



vision

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EUPHORIC LOREEN!

LANDSLIDE VICTORY FOR SWEDEN

Affiliated to Organisation Générale des Amateurs de l'Eurovision

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EDLINES

ISSUE 89 SUMMER 2012



2012 is certainly proving to be a year to remember. The Diamond Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II, the London Olympics and, unfortunately, another low placing at the Eurovision Song Contest for the United Kingdom.

Although The Hump's position in the draw suggested that he would not gain many televotes, a lack of votes from the international juries was completely unexpected. The BBC has already confirmed its participation for 2013, but what the corporation will now do to improve the UK result remains to be seen.

Of course, congratulations must be offered to Loreen who has brought Eurovision back to its honorary home for a fifth time. Of all the participating nations, Sweden is possibly the most enthusiastic and, although Malmo may be staged on a smaller scale than what we have become used to in recent years, it will certainly not disappoint.

I hope to see many of you at Eurobash in October, with this year's event completely selling out within record time. Between now and then, I am sure you will enjoy reading this issue that looks back at those memories that are now Baku and Azerbaijan.

Best wishes,

Gordon Lewis

Editor-in-Chief
editor_vision@hotmail.com

And a quick word from **Vision** editor, Hassan Yusuf Apologies for the lateness of this edition of your favourite Eurovision publication. Unfortunately, due to various reasons as well as attending a dozen Olympic events – and still having to go to work – any spare time that I use to put **Vision** together quickly diminished. We hope to be back on schedule next time with the review of this year's Eurobash!

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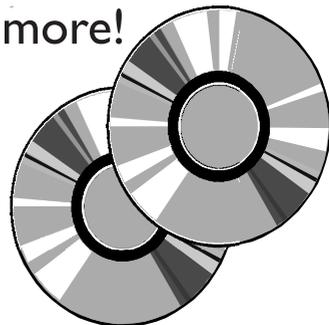
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HOW EUROPE VOTED

FINAL

	Albania	Austria	Azerbaijan	Belarus	Belgium	Bosnia & Herz.	Bulgaria	Croatia	Cyprus	Denmark	Estonia	Finland	France	Georgia	Germany	Greece	Hungary	Iceland	Ireland	Israel	Italy
Sweden	5	12	7	6	12	8	8	7	10	12	12	12	12	8	12	6	12	12	12	12	
Russia	3	5	10	12	8	3	6	6	5	8	8	8	4	5	7	4	7	7	6	7	10
Serbia	1	10			5	10	12	12	7			2	8		10	8	4	3			6
Azerbaijan	4			7	7	10			8					10		5			1	8	
Albania		8			10	6	4	5	4	5		6		3	6	10	8				12
Estonia				4								10	10		4			10	8		
Turkey	10	3	12		7	4	7			2			5	7	8		3			1	
Germany	2	4						4		10	10	1	7	2			10		10		8
Italy	7							2	2	3	7		1	4	2	3	5		2	4	
Spain		6			6	5	3		6		4	3	6				1	2			10
Moldova		1		5				1		7						2	2			5	4
Romania			6		3				3	1			2			7			5	6	7
Macedonia, FYR	8			2		12	2	8													1
Lithuania			4	8			5				3		3	12					7		
Ukraine			3	10							1					1			3		3
Cyprus	6		2													12		8		3	5
Greece	12		5		2	1	1		12					1	1					2	
Bosnia & Herz.		7						10													
Ireland			1	1	4			3		4		4			3			4			
Iceland									1	6	6	7					6				
Malta			8	3																	
France		2				2															
Denmark											2	5			5			5			2
Hungary																					
United Kingdom					1						5									4	
Norway																		1			

SEMI-FINAL ONE

	Albania	Austria	Azerbaijan	Belgium	Cyprus	Denmark	Finland	Greece	Hungary	Iceland	Ireland	Israel	Italy	Latvia	Moldova	Montenegro	Romania	Russia	San Marino	Spain	Switzerland	Points	Place
Russia		10	8	12	7	12	12	7	7	6	8	12	2	12	6	8	6		2	7	8	152	1
Albania		12	12	10	10	7	5	10	10	3	1	5	12	4	1	12	4	2	10	4	12	146	2
Romania		5	5	7	4	6	1		8	3	4	12	8	10	12	7		8	6	12	2	120	3
Greece		8	1	10	8	12	4			5	10	3	5		10	10	12	5	7	3	3	116	4
Moldova		4	6	6	3	6	6	2		2	6	4	2		3	10	12	5	10	7	100	5	
Ireland		8	4	7		2	7	3	6	10		7		10		1		10	12	5		92	6
Cyprus		6		1	3		1	12		12	5	10	7	3	3	6	7	7		8		91	7
Iceland			2		5	8	10	5	4		4	1	5	2	5			1	3	6	4	75	8
Denmark					4		8	1	1	8	7			6	8		3	3	4		10	63	9
Hungary		7	4	2	6	5	5	4							5		8				6	52	10
Switzerland		3	3		2				8	2		1	8	7	8		2		1			45	11
Finland		1			1		8			12	7	3	2		6						1	41	12
Israel			7			1	3	3	5					1			5	6		2		33	13
San Marino		10		5				2					3		7	4						31	14
Montenegro																			8			20	15
Latvia				3							4				4	2		4				17	16
Belgium		2				2	4				6						1			1		16	17
Austria				2						1											5	8	18

The top ten countries went through to the final. While not performing, Azerbaijan, Italy and Spain also voted

HOW EUROPE VOTED

	Latvia	Lithuania	Macedonia, FYR	Malta	Moldova	Montenegro	Netherlands	Norway	Portugal	Romania	Russia	San Marino	Serbia	Slovakia	Slovenia	Spain	Sweden	Switzerland	Turkey	Ukraine	United Kingdom	Points	Place
	12	10	6	6	7	7	12	12	3	10	12	3	10	12	10	12	7	7	6	6	12	372	1
	10	6	4	3	6	4	4	8	8	4	10	7	3	8	8	8	7	10	7	10	3	259	2
		5	10	5	3	12	10	10	5	5	4	6	7	12	12	10	10	10	2	2	2	214	3
		12	2	12	10	5					10	4	3	6				12	12	2	2	150	4
	1	12	1	1	10					1	12	1			3		1	12	5			146	5
	8	8			2		7	7	7		6			10		6	8			1	4	120	6
		1	8	8			8			3		5				6	3				1	112	7
		3	2	2			2	3	10						2	3	4				6	110	8
		4	5	10	5	2	6	4	2			7		5	5	1	5			4		101	9
									12	6		1					4	8			8	97	10
					3			6	12	7	8				1	7		2		8		81	11
					12			4		1						10			4			71	12
					8								12	1	6				8	3		71	13
	4			4	1	1	6				5										7	70	14
	6	2	3	7	8			1	1		2	2		8		2	5					65	15
										2	2						12					65	16
					4					8	3		4						3	5		64	17
			7		6							5	2	7				1	10			55	18
	5						5										5				10	46	19
								5						4	4	4						46	20
		7	1								2	6							2	7	5	41	21
	3							2									2	6				21	22
																						21	23
					1					7			2	8					1			19	24
							3										3					12	25
																						7	26

SEMI-FINAL TWO

	Belarus	Bosnia & Herz.	Bulgaria	Croatia	Estonia	France	Georgia	Germany	Lithuania	Macedonia, FYR	Malta	Netherlands	Norway	Portugal	Serbia	Slovakia	Slovenia	Sweden	Turkey	Ukraine	United Kingdom	Points	Place
Sweden	7	7	10	6	12	6	12	12	10	8	8	12	12	10	7	12	10	10	5	7	8	181	1
Serbia	8	10	12	10	1	12	10	10	2	12	5	10	10	8	2	8	12	8		8	3	159	2
Lithuania	10		4	4	10	5	5				10	4	7	7	6	7	7	2	2	4	10	104	3
Estonia	4		3		10	7	7	8			8	8	12		10	1	12		3	7	100	4	
Turkey		6	8		2	7	3	6		10	12	7	1			3	7			2	6	80	5
Bosnia & Herz.			1	12		4	2	5		5		5	4	5	5	6	5	5	12		1	77	6
Malta	5		6	5	3	4		6	2		2			3	2	4	4	6	6	12	70	7	
Ukraine	12	2	5	1	5	2	6		5	3	6		2	2	4	1		6			2	64	8
Macedonia, FYR	2	8	7	7			1				1				8		6		8	5		53	9
Norway	3	1	2		8			4		3	3			3		4		10	4			45	10
Bulgaria		3				3		2		6	2		6	6	2				10		5	45	11
Croatia	1	12					1		7						12		8			1		42	12
Portugal		4		3		8		3	1			6	5			5	3					39	13
Georgia	6				4				12					1					3	10		36	14
Netherlands					7			8	3				3				2	1	7		4	35	15
Belarus				2			8	7	1	4	1									12		35	16
Slovenia			5	8				4		4					10							31	17
Slovakia					6	1					7			4	1			3				22	18

The top ten countries went through to the final. While not performing, France, Germany and the UK also voted

BLOGGING IN BAKU!

Hassan Yusuf spent over two weeks in Baku covering Eurovision for OGAE UK. Well someone had to do it! This is his eye witness account...
Photographs by David Elder



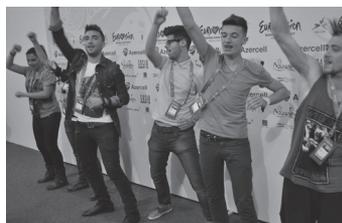
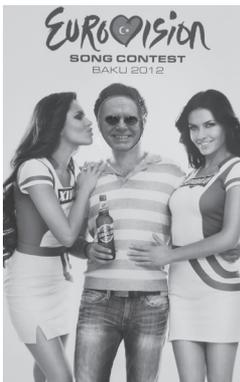
PHOTO BY ROBIN SCOTT



PHOTO BY HASSAN YUSUF



PHOTO BY ROBIN SCOTT





Baku: Looking rich



Baku: A mixture of old and new

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times... Yes, I'm quoting Dickens here because this really was a strange Eurovision.

Let's start off talking about the city and culture...

Getting there: I arrived at Baku's international airport with David Elder, Robin Scott, Andrew Main, Elaine Dove and Paul Jordan. We all arrived at Heathrow from the four capital cities of the United Kingdom.

Getting the visa at Baku airport was very straightforward - helped along by many friendly volunteers. Once sorted we headed off to our various hotels. As usual I was in the same hotel as David and Robin (and later to be joined by OGAE UK's Ticket Coordinator, David Ransted). A rather nice 4-star offering, even though it didn't have an elevator - being a listed building in the centre of town - and just down the road from the famous Fountain Square.

The city: This year's contest was held in Baku, the capital city of Azerbaijan - the most eastern city ever to host the contest - and four hours ahead of the UK! Eurovision there actually started at midnight. Azerbaijan is a rich country due to the huge oil and gas reserves of the Caspian Sea (which actually looks like the world's biggest lake).

Baku is an amazing place. You can see where the oil and gas money has gone - to rebuild the city. During the day it looked great - in the evening it turned amazing! Buildings all lit up, magnificent fountains all over the place.

The architecture looked wonderful - very tastefully designed. Nothing had been spared to make it look great.

The people: The Azeris were all very friendly - and well-dressed. But I swear most of them never work! We often got "welcome to Baku" from many strangers. Obviously they were told to make us all feel welcome. And all the volunteers at the press centre were extremely helpful - even if they knew nothing. Baku was actually a place where nobody knew anything. Seriously. The taxi drivers had no idea where anything was - not even Eurovision! If we ever ended up at our destination without any fuss, it was only a coincidence!

Now the Azeris speak a form of Turkish, so I was able to communicate without any problems - however, most taxi drivers seemed to have been shipped in from friendly neighbouring states. There were hundreds of London-style black cabs with the Eurovision motif sprayed on.

One unusual sight was seeing young men walk around arm-in-arm. In that part of the world, despite the whole macho society, it is accepted for young guys to walk with their friends like that.

The strangest sight however was seeing families out and about at 2.00am in the morning! When did these people sleep? Why weren't those toddlers in bed at that time?!

Security: Apparently Baku has the highest number of police officers, security staff,



PHOTO BY ROBIN SCOTT

Press centre: A busy buzz



PHOTO BY HASSAN YUSUF

Volunteers: A credit to their nation!

etc. And the secret service were easy to spot. Eating at the restaurant just opposite our hotel, we could spot the secret service officers lingering on the street corner, eyeing everything up. We were actually approached a few times by various organisations seeking more democracy for the country (we were easy to spot because we wore our special Eurovision accreditation badges which had many special privileges – like being able to go through road blocks!) But we had to explain that although we may have agreed with their position, we really weren't allowed to bring the contest into disrepute with politics.

No doubt some of you saw the expose by Panorama about Azerbaijan's dictatorship. There was clearly a bit of a rift between the Eurovision and Panorama teams at the BBC.

Food: Very near our hotel there were a number of nice restaurants, so food wasn't an issue. Though we did on occasions have to visit the local McDonalds, mainly to save time. And as it was open 24 hours, it was very useful coming back late from those parties!

Contest background: The organisation for the event also left a lot to be desired. The whole background to the contest was terrible – well for the first few days anyway. The whole Eurovision experience is spread over two weeks. Before the two semi-finals and grand final, there's over a week of rehearsals and press conferences and various parties (all good PR).

Because security was so tight – you couldn't actually get close to the venue by road! For the

first few days before they got the shuttle buses working to pick up the journalists, it was a good 20-30 minute walk to the press centre and venue. But once transport got working, it made life much easier. From our hotel it was a ten minute walk to the special bus stop to pick up a bus that took us near to the venue. Then we had to get a shuttle bus to get to the press centre. And it was an impressive press centre – they had loads of PCs for journalists – but just one big screen to show the scenes from the stage. In previous years we had loads of small TV screens to make watching the rehearsals easier. Still, it wasn't the end of the world. But another bad point was that there was no food available for the first few days! Unbelievable. They gave us free fizzy drinks and fruit and sweets, but no substantial food. After many complaints we were eventually offered rolls and such. But very poor service indeed.

The Baku Crystal Hall, where Eurovision would be staged (just next door to the press centre) was a magnificent building – and just put up in seven months! They were still doing it up when we arrived. But it all worked well on the day. The UK's Health & Safety Executive would've had a field day here. There were so many potholes, uncovered manholes, piles of tiles etc., it was like an obstacle course going from the press centre to the arena. But it was all hands on deck as dozens of staff were working around the clock to make the place perfect. David Elder and myself even gave them a hand...



Montenegro: Rambo's had enough



Iceland: Good chemistry between Greta and Jonsi

Semi-final one highlights

Right – let's get to the rehearsals and press conferences. Well, rehearsals started late. The authorities had blocked off most of the roads going to the Baku Crystal Hall because of a major bicycle race! We managed to hitch a ride on the Latvian delegation's coach (luckily we passed their hotel and they took pity on us).

When we finally reached the venue we expected to have missed the first rehearsals, but Rambo Amadeus from Montenegro was obviously held up in the traffic! Not a good start. And that was generally the impression of Montenegro's entry. A frantic rehearsal of the 'mad monk' – but the song did have a serious message about financial institutes – evil bankers and such – but it's doubtful that came across even with the banners explaining things. Given the choice he would've probably

preferred a live donkey on stage, but he had to settle for a badly illustrated cut-out.

Rambo displayed his dry sense of humour at his press conferences. He was asked if there was any sense to his unique style of music – or was he just out to shock people. He stated that we all had to ask serious questions of the near and distant future. So now you know.

Normality was restored with the Icelandic song. Greta Salome was joined by Jonsi – who returned to Eurovision after his performance in Istanbul 2004. The ethnic-sounding song was given a great backdrop full of magnificent mountain scenes. Made you want to fling your clothes off and roam around as nature intended! But none of that happened – obviously to much disappointment. Greta's song was based on a true story. They decided to sing the song in English to widen its appeal. Greta's dress was also designed specifically to reflect the story



Helping out: David and Hassan help get the Baku Crystal Hall ready in time!



Shocking!: Loose wiring nearly electrocutes **Vision's** Editor!

PHOTO BY ROBIN SCOTT



Greece: All bow to Eleftheria!

of the song. The singers also quite clearly had good chemistry between them – not always the case with some duets.

At their second press conference, Greta and other musicians gave us a classical mini-concert. Then Jonsi sang his 2004 Eurovision entry – then everyone sang the 1991 Icelandic entry. There's nothing like a personal performance.

Eleftheria Eleftheriou, the singer representing Greece (though she was born in Cyprus) looked fab. At her press conference I asked her about her promotional tour (she even spent a few days in Istanbul doing the TV show rounds) – and whether she really found it that useful. She said it was useful, but the performance in Baku was what really mattered.

She's had a busy time during her short career – been on the Greek version of X Factor and has even toured with Sakis Rouvas – who of course represented Greece twice at Eurovision (as well as co-hosting the show in Athens in 2006). Her song for me said 'Eurovision' all over it – and reminded me of Greece's winner in 2005.

After rescuing us from blocked roads, I got a new fondness for the Latvian song, but it did have 'cheese' written all over it and I feared the worst. At her press conference Anmary sang the Johnny Logan song she mentioned in her *Beautiful Song*.

I was very impressed with Rona Nishliu's performance for Albania. What I originally thought was a lot of shouting actually turned out to be a powerful and emotional song.



Latvia: Anmary couldn't stop singing her *Beautiful Song*!

Every year in Eurovision you go to rehearsals and come across a song and performance that somehow escaped you and this was it for me this year.

At her press conference no hands went up when the floor was opened up for questions, so I thought I had better say something – you can hear tumble weed sometimes at these events – so I said for such a small figure it's amazing how she managed to fill up the whole arena with her voice and presence, but why did she decide to appear on stage by herself (well it seemed like a simple question). She thanked me for the compliment, and as the song was very personal to her, she said it would be more effective to avoid distractions on stage. The lyrics to the song were very important to her.

She came across as a humble person – and showed her singing talent by singing *I Will Survive* to the press.

I had high hopes for the Romanian song by Mandinga. They produced a great performance with a busy back-drop. Even three security guards were spotted wriggling their posteriors! Security was very tight with guards around each corner. Nothing gets past them, but even they let their guard down for *Zaleilah* and the lovely Elena.

The group was really powerful on stage. All the backing singers and musicians were dressed in white, but the lead vocalist Elena seemed to be wearing an outfit designed by Minnie Mouse.



Romania: Mândinga give out the love



Finland: A striking red-head!

At their press conference they revealed that their song was positively received – they travelled via Istanbul and were surprised to find many of their fans on the plane. They just wanted to touch the band! Some fans can be touchy-feely can't they?

At the second Romanian press conference we all sang happy birthday to Elena. On stage with the group was the Romanian Ambassador to Azerbaijan – and the seventh member of the group, who couldn't appear on stage because only six performers are allowed. He must have really been pee'd off!

The Swiss band Sinplus beat the legendary Lys Assia to represent their country in Baku. *Unbreakable* had a great Britpop sound, but getting through to the final would be difficult.

Alas, the most 'invisible' song of the contest was probably Belgium's. Not that *Would You?* was a bad song, but it just lacked presence. Nevertheless, the youngest entrant at the contest, Iris, produced a good performance.

A more memorable rehearsal was produced by Finland. The striking red-head, Pernilla, sang *Nar Jag Blundar* – which translates as *When I Close My Eyes* – a lovely ethnic-sounding tune that is easy to hum to. She appeared on stage with a cellist in a simple routine. But she wore a rather long multi-coloured trail. Eurovision is definitely the place to make a fashion statement.

The best Israeli entry in decades in my opinion was rehearsed next. I really liked the unique sounds that Izabo made singing *Time*.

It was a throw-back to the psychedelic songs of the 1960s – but with a new twist. They didn't give a press conference after their first rehearsal – possibly for security reasons - or they thought it wasn't worth it.

Even though Valentina Monetta from San Marino sang her song *The Social Network Song* in perfect English – her knowledge of the language was quite limited.

She had a few problems with her first rehearsal – loads of technical problems, but that didn't stop her from smiling consistently. She came across as a lovely person. Her song was written by the legendary Ralph Siegel – who was celebrating his 40th year involved with Eurovision.

As the song was about cybersex, it was tempting to ask if she had been poked on Facebook – but good British manners prevailed!

Siegel was inspired to write the song after he joined Facebook and suddenly found himself with more friends than he knew he had! The song was entered to various national selections, but was picked by San Marino. Then they sought the service of one of the country's top jazz singers, Valentina Monetta. Siegel also mentioned that he's proud of his Eurovision connection – even though some people like to put the contest down, it rises above it all. A sentiment to which we can all agree on.

Probably the most striking beauty of the contest, with great classical Hollywood



Albania: Nifty head-gear!

cheekbones was next – Ivi Adamou representing Cyprus.

But she didn't look that glamorous at her first rehearsal – probably arrived in Baku two hours earlier. She sounded fine though, but seemed to have developed an accent since her preview video. *La La Love* is probably one of the best Cypriot songs for many a year, but I expected it to struggle to get through to the final, as Greece was also in her semi. And as the many Cypriots in north London couldn't vote for the first semi-final, I expected the worst.

Her song had a great graphic backdrop and made good use of her wind machine. There's nothing like a good wind machine to create that right mood. And who doesn't like a bit of table dancing? The table was quite a strange prop. The dancers were obviously inspired by the ancient Amazons.

Ivi was very chatty and confident at her press conference. One of her backing singers apparently sang for Cyprus in the early 1990s.

Soluna from Denmark had a good press conference – she appears quite intelligent with a nice personality. She leads quite an interesting life – even playing music in the streets with her family. I couldn't understand the appeal of the song – but I always support a performer if they seem intelligent and don't think of themselves above others (some do!).

The Russian grannies proved to be a sensation on and off the stage – the media



Switzerland: "We're unbreakable"!

circus around them was ridiculous! Though it must be said, most of the interest was from the Russian media itself.

The young ladies performed a bread-baking act to accompany their song – though their choreographer was getting quite frantic with them at their first rehearsal and even appeared to push them around – someone deserves a slap in the face! You don't speak or behave to your grannies like that!

Anyway, the Buranovskiye Babushki were expected to storm to the final even though it was likely the juries would mark them down. The song wasn't really that good, but the act was such fun to watch. The grannies of course sang *Party For Everyone* – well they certainly know how to strut their stuff!

As expected the Russian press conference was packed. It was also quite long and unfortunately most of the questions asked were in Russian. Still, eight grannies turned up on stage – as the group actually contained eight performers, two of them had to sit it out because of the six performer rule. The grannies are performing all over the globe to raise funds to build a church for their local village. The smaller, older granny always got the biggest cheer.

Some of the vocals from the group may not be top-notch, but they can sing in harmony at times – they gave a nice rendition of *Yesterday*.

For their second rehearsal I went to the stage area – and as usual they were perfect.



San Marino: Trying to grab new (Facebook) friends!



Cyprus: Good cheek bones

The thing about the grannies is that anyone, even old clubbers like myself, can follow the dance movements – just stand still and move your arms and hips slightly. Fab.

The second press conference was packed as usual – most of the questions again were in Russian. But the young ladies baked some traditional small pastries. Naturally there was a big scrum for them. Once the queue died down I picked up one, took a bite and spat it out again. Bless them for cooking them, but they were vile. No offence to Russian cuisine, but these were obviously a required taste.

Hungary seemed to have had a good first rehearsal. *Sound Of Our Hearts* is a worthy product from Compact Disco. It had a Britrock sound – a cross between Oasis and Depeche Mode – that made it very appealing, but this style of song usually ended up on the borderline of qualifying for the final.

The Hungarians were also one of the very few acts to actually use the catwalk. There was definitely more to this stage than met the eye.

Austria are an act that I really shouldn't have enjoyed – what with pole dancing as part of the stage performance – even though done tongue-in-cheek (pun intended). Good use of fluorescent material on the performers and the two singers made excellent use of the two catwalks. Trackshittaz had a fun press conference. They were the first act to stand on the stage desks. As their song translated as *Shake Your Booty*, they were asked if they've

checked-out any booties yet and which ones impressed them! They said they hadn't had a chance to check yet, but probably the Russians! Those Austrians had no respect!

They were also put on the spot about the song being sexist, but they explained that the song was just a bit of fun and that they would be strutting their booties as well.

It was lively and fun, but would it get through? Doubtful, as there probably wouldn't be many rap-lovers watching, though booty-lovers would get a treat.

The Moldovans made good use of the stage with their very busy performance. One part of their rehearsal was abandoned the second time round – and with good reason – as Pasha Parfeny got on the back of one the female dancers who had gone down on all fours! Just think of the phrase 'ride 'em cowboy'! Luckily good sense prevailed.

At their press conference Pasha and his singers gave us an acoustic version of the song. He revealed that he gets a bit sweaty on stage so he hasn't performed in his outfit yet. He also said his ear-piece kept on cutting out.

Pasha likes to try to write his songs with music and lyrics at the same time as he gets a better feel for it.

He was presented with a Moldova mini-icon T-shirt designed by OGAE UK member Ben Morris. Pasha seemed most impressed.

I asked Pasha about the various awards that he's won. He replied that they were mainly for musical awards around the region – Moldova,



Russia: The full monty! Two grannies had to sit it out!

Romania and Ukraine – but he was hoping to add Eurovision to his tally.

Those cheeky-chappies from Ireland, Jedward, were next to perform. The stage performance looked very typical for Jedward but this year they added a water feature! Cost a lot of money apparently – but probably bought at a B&Q sale.

Their first press conference was a right riot! The twins came in wearing special popcorn-styled outfits – and started throwing popcorn around. It must have been five minutes before they shut up to let the conference host get a word in edgeways. The whole event was just manic.

They were down to carry the Olympic torch on its long relay around the globe. They were asked that if they competed in the Olympics what event they would enter? Anything long distant was the answer – because of more camera time! Previous Eurovision winner, Linda Martin, has mentored them this year and said they were the nicest people she had ever worked with.

At their rehearsal the sound was a bit out – but the effect with the special fountain prop worked well.

Their second press conference was a real hoot again. They basically took over the conference and hosted it themselves. All the journalists and photographers were huddled at the front of the stage – but I managed to get their attention from the middle of the room – so John climbed over the stage and jumped

through chairs to come over to me so that I could ask my question! (If I was 16 and female I probably would've fainted.) I asked that, as this was the second year they had entered Eurovision – if there was a chance that they didn't win, would they be back again and again and again – as we probably couldn't take the strain! Not sure what John said, but they may not be back next year as they planned to win this one. It was pure manic stuff – but they are lovely chaps. Good skin too. Oh, and they wore specially made sweet-machine outfits. Lady Gaga eat your heart out.

Semi-final two highlights

Starting semi-final two rehearsals was a big hitter – Serbia. One of the Balkans' biggest stars, Zeljko Joksimovic was back again. He came second in 2004 and was expected to do very well again – definitely a class act.

At his camera rehearsal Zeljko gave what was expected, with him standing in the middle surrounded by a group of musicians. Simple and effective. A top ten placing was expected for this act. In another year, it might have even won – but there was such strong competition this year.

However Zeljko revealed that this would probably be his last Eurovision as a performer, but he will no doubt be involved in composing future Eurovision hits. He and his band gave the press conference a little mini-concert to much applause.

His second rehearsal was flawless.



Moldova: Ready to entertain

Next up we had another ex-Yugoslav state – Macedonia (FYR), with a big star representing them – Kaliopi. She’s quite a powerful singer and looked like the type that doesn’t take prisoners. They were having audio problems with the link up to the arena, so we just got vision in the press room, but I certainly got a feeling of angst and passion. With the sound coming back, she revealed perfect pitch. Certainly a true professional. And you can’t go wrong with a rock-opera style song.

I popped over to see the Netherlands act on stage – it looked like ‘Indiana’ Joan Franka would be performing her song in traditional Native American garb. She was surrounded by cauldrons of fire, so anyone sitting near the front certainly felt the heat. She sang a very catchy tune – but the Netherlands have only qualified once for the final since the semi-finals were introduced a few years back. But Joan had a good chance this year – she was quite memorable. But nothing is ever certain with the Dutch.

Joan revealed that she is half Turkish. She can’t actually speak Turkish but did a promotional tour in Istanbul. Her press conference went really well – she came across extremely likeable. Her song was a story about her first love – aged six – where she and her ‘boyfriend’ played Cowboys & Indians – hence her Native American outfit. But she does wear feathers in her hair to signify her free spirit. Many punters had a good feeling about this song.



Ireland: Popcorn anyone?

She revealed that songwriting was a passion for her and was inspired by people like Neil Diamond – the 1960s being her favourite musical period.

Malta were represented by Kurt Calleja this year singing a somewhat traditional pop song. Think SAW mid-1980s. Not really my cup of tea, but the act was quite snappy and came off well. Some fancy footwork by everyone – Kurt Calleja was a groovy mover.

Belarus were represented by Litesound (fronted by two brothers) singing *We Are The Heroes*. And they would be in the unlikely event of them getting through to the final. There’s nothing wrong with the song at all – but the competition was tough. Their song was a decent pop/rock anthem – very Britpop actually.

The lead singer seemed to be wearing a see-through netted bodice. Not many blokes could get away with that. My estimation of the song shot up seeing them on stage –and the interesting body contortions added to the act. They won the prize for best microphone stands.

Their press conference was good-natured. I asked the group how they met up, how long they had been going and who was the one in charge. Obviously they never answered the last part – but the two brothers Dmitry and Vladimir Kariakin started up the group ten years ago and added three other members – one from Belarus, one from Italy and the final member from Russia – over the years.



Serbia: Expected to do well

The brothers apparently won awards in the States for pop video production and direction. But so nice not to see any big egos here.

And no big ego from the Portuguese performer Filipa Sousa. A great singer, but singing a fado song – no matter how good – will never win Eurovision. However that doesn't stop it being a good song. Her performance was very moody – full of angst - with lots of slow walking.

Her style of fado was from Lisbon apparently. And despite it sounding all sad, it was in fact a love song. She defended not singing in English, because the meaning of fado just wouldn't translate properly. Personally I would prefer to hear all the songs in their native languages.

The Ukrainian singer, Gaitana – but I called her Giganta for various reasons – really knew how to belt it out! *Be My Guest* was the perfect football anthem ahead of Euro2012 that was co-hosted by Ukraine a few weeks after Eurovision. Giganta was accompanied on stage by four male dancers – wearing strange 'football skirts'. They also had four screens – similar to Blue last year. It was a mite over-produced – too much happening – but the flash-mob graphics were fun.

Ukraine always qualify for the final – no matter what they offer – but this was considered a potential winner.

The Ukrainian press conference was fun. Gaitana was quite a character. Her father is from the Congo. She unfortunately suffered racist abuse from a politician in Ukraine – but



Macedonia (FYR): It's rude to point!

said she had risen above it. She tried to replace hatred with love. She doesn't want people to think Ukraine is a bad place – and wants everyone to visit her country regardless. Her name means 'goodness' – and she tries to live up to that. She definitely was a striking person – and probably scored many goals on her way to the final.

Bulgaria were just thought to be making up the numbers. Sofi Marinova was a decent singer, but her techno-pop number wasn't special enough. Her cat print outfit did nothing for her either. She was brave appearing on stage just by herself, but had decided to do so to make a change from the many duets she has done.

It was clear to see at her press conference that Sofi was a very pleasant lady. Turns out she's from a gypsy background and is very proud of her heritage. She gave us a rendition of a famous gypsy song. She had a tattoo of a rose on her arm – apparently to disguise the name of an ex-boyfriend!

Eva Boto was the Slovenian performer this year singing *Verjamen*, a powerful ballad which translated as *I Believe*. Even though Slovenia is an ex-Yugoslav state, it's not really considered a Balkan country, so can't really rely on their ex-partners for votes.

Eva wore a wedding style outfit with a forest of flowers weighing her down. All her bridesmaids were dressed in white gowns. All very pure and virginal. They could very



Netherlands: Joan was a free spirit



Belarus: Thumbs up for the outfits!

well have featured in an old Hammer film – Vampire Virgin Brides. I made the title up, but you get my drift.

At her press conference Eva said she had received loads of good luck messages from her friends (bet they were jealous). She said that everyone should follow their dreams as she was doing. She had a great time meeting all the other performers and thought the Turkish singer, Can Bonomo, was cute.

She revealed that Eurovision was an important event in Slovenia and hoped to do well in her semi on May 24th. For a 16 year-old, she appeared very well-grounded and charming. I find most 16 year-old girls in north London to be loudmouthed chavs.

Nina Badric from Croatia is one of the Balkans' biggest stars – the region has a habit of sending their best to Eurovision. Her video had her dressed in white – her song was entitled *Nebo* – which translates as *Heaven*. I thought her act might merge with the Slovenians, but she was dressed in black – in one of those short at the front, long at the back outfits. She also shared the stage with a rather long bedsheet.

Loreen for Sweden was great on stage – she performed on a special small platform. She was a very frantic mover. Those sitting in the front rows when she performed in the semi-final and final would experience an Azeri winter...

The Swedish press conference was quite busy – but then Loreen was one of the

favourites to win. She was joined on stage by Melodifestival organiser, Christer Bjorkman.

Despite her resemblance to Kate Bush, she insisted that she wasn't influenced by her at all. Her frantic dancing was unique to her. She also revealed that her Moroccan background probably influenced her style of singing – as the energy and angst comes from within.

Even though Loreen was leading the betting to win, Christer Bjorkman mentioned that predictions were worthless – as France was forecast to win the contest in 2011 but came nowhere near the top positions. They just wanted to qualify for the final from their semi first.

Georgia had a rather good rehearsal. I didn't really like the song, but the stage act was definitely memorable. The ethnic parts of the song really stood out, but as soon as Anri Jokhadze opened his mouth – it was time for me to step back. I also thought the gold glittery loudspeaker was a bit much. As one of my colleagues suggested – for a moment he looked like Liberace's punk rock lovechild...

By the time of the second rehearsal, the song began to get more fun. The backing singers were dressed like extras from *Barbarella* – all very nice. One thing that they got rid of from their live semi-final were the special capes that the backing singers wore.

One of my favourite songs was on next – Turkey. After failing to get through to the final last year, for the first time since the semi-finals were introduced, the Turks returned in



Portugal: Putting their faith in fado

full force. They chose an ‘alternative’ music star to represent them – Can Bonomo. He became famous in Turkey doing commercials while his album became a big hit. His act on stage seemed to feature five Turkish male dancers – probably a first for the Turks. As the song was a seafaring ditty, they had a nice sea-themed backdrop – with pyrotechnics at the beginning and end of the song.

At their press conference, Can came off really well. He announced that it was his birthday – to which everyone in the press conference sang *Happy Birthday*. He had reached the grand old age of 25.

I asked him about his song. As it’s a story about a lonely sailor, had the sea played a significant part in his life? He revealed that, while he was never a sailor, he grew up on the western coast of Turkey in Izmir, so his two great loves were the city and the sea.

He was then asked a somewhat political question – as he comes from a Jewish background, what did he think of the political situation between Turkey and Israel? As far as he was concerned, he’s a Turkish citizen and was proud to represent the country. Music is universal and can be enjoyed no matter where you come from. The conference host then asked the press to avoid political based questions. Bit of a shame, because as we know politics plays a big part in the contest whether we like it or not.

But Can came across as a confident young man, with a decent future ahead of him. The



Ukraine: Double the pleasure!

song was expected to sail (pun intended) into the final.

The second Turkish rehearsal revealed a bit more about their show – a very clever way of portraying a ship. At their press conference Can talked a bit about his tattoos – one has the name of his late mother and he also has another one on his hand – which he thought was cool, as Chris Martin from Coldplay has one there as well. Hmm. Hero worship makes you do strange things!

Just one last mention about the Turkish rehearsal. An assistant fell between a gap from the main stage to the catwalk! She emerged okay, but it was an accident waiting to happen. The British Health & Safety Executive would have been unimpressed in Baku!

Estonia was next with Ott Lepland singing *Kuula* – which translates as *Listen*. Only saw part of his rehearsal and it looked like a straightforward performance. The song wasn’t set up to have flashy effects or frantic dancers. It was a pleasant ballad. At his press conference someone mentioned that it had been ten years since Estonia won Eurovision – had he noticed any difference? He replied that he had – the contest is now much bigger and tougher.

Besides winning Estonian Idol in 2009, he has also sung a duet with his grandmother who is another well-known singer. These achievements and getting to Eurovision are his proudest moments.

Asked about his chances at Eurovision, he replied that everyone had an equal chance of



Bulgaria: A purr-fect pose...



Sweden: "Where am I? Who switched off the lights?"

winning. He seemed like a generally nice guy with a sense of humour – the scally wag threw his voice at the end of one rehearsal to keep us on our toes. His song was proving to be popular among fans. A very simple tune but sang with a bit of angst.

In complete contrast we then had hard rock from Slovakia. Max Jason Mai performed *Don't Close Your Eyes*. It was good to see this genre in Eurovision even though it wasn't my cup of tea. But I think it's important for the contest to offer diversity. They placed traffic cones on one of the catwalks to stop him wandering off too much. Max also seemed to have shaved his pubes so that he could pull his jeans down as much as possible without having a wardrobe malfunction or being arrested.

At the Slovakian press conference the band were joined by a Muppet version of Max. Max revealed that he was far happier with his second rehearsal except for his hair. Apparently he had slept badly on it but wasn't really having a bad hair day. He would have preferred to be allowed to play live music at Eurovision rather than just a playback, but only live voices were allowed on stage. He would also liked to have been able to run around a lot more – even the huge stage wasn't big enough for him.

His favourite song of the contest was Rambo Amadeus' *Euro Neuro*. Hardly a surprise.

Norway were next. Managed to catch Tooji on stage singing *Stay*. What a lively number it was and with a Middle East influence to boot. It was a fine pop song that was expected to do well.

A busy act with lots of dancing – quite a good routine actually. Lots of envious hip gyrations. It's never a good idea to sing and dance at the same time, but Tooji managed it quite well.

At his press conference Tooji really turned on the charm. Many compared him to Eric Saade, who came third for Sweden last year, which Tooji took as a compliment. He said that on stage he likes to create a new character when performing. *Stay* was inspired by Persian rhyme (he's originally from Iran).

He mentioned that he once worked for MTV but, to bring him down to reality, he took up various causes including child protection and asylum seekers.

But the lad knew how to have a fab time. He got everyone in the press centre to dance along with him. I had to give up half way through – couldn't remember the moves – but you're never too old to move it and groove it. How very hip (replacement).

He's always been a big Eurovision fan and one of his favourite songs was *Ooh Aah, Just A Little Bit* from the UK's Gina G. The boy had good taste.

And in complete contrast we then had Bosnia & Herzegovina with Maya Sar singing the love ballad *Korake Ti Znam* – which translated as *I Know Your Steps*. Bosnia tend to progress to the final no matter what, so this was expected to do well despite the understated stage act. Great singer though.

She described her song as a love story between two people who really didn't know



Georgia: Having a laugh before reality sets in...



Turkey: "I pledge to get into the final!"

where to go next with their relationship. She's been at Eurovision twice before – first in Istanbul 2004 as a backing singer, and again last year in Dino Merlin's band. She was in Dino Merlin's band for many years but decided to branch out on her own. She's certainly talented enough to have a solo career.

The last act of semi-final two was Donny Montell singing *Love Is Blind* for Lithuania. He wore a bling blindfold and, as soon as he whipped it off, he did a happy backflip!

He came across as a confident young man, quite well grounded. Indeed, there didn't seem to be any nasty characters that you love to hate. Donny revealed that his father was also a musician, but in a hard rock band. They tried to work together, but their different genre of musical styles never worked out. Instead, his musical influences are Michael Jackson and Freddy Mercury from Queen.

And he asked one simple question: Who has never once felt that love is blind?

Big Five and host country highlights

I have to be honest here. Engelbert Humperdinck had an absolutely awful first rehearsal! He had problems getting the right pitch for his voice and he was having problems with the sound system, but that's what rehearsals are about. By his second rehearsal The Hump had nailed it! Our fears turned to joy!

The backdrop was very nice and followed the song when Engelbert went into his key

change. Near the end of the song we were treated to a lovely firefall effect – then three massive Catherine Wheels swept down and surround the stage. The firefall effect was perfect, but the Catherine Wheels were a bit OTT in my opinion. In fact they looked really tacky. They really weren't necessary. But I guess as the UK were on first at the final, some sort of impact needed to be made. But I would've thought the song would've done that as it was a great product. One of the best UK entries ever.

Also on stage was a guitar player (as in the video) and two ballet dancers telling a subtle love story. Choreographer Arleen Phillips was on hand to make sure there were no slip-ups.

At the rehearsal we came across a film crew from Channel Four News, who seemed to want to do a hatchet job on Azerbaijan ('will the President set free political prisoners'). Hardly in the spirit of Eurovision – obviously they had a point – but it was a shame to get Engelbert involved!

Engelbert displayed a great sense of humour at his press conference. One journalist from Sweden said that before Eurovision she had never heard of him. Well that set him off and he used the opportunity to state many times that he was known all over the world other than Sweden.

He was immensely proud to represent his country and would've done Eurovision before if he had been asked. Apparently he's sold over a hundred and fifty million albums and sang



Estonia: “Can you see my flag?”

with the greats such as Elvis Presley – who “no one in Sweden has probably not heard of”. He showed off a pendant that Elvis had given him. The ‘King’ only gave it out to close friends.

The Hump was also happy to be in the charts again with *Love Will Set You Free*.

He came across as a very likeable person, but you really wonder what he thought about the whole Eurovision experience.

I didn’t really rate the German song at first, but somehow became one of my favourites. It is strange how some songs have a habit of doing that. The song, *Standing Still*, written by Brits and performed by Roman Lob, was so Britrock.

The talented Roman went on stage with a band and the song, a great ballad, was very understated and made a welcome change from the big set offerings from other countries. But I somehow feel it would’ve been better for him to have been alone on stage – more in keeping with the song. This must be my favourite German song in decades.

France had a good rehearsal, but maybe a bit too busy on stage. Anggun had two backing singers and three gymnasts with her. How nice of them to advertise the Olympics for us! The wind machine was in full force to blow her chiffon trail elegantly. Not really sure if it worked for the song, but it was a powerful performance. Another cracker from France.

Next on stage was my favourite song of the contest – Italy! Nina Zilli delivered a superb performance aided by three backing singers.

Ralph Siegel celebrates 40 years!

I was lucky enough to get a personal invite to Ralph Siegel’s 40th anniversary meal. This was a special four course meal to celebrate Siegel’s 20th Eurovision entry and his 40 years of composing songs for the contest.

It was a lovely evening which featured a group of Azeri children singing, a traditional band, Valentina Monetta and a video montage of all his hits. I had forgotten how many great tunes he has written. Some great classics. Ralph gave out various awards to all his helpers over the years. He also revealed the winners of an internet contest where fans were encouraged to produce their own video for The Social Network Song.

He came across as very humble and amicable. May his long career continue.



PHOTOS BY ROBIN SCOTT



Slovakia: Looking cool...



Norway: Seeing the funny side if life

This was be the song to beat in my opinion.

Her stage act was simple and effective and she looked, as we would expect from an Italian, beautiful and elegant. She looked very much in command of the stage.

Nina was sent to Ireland as a young girl to learn English by her parents and her biggest musical influences were stars like Nina Simone (who she was named after), The Temptations

and Chuck Berry to name a few. She perfected her musical career in the United States. When she was 18 she wanted to practice her singing at bars and such, but wasn't allowed to until she was 21.

Despite the title of her song, she didn't really see it as a feminist song. So why did she change her song for Eurovision? Many thought her original entry *Per Sempre* was superior (it was

Whelan says...



Liam Whelan offers some facts and figures from Baku

Alim Qasimov (the sitting singer) was the first man in the history of the contest to feature in the opening of a contest before representing his country in that same contest; the first woman to do this was Lena Meyer-Landrut last year.

Engelbert Humperdinck impressed the crowds at his press conference when asked about Elvis Presley and their relationship by producing a necklace given to him by Presley. It bears the letters TCB – Presley's motto 'Taking Care of Business' – and is one of a handful given by Presley to close friends and now considered priceless. Humperdinck takes the charm everywhere with him.

1976 was the last time the United Kingdom performed first in the running order.

The four members of Compact Disco split into two groups of two so that interviews could be completed faster and they could do more sight-seeing. The group made no secret of this!

Buranovskiye Babushki brought perepechi, traditional pies from Urmurt, for the press after their second rehearsal. Necklaces worn by the women are linked to family fortunes and slightly older than The Hump's – one has been passed down through generations since 1792! Buranovskiye Babushki



Lithuania: Looking for love?



UK: Adored by the masses!

slightly), but she felt that *L'Amore E Femmina (Out Of Love)* had more appeal, especially sung in English. Personally I thought both songs were class acts.

She thought the stage was cool, as I think she was! *(There will be a full interview with Nina conducted by David Elder in the next issue of Vision - Editor)*

There were rumours that the Italian

broadcaster, RAI, didn't really want to win and host the contest next year. That's all nonsense said the Head of Delegation. When you enter Eurovision, you must have a plan to host it the following year and the Italians will honour that agreement.

I had to miss the French press conference to see Sabina from Azerbaijan perform. A round of applause erupted at the press centre after

was the only act to travel east for this contest. Even Israel, for the first time in the history of the contest, travelled west.

Last year Lithuania brought us sign language. This year Braille – on the promotional postcards given to press and fans!

Sofi Marinova brought us the first words in Azeri ever to be performed in a contest entry while, at the same time, breaking the record for most languages performed in one song – Arabic, Azeri, English, French, Greek, Italian, Romani, Serbo-Croat, Spanish and Turkish! We also heard the first Georgian lyrics in a contest song, thanks to the first male soloist for Georgia, Anri Jokhadze.

Many of the postcard themes matched the countries that they were attached to. However Azerbaijan Holy Land, the theme for Israel, was criticised by journalists in the EBU press conference the day after Israel failed to qualify for the final.

Arlene Phillips, choreographer again this year for United Kingdom, came into shot standing to applaud the 'hometown girl' Sabina Babayeva. Phillips was good enough to auction her press pass and delegate bag for the Alzheimer's Society after the show.

If five past winners together on stage were not enough to whet your appetite, Mr. Lordi returned as the Finnish spokesperson this year. It was also from position 17 that Lordi won in Athens (and Serbia a year later in Helsinki). In fact 17 is now the most successful starting position in the Eurovision Song Contest having delivered seven winners (1972, 1980, 1992, 1996, 2006, 2007 and 2012).

Azerbaijan Land of Tea was an appropriate postcard theme for the Turkish song. When asked why she held the Turkish flag all through the voting in Düsseldorf Nikki explained how Turkish and Azeri people are "like brothers". Tea in both countries is a sign of friendship.



France: Should have done better

her first camera rehearsal. Not my favourite song, but she certainly knew how to deliver this powerful ballad. Her dress seemed to change colour – or it could have been special lighting. She was joined on stage by a cross legged male singer and three standing female singers all dressed in white. The male singer is apparently famous in his own right and always performs seated.

Pastora Soler of Spain was by far one of the best singers in the contest and her ballad, *Quedate Conmigo* (which translates as *Stay With Me*) was extremely powerful. Even if the song wasn't any good, she would've brought out the best in it. And Spain had a great draw – position 22 at the final which would be fresh in everybody's mind. By far the best Spanish entry in many a year.

Euro Club and party highlights

The Euro Club is where various delegations hold their parties and where this year's Opening Party would be held. It was basically a large sports hall which had been converted for Eurovision.

Attendance on the first night was very sparse (not many journalists had arrived in Baku yet), despite the great Eurovision music. The only people on the massive dance floor were a few young volunteers and some of the British and Irish journalists! We knew how to have a good time! But Safura, who represented Azerbaijan two years ago, joined the volunteers on the dance floor, which was nice of her.



Italy: What style!

The Georgian party was good fun. Georgian parties usually are. It was held at the Euro Club and offered all attendees nice snacky food with free wine and some sort of Georgian pure alcohol called 'cha-cha', or something like that. Those that mixed their drinks suffered the consequences!

Though I had no time for the Georgian song this year (last year they produced my favourite song), Anri Jokhadze was a talented singer. Along with members of his backing group, Anri gave us a small concert. He also sang a duet with Azeri entrant Sabina. But for the second time on that day we were treated to version of *I Will Survive*; this time by Anri.

The Belarussian group, Litesound, and the Maltese singer, Kurt Calleja, also performed their entries. Other performers were spotted mingling among the crowds. After the DJ started playing naff 'thump, thump. thump' music, it was time to leave.

The Welcoming/Opening Party is usually the party that everyone wants an invite to. This year it was held in the massive Euro Club. It just seemed like a normal night really; various performers got on stage and sang (mimed) their entries. But there were plenty of camera crews. I was dressed in my Carnaby Street made Union Jack jacket and, along with Elaine Dove who was wearing a long Union Jack dress, we walked around media-whoring, giving interviews (spreading the word of the Hump) and posing for photos. It was nice to see many delegations mingling freely with the crowds.



Azerbaijan: A popular choice



Spain: Aiming for the Number One spot!

Apparently the Hump walked in and walked out ten minutes later.

The bar was free for beer and wine, but you had to pay for soft drinks – or not depending on who served you. But there was no food easily available unless you sat in the special VIP area so overall on the scale of previous Welcoming Parties, I'll give it four marks out of ten. Still, it was good fun, but a trip to McDonalds was called for later on as everyone was starving!

Terrorist plots!

Web hackers, allegedly from Iran, managed to bring down various Eurovision websites including esctoday.com. The site was targeted because it reported a gay pride event. The hackers were warning of something big during the televising of the first semi-final. Oh well – cyber-terrorists. Some people just can't stand seeing others having a good time. And it's that old chestnut about Eurovision being a gay event. Eurovision is for everyone and is watched by millions of people from all over the world – old, young, gay, straight, fat, thin – no one is excluded!

Conclusions

Well it certainly was a hectic two weeks! I won't talk about the live shows – as everyone reading this would've watched these live and have their own opinions.

A dreadful result for the UK again, but certainly not deserved.

The whole ticket distribution system was

a complete fiasco! Let's hope Ticketmaster doesn't get involved again! We were giving out final night tickets to everyone on the day itself! Having to have your name printed on the ticket was a big headache, as many got misspelled and had to be quickly reprinted! OGAE UK Ticket Coordinator David Ransted had his hair turn grey!

And the seats OGAE UK were given were, on the whole, quite poor but it was interesting seeing semi-final two from behind the stage! One Ukrainian dancer was cheering on the crowd while behind his screen.

The winner? I really didn't think she would do it, but it'll be nice to go to an EU country again without the need for visas or a demand to pay your hotel bill within hours of getting confirmation – pay up and give us all your personal details or lose the room! A warning would have been nice! Very poor.

There's no doubt that the Azeris put on a great show and it was a high standard contest, but all the background organisation had a lot to be desired! The volunteers were however marvellous, so I left Baku with more happy thoughts than bad ones, but roll on Sweden! ▼

Not many photos of OGAE UK members were available for this issue. If you were in Baku and took photos of yourselves or other members, please send a selection to Hassan Yusuf at hassan.yusuf@hotmail.com so we can include them in a special photo-spread next issue. Don't be shy!

EUROFACTS

Compiled by David Ransted

Finishing positions 1956-2012

	1956 (1) (2)	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86			
Albania	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			
Andorra	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Armenia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Austria	-	-	10	5=	9=	7	15=	13=	7	6	4	1	14=	13=	-	-	16	5	-	-	-	5	17	15	18=	8	17	9	9=	19	8	18		
Azerbaijan	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Belarus	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Belgium	UU	8=	5=	6=	6	15=	13=	10	10=	15=	4=	7	7=	7=	8=	14=	17	17	9=	15	8	7	2	18=	17	13	4	18	5=	19	1			
Bosnia & Herzegovina	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Bulgaria	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Croatia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Cyprus	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	5	16	15	16=	20		
Czech Republic	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Denmark	-	-	3	8	5	10=	5=	10=	1	9	7	14	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	16	6	14	11=	17	17	4	11	6
Estonia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Finland	-	-	-	-	-	10=	7=	13=	7	15=	10=	12=	16=	12	-	8	12	6	13	7	11	10	18=	14	19	16	18	11=	9	9	15			
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Georgia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Germany	UU	4=	7	8	4=	13	6	9	13=	15=	10=	8=	6	9=	3	3	3	8=	14=	17	15	8	6	4	2	2	1	5	13=	2	8			
Greece	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11	-	13	5	8	8	13	8	S	14	-	16=	S			
Hungary	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Iceland	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	16
Ireland	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	4=	2	4	7=	1	11	15	10=	7=	9	10	3	5	5	1	5	11	-	2	6	4	19		
Israel	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	7=	11	6	11	1	1	-	7	2	2	-	5	14
Italy	UU	6	3	6=	8=	5=	9	3	1	5	17=	11	10	13=	8=	5	6	13	2	3	7	13	12	15	6	-	-	11=	5=	7	-	-		
Latvia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Lithuania	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Luxembourg	UU	4=	9=	-	13	1	3	8	4=	1	10=	4	11=	11	12	13	1	1	4=	5	14	16	7	13	9	11=	6	1	10	13	3			
Macedonia, FYR	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Malta	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	18	18	-	S	12	S	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Moldova	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Monaco	-	-	-	-	11	3	10=	2	5=	3	9	17=	5	7=	6	8=	1	16	8=	4=	13=	3	4	4	16	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Montenegro	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Morocco	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Netherlands	UU	1	9=	1	12	10=	13=	13=	10=	11	15	14=	16=	1=	7	6=	4	14	3	1	9	12	13	12	5	9	16	7	13=	-	13			
Norway	-	-	-	-	4=	7	10=	13=	8	13=	3	14=	13=	16	-	17	14	7	14=	18	17	15	20	11	16	20	12	9=	17	1	12			
Poland	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Portugal	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13=	13=	13	12=	11=	15	-	9	7	10=	14=	16	12	14	17	9	7	18=	13	13	11	18	14			
Romania	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Russia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
San Marino	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Serbia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Serbia & Montenegro	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Slovakia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Slovenia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Spain	-	-	-	-	-	9	13=	12	12	15=	7=	6	1	1=	4=	2	10	2	9=	10	16	9	9=	2	12	14	10	19=	3	14=	10			
Sweden	-	-	4	9=	10=	14	7=	13=	-	10	2	8=	5	9=	-	6=	13	5	1	8	-	18	14	17	10	10	8	3	1	3	5			
Switzerland	1U	8=	2	4	8=	3	10=	2	13=	8	6	17	13=	5	4=	12	8	12	14=	6	4	6	9=	10	4	4	3	15	16	12	2			
Turkey	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	19	-	-	-	18=	-	15	18=	15	19=	12	14=	9
Ukraine	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
United Kingdom	-	-	7	-	2	2	2	4=	4	2	2	9	1	2	1=	2	4	2	3	4=	2	1	2	11	7	3	1	7	6	7	4	7		
Yugoslavia	-	-	-	-	-	8	4=	11	13=	12	7=	8=	7=	13=	11	14=	9	15=	12	13=	18	-	-	-	-	15	14	4	18	-	11			

Note: Two songs were judged for each country in 1956 U = Unplaced D = Did not qualify S = Did not start

EURO FACTS

87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	2000	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	16	14 SF	17 SF	17	17	16	14 SF1	5
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	18 SF	23 SF	23 SF	12 SF	16 SF1	15 SF1	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	8	4	10	7	12 SF1	-
20	21	5	10	22	10	14	17	13	10=	21	-	10	14	-	18	6	21	21 SF	-	27 SF	-	-	-	18	18 SF1
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11	18=	19	12	16	20	25	-	20	16=	-	6	12=	24	-	13=	2	22	22 SF	12 SF	26 SF	17 SF1	17 SF1	6	11 SF2	17 SF1
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5=	3	3	8	19	12	22=	-	5	D	16	-	8=	1	2	24	-	13 SF	10	18	19 SF	15	13	4	5	23
-	-	-	-	-	-	D	24	-	5	8	12=	6	4	1	3	21	11= SF	20 SF	18 SF	22 SF	18 SF1	6	14 SF1	24	6
15	20	7	21=	20	23	17	22	-	23	-	15	-	18=	-	20	-	14 SF	18 SF	1	17	22	25	11 SF1	21	12 SF1
14	10	8	2=	2	8	4	7	4	19	7	24	19	23	4	5	18	15	23	22	23	19	8	12	15	22
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10	17	9=	19	13	5	9	14	12	14	12=	20	-	-	3	17	17	3	1	9	7	3	7	8	7	17
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16	16	22	4	15	7	13	12	15	13	20	-	2	12	22=	-	8=	19	16 SF	13 SF	13 SF	14	2	19	20	20
1	8	18	2=	10=	1	1	1	14	1	2	9	17	6	21	-	11=	23	14 SF	10	24	15 SF1	11 SF2	23	8	19
8	7	12	18	3	6	24	-	8	D	-	1	5	22	16	12	19	11= SF	4	23	24 SF	9	16	14	15 SF2	13 SF1
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21	4	20	13	14	21	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
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-	-	-	-	6	3	8	5	10=	10=	9	3	15	8	9	2	25	12	2	24	25 SF	14 SF2	22	12 SF1	11 SF1	21
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5=	9	15	15	-	9	6	23	-	7	22=	4	8=	13	18=	-	13	20	15 SF	20 SF	21 SF	13 SF1	17 SF2	14 SF2	19 SF2	15 SF2
9	5	17	21=	17	18	5	6	1	2	24=	8	14	11	22=	-	4	24	9	14	18 SF	5	1	20	17 SF1	26
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12	12=	4	16	1	22	7	13	3	3	14	10	1	7	5	8	5	6	19	5	18	18	21	11 SF2	3	1
17	1	13	11	5	15	3	19=	-	16=	22=	25	-	20	-	22	-	22 SF	8	16	20 SF	13 SF2	14 SF1	17 SF2	25	11 SF1
22	15	21	17	12	19	21	-	16	12	3	14	16	10	11	16	1	4	13	11	4	7	4	2	13 SF1	7
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13	2	2	6	10=	2	2	10	10=	8	1	2	12=	16	15	4	26	16	22	19	22	25	5	25	11	25
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Lebanon did select a song for 2005, but this was withdrawn

EUROFACTS

David Ransted highlights some of the highs and lows from this year's results

Good Vibrations:

Albania: 5th. Rona Nishliu delivered Albania's best result to date, and only their second top ten finish, beating the country's previous highest position of seventh, achieved by Anzeja Shahini on their debut in 2004. Albania and San Marino were the only countries this year to beat their previous best finishing positions.

Azerbaijan: 4th. All five of Azerbaijan's entries to date have qualified for the final and gone on to place in the top ten. Sabina Babayeva's fourth place was the country's third-best result so far, and was the best result for a host nation since Athena finished fourth for Turkey in Istanbul in 2004 with *For Real*.

Bosnia & Herzegovina: 18th. Maya Sar's top 20 finish maintains the country's record of always qualifying for the final in the nine years to date of the semi-final era (although this was their lowest finishing position in the final since 1997).

Cyprus: 16th. Ivi Adamou may have finished outside the top ten, but this was the best result for Cyprus since Lisa Andreas' fifth place in 2004.

Estonia: 6th. 2012 marked the third time that Estonia has qualified for the final. Along with another sixth place in 2009, this was the country's best result since hosting the contest in Tallinn in 2002.

Germany: 8th. Roman Lob secured Germany's third consecutive top ten placing, the best Big Five performance of recent years, after the country missed out on the top ten in the previous five contests.

Lithuania: 14th. Donny Montell achieved Lithuania's best result since 2006 and the third best since the country entered the contest.

Macedonia (FYR): 13th. Macedonia returned to previous form after missing four finals in a row, and this was their second best result so far, although they still haven't yet cracked the top ten.

Moldova: 11th. Pasha Parfeny's *Lautar* took Moldova

in to the final for a seventh time and brought the country's third highest finishing position to date. Moldova has only once failed to qualify for the final.

Russia: 2nd. The Russians returned to the top ten after a three-year absence to notch up their sixth top three finish with *Party For Everyone*. Buranovskiye Babushki narrowly edged a win over Albania (the only country not to vote for them), in semi-final one, and received points in the final from every country except for party poopers Switzerland.

San Marino: 14th, SF1. The Sammarinese continued to make slow but steady progress as they edged closer to qualification with their best result to date.

Serbia: 3rd. This was Serbia's second-best result so far. Zeljko Joksimovic has now written and/or performed three top three songs.

Spain: 10th. Pastora Soler achieved Spain's best result, and first top ten finish, since 2004. Although a firm fan favourite that many would like to have seen finish much higher, it was a welcome return to the top ten for a country that has finished 20th or lower five times in the past ten years.

Sweden: The Winner! *Euphoria* was an emphatic winner in semi-final two and again in the final with both the televoting public and the juries, receiving points in the final from every country except Italy. It was Sweden's fifth win and the 11th time they have finished in the top three. With this year's win Sweden equals the United Kingdom's record of notching up a win in four separate decades.

Turkey: 7th. Back on form, Turkey returned to the final and to the top ten, having last year failed to qualify for the final for the first time. Turkey resumed an impressive strike rate, landing a top ten finish in seven contests over the past ten years.

Ukraine: 15th. Ukraine maintained its 100% record having never failed to qualify for the final (although this was their lowest position since hosting the contest in Kiev in 2005). Six of Ukraine's songs have finished in the top ten over the past ten years.

Bad Old Days:

Austria: 18th, SF1. Although Austria has had several poor results in recent years, this is the first time that they have finished in last place in a semi-final.

Belgium: 17th, SF1. Belgium has coincidentally finished 17th in the first semi-final in three of the past five contests – their worst results apart from their 26th place in the single semi-final of 2007. Belgium has only once qualified out of their semi-final, when Tom Dice finished sixth in Oslo.

Bulgaria: 11th, SF2. Losing the tiebreak in semi-final two meant that Bulgaria has still only qualified once for the final, when they went on to finish fifth, in 2007.

Croatia: 12th, SF2. Croatia got off to a strong start at Eurovision, but has now missed the final three years in a row.

Denmark: 23rd. This was the Danes' fifth consecutive qualification for the final, but it was also their lowest position in the final since 2002, a disappointing finish for a song that had been an early favourite.

France: 22nd. Although highly fancied before the contest, France saw its worst result since 2007. In fact, had the result been based purely on televoting, France would have kept the United Kingdom company as only the second country ever to have finished 26th and last, with no points at all, in the final. In the event, they were rescued from this fate by the juries. France has had only one top ten finish in the past ten years: Patricia Kaas in 2009.

Georgia: 14th, SF2. For the first time Georgia failed to qualify for the final. After Armenia and Turkey both failed to make the cut last year, that now leaves only Azerbaijan, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Greece, Romania, Russia and Ukraine with a 100% record of qualifying.

Greece: 17th. Following eight consecutive years in the top ten, the longest run of any country in recent years, Greece saw its worst result since 2003. After all the talk of whether Cyprus or Greece would do better, ultimately they recorded almost identical results, with only one

place, and one point, separating them, in favour of Cyprus.

Iceland: 20th. Although Iceland achieved a fifth consecutive final qualifier, they finished 20th for a second year running.

Latvia: 16th, SF1. Latvia has hit a rough patch, having now missed out on four finals in a row.

Montenegro: 15th, SF1. The country came close to qualifying for the final in Moscow but was less successful on its return to the contest this year, and has still never qualified for the final in four attempts.

Netherlands: 15th, SF2. Joan Franka's result in semi-final two was a big disappointment for many fans. Eight consecutive Dutch entries have now failed to make the final, the worst performance of any country taking part over all of that period.

Norway: 26th. Given the strong competition that Norway beat to make it to this year's final, it seems ungracious to highlight the fact that Norway finished last in the final for a record 11th time, especially since they saved the UK from a third last place in five years.

Slovakia: 18th, SF2. Max Jason Mai's rock track failed to ignite the scoreboard, and four in a row have now missed the final for Slovakia. This was the first time that Slovakia finished in last place in a semi-final.

Slovenia: 17th, SF2. Surprisingly, Slovenia finished second from bottom in their semi-final, their worst result since coming 21st in the single semi-final in 2004.

Switzerland: 11th, SF1. Sinplus narrowly missed out on the final. Five out of the past six Swiss entries have failed to make the final, and the one that did qualify went on to finish last.

United Kingdom: 25th. We have finished 25th three times in the past five years, and the UK and France have now finished outside the top 20 six times each. To add insult to injury, the UK came last in the jury vote this year, a result that can't be put down to being first in the running order. **V**

Carry On Baku!

Baku will never be the same again! Read the exploits of those two shrinking violets – Fiona Guest and Sylvia Rook to find out why!

Photos by Fiona Guest



Getting to Baku

After months of planning and eager anticipation, our trip to Baku nearly fell apart at the first hurdle in Birmingham Airport due to the check-in lady's lack of understanding of the visa process for Eurovision fans. After half an hour, lots of phone calls and frantic scanning the reams of paperwork we handed over she finally told us what we told her half an hour beforehand – that we could get the visas on arrival in Baku! This was clearly going to be an interesting Eurovision!

We finally arrived in Azerbaijan at 2:30am totally wiped out. We had to join a long queue – and then another – and finally managed to get the promised visa after filling out incomprehensible documents and being sized up by the customs guy. When Fiona got to the counter he looked at her, smiled, stared into her eyes, looked her up and down, checked the passport, looked back into her eyes and said "very nice" before giving her a full once over with his eyes just for good luck! At least he let her into the country, so the view couldn't have been all bad! You don't get that kind of welcome at Heathrow! Welcome to Baku – the windy city!

Transport

Living in Coventry and Warwickshire, it was wonderful to see all the new London taxis (Made in Coventry) in their Eurovision livery. Now, forgive us if we seem a little naïve, but doesn't riding in a taxi mean being driven by someone who knows the city they drive in? Obviously not in Baku! None of the drivers seemed to have a clue where anything was, and clearly had never seen a map in their lives. We were staying in the Miracle Apartments/Hotel, on a street which had recently changed its name, and not a single taxi driver got anywhere close to it. We tried showing the address on the hotel brochure, describing the market nearby, even telling them every turn to make – but they simply said no, and pointed at the Sat Nav which had us heading somewhere east of the Caspian! On one night, Fiona even got into the front of one of the taxis to show the driver where to



Fiona and Sylvia with their fans

turn left and right – he still said she was wrong! Feeling stropky, we refused to pay for the cost for one of the journeys when the driver took us round in a complete circle, ending back on the road where we started! He was clearly proud of Baku, as he then gave us a much more detailed tour of many unlit and deserted back streets in one of the suburbs. A nice touch, but at 3:30 in the morning a little unnecessary – maybe it would have been better in daylight?

We were also told about an electric golf buggy ride around the old town as a Spanish presenter said it would give us a great introduction and bring the history to life. You know this isn't going to end well... only we could find ourselves on the buggy on the day when no guides spoke any English! The tour was memorable – for being totally ignored as the driver spent most of the 20 minute journey talking in Azeri loudly to a friend on his mobile. So much for bringing history to life – it was more like ignoring it completely.

The Miracle Apartments advertised shuttle buses running directly to the Crystal Hall – well, for the first day anyway, until they realised the security blunder. The buses were designed for the volunteers so they did no checks and they simply drove past all the police and security as they swept towards the hall. As you'd expect by now, we were on board, and managed to wander around the (very windy) outside of the hall for half an hour or so, before being accosted by security and invited to step onto



Hands across the globe



That's a big one!

a police bus. We declined the kind offer, and were then offered a ride in a police car, but we declined that too, and even managed to walk half way up the steps to the second largest flagpole in the world, before being stopped again! We just smiled, spoke English, and carried on walking... a bit quicker than before!! It was no surprise therefore, that we were told the next day that 'they are no longer running - all buses within five km of the hall are not permitted'. The promised ride in police vehicles didn't deter us, and after each show, we found the staff bus left from behind the arena, so we got on it... and no-one asked us to get off! We therefore beat the enormous scrum of people trying to hail a taxi. In the staff bus we drove right past the taxi park next to the arena - there must have been 300 to 400 taxis there, but the police were only allowing them out one at a time. That is why you all had to queue for so long! We were doing everyone a favour really, as getting on the bus allowed someone else to get our taxi!

Security at the Crystal Hall

The Crystal Hall was an incredibly beautiful place, and obviously the Azeris wanted to keep it safe and secure. That meant going through three different security checks, of

varying intensity, each time we went to a show. It depended on who was on security (and the day of the week it seemed) as to what we were permitted to take through and what entertaining demonstrations we had to give to show the things we were carrying were not concealing explosives!! For the first semi-final, Sylvia was able to take her water bottle in, but Fiona had hers confiscated. However, for the second semi-final, neither of us could get water through, and all bottles were taken away. Inevitably, inside the hall it took almost an hour to queue for water to be poured individually into plastic cups by the one person working on the counter.

“By now, the secret police must have been preparing a huge case against us!”

For one of the rehearsals, a volunteer on security decided that Sylvia must have looked decidedly dodgy, and she got the full once over. She had to turn on her phone, take a picture of the floor with her camera, and open her umbrella. Meanwhile, Fiona just walked through unchallenged with her phone, camera, water(!) and umbrella in her bag! Let's be polite, but tiredness kicked in as Sylvia got ratty when the volunteer kept asking her to move on while trying to put her phone back in its case, turn the camera off and put her umbrella away. Guess what - back at the Miracle apartments a couple of days later we ended up in a lift with



Peek-a-boo!



Taxis everywhere! But which way?!

the same volunteer smiling at Sylvia saying: "Remember me and the umbrella?" Carry on Baku!

The true 'Carry On Baku' evening

On the Friday of the jury final a group of us decided to go for a meal at the top of the TV tower – a rotating restaurant with great views over Baku. We arrived at 8pm, knowing we would have to leave around 10pm to get to the Crystal Hall. The corridor to the lift was just amazing – about 200 yards long and covered in gold. Mind you we only really noticed it on the way in, as you'll see in a minute... 30-something floors up, the restaurant, however, was a total shambles. It must have taken us over half an hour to get someone to take our orders, but then... nothing, except a lot of rumbling stomachs and a 360 degree view of Baku! By 9.15pm, three soups arrived for those who had ordered a starter (not us though). By now we'd eaten two plates of bread sticks but nothing else. It must have taken ten minutes more to even see a waiter to accost – and as for the maitre'd – he'd clearly gone into hiding. By 10pm – starving and now dreaming of pizza and chips at the Crystal Hall we left.

We went back down in the lift and through the gold corridor as fast as we could, but at the main entrance we were met by five burly security guards demanding payment for the meals we had not had! After a lot of arm waving and everyone talking over each other we left

without paying for the meals we didn't get! Meanwhile, Sylvia had earlier asked one of the waiters to order a London taxi for 10pm, but of course, waiting for us was... you guessed it... a standard saloon car – a local taxi! London taxis seat five people – saloon cars do not! There were five of us going to the arena, but before we might have been offered another lift by the secret police, we decided to all pile in – and Sylvia had to lie across everyone else's laps.

At the bottom of the hill the road was blocked with a massive traffic jam, caused by a policeman waving his arms and shouting loudly. Our taxi tried to go down the hill to the arena, but he shouted that only London taxis were allowed. We pleaded, explained in our best English and showed our tickets but he would not allow our taxi through. Just then a London taxi happened to pull up next to ours, and the policeman waved his arms wildly and shouted for us to get into it. We piled in through one door of the taxi, at the same time as a lady and her baby were climbing through the other door. The look of shock on her face as she backed out as five manic Eurovision fans piled in was a picture! It was clearly just too much.

Meanwhile, the person paying for our half kilometre ride, had no cash, but with the policeman gesticulating wildly and blowing his whistle as loud as he could, the taxi started to drive off, so he leapt into our cab leaving the first driver unpaid and shouting at the policeman! By now, the secret



This way to my flag Mr. Policeman. I'm British y'know!

police must have been preparing a huge case against us!

After this chaotic and somewhat hysterical journey, we arrived at the Crystal Hall, only to find that none of the food stalls had any food. The pizza was not to be! Sylvia ended up 'chatting up' one of the volunteers who phoned a friend to get him to smuggle in a sandwich from the staff canteen, which we split three ways. Dinner in three bites!

Final night

We ended up having to collect our tickets for the final, dressed in our red, white and blue finery in The Marriott Hotel. A group of us then decided to go across the square to the Hilton for a Eurovision cocktail, but en route, a huge gust of wind tore one of Sylvia's flags off its pole which then blew into the middle of something akin to the Azerbaijan M25. Most sensible human beings would have left it, but Sylvia is not a sensible human being, as many of you may have realised! She didn't want to lose a flag and as no one from our group would volunteer to help, she caught sight of a policeman walking past and accosted the poor chap. His English was as good as our Azeri, but with lots of arm waving and pointing he got the idea of what she was asking, and shook his head. She pointed at the flag now way in the distance and made him realise he was going to help anyway! Sylvia is a difficult person to turn down, and before he knew it, she had grabbed the poor guy by his

hand, and led him into the middle of the road to stop the traffic. The rest of the group fell about in laughter as it looked like the ending to a romantic film. Either that, or seeing Sylvia arm-in-arm with a policeman anyone looking for the first time would jump to the conclusion that she had finally been arrested! But she hadn't... and she got her flag back.

After actually getting dinner that night, we got a chance to see what it must be like to be an A-list celebrity. As soon as our group stepped into Fountain Square, we were set upon by many of the locals who wanted our photo! It took us almost an hour to get across it, as it seemed everyone in Baku wanted their photo taken with the crazy group of people dressed in red white and blue and waving Union flags. It was brilliant! It was such a come-down a day later when we could walk through the square un-accosted! From A list to Z list in 12 hours!

The contest itself

So what about the reason we were there – the contest itself? Wasn't it fantastic? Others will be writing in **Vision** who will analyse the staging and the songs themselves, but we enjoyed them all (even Montenegro?!) and Loreen was a well-deserved winner. All we can say is: What a week and what a contest – we had a blast! Add to that spending time with such lovely people (you know who you all are), we had a brilliant time in Baku – and despite many valiant attempts we didn't get arrested. I'm sure the police in Malmo next year won't get to build such a large dossier on us both! As for 'Carry on Baku'? – It turned a brilliant Eurovision into an unforgettable one.

We would also like to give our grateful thanks to the OGAE UK Committee members for all they did in the face of adversity to get tickets to everyone. Roll on Sweden – we hope to see you all in Malmo.

With grateful thanks To Darron Copeland for the title which evolved in the middle of the lady and baby incident! 🙏

EUROQUIZ

Talk about the strange British weather! This issue's quiz, compiled by Ben Robertson and Alasdair Rendall, pays tribute to the weather and seasons!

1. Which artist in this year's contest released a 15 in 1 'Summer Mix' version of his song, where all the sounds were produced by the artist?
2. Which group sang about breasts in their 1973 Eurovision entry, with the Swedish entry *You're Summer*?
3. *Ludi Letnji Ples* – also known as *Crazy Summer Dance* – was stopped from entering Eurovision in 2006 thanks to which boy band?
4. Which is the only group to have finish second in the contest on two occasions?
5. Fireworks can often heat up a performance. What was the first year that participating artists were able to use fireworks on the Eurovision stage?
6. Which band enquired after the colour of sunshine in 1984?
7. Before going solo, in which band could Gary Lux be found singing about a hurricane?
8. It was raining gold for Michael von der Heide, but which song did he perform in the German national final 11 years earlier?
9. What is the real name of Marcha, who performed *Rechtop In De Wind*?
10. It was obviously sunny in Dublin in 1971, so which performer took to the stage with a parasol?

See inside back page for answers

BOOKREVIEW



Songs For Europe – Volume One: The 1950s and 1960s
Gordon Roxburgh
Telos Publishing
Limited 2012
ISBN 978-1-84583-065-6
496 pages

Previously announced in *Vision*, the first volume in a series of books entitled *Songs For Europe* has now reached the high street and online book stores. Author Gordon Roxburgh has an amazing Eurovision pedigree, having been a member of the Song For Europe jury that chose Bucks Fizz in 1981 and a regular delegate at the live shows for the last 20 years. Coupled with his natural enthusiasm for Europe's prestigious musical event and a desire to preserve an informative record of his country's participation at the song contest, Gordon has combined detailed chapters of each national final, including the 1956 Festival of British Popular Songs, with analytical summaries of the international show and the UK's success... or not at the case may be!

Gordon was granted unprecedented access to the BBC Archives, and this is evident throughout the pages of this volume. The credits also read like a

who's who of Eurovision, with the author able to speak with a host of television executives, commentators, songwriters, performers and even conductors. James Moir, David Jacobs, Bill Martin, Jackie Lee and Harry Rabinowitz are just a handful of personalities who were willing to share their own memories of the contest, with secondary sources including a range of national newspapers, artist biographies, *Melody Maker* and, of course, *Vision*! In addition, there are eight colour pages depicting illustrations of record covers, sheet music and the composer's award for Kenneth McKellar's 1966 attempt, *A Man Without Love*.

Although the academic nature of this book may not appeal to the casual reader, it is an invaluable reference tool and a comprehensive history of the United Kingdom's Eurovision involvement since the contest's inauguration in 1956 through to the year of four winners in 1969. With the second volume covering the 1970s already submitted for publication, the next edition and beyond is already being eagerly awaited by those who share the same love and passion for the Eurovision Song Contest that Gordon Roxburgh clearly does. **GL**

Available from www.telos.co.uk (Cult TV & Film section)

JURIES vs PUBLIC

Simon Bennett looks at the discrepancies between the juries and public televoting for this year's Eurovision

The release of the final voting breakdown a few weeks after Eurovision in Baku proved just as interesting as last year and has fuelled yet another round of debate about the jury/televote split. From a British perspective, I was particularly surprised to see the breakdown of the UK's final vote. *Love Will Set You Free* was always an unusual choice for Eurovision, but it was a beautiful song, performed by an accomplished and relatively well-known artist. As such, I had expected it to score relatively well with the juries and so was amazed to learn that the Hump actually came last in the jury vote, his final position being

thanks to the televoters of Estonia, Ireland, Latvia and Belgium! I am sure, given a later draw, the UK would have done better, but I also now realise that the Hump's performance seemed to come over better live in the hall than on TV. It was a brave experiment by the BBC, and all credit to Engelbert for charming everyone he met in Baku, but ultimately this was not a Eurovision song.

One thing was clear and indisputable; Loreen and Sweden were runaway winners, coming top of the score board in both the public and jury votes in both the semis and final. *Euphoria* was thus a far more comprehensive winner than most in recent years, with only Italy

surprisingly failing to award it any points, and its lowest score being the three points awarded by San Marino and Portugal in the final.

The second placed grannies from Russia were less consistent in the overall voting, with the juries ranking them only eighth and 11th respectively in the semi-final and final. The saturation news coverage and the ladies' undoubted charm ensured that they did very well in the televotes, although there was talk that their song had featured in adverts shown during the commercial breaks in some countries, thus increasing their exposure.

Serbia rivalled Sweden for consistency, coming second

The final

Country	Combined		Televote		Jury vote	
	place	Points	place	Points	place	Points
Sweden	1	372	1	343	1	296
Russia	2	259	2	332	11	94
Serbia	3	214	3	211	2	173
Azerbaijan	4	150	5	151	8	118
Albania	5	146	8	106	3	157
Estonia	6	120	12	78	6	152
Turkey	7	112	4	176	22	50
Germany	8	110	6	125	10	98
Italy	9	101	17	56	4	157
Spain	10	97	18	45	5	154
Moldova	11	81	13	75	9	104
Romania	12	71	7	117	20	53
Macedonia, FYR	13	71	11	79	17	69
Lithuania	14	70	14	68	14	82
Ukraine	15	65	20	37	7	125
Cyprus	16	65	15	63	12	85
Greece	17	64	9	89	18	60
Bosnia & Herz.	18	55	16	57	15	71
Ireland	19	46	10	89	25	14
Iceland	20	46	19	39	19	53
Malta	21	41	25	10	16	70
France	22	21	26	0	13	85
Denmark	23	21	23	18	21	51
Hungary	24	19	22	20	23	30
United Kingdom	25	12	21	36	26	11
Norway	26	7	24	16	24	24



or third in all the individual votes, clearly justifying their third place in the final, and further enhancing Zeljko Joksimovic's Eurovision credentials.

Personally I found Azerbaijan's fourth placing quite surprising, especially as it owed this position mainly to the televoting, having only managed eighth with the juries. To me, this seemed far more of a jury type song, but the power of Eurovision televoters can never be underestimated!

The rest of the voting breakdown made its customary interesting reading. As usual, there were some quite surprising discrepancies between the televotes and the juries, as well as between the semis and the final. Estonia, for example, came between fourth and sixth in all the votes except the final televote where it only managed 12th. Even more surprisingly,

Semi-final one

Country	Combined place	Televote		Jury vote		
		Points	place	Points	place	
Russia	1	152	1	189	8	75
Albania	2	146	3	131	1	131
Romania	3	120	2	132	5	87
Greece	4	116	5	110	3	103
Moldova	5	100	7	85	2	107
Ireland	6	92	4	116	10	72
Cyprus	7	91	6	99	4	90
Iceland	8	75	8	79	11	70
Denmark	9	63	9	53	6	81
Hungary	10	52	11	39	7	76
Switzerland	11	45	10	49	13	45
Finland	12	41	12	36	12	57
Israel	13	33	16	16	9	72
San Marino	14	31	13	25	14	42
Montenegro	15	20	14	24	16	28
Latvia	16	17	15	18	18	17
Belgium	17	16	18	2	15	38
Austria	18	8	17	15	17	27

Semi-final two

Country	Combined place	Televote		Jury vote		
		Points	place	Points	place	
Sweden	1	181	1	180	1	145
Serbia	2	159	2	148	2	141
Lithuania	3	104	3	128	10	55
Estonia	4	100	5	88	4	102
Turkey	5	80	4	114	13	42
Bosnia & Herz.	6	77	7	70	6	77
Malta	7	70	11	39	5	97
Ukraine	8	64	17	24	3	109
Macedonia, FYR	9	53	8	63	9	58
Norway	10	45	6	72	18	25
Bulgaria	11	45	9	59	17	27
Croatia	12	42	14	34	7	66
Portugal	13	39	13	37	12	49
Georgia	14	36	18	15	8	62
Netherlands	15	35	10	51	16	31
Belarus	16	35	12	37	11	52
Slovenia	17	31	16	27	14	40
Slovakia	18	22	15	32	15	40

Turkey, which was greeted with near hysteria by the mainly Azeri audience in the Crystal Hall, came fourth in both televotes but only managed a dismal 22nd in the final jury vote! The reverse was true for the much fancied entries from Italy and Spain which came fourth and fifth respectively in the final jury vote, but 17th and 18th in the televote.

The jury and popular votes were arguably more divided than at any time since the current system was introduced. Ukraine managed only

20th in the final televote but came seventh with the juries, the equivalent positions for Greece were ninth and 18th, for Ireland tenth and 25th, for Malta 25th and 16th and for France 26th and 13th. The latter two songs fared particularly badly in the popular vote despite being hotly fancied by many fans. Anggun's terrible showing in the televote is particularly puzzling, and has caused a lot of comment back in France.



It was fascinating to note that Romania finished third in its semi but only managed 12th in the final. Similarly, Greece was fourth in its semi but only ended up in 16th position. In neither case was there a particularly noticeable change in the way the songs were performed.

I have learned that I can no longer predict Eurovision results with any degree of accuracy, but the voting still threw up some surprises. Tooji from Norway seemed to have a fairly classic Eurovision euro-pop song very similar in style to Eric Saade's *Popular* which proved just that in 2011. The Norwegians were certainly expecting great things but the song only scraped into the final and came a dismal 24th in both the final public and jury votes, thankfully saving the UK from the ignominy of last place. Personally, I was expecting Ukraine to do far better than its eventual 15th place, and Iceland to finish higher than 20th, but I was also surprised how well Roman Lob did for Germany.

The 50/50 split between public and jury votes seems to be here to stay, but many queried the musical credentials of some of this year's juries given the somewhat unpredictable nature of their voting and their seeming susceptibility to the same national prejudices they were supposed to counterbalance.

Without the jury votes, it seems Switzerland would have taken Hungary's place in the final, and Bulgaria and Netherlands would have replaced Malta and Ukraine. Interestingly enough, this seems to correspond to what a lot

of fans would have preferred. The failure of Netherlands to progress from the semis yet again was much lamented not only by the Dutch themselves but also by many seasoned Eurovision fans, although personally I never quite got the song.

The dominance of the English language was slightly diminished this year with eight songs in the final sung entirely in languages other than English (compared to five in 2011). Similarly, the non-English songs fared quite well, with four finishing in the top ten and none in the bottom five.

In 2012 the Big Five did fairly respectably, with three finishing in the top ten and only the UK and France languishing in the bottom five.

The Azeris spent vast amounts of money on staging the contest this year, and the venue certainly looked amazing on TV screens. The set itself was a little uninspired and, personally, I found the presenters a little too bland. Having spent so much, I was quite surprised that so few postcards had been prepared, meaning that they were repeated several times during the shows. Similarly, the interval acts were interesting choices, with most fans agreeing that the semis were better than the final. I'm sure many UK viewers were as astonished as I was to hear Emin introduced as being famous in Britain. Much has been written elsewhere of Emin's relationship to the Azeri President's family so I won't go there.

Along with the muted stage, rather surprisingly 2012 seems to have been a relatively gimmick-free year, after last year's caged women, giant inflatables, big hats and protest placards. The 2012 final nevertheless delivered the Russian grannies' oven and tray of cakes, Lithuanian Donny's blindfold and, of course, Jedward's fountain! The stage was much simpler than in recent years and many countries opted for fairly minimalist presentations, perhaps subliminally reflecting the tough economic times. I eagerly await what Malmo 2013 will have in store. ♡

Euro Glitz

OGAE UK President, Paul Marks-Jones, never made it to Baku – he was too busy having a glitzy time in York! Paul explains all...

It was just a few days after Azerbaijan had won the right to host Eurovision 2012 that Emily Roberts, Eloise Flint and Rachel Alexander-Hill approached me with an idea of staging something a little bit special for OGAE UK during Eurovision 2012. Given that many people would choose not to travel for differing reasons we'd have a fair number of members at home in the UK, but still wanting to celebrate the contest in like-minded company.

So after several months of planning the actual event was upon us. And while we were disappointed not to be in Baku, the actual lead up watching the semi-finals from home and knowing that we would be with a great crowd on the Saturday made for a very exciting build up to May 26th. And as a special bonus – we'd even arranged perfect weather!

After an afternoon exploring the delights of York on Friday, 7.00pm arrived and a merry band of Eurovision fans trooped through the city to board the Euroboat!! Decorated with flags from all nations we were cunningly disguised as a pre-Euro 2012 football appreciation society and received numerous cheers (and a bit more) from the onlookers enjoying the sunshine from the banks.

Special guest – Josh Dubovie (UK 2010) – happily chatted to the crowd before he came on to perform a note perfect 45 minute set ranging from Motown classics to modern day chart hits. After a wild conga on the barge, the expected crescendo was Josh's entry *That Sounds Good To Me*. After thunderous applause and cheers Josh thanked 'his Eurovision family' for all the support given to





him. I am sure it will continue for many years to come.

The floor was then open to the brave for impromptu karaoke – highlights included *On Top of The World*, *Hold On Be Strong* and a rousing performance of *Love Will Set You Free* from Adam King... all clearly practicing for Eurostars at the Eurobash!

Even when the boat docked after four hours of cruising up and down the River Ouse, the party continued back at the official EuroGlitz hotel until the early hours.

Another glorious day greeted us on Saturday and while there were some tired eyes, everyone made it to the start of the historic Euro tour of the city and we were joined by some new delegates – increasing York's Eurovision population!

The hilarious bus tour combined historic facts about this ancient metropolis with some 'little known' Eurovision related facts – whoever knew York had such a rich history associated with Eurovision!

The Union Jack umbrella then led our merry band through York to the Coppergate centre for the very first charity Eurovision singalong! Stunned onlookers gazed in amazement as a quiet corner of their shopping square was festooned with flags, a keyboard and 80 note and word perfect Eurovision fans! They were treated to such classics as *Don't Play That Song Again*, *If I Had Your Love* and joined in with *Save Your Kisses for Me*, *Making your Mind Up* and other UK favourites. The finale was a rousing rendition of *Love Will Set You Free*! The crowds must have been impressed



EUROGLITZ



because they donated £172 for the official EuroGlitz charity Henshaws!

After a short break the local Revolution Bar was transformed into yet another Eurohaven for drinks, food and pre-contest dancing. Although the staff didn't want the party to stop, we all knew there was a very important screening taking place next door in CityScreen! Armed with flags, score sheets and complimentary drinks the screen filled up in time for an exclusive welcome message from Paddy O'Connell and then the event itself began. I do not know how many people have ever watched the Eurovision in a cinema, but it actually felt like we were an extension of the arena and being there with such an

enthusiastic crowd certainly more than made up for not being in the arena!

When we knew the results there was lots of excitement and disappointment for the UK, but undeterred, everyone headed downstairs to continue the celebrations where the bar had been transformed into another Eurovision dancefloor with more free food and drinks! Entertained by Richard McCracken on the DJ decks the dancing went on until the early hours after which over a hundred EuroGlitzers collapsed into a heap of happy and 'euphoric' exhaustion!

A thoroughly marvellous weekend for OGAE and we welcomed many new members.

EuroGlitz 2013? Watch this space! ♥



RETROSPECTIVE 2012

PART 1

It's that time of the year again, where **Darren Jenkin** gives his personal views on the songs from Eurovision 2012. Don't agree with Darren? Never mind...

Photographs by Robin Scott

2012 definitely wasn't the quietest contest on the radar in recent history. With Swedish hysteria amongst the fans and worldwide reports of Engelbert's and the Babushka's participation, interest was further heightened with the BBC's Panorama show highlighting Azerbaijani oppression. I watched the latter just before the first semi-final and maybe I was influenced by it, but there seemed to be a distinct lack of "fans" shown after the songs; just the same old few hanging around the artists as they waited to take to the stage. Due to the location I'm sure fewer travelled to Baku, but there was still a lack of atmosphere coming across from watching it at home and the songs were definitely hurried along too quickly. The presenters were regimented rather than viewer friendly and Eldar was positively frightening in his stance staring down the camera lens with a grinning Cheshire Cat look about him. The songs were the usual mix of the good, the bad and the Montenegro which is always the main thing and you might have guessed where I'm starting ...

42nd MONTENEGRO

Police in Podgorica confirmed recently that they had been successful in recapturing escaped beast Rambo Amadeus. He was spotted by several thousand Eurovision viewers roaming onstage at the Baku Crystal Hall masquerading as a singer. Upon his recapture vigorous shampooing ensued, as well as numerous hosing downs. Reports that audience members were offered tetanus jabs have not yet been verified.

41st NETHERLANDS

The Dutch are consistent if nothing else, as this was another complete disaster of an entry. Things would have improved slightly if she had just left off the ridiculous head-dress as zooming in the opening shot of her dressed in that was laughable. Twee lyrics and the hideously fake backing ensemble added fuel to the fire and she was out of tune in many places.

40th LATVIA

This lyrically stupid offering from the 2002 winners was certainly the most amateurishly performed song of the 42. Anmary certainly had a voice and the tune, I guess, has appeal but the whole stage presence screamed 'local W.I talent night'. Excruciating references to McCartney, Jagger and er... Logan and if the words of the song are to be believed blame must be shovelled in the direction of her parents for encouraging her to persist with music.

39th AZERBAIJAN

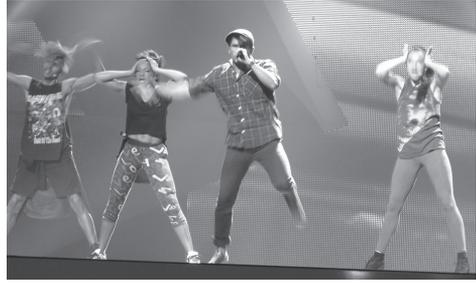
The high placing went the way of the home team as expected but as a song this did little for me. A poor Sam Brown's *Stop* to my ears. The ending fell away so it wasn't just the music dying. The illumination of the dress worked well and vocally Sabina was one of the best this year but this is still a song contest. Fourth place? I don't think so.

38th BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA

In a similar vein comes Bosnia. This really shouldn't have qualified and it took me an age to decipher any hint of a tune. Was this really



Netherlands: Out of tune



Norway: Where's your mobile?

a better song than the United Kingdom? Maya Sar appeared to be channeling a 1970's Katja Ebstein in appearance. Nothing else to add...

37th TURKEY

Going into the contest week this only had Rambo nestling below it in my rankings but where others failed with dreadful staging this was very much a case of Can can or could. An engaging performer jostling between his more serious backing boys, this nautical Turkish romp was always destined for a pretty great reception and placing. Sadly on a musical level it didn't quite float my boat.

36th DENMARK

This is a strange one for me and I know from online forums that this is the 'marmite' entry of 2012. There is nothing wrong with the song whatsoever and Soluna's vocal delivery was always assured but, like most Danish entries over the past few years, I just got bored of the song the more I heard it. Not very constructive I know, but she had a very apt surname in Kettel!

35th BELARUS

It wouldn't be Eurovision without a dosage of national final corruption and that was the most interesting thing about Litesound. Vocally Dmitry didn't really deliver and the last refrain was just too strained. The reconstructing of the song into a more rock sounding number was also a poor decision and even the bendy boys couldn't save this from its obvious semi elimination.

34th SERBIA

I don't think I will remember 2012 as being a classic year for the Balkans with four of their entries nestling in my bottom third. Zeljko merely exhumed a lifeless version of *Lane Moje* and performed it with less lighting than in Istanbul. Nothing new here and totally over-marked. Nice to see Mick Hucknell wandering around in the background though.

33rd FINLAND

Red hair and a turquoise and black outfit. Was it 1987 all over again? Sadly a guitar riff and Vicki Rosti failed to materialise and what we got instead was a limp whimpering ballad which I'm sure many viewers would fail to remember was there at all. It had poignancy though and some beautiful lyrics for her mother, but surely the essence was more obituary than tribute?

32nd NORWAY

Comparisons were always going to be made between Tooji and Eric Saade. Both were pretty boys delivering strong Euro pop songs sounding great on official recordings. Both offered 'street-down with the kids' style smartly choreographed routines. Both represented Scandinavian countries. Both sounded like their vocal chords were being trampled on. Both got ridiculously high scores and finished in the top three. Oh hang on... Does smashing a pane of glass make that much difference? Sadly he failed to pull off the menacing hoodie look. If I met him in a dark alley I would probably steal his mobile.



Italy: Couldn't grasp the brilliance!

31st CROATIA

At the Croatian final I felt *Nebo* was a pretty decent song which had fluidity in its build up and, although it would never be a contender, it could easily make the final. Again Mr. Tinkering got involved and stripped the song of its vital ingredients and left nothing but Nina's still brilliantly engaging performance. The bully boy dancers reminded me of Las Ketchup's prancers from their 2006 routine too. That's not a compliment.

30th MOLDOVA

Were this lot really trotting at points during this song? I know (and have loved) some bizarre Moldovan spectacles over the years, but you tend to laugh with them in most cases. Ironically (after the above review) these backing singers seemed to have come from Spain 2008 and, bearing in mind this was on last in the running order of the final and we had had more than a few drinks by then, this looked as if Colin Farrell had somehow ended up in Baku and had his drink spiked.

29th GREECE

This was definitely Greece on a budget! No props or gimmicks and sadly little tune, although in quite a few years that hasn't stopped a top eight placing. This may have been only one place and point behind Cyprus this year, but I cannot be the only one that thinks Greece were out scored in pretty much every positive department by their bezzies and, like a few I have already retro'd, this made the final purely based on the country's name it represented.

28th IRELAND

Back with a much better song this year I thought were Jedward, but the novelty it seems has worn off on the jury side of things and I imagine they would have been pretty disappointed with 19th. The gold outfits were more hideous than last year's and there's nothing to be said about their vocals that I didn't say in 2011. A top tip for them though: to restore your hair to your infamous quiff status, try getting into the fountain with your microphones still plugged in. Well they might as well use them for something...

27th LITHUANIA

I was surprised to see Lithuania do quite as well as they did in the final given their relatively early draw. Donny was like the outsider who desperately wanted to appear cool and ended up looking like a plank. Surely if love was blind then so was his choreographer. However, he really couldn't have given more in his performance and I thought he sang pretty well. The curtain effect closing down on his impressive backdrop as he took his bow was a wonderful piece of staging too.

26th ITALY

I loved the Italian entry last year when the reaction to its second placing was much derided. This year's was a good Winehouse-esque number which got many fans excited but I just can't grasp what is so brilliant about it. Two consecutive top ten placings will keep the Italians happy though, and the fact that they don't look as if they have enough public support to win a contest should safely keep Gigliola and Toto in retirement as well.

25th GERMANY

The Germans will be delighted with a third consecutive top ten placing and they've certainly cemented their position as head of the Big Five in Eurovision. Roman had a certain winsome charm to him and vocally delivered much stronger than I expected him to. This has pushed him up in my rankings as the song is too meandering in early listens to justify its



Slovakia: Even the six pack didn't help!

top 10 placement. More votes for him than the song I reckon, and boy will he regret that horrible tattoo when he is older. Hardly discreet is it?

24th ICELAND

Remembering back a decade or so and thinking are Darren Day and Melinda Messenger back on the scene? Another huge fan favourite which again eluded me but the staging was dark, moody and totally suited to this folk tinged number. It just qualified from its semi and was among the bottom few in the final and I think that is wholly justifiable. Perfectly pleasant but hardly awe inspiring.

23rd SLOVAKIA

Now I just loved this entry and thought Slovakia may just sneak their first final appearance with something completely different to all else in Baku. Max Jason totally killed the song though with the worst vocals of the whole three shows, especially during the chorus when he was excruciatingly bad. Why inflict such a demanding vocal on such an incapable singer? Not even the six pack and reappearance of Tommy Nilsson's hair could save this. I will just have to listen to the studio version of this one in future.

22nd ROMANIA

One of the most Eurovision of performances came from Mandinga who seem to be about ten years behind the rest of Europe in encountering their Latin phase. Not sure of the bagpipe link but it was catchy enough in a harmless way and

I'm sure many of you reading this will have it higher up your rankings than I have. Note to lead singer Elena: when a live performance has a mishap please try and make it a little less obvious.

21st AUSTRIA

This should have made the final just so we could make a montage of all the commentators around Europe trying to pronounce their name without making it sound too rude! This wasn't as strong visually as in the Austrian final which couldn't be helped, but the crowd participation was great and it was sad to see this land in last place in the first semi-final. Kudos to Manuel too for getting to the end of the song with such a painful injury. That's how to keep the show going Elena.

20th SAN MARINO

30 years ago dear Ralph wrote *A Little Peace*. Now most Eurovision fans just want a little peace from him. I am proud to buck the trend though, as this spectacularly banal offering was just a classic which will be remembered long after so many have been forgotten. Holby City's Jac Naylor singing about having cyber sex while behind her a pilot moved in such a way that suggested he had never heard a piece of music in his life. Valentina is on Facebook (other social networks are available). Give her a poke. You know you want to.

19th SWITZERLAND

Given that the Swiss seemingly chose their entry so early (has 2013's song been confirmed yet?!) it seems strange that lead singer Ivan didn't use the time to learn some English pronunciation. Even Belarus would be proud of 'sweem against the strim'. It appeared that a final place was to be between them and Hungary but I would have loved to have seen both make it. This was pretty catchy in a mild rock kind of way. They staged this well too.

18th SLOVENIA

One of the worst results of the whole contest fell to poor Eva and was very harsh. She sang



United Kingdom: Gutted with the result

this well and although her stylist must have had a breakdown, the *Molitva* style build of the song was surely deserving of some of the second semi-final Balkan vote that was out in force for Serbia in 2007 – and the juries had this below Belarus and Georgia? Perhaps she wasn't butch enough? I can't explain this in 17th. One of Eurovision's many curiosities.

17th SPAIN

A throwback to the days of Nina and Paloma San Basilio and finally a top ten placing for Spain. Pastora was close to bursting as she put almost all she had into this superb performance. Just maybe though she was better than the song but I still think she was under marked especially on the public vote and I feel if they can't make the top five with this then maybe top ten is the Spanish limit?

16th ESTONIA

From nowhere in my pre-contest reckonings came Ott Lepland. From the studio version I feel *Kuula* came across as musically tepid and I just couldn't buy into it at all. In Azerbaijan he vocally beefed up much earlier into the song which made it far more interesting. Maybe a tad too much towards the end of the song where he strained a little, but that's being picky and I loved his outfit too.

15th UNITED KINGDOM

I was horrified to learn of Engelbert's UK participation in March and wondered what on earth the BBC was thinking. Then I heard the song and felt better. Then I heard the draw

and felt bad again! Hearing the Hump on the night and it soon became clear that the worst was to be expected. I couldn't envisage I would be writing that Engelbert's stage presence was so stifled and unnatural, and that his vocals were pretty uninspiring. Why was he so nervous? It wasn't horrendous by any means but from him I expected so much more. I still am really gutted about it all. Such a great song too.

14th UKRAINE

From the moment Gaitana appeared from the screens to a thumping anthemic beat, hand on wiggling hips and looking like someone Bruce Forsyth would marry, I thought this could be the surprise package of the entire contest. The dancers gave the right amount of liveliness to the song and kept well in the background. When the screens came together and the pre-recorded crowd was shown, it looked amazing. A driving tune. Stunning vocalist. Strong staging. What more could you ask for? How about the backing vocals that were hugely integral to the song??????

13TH SWEDEN

Yes, it is I, Retro Boy. One of the 17 people in the world that hasn't got Loreen placed in his Eurovision top ten! Astonishingly I do have a winner highly placed for once though. It's just that I can't get over euphoric (sorry) about it in the way that the world and its offspring have. All positive for Eurovision and with fabulously high chart placings all over Europe, and what a great person Loreen seems to be. I know it's been mentioned by others before, but I just cannot watch this without seeing a comedy sketch where Claudia Winkleman does interpretive dance ...

12th BELGIUM

As the Belgians got so close to making the final last year with such an odd song, I really thought that this year they would do it. Iris was a girl who looked her age and sang a sugary sweet teenage love song to the best of her vocal capabilities. What was there not to love?

Well, according to the televote, pretty much everything, as poor Iris scored the lowest vote by far in the semis. So just myself and Sara Cox liking this then.

11th GEORGIA

No your eyes do not deceive you. Indeed I had Georgia firmly in my number one slot going into Eurovision week. Musically nobody can help what appeals to them and when I heard *I'm A Joker* I loved its absurd inane interludes with Anri's powerful voice prevailing. It could have been from a Rocky Horror type musical but, for some strange reason, they staged this far too seriously on the Crystal Hall stage. The backing girls were too burlesque and Jodie Marsh popping up near the end was a strange one. Anri played it far too seriously when flamboyancy and Moldova-ness would have been more apt. Still quite like it though!

10th PORTUGAL

So it was back to basics this year for the Portuguese and this Fado style ballad. Not the strongest they've ever entered but Filipa recreated the studio version immaculately and was only seven points short of a final place. The problem though is, unless RTP conduct some major changes to its national final, by and large I could pretty much be writing this review every other year. Portugal honour the Eurovision ideal of a traditional song representing it, but sadly this has resulted in the country having just about the worst record in it too.

9th FRANCE

In spite of a feverish promotional campaign, the Mylene Klass look-alike Anggun ended up with a big fat zero from the televote. She will be eternally grateful to the juries then for giving her a top half placing and thus some points, though again given her weak vocals I'm surprised it happened. I had this as my favourite of the final as the infectious whistling and numerous tempo changes made it stand out. The gymnasts were very distracting though and she didn't seem comfortable at all. Still a brilliant French pop song though.



Sweden: Who's Loreen giving the finger to..?

8th MACEDONIA (FYR)

It's always great to see former entrants, if she can truly be called that, come back and do so much better second time around. By far the best entry Macedonia has ever come up with and by far their best singer too. From its gentle opening to the guitar kick in the second verse Kaliopi owned the stage and, instead of being known as a singer that failed to make the Eurovision final itself in 1996, she can now be crowned as the first Macedonian finalist since 2007. Deservedly so.

7th RUSSIA

77 year-old Natalya Pugachyova single handedly stole the show for me and gave me one of the most memorable moments ever on any Eurovision stage. She was the tiny grandma bobbing along in a world of her own with little regard for choreography or lyrics, but what a smile. Everything you think of this is correct, but if you couldn't smile along with it then you carry a cold heart within you. An excellent choice from Russia and a good result for Eurovision too, with a credible winner and a superbly entertaining runner up with a heartwarming story to tell. To think Engelbert could have fathered a couple of them is frightening though!

6th BULGARIA

If tiny Granny was my favourite artist of 2012 then Sofi was definitely my second. What a master class in stage ownership especially given that such an up-tempo song is often overrun by pointless backing dancers. The backdrop was



Cyprus: Husky!

again awesome and with Sofi shimmying about with a beaming smile throughout this went flying up my rankings. Devastatingly close to making the final too, although if it had then the UK would definitely have finished 26th again.

5th ALBANIA

Rona's fifth place final finish for Albania was a big surprise for me as I wasn't even sure it could qualify in a tough first semi. It was simply all about the vocals which were some of the most accurately powerful ever heard in Eurovision and, with the awful dress and hideously placed dreadlock, I guess this was the most memorable performance after the Russians. Naturally the song was never going to be everybody's favourite but this voice needs to be heard again. Wow.

4th MALTA

Unlike the Belgians, Malta did take the big step from near qualification last year to finalists this. Totally deserved too as, yet again, they produced a super pop song that was always more catchy than cheesy and it also had that dance. How do they do it? I've worn out trainers just trying! Kurt seemed a likeable chap and, save for the woeful female vocalist and the silly yellow glove, this was Euro pop at its finest.

3rd HUNGARY

I was relieved that Hungary made the final again and expected the result they achieved, especially after drawing the graveyard slot. I heard shades of Ten Sharps' *You* in this which wasn't a bad thing. Indeed, there was a slightly

80's vibe throughout the song. Csaba's vocals were slightly stronger in the semi, but I liked the tone of it in both performances and this was a fresh sound in the final of 2012 and quite possibly my favourite Hungarian entry ever.

2nd CYPRUS

I've gone a bit pop mad this year. Another song which really exploded into my consciousness was this entry from Cyprus. Ivi's voice had a husky undertone to it but was enough in tune to sell the song very well. The routine was executed strongly too, possibly because it was performed in a contained part of the stage and wasn't therefore distracting. I just felt quite sad for them to see them do so badly as this was by far and away their strongest entry since Lisa Andreas in 2004. Not sure why the word 'Mingachevir' was displayed in the postcard preceding this though...

1st ISRAEL

Of course my favourite failed in the semis! Every other year it seems to happen to me. What was there not to love about this? It had a slightly retro/hippy vibe and Dominic West with a perm on lead vocals. Definitely the catchiest song of the 42 in Baku and the keyboard lady wouldn't have known if it was Eurovision or Wednesday week judging by the state of her! Infectious, cheery and top of the pile for me.

A diverse year as ever which is always welcome. I can't say I would be too keen on a return to Azerbaijan for the contest in the near future, but am looking forward to Sweden 2013 already. To those that have already sent their voting forms and comments, I would like to say a huge thank you for your Retro contribution. The race for the second part is now on! If you haven't already done so, I would love to hear your views and thoughts (and of course your votes) on this year's contest and you can do that by emailing me at ahotspur@hotmail.co.uk putting Retro 12 in the subject line. Or you can simply fill out the voting form in the centre of the last **Vision**. Remember, it's your views and comments which make up Part 2. ♥

EUROCURIOS

More Eurovision curiosities by Thomas Latham

The choice of a well-known artist like Engelbert Humperdinck as the UK's Eurovision singer in 2012 certainly caused something of a media flurry, but there are a few things that you may have missed worth mentioning here. He made a special appearance on the front cover of *The Oldie* magazine for June 2012 in a picture by Spitting Image caricaturist David Stoten. However, the Hump is mentioned only in passing inside the self-proclaimed antidote to youth culture. The Hump was also used in a cartoon in *The Times* on 3rd March 2012, to satirise the Euro crisis, though the song performed was *Please Release Me* rather than his ESC entry.

On the subject of 2012, it is a shame that (as of writing) Engelbert only managed to get to number 60 in the UK charts. However, it was great to see a Eurovision winner reach the top five again. Hopefully, by the time this is published, Loreen and her *Euphoria* will have gone even higher than the number three position she was in when I wrote this. Ivi Adamou and her *La La Love* was the only other ESC'12 song that seems to have reached the UK's top 100 at number 77.

Richard Crane caught an interview with Lee Sheridan of Brotherhood of Man on 7th April 2012, in which Lee said that the group were sent a demo of *Mamma Mia* by ABBA asking



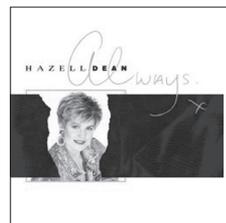
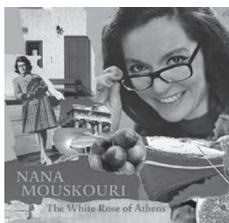
if they wanted to record it. However, they turned it down because they were more interested in recording a little-known song entitled *Save Your Kisses For Me* (UK 1976). I wonder what would have happened if Brotherhood of Man had recorded *Mamma Mia* after all.

Speaking of ABBA, their release of the expanded CD/DVD version of *The Visitors* reached number 62 in the UK album charts as well as charting across Europe. Its success was helped by the addition of the track *From A Twinkling Star To A Passing Angel*, which follows the evolution of the recording of the song *Like An Angel Passing Through My Room* through a variety of demos.

The Japanese version of France Gall's 1965 winner has just received its first release on

CD from Cherry Red (www.cherryred.co.uk/). You can find it on *Made in France: France Gall's Baby Pop* (RETRO 909), which also includes the original *Poupée De Cire Poupée De Son* (LU 1965) and 20 other tracks written for the singer by Serge Gainsbourg.

A number of other recent Cherry Red releases have Eurovision connections, even if they don't have any Eurovision songs on them. Monica Zetterlund (SE 1963) has a number of English and Swedish songs on her *Don't Dream Of Anyone But Me* (ACMEM229CD),



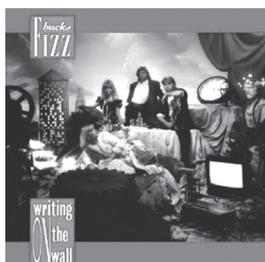
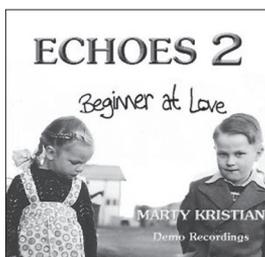
while Nana Mouskouri (LU 1963) has some French, German and Greek recordings on *The White Rose Of Athens* (ACMEM226CD). Also appearing is an extended release of Hazell Dean's (SFE 1976 and 1984) 1988 hit album *Always* (CRPOPD96), which features singles such as *Who's Leaving Who?* and *Stand Up*, which was a Stock (UK 2010), Aitken and Waterman (UK 2010) reworking of Umberto Tozzi's (IT 1987) song *Hurrah*. The booklet has an exclusive track-by-track commentary written especially by Hazell herself.

Other recent releases that may be of interest include a second collection of the New Seeker's (UK 1972) Marty Kristian's demos on *Echoes 2*. Although none of the songs seem to have a Eurovision connection this time, it does include the demo for *Sad Song*, which appeared on *The New Seekers' Farewell Album* in 1974. Marty now also has his own website at: www.martykristian.com/.

Bucks Fizz recently saw the release of an expanded edition of their album *Writing On The Wall* from the Shelly Preston era of the group to celebrate its 25th anniversary. Over two discs you can find the original album track, some extended versions, alternative mixes and B-sides.

Richard Crane informs me that a three CD set has appeared from Acrobat covering Teddy Johnson's (UK 1959) *Solo Years 1950-1954* (ACTRCD9030). It features all his A-sides and B-sides plus several rare duets from this period and much of the material is new to

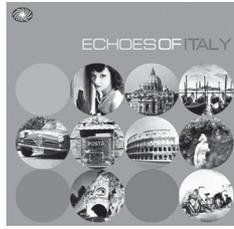
CD. A number of releases take advantage of such recordings falling out of copyright and mastering songs directly from vinyl releases. It is to be hoped that many early UK pre-selection tracks which are otherwise hard to find will eventually see a release this way. Acrobat (www.acrobatmusic.net/) seem to have a



number of releases on CD (but not yet available for download) from the 1950s and early 1960s. Among them their *British Hit Parade* series features songs that charted by year (and part of year) by the original artists, while their Embassy British Hit Parade series features cover versions sold in Woolworths. The 1961 four-CD set from the latter series includes *Are You Sure?* (UK 1961) by Don Duke and Bobby Stevens (ACQCD7045). Look carefully, and you'll also find other interesting tracks on Acrobat releases, such as Allison's singles and B-sides that are new to CD. As we locate more things of interest, we'll let you know.

A similar company is Fantastic Voyage (www.futurenoisemusic.com/catalogue_list.aspx?cat=fv). Their six-CD set *1961 British Hit Parade - Part 1: January - June* includes *Are You Sure?* by the Allison's, their follow-up *Words* and *Dream Girl* by Mark Wynter (SFE 1961 - fourth). Meanwhile their *Echoes of Italy* has Domenico Modugno's *Volare* and *Ciao Ciao Bambina*, but surprisingly, no other Italian entries from Eurovision.

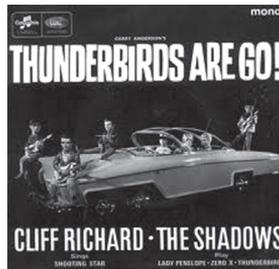
Argentine singer Estela Raval, who sadly died recently on 6th June 2012, was the lead



singer with group Los Cinco Latinos from 1957 to 1970, and then became a solo singer (the group reformed in 1982). In 1974, she released a version of *Eres Tu* (ES 1973) on her album *Cuando Te Encuentres Solo* (Philips), and a fabulous Spanish version of the 1977 French Eurovision winner as *El Zagal Y El Ave Azul*, which you can find on her 1977 LP *La Raval* (Philips), and listen to on YouTube at www.youtube.com/watch?v=QlfekzxYxM4. Marie Myriam, of course, recorded her song in Spanish as well, and you can listen to that (complete with record scratches) at www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kq12PUz4Lr4&feature=related. I'll let you decide for yourselves which is the better version.

Estela Nuñez is a successful Mexican singer with (supposedly) a string of Number One hits to her name, one of which just happens to be a Spanish-language version of the 1971 Italian Eurovision entry *L'Amore E Un Attimo*. Estela's version is entitled *Perdón Cariño Mio* and it features on her album from the same year *Estela... Es Amore*. One year earlier, Estela recorded a cover version of 1970's UK entry *Knock, Knock, Who's There?* as *Pam, Pam, Quién Es?* for the album *Volverás*. In 1973, for some strange reason, new lyrics in Spanish were written for the Spanish ESC entry *Amanece*, which appears as *Se De Un Lugar* on Estela's album *Iremos De La Mano*. Estela has a long recording career behind her, so it is always possible she recorded other Eurovision songs, but these are the only ones I've been able to find so far. All these tracks are available to buy as MP3 downloads.

In 1967, the UK entry to the Eurovision Song Contest was, of course, *Puppet On A String*, while the next year's UK song was performed by Cliff Richard. However, in 1966, Cliff had himself literally been a 'puppet on a string', when he had made an appearance backed by 1975 entrants The Shadows in the film *Thunderbirds Are Go*.

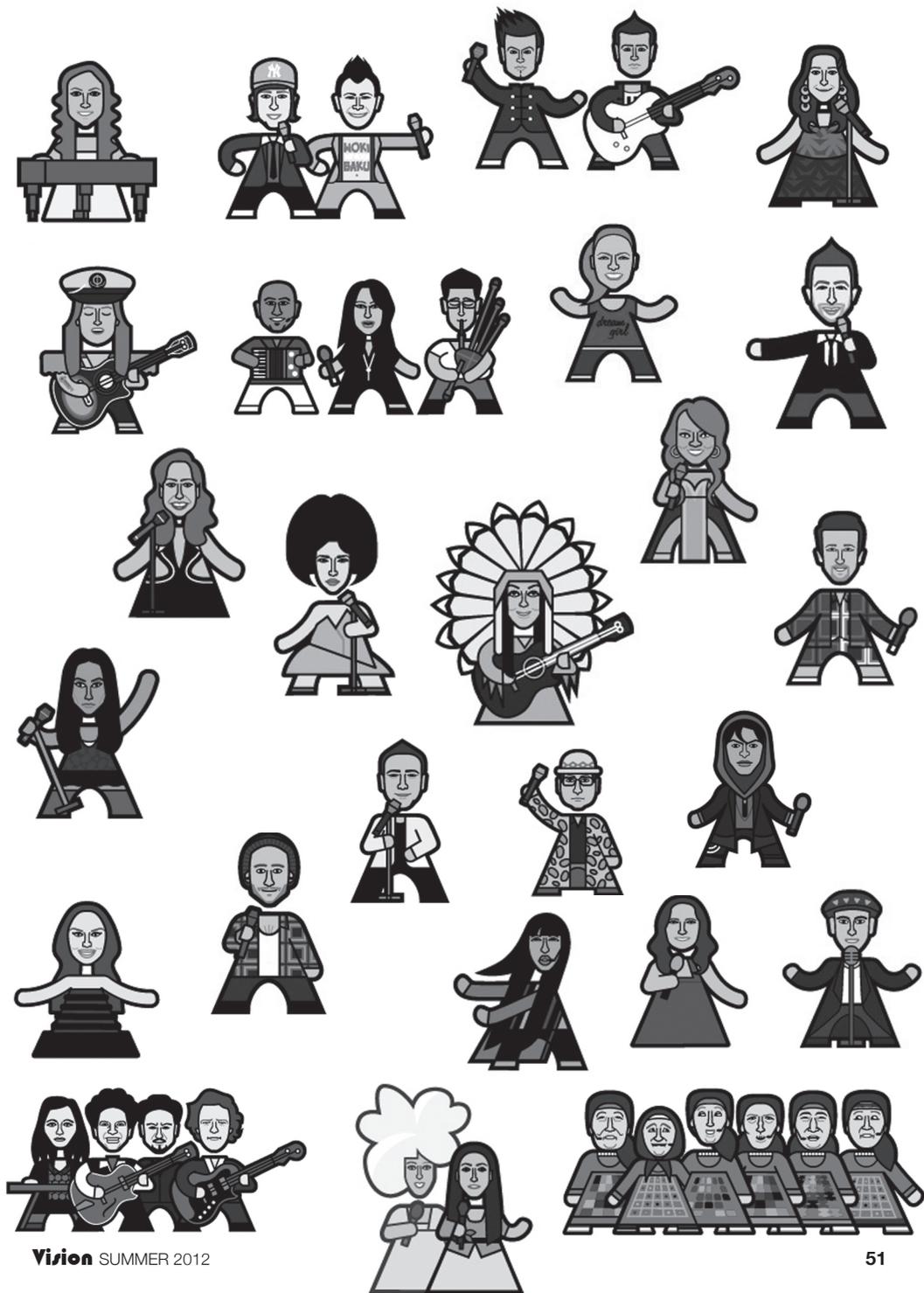


During a dream sequence, Cliff and his Shadows were featured in a scene set in an interstellar nightclub, where they performed a song called *Shooting Star* and an instrumental named after the character of Lady Penelope. Cliff owned a home that was next door but one to film producers Gerry and Sylvia Anderson in Portugal, while Bruce Welch also

had a house nearby, and it was in Portugal that they both agreed to take part. According to an interview with Terry Curtis published in 2009 in *Crikey* magazine, the Cliff Richard puppet was sculpted by John Brown, Terry himself did Hank Marvin, Tim Cooksey did Bruce Welch, Mary Turner did John Rostill and Christine Glanville did Brian Bennett. Apparently, Bennett wanted to keep the puppet based on him after filming, but alas it had already been earmarked to be turned into another character. The CD *Thunderbirds Are Go* (EMI), which mainly featured music by composer Barry Gray, also has the contributions from Cliff and The Shadows.

Thanks this time go to Richard Crane for additional leads and information. 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 ♥

EUROVISION MINIPOP ICONS



THE 10 ESSENTIAL CYPRUS SONGS!



OGAE UK member and Cypriot about town, Nico Pittórtou, gives us his personal Top Ten Cypriot Eurovision songs (And yes, he always dresses like that....)

My Top Ten from the island of *La La Love!*

Top tens are always hard to compile, but all-time favourite top tens are the ultimate. It's almost Sophie's Choice, which of your babies do you include and which to leave out. It is particularly hard with Eurovision as more recent songs are always fresher in your mind, like your younger children. Ah, but the older ones gave you so many memories, you grew up with them and they changed with you. And some songs may even have troubled you to begin with, but your love for them grew.

Some of you will be surprised by the inclusion of some songs and the exclusion of others: where are *Aspro Mavro*, *Anthropos Ki Ego*, *Mono Gia Mas* or *La La Love*? I just could not squeeze them in. Waaaah!

So for whatever reasons here are the ten that made it.

10. *Monika* - Island



The one that kicked it all off. I remember vividly sitting on a Sunday afternoon waiting for Wogan's preview show with the whole family on tenterhooks to hear the first ever Cypriot entry and to see the preview video. "Look at the sheep" my mama cried - her father was a shepherd in Cyprus. This not only looked like the Cyprus we had spent so many summers in, but it sounded like it. And to this day every time I hear the opening bars of *Monika*, a little sunshine fills my heart.

9. *Firefly* - Christina Metaxa



Yeah, we all knew she was never going to overcome those nerves and do this song justice, but still we prayed. Having heard her sing an amazing live acoustic version with her brother in Moscow, maybe just maybe she might pull it off. Alas it wasn't to be, the inexperience showed. Still it remains one of my all time favourites, a joyously hopeful song.

8. *Teriazoume* - Evridiki



One of the ESC's most original songs and a blazingly bewitching, captivatingly torrid performance to suit the intensity of the lyrics and the smouldering, sensual, wanton melody. No-one would ever forget Evridiki after this and thank God she came back.

7. *Life Looks Better In Spring* - Jon Lillygreen & The Islanders



When Cyprus got drawn in the semi of death, hearts sank after being so sure they had selected a song that would finally get Cyprus back into the final. But life did indeed look better in spring. An impassioned lyric

with an uplifting tune makes me want to smile, with a little tear in my eye. Happy days!

6. *Sti Fotia* - Alex Panayi



You want Hellenic drama and passion? Here it is, flailing dodgy hair and all. Watching it at a friend's house I remember being totally taken aback by the

outstanding performance. For many this is *the* Cypriot song.

5. *Comme Ci, Comme Ca* - Evridiki



A nightmare 27 song semi-final and an even more nightmarish draw, but surely this song was too classy to not qualify? The rest is history. Not entirely

incomprehensible though, as this is one of those songs that just gets better the more you listen to it. Perhaps not the best credential for an ESC entry, but it's a sexy song that never gets old.

4. *Tha'nai Erotos* - Marlain



It's amazing when you are sitting in a room with 30 other people, even with the volume on full blast through the stereo, how fantastic this sounded on the night.

Everyone thought it was a contender. Hopes turned into surprise when the points did not come rolling in. Surprise until watched again quietly the next day... Wicked CHOON though man. It's still somehow the Cypriot song that almost won even though it only ended up with two points *sigh*.

3. *Mana Mou* - Hara Konstantinou & Andreas Konstantinou



The beauty of Aphrodite's island encapsulated in a the lyric with the icing of some dabadums. Really, what's not to love? Yeah, it deserved top five.

2. *Mono I Agapi* - Anna Vishy



(Yep that's how it is pronounced in Cyprus). And only love is what I have for this song. First there was copper, then Aphrodite, then came Anna Vishy. A

childhood favourite made one little boy's dream come true when she entered ESC again, this time for her own country. Two countries didn't agree that Germany was the best song that year and gave their douze points to Cyprus. Maybe it was the Dynasty hair, but I agreed with them.

1. *Stronger Every Minute* - Lisa Andreas

My first ever attendance at a live Eurovision and Cyprus' third fifth place; the first ever points from Turkey in Istanbul; hopes of Cypriot reunification



running high and Cyprus joining the EU that year – it was like the perfect storm. With so many emotions bubbling under, it is no wonder that this represents far more than a single memory. On top of that, the lyric seemed to be written for someone I would meet later that same year. Beautiful in its simplicity, more than any la la could be, this is true love.

So that's it. I'm pretty sure you might swap around the order and maybe pick a couple of other songs which would be just as good, but I'd say it would be very difficult to pick a totally different top ten to that. Anyway, it was a nice walk down memory lane for me. Hope you enjoyed the stroll with me.

Ah and the one that got away? Well that would be *Fterougisma* - Alex Panayi & Marlain Angelidou that came second in the 1998 national final. A really beautiful song, that should have won in my humble opinion. Michalis Hajjiannis' star was on the rise though and you could see that many of the jurors were tactically voting, not giving Alex and Marlain any or very low points in order for *Genesis* to win. *Fterougisma* would have been another typically Cypriot entry that would have fitted well in Cyprus' enchanting catalogue. You can check it out on Youtube, but it doesn't really give you the power or the wow factor of the full screen. And it would really have been great with the full orchestra. ♡

COUNTRY SPOTLIGHT PORTUGAL

David Ransted profiles members of the Eurovision family and some of the artists who have represented them. This time we spotlight a country that is the contest's longest-participating non-winner: **Portugal**

An inauspicious start

There can be few Eurovision fans who wouldn't love to see a Portuguese victory in the contest. Portugal has been a loyal contributor since first entering the contest in 1964 but, 48 years after joining the fray, the country has never finished in the top five, and victory often seems as far away as ever. And it wasn't a great start: Portugal scored zero on its debut, and its first three entries all finished 13th - unlucky for some, indeed.

As the winner of the Festival RTP da Canção, António Calvário had the honour of representing Portugal at their contest debut in Copenhagen in 1964 with *Oração (Prayer)*, performing 11th in a line-up of 16 countries. António was a major recording star of the late 1950s and 1960s, who became a noted actor and opera singer, and remains a celebrity in Portugal. Unfortunately Portugal was one of four countries to finish joint 13th and last in 1964, alongside Germany, Switzerland and Yugoslavia, all without a single point. In the era when Portugal joined the contest it was difficult to pick up points, and very easy to record a very low score, since countries only voted for their top three choices, awarding five points to their favourite song, three to their second favourite and one point to their third favourite, leaving no points to distribute among the remaining countries.

Undaunted, Portugal returned in 1965, sending Simone de Oliveira, who had finished third in the previous year's Festival RTP da

Canção with *Olhos Nos Olhos (Eyes In Eyes)*, to the tenth Grand Prix in Naples. Lisbon-born Simone had her singing debut at the 1958 Festival da Canção Portuguesa, which she went on to win in 1959 and 1960. Simone got Portugal on to the scoreboard at the second attempt with *Sol De Inverno (Winter's Sun)*, notching up a first solitary point, from Monaco. Four countries failed to score points and so Portugal finished equal 13th out of 18. As well as a recording artist, Simone is an established actor of movies, TV and theatre, and was the first of three Portuguese solo artists to represent the country twice, returning in 1969 when she finished second-to-last in Madrid, ahead of Norway. After her 1969 Eurovision performance Simone lost her singing voice for two years, and worked for a time in journalism, radio and TV.

Madalena Iglésias, who, like her two predecessors, had entered the Festival RTP da Canção in 1964, won the festival in 1966 and with it the ticket to Luxembourg. Her song, *Ele E Ela (He And She)*, which has come to be seen as a Eurovision classic in Portugal, recorded a third consecutive 13th place, largely helped by a top mark of five points from neighbouring Spain, where Madalena was already well known. The year also saw Madalena finish second at the Festival of the Mediterranean with her song *September*.

Angolan-born Eduardo Nascimento represented Portugal in 1967 with *O Vento Mudou (The Wind Changed)*. Eduardo made



António Calvário, 1964



Eduardo Nascimento, 1967

some headway by moving Portugal up a notch to 12th place in the voting. More noteworthy, however, is the fact that Eduardo was the first black male singer to compete in the Eurovision Song Contest, and only the second black artist after Milly Scott a year earlier. For the first time more than two countries voted for Portugal, with a point each coming from France, Switzerland and Spain. Eduardo abandoned his music career two years later and returned to Angola. Eduardo's departure from the music scene is unusual: one striking aspect of Portugal's Eurovision history is the longevity of its performers, many of whom are still recording and performing today.

Carlos Mendes, a founder member of The Sheiks, a popular band in the mid-1960s, represented Portugal in 1968, and again nudged the country up one place in the voting, to 11th place, with *Verão* (*Summer*). Drawn first in the running order, Carlos received points from Norway and Spain. Carlos continued to pursue a solo career after his Eurovision debut, and returned to the contest in 1972.

Top ten breakthrough

Portugal joined the Scandinavian countries in boycotting the 1970 contest in protest at the voting in 1969 and the four-way tie that resulted. On its return in 1971 Portugal achieved the country's first top ten placing when Tonicha's *Menina Do Alto De Serra* (*High*

Ridge Girl) finished ninth in Dublin. In those pre-douze points days, Portugal achieved its first ever maximum score, ten points (actually two fives), from Spain. (From 1971 to 1973 each country's 'jury' consisted of two on-screen individuals who awarded each song, other than their own country's, between one and five points). Tonicha had been recording since the mid-1960s. Her most recent release came in 2008, and her music draws extensively on Portuguese folklore.

Carlos Mendes became the second solo artist to represent Portugal twice when *A Festa Da Vida* (*The Party Of Life*) finished seventh in the Usher Hall, Edinburgh, the country's best result up to that point and still their equal second-best performance 40 years later. Portugal achieved its second maximum score, with ten points from Luxembourg. Carlos went on to further solo success in his homeland, and gained particular critical acclaim for his 1977 album *Songs Of Ex-Harpsichord And Malviver* and for 1980's *Sea Triangle*, which melded Portuguese, Brazilian and African influences on Lusophone music. He gained further plaudits for an album of children's songs, *Jaleco Garden*, in 1978 (awarded Best Children's Album of the Year), and for *No More Songs Spare Me* in 1994, which was a musical tribute to Portuguese poetry, including works by Camões, Carlos Oliveira, Fernando Pessoa and Miguel Torga. In 1989 Carlos was reunited with his fellow Sheiks for a show entitled Just We Three.

COUNTRY SPOTLIGHT: PORTUGAL

PORTUGAL: SCORECARD

Year	Song	Language	Artist	Selection process	Starting number	Position	Points
1964	<i>Oração</i>	Portuguese	António Calvário	Festival da Canção	11/16	13th	0
1965	<i>Sol De Inverno</i>	Portuguese	Simone de Oliveira	Festival da Canção	12/18	13th	1
1966	<i>Ele E Ela</i>	Portuguese	Madalena Iglésias	Festival da Canção	8/18	13th	6
1967	<i>O Vento Mudou</i>	Portuguese	Eduardo Nascimento	Festival da Canção	5/17	12th	3
1968	<i>Verão</i>	Portuguese	Carlos Mendes	Festival da Canção	1/17	11th	5
1969	<i>Desfolhada Portuguesa</i>	Portuguese	Simone de Oliveira	Festival da Canção	15/16	15th	4
1970	Boycotted	-	-	-	-	-	-
1971	<i>Menina Do Alto Da Serra</i>	Portuguese	Tonicha	Festival da Canção	15/18	9th	83
1972	<i>A Festa Da Vida</i>	Portuguese	Carlos Mendes	Festival da Canção	7/18	7th	90
1973	<i>Tourada</i>	Portuguese	Fernando Tordo	Festival da Canção	3/17	10th	80
1974	<i>E Depois Do Adeus</i>	Portuguese	Paulo de Carvalho	Festival da Canção	16/17	14th	3
1975	<i>Madrugada</i>	Portuguese	Duarte Mendes	Festival da Canção	16/19	16th	16
1976	<i>Uma Flor De Verde Pinho</i>	Portuguese	Carlos do Carmo	Festival da Canção	15/18	12th	24
1977	<i>Portugal No Coração</i>	Portuguese	Os Amigos	Festival da Canção	8/18	14th	18
1978	<i>Dai Li Dou</i>	Portuguese	Gemini	Festival da Canção	5/20	17th	5
1979	<i>Sobe, Sobe, Balão Sobe</i>	Portuguese	Manuela Bravo	Festival da Canção	1/19	9th	64
1980	<i>Um Grande, Grande Amor</i>	Portuguese	José Cid	Festival da Canção	14/19	7th	71
1981	<i>Playback</i>	Portuguese	Carlos Paião	Festival da Canção	15/20	18th	9
1982	<i>Bem Bom</i>	Portuguese	Doce	Festival da Canção	1/18	13th	32
1983	<i>Esta Balada Que Te Dou</i>	Portuguese	Armando Gama	Festival da Canção	17/20	13th	33
1984	<i>Silêncio E Tanta Gente</i>	Portuguese	Maria Guinot	Festival da Canção	19/19	11th	38
1985	<i>Penso Em Ti, Eu Sei</i>	Portuguese	Adelaide	Festival da Canção	9/19	18th	9
1986	<i>Não Sejas Mau Para Mim</i>	Portuguese	Dora	Festival da Canção	20/20	14th	28
1987	<i>Neste Barco A Vela</i>	Portuguese	Nevada	Festival da Canção	8/22	18th	15
1988	<i>Voltarei</i>	Portuguese	Dora	Festival da Canção	20/21	18th	5
1989	<i>Conquistador</i>	Portuguese	Da Vinci	Festival da Canção	9/22	16th	39
1990	<i>Há Sempre Alguém</i>	Portuguese	Nucha	Festival da Canção	16/22	20th	9
1991	<i>Lusitana Paixão</i>	Portuguese	Dulce	Festival da Canção	12/22	8th	62
1992	<i>Amor D'água Fresca</i>	Portuguese	Dina	Festival da Canção	8/23	17th	26
1993	<i>A Cidade (Até Ser Dia)</i>	Portuguese	Anabela	Festival da Canção	11/25	10th	60
1994	<i>Chamar A Música</i>	Portuguese	Sara Tavares	Festival da Canção	8/25	8th	73
1995	<i>Baunilha E Chocolate</i>	Portuguese	Tó Cruz	Festival da Canção	16/23	21st	5
1996	<i>O Meu Coração Não Tem Cor</i>	Portuguese	Lúcia Moniz	Festival da Canção	4/23	6th	92
1997	<i>Antes Do Adeus</i>	Portuguese	Célia Lawson	Festival da Canção	15/25	24th	0
1998	<i>Se Eu Te Pudesse Abraçar</i>	Portuguese	Alma Lusa	Festival da Canção	14/25	12th	36
1999	<i>Como Tudo Começou</i>	Portuguese	Rui Bandeira	Festival da Canção	Jan-23	21st	12
2000	Relegated	-	-	-	-	-	-
2001	<i>Só Sei Ser Feliz Assim</i>	Portuguese	MTM	Festival da Canção	11/23	17th	18
2002	Relegated	-	-	-	-	-	-
2003	<i>Deixa-Me Sonhar (Só Mais Uma Vez)</i>	Portuguese	Rita Guerra	Festival da Canção	7/26	22nd	13
2004	<i>Foi Magia</i>	Portuguese	Sofia Vitória	Festival da Canção	7/22	15th (SF)	38
2005	<i>Amar</i>	Portuguese, English	2B	Internal selection	3/25	17th (SF)	51
2006	<i>Coisas De Nada (Gonna Make You Dance)</i>	Portuguese, English	Nonstop	Festival da Canção	19/23	19th (SF1)	26
2007	<i>Dança Comigo (Vem Ser Feliz)</i>	Portuguese, French Spanish, English	Sabrina	Festival da Canção	17/28	11th (SF)	88
2008	<i>Senhora Do Mar (Negras Aguas)</i>	Portuguese	Vânia Fernandes	Festival da Canção	13/25	13th	69
2009	<i>Todas As Ruas Do Amor</i>	Portuguese	Flor-de-Lis	Festival da Canção	6/25	15th	57
2010	<i>Há Dias Assim</i>	Portuguese	Filipa Azevedo	Festival da Canção	23/25	18th	43
2011	<i>A Luta E Alegria</i>	Portuguese	Homens da Luta	Festival da Canção	16/19	18th (SF1)	22
2012	<i>Vida Minha</i>	Portuguese	Filipa Souza	Festival da Canção	6/18	13th (SF2)	39

COUNTRY SPOTLIGHT: PORTUGAL

Highest points (from)

-
1 (Monaco)
5 (Spain), 1 (Denmark)
1 (France, Switzerland, Spain)
3 (Spain), 2 (Norway)
2 (Spain), 1 (Belgium, France)
-
10 (Spain), 8 (France), 6 (Monaco, United Kingdom, Yugoslavia)
10 (Luxembourg), 9 (Italy), 7 (Ireland, Spain, Sweden, Belgium)
8 (Spain, Switzerland), 6 (Belgium, Yugoslavia, France)
2 (Switzerland), 1 (Spain)
12 (Turkey), 2 (France, Spain)
12 (France), 6 (Luxembourg), 4 (Greece)
6 (France), 4 (Switzerland)
4 (Italy), 1 (Spain)
10 (France), 7 (Austria), 6 (Italy, Norway, Spain)
10 (Italy), 8 (Sweden, Norway), 7 (Ireland)
8 (Germany), 1 (Greece)
7 (Luxembourg), 6 (Sweden), 5 (Turkey)
7 (Luxembourg), 6 (Switzerland, Netherlands)
8 (Germany, Switzerland), 7 (Yugoslavia)
7 (Greece), 2 (Turkey)
8 (Spain), 7 (Israel)
8 (Spain), 5 (Greece)
4 (Spain), 1 (Greece)
8 (Spain), 7 (Luxembourg), 6 (Austria, Greece)
7 (Luxembourg), 2 (United Kingdom)
10 (France, Spain), 8 (Iceland), 7 (Sweden, Finland)
8 (Israel, Germany), 5 (Yugoslavia)
12 (Netherlands, Spain), 8 (France)
12 (Spain), 8 (Finland, Iceland, United Kingdom), 7 (Hungary)
4 (France), 1 (Greece)
12 (Cyprus, Norway), 10 (Croatia, Switzerland, Iceland), 6 (Netherlands, Belgium)
-
8 (France), 6 (Spain, Turkey)
12 (France)
-
12 (France), 6 (Spain)
-
6 (France), 3 (Ukraine)
-
12 (Andorra), 8 (Romania), 7 (Switzerland), 6 (Spain)
12 (Switzerland, Germany, France), 10 (Belgium), 5 (Spain)
-
12 (Andorra), 7 (Switzerland, France)
-
12 (Andorra), 10 (Poland, France), 8 (Switzerland, Spain), 7 (Belarus, Moldova, Germany)
-
10 (Andorra, Switzerland), 8 (France, Spain), 6 (Iceland, Belgium)
-
10 (Switzerland), 8 (Spain), 7 (France, Iceland, Czech Republic), 6 (Belgium, Andorra)
8 (France), (Spain, Germany, Latvia)
8 (Spain), 4 (Albania, Switzerland)
8 (France), 6 (Netherlands), 5 (Slovakia, Norway)



Tonicha, 1971

In fact, the fellow members of the Sheiks, Fernando Tordo and Paulo de Carvalho, had followed Carlos to Eurovision, representing Portugal in 1973 and 1974 respectively - the performance of the 1974 entry, *E Depois Do Adeus (And After The Farewell)*, at the Dome Theatre in Brighton, gained notoriety as one of two signals that marked the start of the Carnation Revolution against the regime of Marcelo Caetano.

At the 1975 contest in Stockholm, the first year of the new points system, Portugal received a precious first douze points from debuting Turkey, but with a total of just 16 points, Duarte Mendes' *Madrugada (Dawn)* was overlooked by most juries, and Portugal finished 16th. Over the coming years the country would settle in to a pattern of generally finishing in the mid-teens, seemingly its allotted position. *Madrugada* was a celebration of Portugal's revolution, and while this was of course a subject close to Portuguese hearts, its lyrics may have appeared a little inward-looking.

The 1970s was a lean time for Portugal in Eurovision, but the decade ended on a higher note when Manuela Bravo, singing from pole position, took *Sobe, Sobe, Balão Sobe (Rise, Rise, Balloon Rise)* to ninth place in Jerusalem at the 1979 contest. And the following year was to see even greater success as José Cid finished seventh with *Um Grande, Grande Amor (A Great, Great Love)*. Its final points tally of 71 would stand as a record for Portugal for

14 years. It was, unfortunately, a false dawn, and Portugal went right through the 1980s without returning to the top ten. The closest was Maria Guinot's 11th place in 1984 with *Silêncio E Tanta Gente* (*Silence And So Many People*), a simple, straightforward ballad performed right at the end of the running order. As with many Portuguese songs at this time, votes for Portugal tended to see high marks from a small number of countries, but with few or no points forthcoming from the majority.

In the 1980s Dora became the third solo artist to represent Portugal twice, finishing 14th in Bergen in 1986 with *Não Sejas Mau Para Mim* (*Don't Be Bad To Me*), and coming 18th two years later in Dublin with the dramatic ballad *Voltarei* (*I Will Return*), a song that was reworked between its initial selection and its performance at the contest. In both cases Portugal's highest mark again came from Spain. There had been high hopes for Dora, a promising new discovery on the Portuguese pop scene, particularly with the up-tempo *Não Sejas Mau Para Mim*, which broke from the more customary ballad style that Portugal often entered, and which was performed last on the night.

1990s upturn

The early/mid 1990s saw a marked improvement in results as Portugal finished in the top ten four times in six years: Dulce's *Lusitana Paixão* (*Lusitanian Passion*), a tribute to the Fado genre, achieved a strong eighth place in Rome, scoring 62 points (including tens from France and Spain). With her first album, *Lusitana*, and with 1993's follow-up, *Lágrimas*, Dulce helped to stimulate a reawakening of interest in Fado in Portugal, and went on to introduce it to new audiences around the world. Her version of *Canção Do Mar* became a major hit and was included in the soundtrack to the movie *Primal Fear*. Dulce has toured extensively, including with Ennio Morricone, with whom she has collaborated extensively over the years, including on the theme to the movie



Dulce, 1991

Sostiene Pereira, and on her own album, *Focus*, in 2003. She remains a major star in Portugal.

In 1993 Portugal returned to the top ten with Anabela and *A Cidade (Até Ser Dia)* (*The City (Until Dawn)*). The song scored 60 points, including 12 points each from the Netherlands and Spain, and finished tenth. Anabela has released eight albums since her debut in 1991 including one, *Aether*, in 2005, which was a musical interpretation of Portuguese poems. She has gone on to become an established musical theatre actress, starring in the Lisbon productions of *My Fair Lady*, *The Sound Of Music* and *Jesus Christ Superstar*, and has also provided voice-overs for five animated movies, including the title character in the Disney movie *Mulan*.

Any aficionado of the World Music genre will be familiar with Sara Tavares. At just 16 years of age Sara was selected to represent Portugal at the 1994 contest in Dublin with *Chamar A Música* (*Call The Music*). The song scored well, setting a new record for Portugal of 73 points – including a 12 from Spain – and finishing in eighth place. But whereas many of Portugal's Eurovision artists have enjoyed largely domestic careers, Sara has become a major star on the international stage. Drawing on her Cape Verdean heritage and her Portuguese upbringing, Sara's music is a melting pot of multilingual wordplay that mixes Portuguese and Angolan street culture slang, Cape Verdean Crioulo, English

and French, often even in the same song. Sara was abandoned by her parents when she was young, and has stated that she has used music to seek out her heritage and cultural roots and to define her own place in the world by developing her own unique musical style. She has described her songs, particularly on the inspiring 2006 album *Balancé*, as little lullabies to herself, and to the large Cape Verdean diaspora. Since her 1999 album, *Mi Ma Bô*, Sara's music has evolved from its R'n'B origins to draw on Brazilian and Afro-pop influences, but her songs continue to reflect a colourful personal journey, particularly on *Xinti*, where tracks such as *Voz Di Vento (Voice Of The Wind)* and *Manso, Manso (Softly, Softly)* use background sounds such as Afro-Brazilian drums and Lisbon street life respectively. Eighteen years on from her Eurovision appearance, Sara is more than ever a standard bearer for Portuguese music.

Portugal's high water mark at Eurovision so far came in 1996 in the Oslo Spektrum, when Lúcia Moniz finished sixth with *O Meu Coração Não Tem Cor (My Heart Has No Colour)*, just eight points behind third place in a close-fought race for top ten positions. Portugal was awarded two sets of 12 points, beating Greece for Cyprus' top mark as well as receiving 12 from host nation Norway. Surprisingly, for their strongest result to date, they received no points at all from Spain. Sixth place drew Portugal level with Finland, equalling the highest placing of the contest's other longest-serving non-winner, until Finland won the contest ten years later at the 40th attempt. Lúcia has recorded four pop albums since her Eurovision entry, and has also branched in to acting, performing in Portuguese films and soap operas and in the hit 2003 movie *Love Actually*, in which she played Aurelia, opposite Colin Firth.

Unfortunately Portugal hit a low point the following year when Célia Lawson's *Antes Do Adeus (Before Goodbye)* recorded Portugal's only nul points of the current voting system, the third time they had finished last or joint last. Although Portugal survived to return in



Lúcia Moniz, 1996

1998 – in those days of relegation from the contest – the country was relegated from the 2000 and 2002 contests. They were in fact offered a place in 2002 after having initially been dropped, but declined. Ironically, their place was taken by Latvia, who went on to win the contest.

Portugal found the going heavy in the early years of the semi-final era, although they were not without support, with Spanish, Andorran, French and Swiss voters the most generous. For the first time, English was used in some entries, and indeed four languages were used when in Helsinki Sabrina came close to qualifying with *Dança Comigo (Vem Ser Feliz)*, (*Dance With Me (Come Be Happy)*).

Breaking out of the semis

The 2008 entry, Vânia Fernandes' *Senhora Do Mar (Negras Aguas) (Lady Of The Sea (Dark Waters))*, was a pre-contest fan favourite and enjoyed huge support in the arena in Belgrade, with high hopes for a long awaited breakthrough to the final and even a possible victory. When it was drawn out of the last envelope as the qualifiers for the final were revealed, the outpouring of support and relief among fans in the arena was evident. In fact, Vânia had come second in her semi-final. Voting in the final was more sporadic though, and Portugal came home in a familiar 13th place, but it was the breakthrough they had been waiting for. The song was the first of three in a row from Portugal to qualify for the final,



Vânia Fernandes, 2008

with Flor-de-Lis and Filipa Azevedo following with 15th and 18th places respectively. To date these are the only three Portuguese entries to make it out of their semi-finals. After a hat trick of qualifiers, the 2011 entry *A Luta E Alegria (The Struggle Is Joy)* came close to bottom of its semi, and seemed something of an in-joke that most of Europe just didn't get. A more traditional ballad in 2012, *Vida Minha (My Life)*, the near-unanimous choice of a Fado themed national final, fared better, but amid a strong field was crowded out and finished thirteenth.

No Portuguese winner?

Although Portugal hasn't won the contest, French winner Marie Myriam (actually Myriam Lopes), does have Portuguese origins. Portugal did, however, come close to hosting the contest: In 1980, when Israel was unable to host the 25th Grand Prix, Lisbon was put forward as a potential host city. In the event, of course, The Hague was chosen for the contest's silver jubilee.

Getting neighbourly

While Spain and Portugal have often traded high marks in the voting, in fact Spanish juries have been quite discerning, and have sometimes ignored Portuguese songs, although it's also true that sympathetic Spanish voting has often saved Portugal from an even worse fate at, or near, the bottom of the scoreboard. Portugal has actually received

more points from France than from Spain in recent years, but that's partly because Spain was not always able to vote in Portugal's semi-final.

Selection process

The national broadcaster, RTP, has used the annual Festival da Canção to select Portugal's Eurovision entry, with little variation, throughout its participation in the contest. The one exception was 2005, when an internal selection was made. Much like Italy's San Remo festival, the Festival da Canção pre-dates Portugal's participation in the Eurovision Song Contest, and has continued to be staged even when Portugal has been absent from the contest (except for 2002). Originally the winner was selected by jury, and in more recent years by televoting, but nowadays the two are combined. Juries in cities and towns around Portugal are called in to deliver their votes, and these are then converted in to a single set of points in the traditional 12, ten, eight, seven fashion. The public vote is then similarly revealed and the two sets of votes combined to produce a final result. In 2012 this made for a rather lengthy voting process: the juries in the many cities and towns voted in largely the same way, and the public voting more or less mirrored their choice.

As we approach the 50th anniversary of Portugal's first participation in the contest in 2014, fans around Europe continue to hope each year that this may be Portugal's year. But after so many tries, Portugal gives the impression these days of being more comfortable in its own Eurovision skin, selecting generally strong songs – in Portuguese – that appeal to the home audience and reflect the country's own culture and musical tastes, rather than chasing fashion or an elusive winning formula. Arguably this strategy worked for Finland – perhaps it will work for Portugal too. For a country with such a rich musical heritage, and which has shown such support for the contest over the years, it's about time. ♡

PRESIDENT'S PAGE

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



I would like to start this edition of the President's page with some words of thanks! First and foremost, thank you to David, Hass and Simon for being our team 'on the ground in Baku'. We faced many challenges this year, especially where tickets and distribution were concerned, so without the patience and efficiency of our OGAE team things could have been very different. And while I wasn't there to enjoy all of the excitement and drama, I was keeping abreast of the situation back in the UK and helping wherever possible.

I would also like to thank all our members who travelled to Baku and maintained patience and understanding with the ticketing, distribution and seating arrangements. Although we might not have had great seats for all of the shows, I am sure you all enjoyed the experience and understand how tricky it was this year. Hopefully in Sweden normal service will be resumed...

And my final thank you goes to the merry band of members and friends who came along and supported our home event – EuroGlitz! It was a perfect substitute for not being able to travel to Baku and you can read all about the fun times we had elsewhere in this edition.

We've already had enquiries about the ballot for Sweden 2013 and while we would love to be able to guarantee tickets for everyone, we cannot. It all depends on the venue, host broadcaster and EBU as to the allocation OGAE receives. So, to maintain fairness, we operate the ballot system, details of which you will find elsewhere in this edition if you are not familiar with the process. Still, this should not deter

newer members from applying – we always run a second ballot in case we are allocated more tickets than expected!

And while Engelbert didn't perform as well on stage, or in the voting, as we had all hoped, the good news is that the UK will be back in 2013. I have already been in touch with the BBC not only to congratulate them on their efforts and friendliness extended to OGAE UK in the run up to the contest, but also to offer our support and expert advice in selecting our entry for 2013. I'll have more news on their response and progress next time, but let's hope we can have some input.

In the run up to the big day I was contacted by various media houses to do pieces for radio, TV and print. Where I was unable to fulfil these requests I was able to offer the opportunity to other members. Maybe you'd like to be considered for future opportunities – if so, please let me know so I can keep you in mind if I am contacted by the press in your local area.

So now all efforts are concentrated on Eurobash! I have been overwhelmed by the response to the event! While we'd normally have an initial rush and then a calm period before selling out, this year took us all by surprise. Not only did we have a record number of enquiries, but we sold out in less than seven days! I hope this doesn't leave some of you disappointed if you can't attend. Many people suggest we should make it bigger, but one of our main aims is to keep Eurobash one of the more intimate gatherings on the OGAE calendar – this is probably why it is so popular! But we'll see what the future holds.

As always, any comments or questions can be sent to me at presidentogaeuk@btinternet.com ♡



HAVING A BALL AT W

Dean Asker reports on the 2012 edition of this annual event

now in its fifth successful year, West End Eurovision is a late night celebration of everyone's favourite song contest. On 26 April performers from ten of London's top theatre shows came together at the Dominion Theatre to create their own unique and, in most cases, hysterical interpretations of Eurovision classics, all for the Make A Difference Trust.

And just as with the real contest, there was voting and a winner! Each show had its own judging panel that could award marks to the other nine shows, the audience could also vote by text, and, finally, celebrity judges Tony Blackburn, Kerry Ellis and Stephanie Powers also had their say.

After a non-Eurovision performance from the cast of *We Will Rock You*, the musical based at the Dominion Theatre, the hosts for the night, Gaby Roslin and John Partridge entered the stage.

The first show to perform was *Mamma Mia!* with *Bonjour, Bonjour*, the Swiss entry from 1969, which I have to admit is a song I didn't really know at all! A very slick, movie-set style routine, for sure, but the song choice wasn't really going to Hoover up the votes.

Next up was *Shrek The Musical* with *Fly On The Wings Of Love*, the Danish winner from 2000. The performers, dressed primarily in white, made the decision to create a techno version of the song, as if they didn't really have confidence in the original.

I was eagerly anticipating the third act. The cast of *Sweeney Todd* were going to perform the UK's 1992 second placed entry, *One Step Out Of Time*. Matthew Gent was uncanny as a youthful Michael Ball, making the most of the cheesy dance routine. The audience were lapping it up, but things were set to get even



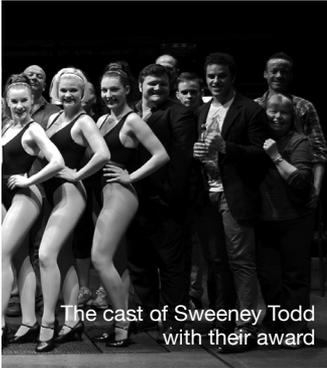
better. Towards the end, the real Michael Ball, who plays the role of the demon barber in *Sweeney Todd*, came on stage, 'cut the throat' of his doppelganger before finishing the song! And to top it off fellow cast member, Imelda Staunton, shouted the cutting line: "It was 20 years ago, Michael, get over it!" The audience went wild, and it was amazing to see Michael embracing his Eurovision entry in such a warm way. Douze points!

The next two entries both had 'Boom' in their song titles. First, *The Wizard of Oz* had the unenviable task of following *Sweeney Todd*, but they did well with a high camp, Carry On Cleo style interpretation of *Boom Boom*, Armenia's 2011 entry. And *The 39 Steps* did a lovingly authentic version of *Boom Boom Boomerang* (Austria 1977), complete with the German lyrics.

Rock Of Ages, featuring X Factor winner, Shayne Ward, brought out the pirates in us with Latvia's 2008 song, *Wolves of The Sea*. (Good, although perhaps not as good as the version performed at the Eurobash a few years back by OGAE UK members!)

After an interval, *The Phantom Of The Opera* kicked things off with *Fairytales*, Norway's 2009 winner, with *Billy Elliot* having a lot of fun with the Israeli song from 1987, *Shir*

WEST END EUROVISION



The cast of Sweeney Todd with their award



The cast of The 39 Steps performing Boom Boom Boomerang

Habatlanim, although I was disappointed they used English lyrics.

The penultimate act was from *Les Misérables*, with Celine Dion's *Ne Partez Pas Sans Moi* (1988). Initially there were microphone issues, so in true Spain 1990 style, they had to start again! Of course Celine sang for Switzerland, but the cast played on this being a song with French lyrics. So in true *Les Mis* style we got big tricolour flags. Full credit to Carl Mullaney who took the lead vocal in French drag! Suddenly it looked like *Sweeney Todd* had some serious competition for the top spot!

The final performance came from *Wicked* with Luxembourg's winner from 1965, *Poupée De Cire, Poupée De Son*. This was superbly choreographed, with the routine firmly rooted in an *Austin Powers* 1960s. Probably the most professional act on offer, and a great way to end the evening.

While the votes were coming in, Javine gave a rendition of the UK's 2005 entry, *Touch My Fire*. And then it was time for the voting...

Unfortunately this is where technical hitches took over. The shows' juries came on stage to give their votes, but the scoreboard couldn't keep up. After five shows had given their points, the decision was made to ask the juries to reissue their scores! By this time it was



Javine lights things up

about 1.30am, and it was obvious which act was going to win.

Yes it was *Sweeney Todd* with *One Step Out Of Time*. Good to see a UK song winning at a Eurovision contest...! *Billy Elliot* came second, and *Les Misérables* was third.

The event has raised more than £45,000 for the Make A Difference Trust, which brings together the British Entertainment community and its audiences to raise funds to support people living with HIV and AIDS, and those in the entertainment industry facing hardship as a result of a long-term medical condition.

Congratulations to everyone involved in making West End Eurovision such a great evening out. If you get a chance to go next year, then I thoroughly recommend it.

For more information on the Make A Difference Trust go to www.madtrust.org.uk

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO... TONY COLTON

Tony Colton was one of the co-writers of Sonia Jones' 1980 Song For Europe entry *Here We'll Stay*. Marcus Keppel-Palmer looks at his career in this latest edition of the Song for Europe column

Tony Colton, or rather Anthony Chalk, was born in Tunbridge Wells in 1942, one boy in a large family. The Chalks moved to Dagenham in East London, site of a World War II Prisoner of War camp and where Sandie Shaw would be born in 1947. Like many boys growing up in the 1950s, Tony was very interested in music, writing his own lyrics to instrumental songs and forming his own bands with the rise of rock and roll.

By the early 1960s Tony Colton had a job writing songs in the West End and got in with the Soho club scene, most notably the Flamingo Club, which was a hub for rhythm and blues aficionados, such as Eric Clapton, John Mayall, Jeff Beck, Georgie Fame and guitarist Albert Lee, with whom Colton would later form a band. Colton was in a songwriting partnership with Ray Smith, and Georgie Fame encouraged the pair to write songs for his group. Zoot Money was another artist to champion the Colton/Smith songwriting duo.

The Flamingo Club scene was characterised by an ever-changing carousel of musicians forming bands with each other and then moving on to another band. Tony was no different wanting to play guitar and sing in bands. He played in bands with Peter Green and Mick Fleetwood (before they formed Fleetwood Mac), Rod Stewart, Eric Clapton and Shotgun Express,



whose work Tony would later produce, before Tony formed his own bands, Tony Colton & The Big Boss Band, and Tony Colton & The Crawdaddies. In 1964 Tony signed a deal with Decca and released *Lose My Mind* co-written with Ray Smith.

When Decca dropped him he signed with Pye. His first release for Pye was under the name of Tony Colton & The Big Boss Band and was his own song *I Stand Accused*, which would be a hit, not for Tony but for The Merseybeats. Elvis Costello later recorded his own version of

the song. Two further solo singles followed on Pye, *I've Laid Some Down In My Time* and *You're Wrong There Baby*, both of which proved to be club successes in the Mod scene, but failed to trouble the charts. These singles raised Tony and Ray's profile and Shotgun Express recorded the duo's song *I Could Feel The Whole World Turn Around* as their first single, and indeed the only one Rod Stewart recorded during his stay with the band.

Tony was also beginning to produce recordings, starting with his friends from the Flamingo Club, The Shevelles. Danny Cordell, producer of the Moody Blues, then asked Tony to produce Georgie Fame and the Blue Flames, following which Tony went on to produce the first three Taste albums featuring Rory Gallagher on guitar. One further single for Pye under the name Tony Colton & The Big Boss Band slipped

out, *Further Down The Track*, but Tony was now fully occupied as a producer. He worked with Johnny Harris producing artists such as Richard Harris and Shirley Bassey, and in his own right producing the early recordings by Yes on the album *Time And A Word*.

As the Sixties turned into the Seventies, Tony looked to the more country-rock sound of Crosby, Stills & Nash and formed his own band, Poet & The One Man Band, with his old Flamingos colleague Albert Lee and with Ray Smith. The band worked on the Shirley Bassey recordings Colton produced, including the hit single *Something*, as well as their own recordings. Poet & The One Man Band recorded an album, but although the single *The Coffee Song* saw the light of day, the album didn't as the label which funded it went into insolvency.

Undeterred, Colton, Lee and Smith formed Heads, Hands & Feet, a band which included Chas Hodges (formerly a musician with Joe Meek and who would go on to find fame with Chas 'n' Dave) in 1970. In 1971 the band released its first album *Heads, Hands & Feet*, which was a double album. While promoting the album Colton claimed that Lee's guitar playing was much better than Jimmy Page's. The Led Zeppelin guitarist heard about this and publicly laid a curse on Colton - Page was much taken by the occult at the time. Maybe because of that, Heads, Hands & Feet's follow-up albums, *Tracks* and *Old Soldiers Never Die* both failed to capitalise on the success of the debut, and the group broke up in 1973, around the time of the release of the third album.

Unable to carry on, and by now trapped in a marriage that made him unhappy, Colton turned initially to Eric Clapton and together the pair spiralled into drugs and drink. Clapton's minders had to ban Colton from Eric's company and for years Colton drank and drank. He managed to write a few songs during this time and one was *Here We'll Stay* for the 1980 Song for Europe, co-written with Jean Roussel. Roussel was born in Mauritius in 1951 and came to live



and work in London. In the 1970s he had a growing reputation as an organist and keyboard player and arranger, working with Cat Stevens on all his records in the 1970s, as well as artists as diverse as Bob Marley, Elkie Brooks and Joan Armatrading. At the time of the 1980 SFE, Roussel had just started playing with The Police.

Here We'll Stay only finished 11th in the SFE heat, with the major points haul coming from the Cardiff jury; not really a surprise as Sonia Jones, who sang it, was Welsh. The Song for Europe was Sonia's first foray into show business, but she went on from there to sing the lead on the title song to the Monty Python film *Life of Brian* before embarking on a long career singing with The Rolling Stones, The Who, Annie Lennox and Simple Minds, among many, and appearing in musicals like *Time with Cliff Richard*. *Here We'll Stay* also had legs as it was subsequently recorded by Frida (of ABBA), duetting with Phil Collins, and released as a single.

In 1984 Ricky Skaggs, one of the then new breed of Country music stars, covered one of Colton's songs from his *Heads, Hands & Feet* days, and as a result of the success Colton was asked to move over to Nashville. While there he cleaned up his act and within a short space of time found himself writing songs and recording a host of Nashville artists including Willie Nelson, Johnny Cash and Tom Waits. The 1990s saw Celine Dion record some of Colton's songs written with Eric Pressly, while more recently, despite being in his 60s, Colton's songs have been snapped up by artists such as Leanne Rimes and Ricky Skaggs. Aged 70, Colton still remains in the music business, writing and producing for an Irish band called The Riptide Movement, who have just released their second album.

Tony Colton has been described as the most important forgotten figure of the 1960s, but this would not do his life's work from Mod to Prog to Country Rock to Country via Song For Europe proper justice. 🗣️

THE VISION PANEL

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



Alasdair



John



Pam



Chris



Andy

Questions: Alasdair Rendall (chairman)

JB: John Bennett

PP: Pam Poppe

CP: Chris Poppe

AR: Andy Roberts

Alasdair Rendall: Another Eurovision over, what were your impressions of Baku 2012?

John Bennett: I thought the standard of songs was pretty decent this year, which is always the foundation of a good contest. For once I even found myself liking most of the songs from the Balkans! I thought the show itself was very well put together – nice to see a return to the old-fashioned postcards with clips of the country. The presenters weren't the most charismatic but were competent. The highlight for me was Lynda Woodruffe reading the results for Sweden!

Pam Poppe: I was fortunate enough to be at the superb event in York this year to watch the contest and I have to say I really enjoyed it. The production was slick, the external light-show seriously impressive, the postcards interesting enough. It also struck me as being extremely well rehearsed as I didn't notice any dodgy camera angles or techies accidentally in shot. The semis were also good entertainment, enlivened by the scholarly appearance of

Dr. Eurovision (our own Paul Jordan) adding a spot of gravitas to a dodgy BBC 3 segment.

Chris Poppe: From our vantage point of the OGAE UK shindig in York, I thought it was a great contest overall. Plenty of excellent songs and even the dud ones (Rambo Amadeus, Trackshittaz) are funny in their own way. Okay, the voting wasn't terribly exciting, but we can blame Loreen for that. The presentation was reasonably slick; I loved the illuminated flags outside the Crystal Hall that introduced each song. I think, for the TV audience, Azerbaijan put on an excellent show. A few days afterwards I listened to the Radio 2 broadcast through headphones and was amazed at how strong (with a couple of exceptions) the quality of vocals was throughout the evening. So, yes my general impressions of this year's contest are very good.

Andy Roberts I didn't attend the contest for the first time in many years so watched the Azerbaijan show from these shores. I recall in Belgrade, Azerbaijan's first year in Eurovision, the huge billboards promoting Elnur & Sami's entry and it was quite clear that Azerbaijan was determined to throw a lot of money at the contest and win it quick time, which they achieved. By all accounts, Baku left a very positive impression on those who visited. As envisaged, the promotion was excellent – when I closed my eyes the night after Eurovision,



Baku left a good impression

I could still see those blessed flame towers. I enjoyed Baku 2012 – liked the vast majority of the songs – and the final evening’s enjoyment was enhanced by the fact that I was sitting in front of a big cine screen in York surrounded by many wonderfully joyous ESC fans!

Sweden has already said it may use Eurovision to highlight human rights, but should Eurovision and politics be kept apart, or is it a good forum to raise issues of democracy and human rights?

JB: Short of preventing countries from taking part, I’m not sure there’s anything Sweden could do to highlight human rights issues. And unless there’s a much wider cultural or sporting boycott of a country, as there was with South Africa during Apartheid, I don’t think they should do that. Making an arbitrary decision to try to exclude Belarus (a country I’ve chosen completely at random there of course!) could lead to someone else deciding the UK shouldn’t take part in the future – we don’t exactly have great relations with the Russians at the moment for instance.

PP: With 120 plus million viewers, it would be quite a platform to raise awareness of democracy and human rights issues and I think if any country had the balls to do it, it would be Sweden. I could immediately rattle off a list of countries that it might apply to. However,

how would I feel if Sweden highlighted dodgy human rights in the UK? Contemplating this question I discovered that by the end of 2010, the European Court of Human Rights had, in 271 cases, found violations of the European Convention of Human Rights by the United Kingdom. Rich pickings there then. I also discovered a recent Amnesty International report condemning Sweden for failing to introduce torture as a crime in its penal code. On balance I tend to think overtly mixing the Eurovision and politics would be a pretty tricky business.

CP: The EBU seem to be steadfast in their line that Eurovision and politics should not mix – look how impassively they reacted to the politically motivated cyber attacks on fan-sites; but I guess, in Azerbaijan at least, it was important that not too many bigwigs’ feathers got ruffled in order for the show itself to go ahead as successfully as it did. But the Eurovision spotlight seems to get broader every year and it is inevitable that so much journalistic activity will seek to talk about things other than just a running commentary on Tooji’s rehearsals. Talking of whom, I read that the Norwegian delegation faced a lot of harassment from the Azerbaijani officials, especially at the airport, so they would certainly be entitled to get narked, and demand in future that competing nations achieve a minimum standard of human rights. Sweden, I suppose, hasn’t much to hide from the world so non-music issues like democracy and human rights could be somehow incorporated if that’s what the host broadcaster deems fit. Even then it would be a bit distasteful if it comes across as “Sweden is the best place in the world and the rest of you are inferior” – so it would have to be done with some diplomacy. Overall I’m dubious about the positive result of mixing the two.

AR: I have to say that my gut reaction would be for Eurovision and politics to be kept apart, although realistically it is probably too much to ask in this ‘in your face’ age we are now subjected to. A little politics of course has,

inevitably, always played a part in Eurovision, albeit not too overtly, and I wouldn't want that emphasis to change. Politics has its place and I would respectfully suggest – from Baku all the way to Malmo – that it does not take centre stage during the Eurovision fortnight. For me, Eurovision is about celebrating the diverse cultures and influences from across Europe in a musical celebration and it is the only 'competition' I can think of which engenders the spirit of mutual support. As Andy Abraham said following his disappointment in Belgrade, "it's all about the music". Eurovision shouldn't be about facing the music.

A disappointing result for Engelbert - what do you put this lack of success down to?

JB: I think there were a few factors. Firstly, his poor performance in the jury final. I haven't seen it for myself but the reports were that his performance wasn't good, and that's reflected in his bottom placing in the jury vote. Secondly, being first in the running order. While people have won from being on first before, it certainly isn't ideal. Thirdly, we don't do enough to promote our songs across Europe in advance of the contest. While other countries are releasing their song and making sure it gets airplay in advance of the contest so people are familiar with it, Engelbert was off touring in the USA and cropping up occasionally in the UK media. Despite the result I'm not embarrassed by our choice – I still think it was a decent song, his performance on the live show was good and at least people had heard of him.

PP: I think it was a combination of factors that led to the UK's poor result with the most obvious being the draw and the nature of the song. I really liked the song but thought it was totally swamped by what followed it. I think The Hump gave a strong performance of a good song and I don't think his age had anything to do with the lack of success. Nor do I think the rest of Europe has it in for the UK.



A disappointing result for The Hump

CP: Well it wasn't his age – otherwise the Russian grannies wouldn't have been so successful. I think Liam Jarnecki got it absolutely right when interviewed on the BBC Breakfast sofa the next day. The song would have been the perfect antidote to bouncier, noisier, more schlagery numbers, and in a perfect position could have been very effective. However, when it's sung first in the running order, it isn't an antidote to anything, and so therefore had no impact. Added to which, it's a nice song but not a great one – compare its chart success versus Loreen's – there was no pre-contest tour of Europe to give it a chance to get heard in advance – and by all accounts (I haven't seen it) a lousy jury rehearsal will no doubt have sent the points plummeting. But primarily, performing first was its kiss of death.

AR: Now there's a question... was I dumbstruck when I heard who was representing UK in Baku? Yes. Did I think the artist selection was plain wrong? No. Did I think this was potentially a neat piece of PR from the BBC? Yes. Did I like the song? Yes. Was it a Eurovision song? No. Did it need a gimmick? Initially no, Engelbert was the gimmick, then along came those cheery little grannies from Russia and then yes we did! Was the draw kind? No, could have been worse though, he could have been on second instead of first. At least if you are on first you have a chance to catch the eye straight away and, you never know, a cutesy dance, a percussion instrument or some



A chart success for Eurovision

golden boots could even win you the show. But no... Did Engelbert's jury final performance go well? Er, no. So there you have it – a guy who hasn't had a hit in more than 40 years in the UK, singing a plodding ballad and putting in a duff performance when it mattered. First up out of 26 songs and already forgotten by song six when the bread came out of the oven. The bottom line though is this – the song did not make the UK Top 40 so if we don't like it, why would we expect the rest of Europe to vote for it? It's all political ya know...!

The winning song has seen success in charts all over Europe. How important is it for Eurovision winners to cross over to the 'mainstream'?

JB: For Eurovision to be seen as more than a novelty contest the winners and other participants need to feature in the charts around Europe. While people might pick up the phone and vote for the Russian grannies (thank heavens they didn't win) they aren't likely to buy it, but I don't want to watch a contest full of novelty songs like that. Having a winner who has been top of the charts across Europe, including an incredible number three in the UK, helps Eurovision to have some credibility and ensure that most countries continue to put some effort in and send decent songs.

PP: During my dreary daily commute, I listen to Heart FM on my way home and frankly,

most of this year's entries would be right at home in the middle of the road music mix served up to its seven million listeners so I tend already to think of it as mainstream. I was very pleased that Sweden charted in the UK but disappointed that I haven't actually heard it on a UK radio station, in fact my better half, Chris, tells me Radio One wouldn't put it on their playlist. A bizarre form of musical apartheid.

CP: I don't think it's that important; the rest of the world thinks Eurovision fans are all crazy anyway, and, in the UK at least, even when the winning song does crossover, our national broadcaster still refuses to play it – presumably still under the thrall of a spell cast by Terry Wogan about ten years ago. However, when it does rarely happen that a Eurovision winner achieves chart success, it can feel quite reassuring to your average Eurovision fan that their taste isn't necessarily shot to pieces! If a sizeable number of any one year's entries suddenly made it in the charts then just maybe Eurovision would get some decent recognition – although even then, I expect general commentators would still ridicule it.

AR: I always like to see a Eurovision winner do well in the popular music charts across Europe and, when this happens, it cannot help but boost the song contest's credibility. However, certainly in the case of Rybak and Loreen, their Eurovision winners had already achieved significant sales prior to the contest taking place so the song did well Eurovision aside – both Scandinavian winners enjoyed chart success in the UK after Eurovision, reward for having a strong commercial song, but I venture that reflects little on the Eurovision brand and nor should it. If a Eurovision winner takes off then great, but it is by no means vital that it crosses over to the mainstream. *Molitva*, for example, was not a pan-European hit but the song broke many boundaries and, in my opinion, Marija's victory for Serbia was more meaningful than Rybak's for Norway and Loreen's for Sweden. ♡

Eurovision 2013: Malmo, Sweden

Ticket application process for OGAE UK members

We are expecting a high level of demand for tickets for Malmo 2013. In recent years we have been able to obtain tickets for all members requesting them, and we will do all we can to secure tickets for everyone in 2013. However, with the slightly smaller venue and expected demand we cannot guarantee to secure tickets.

Ticketing details have not yet been confirmed by the host broadcaster but, in line with recent practice, we expect tickets to be issued as packages (one for each semi and one for the final). We have no indication of price as yet.

We will operate a slightly different process for 2013. All members who joined OGAE UK before the date of the last contest (26 May 2012) are eligible for the main ballot. Members who joined (or re-joined) after that date will be eligible to join a separate reserve ballot. Any tickets that are made available to us will be allocated firstly to the main ballot and then to the reserve ballot in the order drawn.

If you would like to apply for tickets through OGAE UK, please email our Ticket Coordinator, David Ransted, on [djrunners@yahoo.com](mailto:djranners@yahoo.com) to request an application form, plus details of the full terms and conditions.

The application process will follow the normal format:

- One application form to be completed for each member.
- Completed application form and deposit to be returned to the Ticket Coordinator by 31 October 2013.
- After the deadline OGAE UK will conduct an independently run ballot. Tickets allocated to OGAE UK will be reserved for members in the order of their position in the ballot.

Full details of terms and conditions will be included on the application form.





Ministry of Expression Productions are producing Eurobeat – Almost Eurovision. Set up as a subsidiary of Ministry of Expression, a creative school in north London, Ministry of Expression Productions is a not for profit organisation whose aim is to promote live entertainment in North London; this includes theatre, musical theatre, music and comedy.

In September of this year they will be embarking on their first semi professional production and chose Eurobeat – Almost Eurovision. Having worked on the show in 2010, producer Matthew Herd would like to offer OGAE UK a chance to see this amazingly funny show at a discount. Eurobeat, the glorious stage musical that celebrates everything we love and cringe about every time we watch the Eurovision Song

Contest, heralds the dawn of the interactive musical as the audience vote for their favourite song via text message.

The show is set in Sarajevo, capital of Bosnia & Herzegovina, who have somehow won the right to host ‘this year’s’ competition. Every audience member will be assigned to one

of the ten competing countries as they enter the venue with a badge – so it doesn’t matter if you are from Queensland – on the night you will be from the country you’re given! Don’t forget – you can’t vote for your own country although there is nothing to stop you bribing others.

Competing countries are (in order of appearance): Italy, Poland, Iceland, United Kingdom, Hungary, Russia, Ireland, Greece, Germany and Sweden.

Go along and join in the fun!



MoE Productions is offering members of OGAE UK the chance to see the show at a discounted rate. Tickets can be booked online via the theatre website www.millfieldtheatre.co.uk. At the checkout stage just input the discount code **OGAE** and you can receive a discount of £3 per ticket. Tickets are normally £15 & £10 concessions. OGAE UK members can get them for just £12 & £10 concessions.

6-8 September 2012
Millfield Theatre.
Edmonton, North London

VISION EYE

Welcome to a new irregular feature where we look at things non-Eurovision. **Hassan Yusuf** reports

Most of you would have noticed that there were a few international flag-waving events other than Eurovision this year.

First off we had the Euro 2012 football tournament. Well done to host nations Poland and Ukraine for putting on a great show. And congratulations to Spain for achieving the double! If only they could emulate their victory at Eurovision!

The bigger flag-waving event of the year was of course the Olympics! As of writing Team GB are on course to achieving a remarkable tally of medals. I achieved a childhood dream of attending the Olympic Opening Ceremony! I watched this amazing show with fellow OGAE UK member and Olympic fanatic, Steve Truslove. Also in the audience on this unique event was OGAE UK Ticket Co-ordinator David Ransted accompanied by his lovely wife Kaori.

Steve and myself attended a dozen events together – including ‘Super Saturday’ (also attended by David and Kaori) where in the Track & Field at the stadium we saw Team GB achieve three gold medals! First Jessica Ennis won the women’s heptathlon, Greg Rutherford won the men’s long jump, and of course Mo Farah won the men’s 10,000m. An amazing night – especially seeing the Union flag raised for Jessica Ennis’ victory!



It's a tough life for Simon



Two famous flags

But while it was an amazing experience for Steve, David and myself to be at the Opening Ceremony – one OGAE UK member went one better! OGAE UK Treasurer and Membership Secretary, Simon Bennett, was actually part of the performance!

Simon was a worker in the ‘Pandemonium’ section of the show. And as you can see from the photo, Simon wasn’t allowed to shave or shower for a week! *

Well done and congratulations Simon! We’re all proud of you!



Out emerge the workers from the tree

* We’re joking about not showering. Simon has standards!

VISIONSPY

IT'S DR. EUROVISION!



Paul (Dr. Eurovision) Jordan with Sara Cox

Those who watched the semi-finals on BBC3 couldn't have helped but notice a new media-star in the making - our own Paul Jordan - the new Dr. Eurovision! The good doctor gave his expert opinion throughout both semi-final shows. Whoever said a knowledge of Eurovision amounted to nothing?

Liam Whelan made no secret that his favourite song of this year's contest was *Suus* by Albania's Rona Nishliu. His Albanian flag t-shirt got noticed by Bekim Lumi who directed Rona's preview video. Lumi then introduced Liam to Leon Menkshi (Albanian spokesman 2006-2011) who interviewed Liam about the t-shirt. The interview went out live on Albanian TV the night before the final.



Robin interviews Litesound from Belarus

Our own Robin Scott became the face of **esctoday.com** this year. Robin interviewed most of the performers - and proved to be a big hit. His relaxed style won over many fans. Even when the website was targeted by hackers this couldn't stop Robin performing his duties in true British spirit!

SPOTTED IN THE RADIO TIMES



Ben Morris - creator of the mini-icons seen elsewhere in this issue - defended the UK's participation in Eurovision after

a disgruntled viewer was chosen as the star letter in the 9-15 June 2012 issue of the Radio Times. Ben replied a week later:

"Martin Crawley repeats the popular belief that those countries that do well in Eurovision only do so by benefitting from political voting, which also causes the UK to consistently languish at the bottom.

He is mistaken. Yes, neighbourly voting will always ensure certain countries don't come last. But it doesn't dictate who will reach the top of the scoreboard.

Russia did well this year, but badly last year. Sweden have had a poor record in recent years, yet were third in 2011 and won with a landslide this year. As did Germany in 2010, having come close to the bottom nearly as often as we have in the past decade.

The UK can win but we have to change our strategy first. Let's start planning now for 2013. Ask Hurts (Alias Theo Hutchcraft and Adam Anderson) to write a song for a national final, to be managed by Simon Cowell. They may just be the men to bring it back home."

EURO QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Zeljko Joksimovic
2. Nova & The Dolls
3. No Name - who officially won the Serbian & Montenegrin selection that year, but the broadcasters could not agree which song to send to Athens
4. Wind
5. 2006
6. Rainy Day
7. Westend
8. Bye Bye Bar
9. Marga Bilt
10. Hanne Krogh

THE 'LAST' PAGE



Norway 2012 – Final

Stay

Tooji

Received seven points

(one from Iceland,
three from Netherlands and
three from Sweden)