to a particular person, but let's just say it's taken a titanic effort from a handful of people! And this effort will continue once in Baku, so thanks to Hassan, David and Simon who will be our OGAE UK reps in Azerbaijan. They will be in touch with everyone travelling there with details of everything you need to know! And also thanks to everyone who will be contributing to **Vision** magazine during and after the contest. We've had lots of positive comments about our recent editions, so let's keep up the great work – remember – contributions are welcomed from every single one of our members. If you've already

contributed, I would just like to say how appreciative we are for the variety and quality of the articles we are lucky enough to include in **Vision**.


Of course we've not forgotten about our members (and friends) who cannot make the long journey to be by the Caspian Sea, so we have EuroGlitz in York. I will be there helping you all cheer The Hump along and celebrate the UK's success. Hopefully by now you will have seen all the details and booked your places! There's a handful of cinema slots left – so if you fancy a once in a lifetime experience come and join the hundred or so other fans enjoying everything Eurovision!

(For a place at the cinema please email [euroglitz@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:euroglitz@hotmail.co.uk) as soon as possible.)

And as always, it's been great to catch up with many of you at the various events that have been taking place in the run up to May's festivities. The most recent one was the Eurovision Reunited concert in Gateshead at the beginning of April. This charity event brought together a host of past stars to entertain the crowds in the great setting of the Sage Theatre. Although

the ticket sales weren't phenomenal, it didn't deter the acts from enthusiastically taking everyone on a whistle-stop tour of Eurovision past and present. Hopefully it will become a regular feature in our annual calendar!

I hope you all enjoy the Eurovision 2012 experience and let's hope it's another great result for the UK!

As always, any comments, feedback and ideas can be sent to me at [presidentogaueuk@btinternet.com](mailto:presidentogaueuk@btinternet.com) 



# ESCONLINE

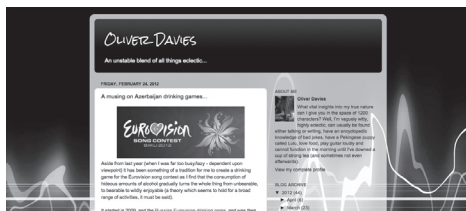
Welcome to Martin Faulkner's pre-contest look at what's happening on the World Wide Web

As is customary for this time of year, we'll start with a brief look at the Eurovision host city. Given the complexity of the logistics involved, those of you travelling to Baku will no doubt have already informed yourselves comprehensively about what to expect on arrival. Just in case there's anything you've forgotten though, ESCInsight have compiled a handy overview of visa requirements, currency issues, transportation and the like (<http://bit.ly/IqYnmh>), while the Speak Azerbaijani blog offers the top ten things you need to know



when visiting Baku as written by an ex-pat resident of the city (<http://bit.ly/Ich7Eq>). The site might help you pick up a bit of the lingo too! Meanwhile, the ever-reliable Lonely Planet has a decent section on Azerbaijan in general and Baku in particular at [www.lonelyplanet.com/azerbaijan](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/azerbaijan).

Those of you staying at home instead might want to keep an eye on Oliver Davies's blog for



a suitably chaotic Eurovision drinking game. His post at <http://bit.ly/HvIv2s> promises an exhaustive follow-up to the impressive (if somewhat sarcastic) 2009 and 2010 efforts documented therein, including efforts to identify the most typical Azeri drinks. Quite whether you'll be able to find them in your local supermarket is another matter, of course!

Genuinely good official websites for this year's participating artists are surprisingly thin on the ground, but there are still a few worth visiting. Pastora Soler has a nicely designed promo site focusing on her latest album ([www.pastorasoler.es](http://www.pastorasoler.es)), Nina Zilli comes across as glamorous online as she does in real life ([www.ninazilli.com](http://www.ninazilli.com)), Mandinga's extensive site underlines their long-standing popularity

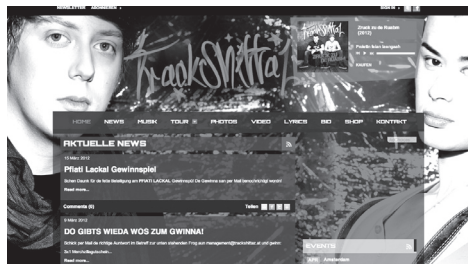




at home ([www.mandinga.ro](http://www.mandinga.ro)), while Can Bonomo's web image is as playful as the one he projects in his videos ([www.canbonomo.com](http://www.canbonomo.com)).

Meanwhile, Trackshittaz have a predictably colourful web presence ([www.trackshittaz.at](http://www.trackshittaz.at)) which demonstrates that they're consistent in their use of dialect even in writing, while their next-door neighbours, Sinplus, boast a design that reflects the industrial nature of the *Unbreakable* video ([www.sinplus.net](http://www.sinplus.net)). And of course we mustn't forget Valentina Monetta's now-legendary official Facebook page (<http://on.fb.me/Ixikl8>)!

Elsewhere in the webiverse, there are a number of fan-owned websites to catch up on as usual. Let's start with Australian student Jaz, who takes a sideways look at the contest at <http://eurovisionbyjaz.wordpress.com> – the diverse content includes such delights as a



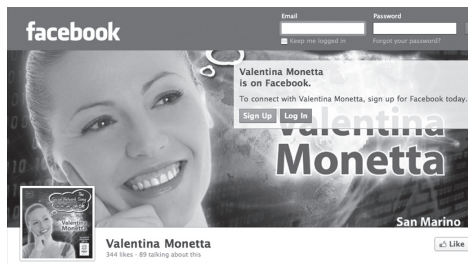
quiz that asks readers to identify the countries based on stills from last year's postcards.

Eurovoix (<http://eurovoix.com>) is a general fan site with several interesting writers and a useful feature providing direct links to those recent Eurovision songs that are available on music streaming service Spotify (which you should use, if you don't already!).

ESC Ireland ([www.escireland.com](http://www.escireland.com)) is another general site with – as the name suggests – an Irish slant and an eye for the quirkier side of life, including an 'Eye Candy' section and an award for robbed semi-finalists named after good old Kate Ryan.

Finally, Nul Points ([www.nulpoints.net](http://www.nulpoints.net)) describes itself as "celebrating the wonder of Eurovision" – and that celebration takes in a huge amount of writing on topics as diverse as the hosts, the free language rule, the "ones that got away" and, of course, those poor unfortunates who came away from Eurovision with a big fat zero to their name.

And that should be plenty to entertain you while the minutes tick away towards this year's contest. Whether you're Baku-bound or simply watching the shows from the comfort of your sofa, have a wonderful Eurovision week – and happy surfing! 📺





# MIDNIGHT WITH MARIE

It's been ten years since Marie N won Eurovision for Latvia. Paul Marks-Jones caught up with her in this anniversary year for a quick chat



**Paul Marks-Jones: It's ten years since you won Eurovision, so what's been happening all this time?**

**Marie N:** Lots of things – touring around Europe, I've released several albums and I starred in a musical. Right now I'm starting a tour of French chansons with French musicians and then I will go to Paris. And I also had a son. So, good things, a lot of good things.

**PMJ: So after your win we didn't see you too much in the UK – is that a decision you made consciously?**

**MN:** In fact, the year after Eurovision I was flying to about 20 different places a month and my schedule was fully booked. I was a few times in London, but there were other countries where I was very busy.

**PMJ: You've done lots of different projects – what has been your favourite one?**

**MN:** It's too difficult to say. I love all of my projects. But, okay if I have to choose one – during the last two months of my pregnancy I recorded an album – it was dedicated to my son. It's an international CD of lullabies and I recorded the last one the day I went into hospital to give birth! So this is definitely my most emotional project.

**PMJ: So today, after ten years you're performing on a Eurovision stage again at the Latvian national final – have you ever been asked to return to the competition?**

**MN:** Yes they've asked, but I don't want to compete anymore. I did so many competitions before Eurovision, so I feel I don't need to do this anymore. They've asked me to come back as a jury member, and this year I agreed.

**PMJ: On your albums you've recorded in so many languages – English, French, Russian, Portuguese – do you speak all these languages and which is your favourite to record in?**

**MN:** Yes, I did and also in Georgian, Italian and Greek. Unfortunately I don't speak them all. But music has its own language, so if you have something to say - and with words we only say 15-20% – the other 80% comes with the emotion of the song. So I like to record in any language.

**PMJ: And so now you live in Paris?**

**MN:** Yes, I live in Paris – it's a great place to have many ideas and I can fulfil lots of projects there. I hope to come to London in March after I finish my tour here in Latvia. I hope to take my tour from Latvia to Paris then London. And I do love to perform in French – it's a beautiful language to sing in and I feel I have some special connection with the language – it is very close to Russian and there are many similar words, so it could be that, or maybe I lived in France in a previous life!

**PMJ: Your son Arthur was born 18 months ago – has this made your recording, writing and performing more mature or different to what it was?**

**MN:** Well I know for sure it's different. I have been recording and performing for many years, but never as 'mamma'. So I obviously want to spend more time with my family and have them close by. I was brought up in the theatre because my mother was an actress. But I want to be different, I don't want to be doing the same thing every evening, I don't want it to be a job because for me it's a pleasure.

**PMJ: Can you tell us some more about your current tour?**

**MN:** Yes, it's called 'Midnight in Paris', a tour of French chansons, and it will be very authentically French – creating a very French atmosphere. I have French musicians who have played in many famous productions and with people like Charles Aznavour, so it's really great to be surrounded by such a great team.

**PMJ: Thank you and 'bonne chance'.**

**MN:** Merci and best wishes to everyone in the UK! 🇬🇧



# COUNTRY SPOTLIGHT POLAND

In the first of a new series, David Ransted profiles members of the Eurovision family and some of the artists who have represented them, beginning with a country that will be an absent friend in Baku: **Poland**

## Off to a flying start

Poland's storming debut in the contest in 1994 is well known: Edyta Górniak's *To Nie Ja (It Wasn't Me)*, a stunning ballad with a big finish, was presented second from last in the running order of 25 countries in Dublin, and made the whole of Europe sit up and take notice. In an age of language rule, orchestra and jury-only voting, a total of 166 points was a record haul for a runner-up song that wasn't bettered until 2001. Poland was the highest-placed of the seven countries that debuted in 1994, picking up five 12's (Poland's first *douze points* came from the UK jury), and one can only imagine the impact if the song had been performed in English. (In fact, Edyta received a stern warning when she performed part of the song in English in the final rehearsal). With Poland second and Hungary fourth, the newcomers had arrived in style. At the time this was the highest ever placing by a debut country (since equalled by Serbia & Montenegro in 2004 and bettered by the newly standalone Serbia in 2007).

*To Nie Ja* became the biggest selling hit of 1994 in Poland and, although she had already achieved some success – entering the 1990 Opole Song Festival and finishing third in 1993's Baltic Song Contest – it launched Edyta as a major star in her home country. Her first studio album, *Dotyk, (The Touch)*, sold over half a million copies and the title track, with its atmospheric black and white video, delivered a double for Edyta when it became the biggest hit single of 1995 in Poland.

Edyta remains a star in Poland, where her album sales have topped one million, despite changes of direction and record label, and some time away from the charts in the intervening years. She has established an eclectic repertoire, in both Polish and English, with some success in western Europe. Her first English language album, 1998's *Edyta Górniak*, contained two tracks that were huge international hit singles, but for other artists: *One And One*, originally recorded by Edyta in 1996 but adopted before her version was released by Robert Miles, who took it to the Top Tens of ten European countries and the Billboard Hot Dance Music chart, and *Perfect Moment*, which Martine McCutcheon took to Number One in five countries, including the UK, in 1999. Edyta's own hit records over the years have owed their success to such diverse sources as the soundtracks to the Disney movies Pocahontas and Mulan, club hits (*Love Is On The Line*, written by Kylie Minogue, and *Impossible*), and a collaboration with metal band Sweet Noise on the hit *Nie Było (Wasn't)*. Edyta had her own perfect moment in 1999 when her theme to the Polish movie *With Fire And Sword, Dumka Na Dwa Serca*, became the biggest Polish hit of the year. After a period away from the top of the charts (during which she was a juror in the Polish TV show Soapstar Superstar), in recent years Edyta has returned to chart success with the movie themes to two hit Polish comedies, *To Nie Tak Jak Myślisz* and *Oj... Kotku*.



Edyta Górniak got Poland off to a great start

## Second Album Syndrome

As many artists will testify, following up on a successful debut can be a fraught experience, and Poland came down to earth in 1995 when Justyna Steczkowska's *Sama (Alone)* finished in 18th place. *Sama* showed off Justyna's distinctive style and four-octave-plus range but was perhaps just too unusual for some jurors. As a singer and actor Justyna's flair for theatrical and dramatic presentation, and her versatility as vocalist, instrumentalist and composer, have brought success in both music and acting. Her 2002 album *Alkimja (Alchemy)*, inspired by traditional Jewish music, to which she added Polish lyrics, earned Justyna – in the ethno-folk category – one of the five Fryderyk Awards she has received to date (the Polish equivalent of the Grammy or Brit).

Hoping for a bounce back, TVP (Telewizja Polska) commissioned Kasia Kowalska for 1996, fresh from her victory in the Sopot Festival. *Chcę Znać Swój Grzech... (I Want To Know My Sin...)* achieved 15th place in Oslo. Though her roots are in rock, Kasia's vocal range, poetic lyrics (she writes all the lyrics for her songs as well as composing many of them), and her artistic delivery – she is a self-confessed 'stage animal' – have brought success in other genres, including pop and jazz. She had already made an impact before her Eurovision appearance: her first album, *Gemini*, was certified platinum in Poland (300,000 sales), leading to her award of 'Greatest Hope of the Polish Rock Scene', and in 1995 she was voted

Vocalist of the Year in Poland. Over the years Kasia has released seven albums, with total sales of over one million, and on stage has supported Sting, Robert Plant and Bob Dylan, while also pursuing a successful acting career. In 2001 Kasia won the Best Polish Vocalist award, and the following year won both Rock Album of the Year, for *Antidotum (Antidote)*, and Artist of the Year.

Anna Maria Jopek continued the fight back as the folk-rock tinged *Ale Jestem (But I Am)* finished 11th in 1997. Although perhaps more at home with jazz than pop/rock – with successful collaborations with Pat Metheny, Dhafer Youssef and Branford Marsalis among others – Anna Maria has produced an extraordinarily varied range of music that showcases her creativity and versatility, as her three most recent albums have illustrated: she recently completed a tour of Japan which premiered the album *Haiku*, a collaboration with jazz pianist Makoto Ozone that melded Polish jazz with traditional Japanese music; *Sobremesa*, on which Anna Maria sings most of the tracks in Portuguese – it includes collaborations with Sara Tavares, Paulo de Carvalho and Tito Paris, and is a homage to Fado and Lusophone culture that tells stories of Lisbon, a city that Anna Maria sees as her home from home; and *Polanna*, an album bringing together Polish soul and jazz, featuring Maria Pomianowska, Rafał Kwiatkowski and Gonzalo Rubalcaba, with arrangements by Krzysztof Herdzin and Grammy Award-winning Gil Goldstein. Anna Maria has also added a unique twist to more traditional pop/rock: her understated, jazz-influenced interpretation of No Doubt's *Don't Speak* is an exquisite example.

After *Ale Jestem* subsequent entries fared less well, but 2003 saw a marked upturn as Ich Troje took *Keine Grenzen-Żadnych Granic (No Borders)* to seventh place in Riga. Performed in the languages of neighbours Germany and Russia, as well as in Polish, the song brought Poland's only *douze points* (from Germany) since their debut. Ich Troje has undergone several changes of line-up over the years and returned to the contest, less successfully, in

## POLAND: SCORECARD

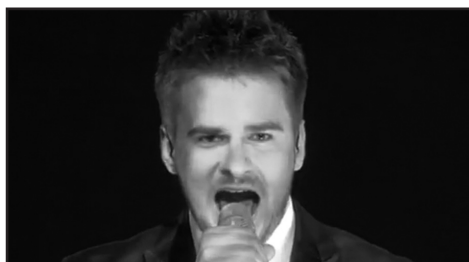
Year	Song	Language	Artist	Selection process	Starting number	Position
1994	<i>To Nie Ja (It Wasn't Me)</i>	Polish	Edyta Górniak	Internal	24/25	2nd
1995	<i>Sama (Alone)</i>	Polish	Justyna Steczkowska	Internal	01/23	18th
1996	<i>Chce Znac Swój Grzech... (I Want To Know My Sin....)</i>	Polish	Kasia Kowalska	Internal	20/23	15th
1997	<i>Ale Jestem (But I Am)</i>	Polish	Anna Maria Jopek	Internal	12/25	11th
1998	<i>To Takie Proste (It's Easy)</i>	Polish	Sixteen	Internal	07/25	17th
1999	<i>Przytul Mnie Mocno (Hold Me Tight)</i>	Polish	Mietek Szczesniak	Internal	12/23	18th
2000	-	-	-	-	-	(Relegated)
2001	<i>2 Long</i>	English	Andrzej Piaseczny	Internal	18/23	20th
2002	-	-	-	-	-	(Relegated)
2003	<i>Keine Grenzen-Zadnych Granic (No Borders)</i>	German, Polish, Russian	Ich Troje	Tele voting	20/26	7th
2004	<i>Love Song</i>	English (some Spanish)	Blue Café	Tele voting	19/24	17th
2005	<i>Czarna Dziewczyna (Black Girl)</i>	Polish, Russian	Ivan & Delfin	Internal	25/25	11th (SF)
2006	<i>Follow My Heart</i>	English, Polish, German, Russian, Spanish	Ich Troje feat. Real McCoy	Tele voting	12/23	11th (SF)
2007	<i>Time To Party</i>	English	The Jet Set	Tele voting	14/28	14th (SF)
2008	<i>For Life</i>	English	Isis Gee	Tele voting	10/25	24th
2009	<i>I Don't Wanna Leave</i>	English	Lidia Kopania	Tele voting	05/19	12th (SF2)
2010	<i>Legenda (Legend)</i>	Polish, English	Marcin Mroziński	Tele voting	09/17	13th (SF1)
2011	<i>Jestem (I Am)</i>	Polish	Magdalena Tul	Tele voting	01/19	19th (SF1)
2012	-	-	-	-	-	(Withdrawn)

Athens. Their album sales have topped two million.

In the semi-final era Poland has appeared in the final twice: in 2004 Blue Café, who had lost out to Ich Troje in the national final the year before, automatically qualified for the final in Istanbul on the back of their predecessor's strong result, and finished 17th with *Love Song*. In 2008 *For Life*, written and performed by Isis Gee, qualified on its own merit, finishing 24th in the final.

More recently, Lidia Kopania and Marcin Mroziński both narrowly missed out on qualification for the final. There were high hopes for Marcin's dramatic presentation of *Legenda*. The singer and actor, a well-known performer in Poland who has starred in the Warsaw productions of *The Phantom Of The Opera* and *Les Misérables*, had easily won the national final.

Eighteen years after their debut, Poland remains in the company of fellow bridesmaids Malta and Iceland (and the now-defunct Serbia



Marcin Mroziński narrowly missed out on the final

& Montenegro), countries that have been runner-up but have yet to win the contest. Disappointingly, only once since their debut have the Poles returned to the top ten of the Eurovision scoreboard, and in the semi-final era only one song has qualified for the final, although there have been some exasperatingly close near-misses, particularly the back-to-back 11th places in the semi-finals of 2005 and 2006. Ich Troje's failure to make the final in Athens with *Follow My Heart*, a pre-contest fan favourite, was thought particularly harsh.

Points	Highest points (from)
166	12 (United Kingdom, Estonia, Lithuania, Austria, France) 10 (Switzerland, Germany)
15	6 (Iceland) 4 (Norway)
37	7 (Turkey, Greece, Bosnia & Herzegovina) 4 (Austria, Cyprus)
54	8 (Austria) 7 (Hungary, Slovakia)
19	10 (Romania) 5 (Germany)
17	7 (Lithuania) 6 (Bosnia & Herzegovina)
-	
11	5 (Germany) 3 (Slovakia)
-	
90	12 (Germany) 10 (Austria, Malta)
27	7 (Lithuania) 5 (Ukraine)
81	10 (Greece) 8 (Germany, Ukraine)
70	10 (Ukraine) 8 (Lithuania)
75	10 (Ireland, Andorra) 6 (Georgia)
14	10 (Ireland) 4 (United Kingdom)
43	10 (Ireland) 6 (Ukraine, Albania)
44	7 (France, Germany) 6 (Russia, Belgium, Albania)
18	5 (United Kingdom) 4 (Hungary, Georgia)
-	

## Disenchantment

Arguably while many Polish entries have been creative, innovative, original, thoughtful and even storytelling in conception and live performance – singer/actors Justyna Steczkowska, Kasia Kowalska and Marcin Mroziński delivered performances that clearly reflected their acting and musical theatre pedigree – they have sometimes lacked mass appeal in the age of televoting.

Poland's lack of greater success in the semi-final era led to some calls to withdraw from the contest, but to their credit TVP soldiered on. Some Polish commentators highlighted the impact of neighbourly voting and the lack of neighbours with a natural linguistic or cultural fit that would give Polish fortunes a lift. Curiously, the large Polish diaspora in the UK has not translated in to high scores from the UK to Poland in the televoting era, although the UK was one of the few countries to vote for *Jestem* in 2011. Arguably this lack of confidence and sense of isolation

was reduced when Poland won the Eurovision Dance Contest by a convincing margin in 2008.

## Selection process

In recent years TVP has settled on an open national final format, *Krajowe Eliminacje*, traditionally held on 14th February in front of a boisterous and youthful audience in Warsaw. An upbeat and energetic style – while viewers' St. Valentine's Day messages are streamed across the screen – has culminated in telephone and/or SMS public voting, although in the past there has also been jury input. The finalists – usually around ten or 12 in number – are for the most part wildcards nominated via popular public support, alongside a smattering of jury-selected entries.

Recent national finals have seen a good mix of quality songs. The 2011 *Krajowe Eliminacje* saw traditional pop fare mixing with harder-edged rock acts like The Trash and Roan, and even a swing song, Ajda Fijał's *Hot Like Fire*. While *Jestem* won the national final by a country mile, it went on to finish last in its semi-final in Dusseldorf, a new low point for Polish fortunes in Eurovision. Although Poland opened the first semi-final with an upbeat pop song, it was largely overlooked in the voting.

## 2012

TVP withdrew from this year's contest in order to concentrate its resources on presentation of the Euro 2012 football championships, which Poland is co-hosting just two weeks after the contest. (Ironically, co-host partner Ukraine's entry, *Be My Guest*, overtly celebrates the championships). But the broadcaster has left the door open for a return to the contest in 2013, and we can look forward to the *Krajowe Eliminacje* on St. Valentine's Day next year, and the return of a country that has graced the Eurovision stage with artists who have achieved acclaim around the world with a high degree of originality across an array of musical genres. So let's wish Poland Powodzenia (good luck) for their return! 🍀

# WHATEVER HAPPENED TO CARYL BRAHMS

Marcus Keppel-Palmer has been writing this column looking at the careers of performers and songwriters who have been connected with the UK pre-selection for 10 years now. In this edition he casts his eye over Caryl Brahms, who co-wrote one of the pre-selection songs in 1966

**W**hile many of the composers connected with A Song For Europe have lengthy careers in music, Caryl Brahms had a lengthy career in journalism and novel writing. Born in 1901 in Croydon, South London, Doris Caroline Abrahams went to school in Leicestershire. Her father, a jeweller, harboured dreams that his daughter would play the piano and she then went to study at the Royal Academy of Music. However, she considered herself to be so bad at the piano that she left before graduating. After leaving, she penned some light comic poems which were published in the Evening Standard newspaper, for which she took the nom de plume, Caryl Brahms. In 1926, Brahms was asked by the Evening Standard to write stories for cartoons that were published by the famous cartoonist, David Low. These satirical cartoons featured a dog named Musso.

In the late 1920s, Caryl teamed up with a Russian emigre, S.J. Simon, whom she had met when they were both students, and the pair entered into a long-running writing partnership, penning not just stories for the Evening Standard but also a series of comic-thriller novels. As Brahms was by now writing as a ballet critic for the Daily Telegraph, the pair's first novel was set in that milieu. A Bullet For The Ballet was well received and introduced Inspector Quill and the Stroganoff



Ballet Company to the novel reading world. Three further novels in the series were published up to 1940. Brahms continued to write as a journalist and in the 1930s had three volumes of her children's poetry published, as well as an anthology of ballet criticism.

In 1940 Brahms and Simon commenced writing a series of comic novels writing unreliable versions of history. Don't Mr Disraeli was set in the Victorian era, while the follow-up, No Bed For Bacon, was a comic romp set in the Elizabethan world and featuring Shakespeare in love. The pair wrote a further four novels over the next four years, including one which revisited the Stroganoff Ballet, while Brahms wrote a biography of the ballet dancer, Robert Helpmann, who would later play the Child Catcher in Chitty Chitty Bang Bang. In 1948, while writing You Were There, Simon died suddenly leaving Brahms to complete the novel by herself and to resolve not to enter into another partnership. Brahms felt the loss of her writing partner as hard as she felt the death of her one true love, Jack Bergel, in World War II.

Brahms would never marry, but she did engage in a further writing partnership, in 1954, with the much younger Ned Sherrin. Before then, she expanded her regular newspaper criticism to opera and theatre, wrote a romantic novel and a beginner's guide



to ballet. Sherrin wrote to Brahms asking for permission to adapt *No Bed For Bacon* as a musical, and Brahms rang him to turn him down. During that telephone conversation she became enchanted with Sherrin and agreed not only to the adaptation but also to collaborate with him on it. Although the musical was not a great success – it was staged first in 1958 at the Bristol Old Vic and then subsequently revived in 1963 – both participants enjoyed working together so much that they collaborated for another quarter century.

One of their long running collaborations was called *Cindy-Ella*, a re-telling of the Cinderella story re-located to New Orleans. It started out as a radio play, was published as a novel and finally adapted into a stage musical. In 1962 Sherrin became the TV producer responsible for the satirical weekly BBC programme *That Was The Week That Was*, hosted by David Frost, and Sherrin and Brahms wrote a weekly satirical song summarising the previous week's news. This collaboration won them an Ivor Novello Award.

Caryl Brahms wrote another solo novel in 1963, and she and Sherrin collaborated on plays written straight for TV. It seems strange that in 1966 the pair, together with Ron Grainer, another regular on BBC programmes at the time and composer of the theme tunes to *Step toe & Son*, *Doctor Who* and to *That Was The Week That Was*, were one of the composing teams selected to write a song for Kenneth McKellar, although the BBC looking in-house was nothing unusual. *Comes A Time* was the song and, although it lost out to *A Man Without Love*, Kenneth McKellar recorded the song on the EP containing all songs from *Song For Europe* pre-selection. 1966 was always one of the oddities in the BBC Eurovision canon, and so it comes as no surprise that Caryl Brahms did not enter *Song For Europe* again. Aged 65, she was not



exactly a member of the new 'beat generation'.

All through the 1970s Brahms and Sherrin collaborated prolifically, writing original comic plays for stage and also adapting several George Feydeau farces for both stage and television, the latter under the name *Ooh-La-La*. Barely was there a week in the 1970s when you could not find one or

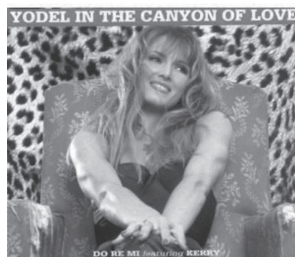
other Sherrin and Brahms musical playing in one London theatre or another. Brahms continued to write newspaper criticism, giving up on ballet, which she now found less interesting than theatre reviews, and she also discovered later in life an abiding love of show-jumping. She wrote extensively about the theatre too, writing books on the lives of Gilbert & Sullivan and about great songwriters for musical theatre. She found time too, among two volumes of her own memoirs and a biography of the Russian playwright Chekhov, to write another comic thriller based on the characters from her *Stroganoff Ballet* company novels, written some 30 years or more before.

In 1981, Sherrin and Brahms collaborated on what would turn out to be their final musical, *The Mitford Girls*, which ran for over a year and was running when Brahms died in December 1982, a few days short of her 81st birthday. She was one of the grande dames of British Theatre despite having never acted on the stage – although she was a patron of the National Theatre from 1974 until her death. Ned Sherrin published a further volume of Brahms' memoirs which he finished off and also wrote a biography of his long-time partner. Brahms' reputation was briefly revived when critics noted the similarities between the film *Shakespeare In Love* and her most admired work, *No Bed For Bacon*, but apart from that novel, most of the rest of Brahms' extensive output, both comic and review, remains out of print. ♡

# EUROCURIOS

More Eurovision curiosities by Thomas Latham

First some very sad news. Kerry McGregor ([www.kerrymcgregoronline.com/](http://www.kerrymcgregoronline.com/)) recently lost her battle with cancer. She was best known for her appearances in the 2006 series of X Factor, but to Eurovision fans she will be better known as the singer of *Yodel In The Canyon Of Love*, which lost out to Katrina and The Waves in the 1997 search for a Eurovision entry by the BBC. How it was never a hit, I



in 1955. And so it was that Lonnie Donegan recorded the skiffle song *I Lost My Heart On The 542*. Recorded around 1973, it was originally only released on an LP available at his mid-1970s concerts (TYLER RECORDS - LDNH 123), but has since appeared on the 2008 CD *Lonnie Live! Rare Tapes From The Late Sixties (Upbeat Jazz)*. It is also available as an mp3 download and is well worth checking



out just to see how the melody survived being transferred from schlager to skiffle.

will never know. At the end of last year, her website put up the official video for the song on YouTube (which I had never seen before), so you can remind yourself what it was like at: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=gAIAtay0vMc&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gAIAtay0vMc&feature=related).

Now for a curious fact related to last issue's column, which mentioned (albeit in passing) the song *Velkommen Til Verden*. It was written originally by Björn Ulvaeus and Benny Andersson just before the formation of ABBA as *Välkommen Till Världen* and recorded by Lill Babs in 1971 (incidentally with all four future members of the super group on backing vocals). A top twenty hit in Sweden, the song was apparently written as a possible Melodifestival entry. Manager Stig Anderson was keen to hawk the songs written by Björn and Benny around Europe and he managed to bring this one to the attention of an English singer who had first reached the UK top ten

In 2011, before Blue were chosen by internal selection, did the BBC intend to have an open competition to select the UK's Eurovision entry? That is the suggestion made by a company called Prolific Media Group UK who have recently worked with Hazell Dean (SFE 1976, 1984) and Sinitta (SFE 1984). Apparently, 1970s disco diva Tina Charles (of UK Number One *I Love To Love*) had a song all ready for submission to a Making Your Mind Up televised pre-selection. Tina Charles's *Your Love Is My Light* was co-written and produced by Dave Ford, Ian Curnow (SFE 1993, 1995), Carl M. Cox (of PMG) and Steen Ulrich. It seems that, during the recording session, the songwriters felt that the song would make an ideal Eurovision entry and so they started to re-work the song with that in mind. They claimed that the BBC changed the rules at the last minute to select Blue. Nevertheless the song was released in November 2011 and is certainly in the style of what the British public might expect from a UK entry. Whether or not



it would have done better than Blue though is open to question.

Cherry Red have released a new compilation CD of the recordings of Clodagh Rodgers (UK 1971) under American producer and songwriter Kenny Young entitled, appropriately, *Come Back And Shake Me: The Kenny Young Years 1969-1971* (RETRO905). Among the singles, B-sides and album tracks are her Eurovision



entry *Jack In The Box* and SFE entry *Wind Of Change* (equalled second), which here gets its first outing on CD. I can't help feeling that the label have missed a trick here by not including

her other SFE entries as well, but perhaps a sequel release is planned (I hope).

This is a worthy release though with a comprehensive accompanying booklet. Among other noteworthy facts, it reveals that Clodagh's first hit *Come Back And Shake Me* was originally wanted for Lulu by her producer Mickie Most. The booklet also lays to rest one long standing rumour about Clodagh's 1971 Song For Europe songs. It has been suggested that Kenny Young submitted a song for the final six, but that it was rejected (or disqualified) at the last moment and replaced by another song (possibly *In My World Of Beautiful Things*). Here Kenny Young states that it had originally been his intent to submit a song, but that songwriters like Tony Macaulay, Cook & Greenaway and others had ganged up on him for not being British and he had decided to leave them to it. Well, now we know.

In 1999 she failed to reach the last four

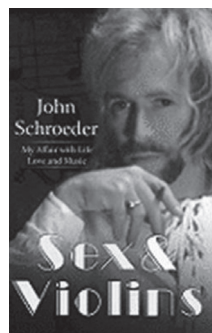
of the Great British Song Contest with the frankly fantastically bonkers *Separate Lives* (oh how I would have loved to have seen that performed on Top Of The Pops). Well Susan Black is still writing, performing and recording songs. A number of download singles are available online and you can hear her unique vocal stylings on her website at [www.susanblack.co.uk/Susan\\_Black/Susan\\_Black.html](http://www.susanblack.co.uk/Susan_Black/Susan_Black.html). The latest of these releases is *Timeless World* from May 2011, and if (like



me) you liked *Separate Lives*, then you will probably find it worth checking it out. Perhaps we could even persuade her to make a copy of her GBSC entry available.

In his autobiography *Sex & Violins*, songwriter, producer and record label boss John Schroeder recalled how, as the new head of Oriole Records, he had asked Jackie Lee and The Raindrops how they would feel about entering the Eurovision Song Contest in 1962 if he were to write the song. The idea was that, at the very least, it would get the band, the record label and Schroeder himself some much-needed publicity. Everyone agreed it was a good idea, and Schroeder came up with the song *There's No One In The Whole Wide World*. Frank Barber arranged the song for the studio recording, which Schroeder produced himself. He remembered that, despite not winning or charting, the song still picked up some sales.

In 1975, Ellen Nikolaysen, that year's Norwegian Eurovision entrant (with *Touch My Life With Summer*), who was also a member of

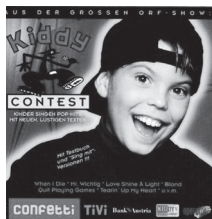




the Bendik Singers in 1973 (*It's Just A Game*), released a single in German entitled *Wer Liebt Kommt Wieder* (Philips 6003 419). This turns out to be a

cover version of *Have Love, Will Travel*, one of Olivia Newton-John's Song For Europe entries from the previous year (it came fourth). In the 8th December 1973 issue of the American Billboard magazine, Nikolaysen had been listed among those Norwegian acts "getting overseas exploitation", but, as far as I can tell, less than two years later *Wer Liebt Kommt Wieder* was to be her last ever single release (as well as her only German-language single).

Kiddy Contest was a children's talent show on Austrian television (ORF) beginning in 1995 (and occasionally on German station ZDF), which featured 8-13 year-olds performing well-known songs with German lyrics. CDs of the entrants have been released every year from 1995 to 2010. The 1997 release (BMG 74321 540952) features a song entitled *Jungs* (young people) sung by Tanja Steinlechner (she didn't win), which turns out to be a German cover version of that year's winning Eurovision song *Love Shine A Light* by Katrina & The Waves. The booklet has the German lyrics and there is a bonus karaoke version, so you can perform



your own version. Few, if any, of the performers seem to have gone on to be successful adult performers, but if Austria participates regularly in the Eurovision it can only be a matter of time

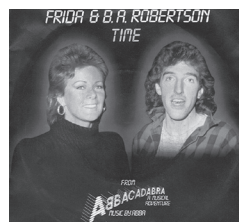
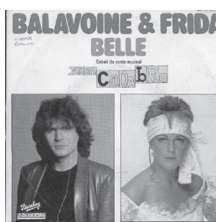
before one of them turns up in at least a pre-selection competition.

Sarah Brightman's 2007 CD *Winter Symphony* (Manhattan Records 50999 2 44011 28) contains a cover version of the ABBA (SE 1974) instrumental *Arrival*. In 1999, Björn Ulvaeus (of ABBA) had written English lyrics



themed album.

It's not the first time the song has been re-recorded with lyrics, of course. In 1983, a



French version – *Belle* – was included in the musical ABBAcadabra and released as a single by Daniel Balavoine and Frida (of ABBA). The same year, Frida re-recorded the song in English as a duet with B. A. Robertson entitled *Time*



(Epic A 3983), which reached number 45 in the UK charts. There is also another French version entitled *J'Aime* (AZ - SG 643) by Michèle Torr (LU 1966, MO 1977), which was released in 1977 as the follow-up to her second Euro entry *Une Petite Française*. Incidentally, Mike Oldfield released an instrumental version on single in the UK in 1980 (Virgin VS 374), which parodied the ABBA album cover with the helicopter on the picture sleeve, but it failed to chart.

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](mailto:eurocurios@hotmail.co.uk).



Gordon  
Lewis  
uncovers  
yet more  
Eurovision  
philatelic  
connections

# MORE STAMPING ON EUROVISION

**T**he last issue of **Vision** was still being printed when a stamp depicting Julio Iglesias, who performed *Gwendolyne* for Spain in 1970, was unexpectedly discovered within Spanish philatelic circles. Released in 2000, the unusual circular stamp was issued as a miniature sheet for the World Philatelic Exhibition of the same year. While the actual stamp only bore the name of the singer, Iglesias was shown on the surrounding sheet with each one having its own unique serial number.

Almost 20 years ago in 1993 the Dutch Post Office released a pair of stamps celebrating Radio Oranje. Using BBC transmitters, the radio station was responsible for broadcasting on behalf of the exiled government of the Netherlands to an occupied nation that was under the control of the Nazi regime. One

**Jetty Paerl  
sang the  
very first  
song to be  
performed in  
the history of  
Eurovision**



of these stamps featured 'Jetje van Oranje' who performed songs of wartime resistance across the airwaves. In 1956 Jetje, who was also known as Jetty Paerl, performed *De Vogels Van Holland* which was the very first song to be performed in the history of Eurovision.

More recently Italian singer Renato Rascel made his second appearance on the stamps of San Marino. Issued in 2005 as part of a series entitled *Il Teatro Di Rivista*, Rascel took his place alongside nine other singers and actors that formed the basis of yet another miniature sheet. Closer to home, The Miami Showband was featured on a set of Irish stamps in 2010 celebrating *Legendary Showbands*. Although the band did not perform on the Eurovision stage, lead singer Dickie Rock would come fourth for Ireland in 1966 with *Come Back To Stay*.

Further afield, Israel Post produced a set of 12 stamps in 2009 to celebrate Israeli music. Perhaps the most poignant inclusion was that of Ofra Haza who performed *Hi* in 1983







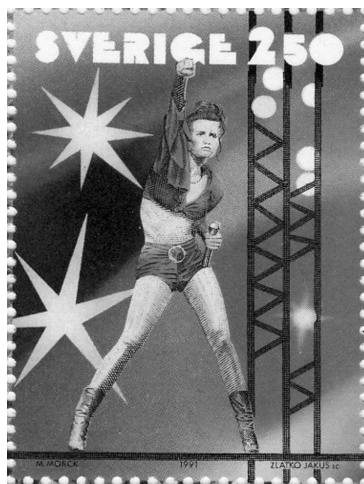
and sadly passed away at the age of 42 in 2000. Also featured was the late Israeli songwriter, Ehud Manor (1941-2005), whose contribution to Eurovision will always be remembered. He wrote Izhar Cohen's 1978 winning entry, *A Ba Ni Bi*, and was also involved in writing *Ey Sham* (1973), *At Ve'ani* (1975), *Emor Shalom* (1976), *Ben Adam* (1988), *Ze Rak Sport* (1992) and *To Believe* (2004) as well.

Another composer to appear on national stamps is the legendary Serge Gainsbourg (1928-1991), who was responsible for the first non-ballad song to win Eurovision. Representing Luxembourg, France Gall won the 1965 contest with *Poupee De Cire*,

**The legendary Serge Gainsbourg was responsible for the first non-ballad song to win Eurovision**

*Poupee De Son* and suggestive lyrics about seduction that the young singer was too naïve to understand. Other Gainsbourg compositions included *Boom Badaboum* for Minouche Barelli (Monaco 1967) and *Black & White Blues* performed by Joelle Ursul (France 1990). Gainsbourg's philatelic appearance occurred in 2001.

Returning to Sweden, a stamp featuring Lena Philipsson appeared alongside two others depicting Roxette and Jerry Williams. Issued in 1991 as part of a booklet, this predated Philipsson's Eurovision outing by 13 years, although she had already entered Melodifestival on three different occasions when the stamps were released. In contrast,



Vladimir Arzumanyan, who won the junior contest in 2010, had barely arrived back in Armenia when he first saw his image on a stamp celebrating the young singer's victory with *Mama*. However, the stamp was only issued in the disputed Armenian/Azeri territory that is currently known as the Republic of Mountainous Karabakh.

Later this year the Finnish Post

The Finnish Post Office are due to release a set of six stamps celebrating singers who have enjoyed chart success including two Eurovision performers



Office is due to release a set of six stamps celebrating singers who have enjoyed chart success during the past two decades, and included in the line-up are two such artistes who have represented Finland at Eurovision. The first of these is *Addicted To You's* Laura Voutilainen (2002), while the second is Jari Sillanpää from 2004 (*Takes 2 To Tango*). And without mentioning in detail the many stamps issued in non-European territories that have featured ABBA, Celine Dion and Julio Iglesias among others, the world of Stamping on Eurovision is certain to grow even further within the coming years. ♥

With thanks to Richard Scholey



# THE 10 ESSENTIAL SCHLAGER STOMPERS!

Fresh from his enjoyment of Melodifestival 2012, **Alasdair Rendall**, chairman of the **Vision** Panel, Radio International correspondent and key change obsessive, sets out his list of the ten most essential Melodifestival songs that any Euro-fan should have on their mp3

## Arja Saijonmaa: *Högt Over Haget*



**1987: 2nd**

Statuesque is a word that could have been invented for Arja Saijonmaa. The Finnish born singer with the booming voice remains a fan favourite after losing out to winner Lotta Engberg by just one point in the 1987 contest. As well as being a successful actress and singer, Arja has even entered the world of politics and took part in the Swedish version of *Strictly Come Dancing*. But it's for Melodifestival (MF) that the Swedes love her the most – and she entered the competition again in 2005 with the equally distinctive *Vad Du An Trodde Så Trodde Du Fel*.

## Haakon Pedersen & Elisabeth Berg: *Nattens Drottning*



**1989: 5th**

1989 saw the opening of Stockholm's iconic Globe arena and it was fitting that the year saw a particularly strong MF. It was Tommy Nilsson's big ballad that took the crown, but one of the enduring classics was this mixture of rock, opera and schlager. Joined by opera singer Elisabeth Berg, the frothy-haired Norwegian-born Haakon Pedersen made his second MF appearance, but despite a warm response from the vast audience, could only make it to fifth place.

## Linda Bengtzing: *Jag Ljugar Så Bra*



**2006: 7th**

There are some schlager stars who shine briefly and brightly and then disappear. There are others however who carve out a lengthy career. Linda Bengtzing is definitely in the latter category. With four appearances in MF to date, she has cemented her place in the hall of schlager fame with a number of efforts that tick all the right boxes. It's her 2006 effort, *Jag Ljugar Så Bra* that, despite only coming seventh in the final, is the Linda song guaranteed to bring fans flocking to any dance floor.

## Sanne Nielsen: *I'm In Love*



**2011: 4th**

If we were giving an MF award for effort, then a serious contender would be Sanne Nielsen. The former child star made her MF debut in 2001 with *Igår Idag*. Appearances followed in 2003, 2005, 2007 (with fan favourite *Vågar Du Vågar Jag*), and again in 2008. It was in that year that she won the televote, but in a quirk of SVT's (national broadcaster) voting system, lost out to Charlotte Perrelli when the results were combined with the juries. After a few years break, she came back in 2011 with the powerful stomper *I'm In Love*. It's hard not to dive on to the dance floor whenever this is played, such is its intensity, but sadly it wasn't going to be sixth time lucky for Sanne. Despite winning her semi-final, and scoring well

with the international juries, she ended up in fourth place.

**Kikki, Bettan & Lotta: *Vem E Dé Du Vil Ha***



**2002: 3rd**

It was the first year of the revamped format of MF that we've all come to know and love. And what better way to launch it than by bringing together some of the country's biggest schlager stars. Kikki Danielsson, Elisabeth Andersson and Lotta Engberg were all well known to Eurovision fans, and their song ticked every box. It's cliché-ridden... but utterly fabulous!

**Pernilla Wahlgren: *Piccadilly Circus***



**1985: 4th**

17 year-old Pernilla was already an established child actress when she took to the stage in Malmö for the 1985 MF. Despite only coming fourth and some rather ropy high notes, her song about love in one of London's most famous locations has become an enduring classic. It was the start of a hugely successful musical career – and as for MF, well we hadn't seen the last of Pernilla!

**Charlotte Nilsson: *Take Me To Your Heaven***



**1999: Winner**

For as much as many fans love schlager, it has a disproportionately low number of successes at Eurovision. One effort that did make it all the way to the top was Charlotte Nilsson's (as she was then known) 1999 hit. It stormed to success in MF under its Swedish title of *Tusen Och En Natt* before taking the crown in Jerusalem in a Scandi-pop battle with Iceland. It even made the Top 20 in the UK, something virtually unheard of for a schlager song. Despite remaining a fan favourite, Charlotte's Euro-career took something of a turn for the worse, coming 18th in the 2008 contest with *Hero*, and failing to even make the final of the 2012 MF with *The Girl*.

**Alcazar: *Not A Sinner Nor A Saint***



**2003: 3rd**

Aside from ABBA, the Swedish schlager scene has generally been dominated by solo artists.

One group that has made an impact though is Alcazar. Celebrating ten years in the music business, including that rare Swedish pop feat of having hits in the UK, they disbanded in 2011. In their various line-ups – sometimes a four-piece, sometimes a three-piece – they had four entries in MF. This was in addition to solo MF entries for Magnus Carlsson and Andreas Lundstedt. While many fans would go for *Stay The Night*, for me it is their first MF effort, *Not A Sinner Nor A Saint* that shows the band at their glittering best.

**Carola: *Främling***



**1983: Winner**

She's someone who's split much of the fan community, but there's no denying the huge impact that Carola has had on the Swedish pop scene. With three Eurovision attempts, plus others that didn't make it beyond Melodifestival, she's had one of the biggest careers of any Swedish schlager star. But it was 1983 where it all started. *Främling* stormed to victory, before taking the bronze medal in Munich and going on to become one of the biggest singles ever in Swedish history.

**Shirley Clamp: *Att Alskar Dig***



**2005: 4th**

Who is the ultimate Queen of schlager? It's a question posed by many fans of all things Swedish. But for my money there's only one contender; the amazing Shirley Clamp. A regular in MF since her debut in 2003, she has cornered the market in schlager anthems. And she's got a good line in the ballads to boot. But what's her best song? The 2004 runner up *Min Kärlek* is a strong contender, but I think most fans would agree that it was her song a year later, *Att Alskar Dig*, that takes the schlager crown. ♥



# THE VISION PANEL

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



Alasdair



Andrew



Donald



Caron



Nicky



Liam

**AR:** Alasdair Rendall (chairman)

**AM:** Andrew Main

**DM:** Donald McNaughton

**CT:** Caron Tetsill

**NT:** Nicky Teare

**LW:** Liam Whelan (regular panelist)

**AR:** It's Engelbert Humperdinck for the UK! It's certainly a choice that has divided fans. Is it a brave move by the BBC – or could it become yet another failure for the UK at Eurovision?

**AM:** When I finally heard that Engelbert had been chosen by the BBC I was very disappointed. Is the BBC even taking the contest seriously, why can't we get a decent contemporary artist to feel proud of for a change, these were the thoughts going through my head. However, since hearing the song, I've been pleasantly surprised how good it sounds. So as to whether it's a bold move, it most certainly is. Whether it's another failure? Most likely it will be in terms of not winning it, but I think we will see a great performance from the Hump which will give the UK a reasonable finishing position.

**DM:** When I first heard that the BBC had selected Engelbert Humperdinck as our entrant, my heart did sink somewhat. I imagined the swathes of fans and non-fans who would ask "Who?" and a general sense that the BBC had completely lost the plot. But

after some thought, I genuinely think it is an inspired choice. For starters, he has a powerful voice that can sing... in tune... unlike certain acts, and singing in front of a huge audience both in the arena and at home will be a breeze for him. Second, he has a proven record of success with album sales in excess of 150 million (rather puts Blue in the shade) and he's well known in Europe including the Eastern countries who aren't as ageing as us in west Europe and who will appreciate a quality act. I also think that he could do a Tom Jones whose career was revived thanks to the *Reload* album and collaboration with modern songwriters and singers. In all, I think it's an inspired choice by the BBC and he won't let us down. After hearing the song, I sense we'll be in Top Ten and I'll be very happy to wear a Hump Minipop Icon T-shirt in Baku.

**CT:** I think it is an inspired idea, the ultimate example of 'thinking outside the box'. Whatever the actual result, it cannot be classed as a failure. The song and singer stand on their own as in a different class. It is already a huge success and improvement on most UK entries of the last 20 years!

**NT:** Given the sense of mourning that overwhelmed my household when, on the same night that Charlotte Perrelli had been unceremoniously ejected from the Swedish heats, we 'discovered' that Atomic Kitten were set to represent the UK, Engelbert came as a





Engelbert Humperdinck in full flow

bit of a relief. He's certainly got stage presence, charisma and a cracking voice, which is a contrast to some of our entrants over recent years and some of our rumoured entrants for this year. I just think the song is a bit dull and even Engelbert has said "it's not a one-time listen", which isn't ideal given 90% of the viewers will only hear it the one time. As to how we'll do, I think everyone should approach any prediction with a bit more humility this year given last year's all round joyously hopeless predictions from many fans (France or Estonia to win, Sweden to go out in the semis and my particularly Nostradamus-esque bet on Turkey), but I think we'll hopefully have some mid-table respectability thanks to generous juries rewarding a strong performance, although I think we could struggle in the televote, especially as we're on first.

**LW:** I think it is a brave move. I am tired of teeny boppers in the contest. The contest is for all ages. I also love that Engelbert Humperdinck isn't a belly dancer or won't be accompanied on stage by dancers on stilts (I am almost sure!). The melody is so simple and lovely. I gasped when United Kingdom was drawn first. It is a shame the televoting lines are not open from the start of the show anymore and that there won't be a live orchestra.

**AR:** Many songs chosen this year have a much more contemporary sound than in

previous years. While this is welcome by many, do you think it's a shame that we're hearing ever fewer 'traditional' sounding Eurovision songs?

**AM:** I always feel that the broader the spectrum of songs in the contest the better and stronger the contest will be. Yes, there are and have been many more contemporary songs over the last few years and this helps to keep the contest fresh and vibrant. We will always have a section of timeless 'Eurovision' songs in the classic genres, they will never truly go away. Therefore I am happy to have the variations we hear nowadays.

**DM:** What I have always loved about the contest is the wide ranging styles of songs that countries have selected, even when I may not necessarily like them myself. There are so many people who are a little 'sniffy' about the contest and think it only presents certain types of music, but a decent song, of whatever genre, will always shine through and can be celebrated. Look at the contrast between *Hard Rock Hallelujah* in 2006 and *Molitva* in 2007. I think this year we have a great balance in styles and ultimately today's contemporary songs may become tomorrow's traditional ones.

**CT:** I don't think there are too many contemporary songs this year! There are some wonderful traditional simple Eurovision songs along with the more modern sounds we would hope to expect to see by now. I think the balance is the same as in previous years, and all to the good!

**NT:** I don't think much has changed in Eurovision. A lot of people, especially in the UK, are afraid to play, buy or like music in general unless it is deemed 'relevant' or 'credible' in some way, and as a result a lot of songs have been produced over the years to appeal to this and struggle to have an identifiable tune. Conversely, Eurovision songs should be designed to appeal to the largest amount of people possible on first listen. Entering a song

for Eurovision that is a 'grower' or a 'good album track' makes no sense – they should be tuneful and instantly memorable and likeable. For this reason there is purity about Eurovision songs that I only rarely find in other music and for me the biggest thrill of Eurovision is the pure happiness and excitement you feel hearing a joyous, tuneful, three minute burst of pop that you will treasure for the rest of your life. Although these songs sound slightly different now than they did ten, 20 or 30 years ago, they still have the basic ingredients of a traditional Eurovision song and so I don't think the strive towards modernity will ruin the contest. And we've still got Malta.

**LW:** I never understood the term 'Eurovision song'. Besides that maybe a song needs to be instant. I think there is a fantastic mix of songs this year, some staying true to the culture they represent, some pure fun, some amazing ballads and many that would (and hopefully will) do well in today's charts.

**AR:** No year would be complete without a bit of controversy in a national final. This year we saw Belarus overturn the original song choice. Should the EBU take a tougher role in these controversies, or is it all just part of the fun of national finals?

**AM:** I think controversy in national finals is an institution and comes to be expected year after year. As long as the EBU does not take more control over this the better it will be, as it all adds to the fun of the season. It should always be down to the individual countries to make their choice whichever way they see fit, then the EBU rules of the contest will judge whether each song fits into the overall show legally.

**DM:** It always amazes me that countries replace songs after they've gone through all the effort of selecting their entry. I wonder how much pre-selecting the relevant broadcaster undertakes to filter out the dross and those that aren't considered suitable. I believe Belarus also changed their song last year (which was a

great pity as their original choice was fantastic and would have taken them to the final) and Ukraine certainly have developed a reputation for changing their mind. I wonder how the public feel in those countries where they've over-turned the result, although it will no doubt generate some publicity for the contest and it's always said that any publicity is good publicity. Ultimately though I think it's right that the EBU stays out of national selections unless the choice infringes the rules in some way (eg: Georgia 2009). They have enough to do just organising the contest!

**CT:** The national finals are just that: national finals, heaven help us if even that is homogenised out of existence! Countries have a right to choose their song however they like, and the EBU should stay out of it. What would us fans do without the controversies?!

**NT:** I think there are probably more pressing issues in Belarus to worry about – and the song they have finally come up with is a fabulous pop-rock stomper that is undoubtedly preferable to the initial effort. I think it's up to each country's broadcaster how they select their entry and as long as they deliver a song on time then the EBU shouldn't really need to get involved, although when that process involves torture of the local population – as many claim Malta's nine-hour epic amounts to – then maybe it is time to step in. As in other areas of life, I think we in the UK should focus on the issues and shortcomings we have rather than lecturing others on the drawbacks in their processes. It is regrettable that in a country where the most watched TV shows are singing and dancing talent shows in which audience televoting is a major feature, the BBC has never managed to cobble together an exciting three or four week show that grabs the attention to select our entry. No one is expecting Melodifestival overnight, but, as a friend of mine suggested, there would probably be enough willing 'names' (maybe Gareth Gates, (The Real) Bucks Fizz, Nicki French, Same Difference, Jane McDonald, Shakin Stevens, etc. – we're not thinking Kylie



Controversy in Belarus! But probably a better song

and One Direction) to at least get this started and grab the attention, but the selection of the Eurovision act always seems to be left until the last minute.

**LW:** I think it is just all part of the fun of the national finals and it shows the different cultures of the participating nations and indeed how seriously each one takes the contest. I think the EBU will think twice about getting involved in national selections with feedback being received about insisting on involvement from the public in national selections from 2013. The contest is for member countries of the EBU. The selections should be for the respective nations.

**AR:** It has been a busy few months in the national final season – what has been your highlight?

**AM:** There are always many highlights in every national final season, songs we love, shock results, shocking performances, cheesy, fantastic songs. But for me the highlight this year has to be my moment in the spotlight at the Cypriot national final in Nicosia. I was asked to sit on the jury of seven 'experts' which helped to choose *La La Love* for Baku. Not only did this ensure I had a speaking part on Cypriot TV, but got to wear a Madonna-esque head mic and a stint in make up before the show. But the best part was getting to meet Ivi Adamou and her family and to present Ivi with her

Minipop Icon T-shirt (designed by Ben Morris) of herself in her dressing room. She loved it of course! *(All of Ben's designs will be shown next issue –Editor)*

**DM:** The highlights of this national season for me have been Sweden, as ever, and Russia – you could not ask for a greater contrast in entries. Sweden of course is the shining light when it comes to Eurovision, although to be fair, I'm not sure the quality of songs in Melodifestival was as strong as previous years. Still, it all came right in the end with a fantastically strong song from Loreen selected (far better than the weak voiced Danny). As for Russia, I've never been a fan of the grannies in previous years and even this year I did have my doubts when I first heard their song. However, listening to the song again in a club in Stockholm and I'm convinced it's going to do very well indeed particularly with the televoters. Can't wait to see the Minipop Icon for them! It was also quite pleasing to see Dima's face when he lost. I was a little disappointed with the Norwegian heats and final with some very bland, albeit vaguely attractive, female singers and songs. Still the winner from Tooji made up for this and is very similar to Eric Saade, so should do well. But perhaps the top highlight comes from the Netherlands and that head-dress! Completely bonkers!

**CT:** There are so many moments of delight, surprise and shock! Watching the live feed on my laptop of Andreas Lundstedt perform *Aldrig Aldrig* in Gothenburg has to be a highlight for me. I simply fell in love with the song, really the lyrics, the first time I heard it. All the controversy and excitement surrounding Max Barskih in Ukraine was a highlight too! I have been a fan for a couple of years so was excited at the prospect. In fact, if Max had been 'chosen' to represent Ukraine that would have been the reason I would go to Baku! As it stands, I am not going. However the biggest and best highlight for me has to be when I made the Melodifestival pilgrimage to Stockholm! Watching the show in Globen was amazing (as

a wise and rather handsome blonde sang!). However, the highest of the highlights was spending time with friends, having discussions about our favourites over coffee, dancing in restaurants and bars and walking home together, laughing, holding hands, hugging and quite frankly, delighted!

**NT:** The few minutes between Loreen standing up in Globen and finishing the performance was one of the most magical things I've experienced live at any Eurovision event – save a couple of moments from Eurovision Stars In Their Eyes at Eurobash – so that will live long in the memory. I also fell in love with one of the Norwegian songs on first listen and assumed it must therefore be far too cheap to actually win, but the wonderful Tooji triumphed and it is always a special, and increasingly rare, moment when a song you love and have championed wins a national final. Perversely, the lack of public planning with regard to the UK's Eurovision entry does mean the annual UK rumour mill is always exciting. Right Said Fred and the aforementioned Atomic Kitten both looked certain at different times in the season, but the highlight was a fabulously dramatic St. David's Day as even part time Eurovision fans joined in the speculation as to who our act was. Tom Jones and Shirley Bassey were mentioned when it was 'leaked' that it was a platinum selling, Grammy nominated artist (presumably with a demand for a sun bed on BBC expenses as well) and it wasn't until a couple of hours before the deadline that the equally deep-tanned Engelbert's name began circulating.

**LW:** Dancing to Venter in Denmark. Ryback repeating the interval in Denmark and Norway (Tommy Fredvang and his jacket in Norway). Live orchestras and real music winning in Albania and Italy. Lip syncing in Cyprus (to a juror we know and love). Lip syncing inside a shopping centre in Greece. Lip syncing all over Europe from Anggun for France (though her performance of *Puppet On A String* was impeccable). Montenegro's rebel. Belgium's



Lip syncing in Cyprus? But what lips!

beauty. Israel's boogie. Sergio Dalma's duet with Pastora Soler in Spain. Emilija Kokić in Bosnia & Herzegovina. Iceland's 1970s style arena (I was waiting for Moira Shearer to take to the stage!). That walk from the green room in Estonia. Azerbaijan's marathon selection show. Lys Assia in Switzerland. Ralph Siegel in Switzerland and San Marino. Another man who cannot stay away despite promises, Stefan Raab in Germany! If at first you don't succeed for a great act and dialect in Austria (and Russia!) Dima Bilan in Russia. Third time lucky for Pasha in Moldova. Kaliopi finally getting to go to Eurovision for Macedonia (FYR) after 1996's harsh preliminary. Portugal's delicious host. Malta's delicious host! Serbia's 2008 contest host representing his nation again! San Marino's lyrics. Latvia's lyrics! Ukraine's backing dancers and lack of controversy (for once). Belarus' controversy. Finally lyrics in Georgian for Georgia (and all of us Googling the meaning of 'jocker') and Azerbaijani too, but for Bulgaria. Swedish on stage for the first time since 1998, but for Finland and representing them for the second time in the history of the contest. Lithuania's blindfold. Klemen Slakonja, Klemen Slakonja, Klemen Slakonja in Slovenia who is sending Laka's brides caught in a storm! Sean Banan's flag and bananas in Sweden. Abstinence in Croatia. Leather in Hungary. Glen Vella lookalike on the bagpipes in Romania. Slovakia's hair. Ireland's hair... again! Turkey's lonely sailor. Seeing Joan's face as the televote completely reversed the jury's decision in Netherlands. United Kingdom taking risks in the contest and then being drawn first. ♣



# BAKU GETS READY!

By the time you read this, all the preparations in Baku will have been completed. The brand new and impressive Baku Crystal Hall will be set to host one of the best ever contests, according to the organisers. All the coaches will have been sprayed, all the signage will be up and flowing, the stage will be ready – along with seats at the front for all the international OGAE fans to wave their numerous flags!

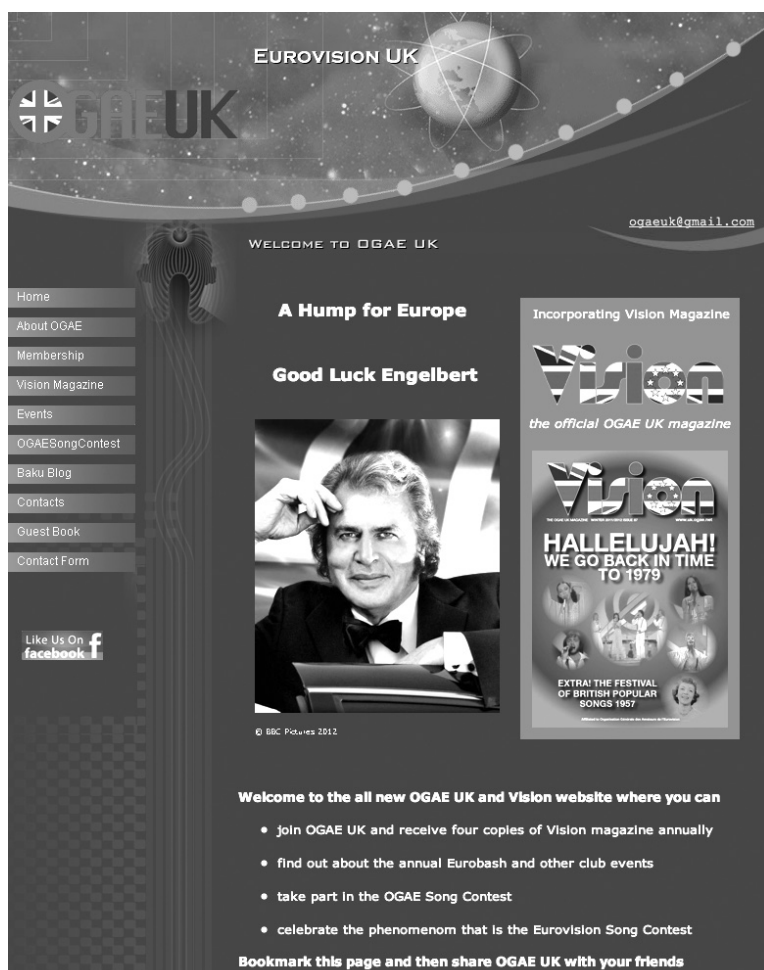




# www.uk.ogae.net

Have you checked out our new website yet? We hope you agree that we've improved upon our old one. Many thanks to Sian Sim who worked hard with Gordon Lewis and the rest of the OGAE UK committee to achieve our new look.

Make sure you check out the Baku Blog section from **Sunday 13th May** where **Vision** editor Hassan Yusuf will be reporting 'live' throughout the two-week Eurovision period. He'll reveal all the latest news from rehearsals, press conferences and parties. The blog will be updated throughout the day – but remember, there's a four-hour difference between the UK and Azerbaijan – while you're watching Corrie or EastEnders, those in Azerbaijan will be enjoying Baku's night life!



# VISIONSPY

## NEW EUROVISION BOOK!

Gordon Roxburgh, OGAE UK member and an editor for **eurovision.tv**, has written a new book about our favourite show: **Songs For Europe: The United Kingdom at the Eurovision Song Contest (Volume One: The 1950s and 1960s)**, published by Telos Publishing Ltd.



Through examination of surviving archive material and documentation, plus interviews with those involved both behind and in front of the camera, this series of books charts the history of the United Kingdom in the contest. Find out more about how the songs were selected to represent the country, and details on the all important voting each year.

This first volume looks at how the contest was created, and how important the BBC was in influencing its development. There is in-depth coverage of those contests staged in the United Kingdom, and interviews

with artists, composers and production personnel who took part in both the domestic and the international competitions.

A detailed and exhaustive work of reference which fans of music and television history will find invaluable and fascinating.

Available in May, the book can be pre-ordered for £15.99 via [www.telos.co.uk](http://www.telos.co.uk)

ISBN: 978-1-84583-065-6

### OGAESC UK2012

#### OGAE Song Contest 2012 – UK Selection

Nominations are now being sought as possible representatives for the UK at the OGAE Song Contest 2012. Songs must have been released on or after 1st January 2011 and should not exceed four minutes in length. Performers and songwriters should be UK nationals, while chart hits and lesser known album tracks are equally acceptable.

All nominations should be sent to Martyn Clarke at the address below and should arrive no later than 30th April 2012. Please DO NOT send MP3 files.

If you would like to know more about the OGAE Song Contest, including participation on the UK jury, please write to Martyn Clarke, 237 Argyle Road, Ealing, London W13 0AY or email [ogaesc2012@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:ogaesc2012@yahoo.co.uk)

#### EURO QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Duduk
2. 10 to 15 on the day of the Junior Eurovision Song Contest
3. 75 Cents - Ladislav Demeterffy
4. 86
5. Peter – in the Finnish entry *Da Da Dam*
6. Emma (1990)
7. 1936
8. Israel and France
9. 47
10. Denmark

# EUROVISION STAMPS

