

INSIDE: TRIBUTE TO TEDDY JOHNSON

vision

THE OGAE UK
MAGAZINE
SUMMER
2018

ISSUE
113

A photograph of Netta Barzilai singing into a microphone. She has dark hair tied back in a ponytail with red highlights. She is wearing a shiny, pinkish-red outfit with black stripes on the sleeves and a sequined black vest over a white top. The background is blurred with warm, yellow lights.

IT
TASTES
LIKE
SUCCESS!

Netta's special
recipe wins it
for Israel

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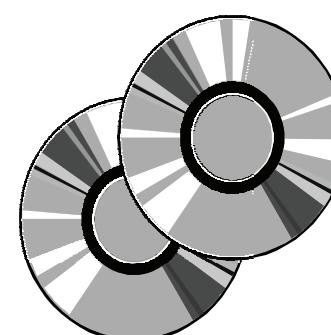
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NEXT ISSUE – DUE OUT IN
LATE OCTOBER
Full report on...

eurobash
LEEDS 2018

The Organising Committee and everyone connected with **Vision** would like to thank Gordon Lewis for his decades of inspiration and dedication!

TEDDY JOHNSON

4th September 1919 – 6th June 2018

OBITUARY: TEDDY JOHNSON ■■■



Pearl and Teddy with
Lynsey de Paul at
Jobs For The Boys:
Eurovision Special
in 1998

Photo by Gordon Lewis

teddy Johnson, who represented the United Kingdom at the 1959 Eurovision Song Contest with his wife Pearl Carr, has died at the age of 98. Born in Surbiton, Surrey, Edward Victor Johnson was the eldest of four children, including his younger brother, Bryan Johnson (1926-1995), who would go on to compete at the 1960 contest.

At the age of 15, Teddy had already formed his own band and, just three years later, started performing onboard cruise ships as a solo singer. Back on land, his vocal abilities started to be sought after for musical theatre and, by 1950, he was offered a recording contract with Columbia Records. Although the UK record charts did not exist at this time, Teddy's first song, *Beloved Be Faithful*, became a popular choice at dancehalls across the country.

Firmly establishing himself over the next five years, Teddy



Pearl and Teddy at their wedding



was approached by the BBC who wanted him to perform with another solo singer, Pearl Carr. At first Teddy refused, recalling in a recent interview "I didn't want to do it, I was a solo singer, I didn't do duets." However, Pearl started to join Teddy on his summer tours and, before too long, the couple fell in love and married on 18th June 1955 at Marylebone Register Office, London. Although Teddy and Pearl both continued as solo artistes, when their first recorded duet, *Tomorrow, Tomorrow*, was released in 1957 the pair quickly became known as Mr & Mrs Music.

Although his brother, Bryan, had competed at the 1957 Festival Of British Popular Songs which chose Patricia Bredin as the UK's first Eurovision entrant, it was not until 1959 that Teddy, together with Pearl, would venture into the realms of the Eurovision Song Contest. With one song in each of the two heats, *That's It, That's Love* failed to impress the regional juries while the infectious *Sing*

Little Birdie not only qualified for the final but would also become the overall winning song. Having hastily recorded the song with Columbia, Teddy and Pearl flew to Cannes where they were the clear favourites to win. However, victory went to the Dutch, and Teddy once claimed that he was convinced that the Dutch and Italian delegations, and possibly others too, had deliberately voted against the United Kingdom.

In 1960, Pearl and Teddy once again competed at the British final for the Eurovision Song Contest with a further two songs. *Pickin' Petals* failed to qualify from its heat, while *When The Tide Turns* found itself in the final competing against Bryan Johnson's *Looking High, High, High*. Of the two brothers, it was Bryan rather than Teddy who went on to fly the Union Flag at London's Royal Festival Hall where the song contest was held that year. Although Teddy and Pearl continued to record until the mid-1960s, the couple did not make any further

Photo by Gordon Lewis



Pearl and Teddy
with Malta's
Chiara at the
OGAE UK
Convention in
1999

attempts to represent their country on the international stage.

As the Swinging Sixties and glam rock seventies changed the face of popular music across the globe, the songs of Pearl Carr and Teddy Johnson became outdated. However, the married couple continued to perform on television, as well as the nostalgia and variety circuits where they were enthusiastically greeted by their devoted followers. Following their appearance on *This Is Your Life* in 1986, Teddy and Pearl were invited to appear in the West End revival of the Stephen Sondheim musical, *Follies*, where they played the characters of Wally and Emily Whitman. In 1990, Teddy and Pearl announced their retirement from show business.

However, following Katrina & The Waves' 1997 Eurovision victory in Dublin, Teddy and Pearl found themselves in popular demand once again. Alongside other past UK performers, the couple were special guests at the recording of Hale & Pace's *Jobs For The Boys: Eurovision Special* and were interviewed by several media outlets in the weeks preceding Birmingham's hosting of the

1998 Eurovision Song Contest. OGAE UK was also very privileged to have Teddy and Pearl, alongside Maltese singer Chiara, attend the 1999 OGAE UK Convention. Both of them delighted the audience with their musical memories and were amazed that so many people, most of whom were born after their contest appearance 40 years earlier, were able to provide word perfect renditions of *Sing Little Birdie*.

Teddy and Pearl were recognised by the British Music Hall Society in 2011, receiving a Lifetime Achievement award at the society's annual ball. Sadly, Pearl's health started to deteriorate and the couple moved to a retirement home managed by the Royal Variety Charity. Teddy remained in good health and, during 2017, was interviewed for the official Eurovision Song Contest website at www.eurovision.tv. He also filmed a short tribute to iconic British comedians Morecambe & Wise.

Teddy Johnson was a devoted husband and a true gentleman who represented a musical era that was far removed from the music industry of the 21st century. While we



pay tribute to this wonderful man, **Vision** and OGAE UK would also like to offer our sincere condolences to his widow, Pearl Carr, who has no doubt shed more than a few tears following the loss of her husband of almost 63 years. **GL**

Photo by Gordon Lewis

EUROVISION 2018

HOW EUROPE VOTED

GRAND FINAL

	Israel	Italy	Latvia	Lithuania	Macedonia	Malta	Moldova	Montenegro	Netherlands	Norway	Poland	Portugal	Romania	Russia	San Marino	Serbia	Slovenia	Spain	Sweden	Switzerland	Ukraine	United Kingdom	Televote	Total	Position
	2	6	1	6	10		5			1		8	12	2	1	10	7	12	1	10	10	317	529	1	
	3	1	10	12	6	1	6	5		8	12	8	12	4	10	8	12	12	7	7	253	436	2		
12	7	7	12		1	3		10	5			8	12	4	10	8	10	8	10	4	7	71	342	3	
5	10	3	5	3		4		12	12	10		4	4	10	10	7	1	12			136	340	4		
					10	4					4	1	4	8		3					249	308	5		
					4	5									3	4					215	281	6		
10	1	12	8	7	7			8	10	6		10	8	12	12	2				5	6	2	21	274	7
	4	8	12		12	5	4				12	3	6	5	3	5	1			10	1	6	102	245	8
2	8					6														3		188	226	9	
						8															115	209	10		
						6		10			7	10	7	5	6						7	58	184	11	
						4			7	3	1	6	6	3		1	4				91	181	12		
						10	10	8		7	5	2			2	6	5		12	59	173	13			
1						2	8			2	7						6	2		8	66	166	14		
						4	2	7	3								2			5	84	144	15		
						5				1	5			1		5	4	6	3	62	136	16			
						5														119	130	17			
						5														8	32	121	18		
						5														75	113	19			
7	6					3	7			6	4		2	5	2					9	99	20			
3		2								3										65	93	21			
4	1	2						1			3	1		6					5	23	64	22			
8	6	2					2			2	2	10								1	18	61	23		
6						5														25	48	24			
						7				2										4	23	46	25		
																				3	18	39	26		

SEMI-FINAL 1

Position order	Jury votes																								
	Albania	Armenia	Austria	Azerbaijan	Belarus	Belgium	Bulgaria	Croatia	Cyprus	Czech Republic	Estonia	Finland	Greece	Iceland	Ireland	Israel	Lithuania	Macedonia	Portugal	Spain	Switzerland	United Kingdom	Televote	Total	Position
Israel	10	12	12	4	6	7	5	12	12	12	4	12	4	10	10	7	5	7	2	12	5	8	116	283	1
Cyprus	12	10	8			3	3	2		8	7	7		12			3	10	4	7	8	173	262	2	
Czech Republic	7	8		10	10	7	10	1			2	5	4	3	5	8	3	7	7	8	134	233	3		
Austria	4		1	12	8			3	1	12	8	7	7	12	10		6	8	6	10	116	231	4		
Estonia	8	3	1					5			10	6	8		4	4	8	6	12	6	120	201	5		
Ireland		5	2	5		7		8	6	4		8		12	1		2	10	1	108	179	6			
Bulgaria	6	4	2	5	2	6	6	7	7	10	6		6	3	12	7	3	3	12	70	177	7			
Albania	5	6	7	12	4	6	4	7	5	1	6	8	12	4	1	10	5	4	7	48	162	8			
Lithuania	1	2			10	8		3	10	2			2			12		7		62	119	9			
Finland			3	1		2		5			4	5	7	2			1	2	3	73	108	10			
Azerbaijan	5					10		3	12		10		7							47	94	11			
Belgium	4	6	7				12	1	10	4	5	2	2		8		10			20	91	12			
Switzerland	2	3	1	3		8	5	6	1	1	3	3	8	6			5	4	27	86	13				
Greece	3	2	10				3	8				1	1							53	81	14			
Armenia		10		4	6	2			2	3			5			4		2	41	79	15				
Belarus	7	1	12																	45	65	16			
Croatia			5	8	4	4		2	5			6		6	1		5	17	63	17					
Macedonia	8						4		3			1			2		1		6	24	18				
Iceland			7	1				4									1		0	15	19				

The top ten countries went through to the Grand Final. Also voting were Portugal, Spain and United Kingdom.

SEMI-FINAL 2

Position order		Jury votes										Position										Position		
		Australia	Denmark	France	Georgia	Germany	Hungary	Italy	Latvia	Malta	Moldova	Montenegro	Netherlands	Norway	Poland	Romania	Russia	San Marino	Serbia	Slovenia	Sweden	Ukraine	Televote	Total
Norway		8	6	2	5	5	7	12	5	12	4	6	10	4	2	10	7	8	7	12	1	133	266	
Sweden		12	10	7	12	12	3	6	10	10	2	12	12	12	8	12	12	12	7	83	254	2		
Moldova		10	2		3	4		4	6	4	5	3		12	12	10	5	2	153	235	3			
Australia		12	12		8	10	7	12	7	10	3	4	10	8	3	6	2	10	6	82	212	4		
Denmark		6				5	10		8	1	1					5		4	164	204	5			
Ukraine		7	3		7			1	6	8	10	6	3	2	6	1		5	114	179	6			
Netherlands		1	5	8	10	7	8	3	8	5	4	8	10	8	4	10	10	6	12	47	174	7		
Slovenia		2	4	5	1	3		2	4	6		8	5	5	4	3	2	8	5	65	132	8		
Serbia		1			1	6	1	1	12			6	7	6	4		72	117	9					
Hungary		4		2							6	3	5		3	88	111	10						
Romania			1	6		12		3	2	12	8	2	2	3	4	1	6	3	2	40	107	11		
Latvia		5	7	10	8	10	2			3		7	7	7	1	5	3	7	10	14	106	12		
Malta		3	8	6	4	6		8	7	2	7	1	6	1	10	8	4	8	4	8	101	13		
Poland			4		2	4					5	1			2	1	60	81	14					
Russia		3								7		4					51	65	15					
Montenegro										5			7			7	1	3	17	40	16			
San Marino										5			5	1				14	28	17				
Georgia								1	2							8	13	24	18					

The top ten countries went through to the Grand Final. Also voting were France, Germany and Italy.

PRETTY IN PINK! EUROVISION 2018 REVIEWED



Hass Yusuf spent two weeks rushing around watching rehearsals, blogging and going to press conferences. Here he gives a personal rundown of the contest in Lisbon and reports on the entries.



David Ransted photographed everyone for two weeks wearing out the soles of his shoes while supplying exclusive and unique photographs for our website and **Vision**. He also supplied the country stats.



my main trip abroad every year is usually dictated by who wins Eurovision! For many years I have wanted to visit Lisbon so I was delighted when Portugal won last year's contest. It was about time the country won the contest after 49 attempts over 53 years.

The country didn't enter the contest a few years ago because they couldn't afford it - but now they had to host it! However, it soon became apparent that the extravagance of previous contests wasn't going to be repeated. This would be a far quieter affair. The first clue was a non-LED stage. It actually made a nice change – with clever lighting effects taking its place. There was also quite a few on-camera special effects – Cyprus, Norway, Italy all come to mind. And some countries brought along their own staging – Germany, Sweden and the United Kingdom weren't satisfied with mere lighting!

The Portuguese were going to do things differently! Originally, they were under the impression that they could charge around £900 for the shows! On previous occasions

concerts featuring big names such as Justin Bieber cost that much! It took OGAE International to tell the Portuguese TV company that Eurovision was a completely different situation! We're naturally all fanatics, but slightly more restrained in our, er... appreciation. (Unless you were an Israeli fan of course, but who could blame them this year?) Prices eventually reduced to £400 or so for a package of shows – more reasonable to be sure, but still the most expensive Eurovision tickets ever!

Subdued

The atmosphere in the media centre was very subdued throughout most of the two-week rehearsal period. To begin with they tried to segregate the journalists – bloggers in one part, radio journalists in another, etc. A bit awkward as some organisations represent various media outlets – so that plan was soon abandoned. But, even so, the usual buzz was lacking inside the press hall.

The structure of the Eurovision two-week 'bubble' is that the first week is all about rehearsals and press conferences, while the



second week concentrates on the dress rehearsals and the three live shows – the two semi-finals and the Grand Final.

But the buzz did start to emerge when more journalists turned up – and when it became obvious that this year's contest was going to be very strong. There was lots of negativity during the national finals season but, once in Lisbon and seeing the acts perform on a large stage, the ante definitely upped! This was going to be one of the best contests ever – with some really fabulous entries.

Reporting on Eurovision can be very hard work! Along with David Ransted and Robin Scott, we were usually among the first to arrive and the last to leave – some days we really were there from 9.00am to 9.00pm! I made sure that I saw at least one rehearsal and attended one press conference for each act. Robin recorded items for our website while David spent many days on his feet photographing all the rehearsals. (A special shout out must go to our old pal David Elder who had to miss out on Eurovision for the first time in nearly 30 years!)



Eurovision supervisor, Jon Ola Sand, made sure all the voting was ship-shape!

I thought the songs that this year's contest offered were, on the whole, excellent. There was a wide range of genres – pop, rock, ballads, heavy metal, opera, country and ethnic folk – something for everyone! There were very few songs that I disliked.

My three favourites were, in order, Albania, Germany and Italy. But my kiss of death didn't happen this year – as Albania made it through to the Grand Final! Germany and Italy already qualified being part of the Big Five of course. It was a good year for Albania as one of its countrywomen nearly won the contest representing Cyprus!

As usual the semi-final results threw up a few surprises – for the first time ever, Russia, Romania and Azerbaijan failed to qualify to the Grand final! Only Ukraine and newbie Australia now have a 100% record of qualification.

I was in the audience of our national final, Eurovision: You Decide, when we chose SuRie to represent us. I had high hopes for our song then. But over the months, as more and more countries revealed their entries, it became very clear just how strong the competition was! You would've thought

that the stage invasion would've given us more of a sympathy vote but, alas, that never materialised – I did suspect that we would've come last without it! No, that 'honour' went to the host country, Portugal! That to me was a shock as I thought the song was brilliant – a really lovely ballad! Clearly voters have no sentimentality when voting – this isn't the first time that a host country has come last – or nearly last. Most recently it happened to the Austrians!

Security

Going back to SuRie, it was a surprise to see that the protester actually managed to get on stage, as security throughout the two weeks was very thorough. As well as going through metal detectors entering the building, we were all physically frisked – and believe me some security staff were rather too thorough! Though of course one shouldn't really complain!

What of the winner – well, I always liked it and Israel's performer, Netta, was very nice and charming. It certainly was a unique sound – you can't argue that it wasn't modern. The march of K-Pop continues



around the world! Just think of it as another genre for Eurovision.

I have to admit I was rooting for Cyprus to win near the end of the voting – I actually preferred the Cypriot song – and they've never won before. However, Israel was a worthy winner. Netta's performance obviously impressed many in Europe – and how great it is to see a female singer who isn't a size zero! Netta is a real person who will be a great role model for many.

Tribute?

Overall, I thought the Portuguese did a brilliant job. The idea of the four presenters seemed to work, but far too many names to remember! The big disappointments were SuRie scoring so low – she gave one of the best performances of the night; Portugal certainly didn't deserve to come last; and Azerbaijan, San Marino and Romania should have all qualified. The worst incident was the tribute given to the first lady of Eurovision, Lys Assia – it was pathetic! Would it have hurt to have played a few seconds of *Refrain*? Tut-tut.

But anyway, all three shows were top

class and Lisbon itself was lovely with lots of fabulous architecture. And the Portuguese themselves were wonderful. Most were very relaxed. Lisbon seemed like a very safe place – it certainly is a multi-cultural city where everyone seemed to be at ease with each other. And it seemed to be a very well-run place too.

Elsewhere in this issue you will find photo-features of extra events in Lisbon such as the mini-concert SuRie gave at the UK Ambassador's residence and, of course, our usual OGAE UK gathering – another great success.

And we must thank SuRie for the hard work she did at both Eurovision and the run up to it. You couldn't ask for a more professional attitude. Fingers crossed that she'll represent us again. It's always great to be represented by someone who actually appreciates the fans and really understands what Eurovision is actually about!

Let's end by congratulating Netta once more on a fabulous win – and to Portugal – for finally getting on the Eurovision winners' map and being great hosts! But don't leave it so long again...

ALBANIA



Song: *Mall (Yearning)*
Performer: Eugent Bushpepa
Songwriter: Eugent Bushpepa



ALBANIA

SF1:	Total: 162 points
Juries:	114 points (highest: 10 from Belarus, Iceland)
Televote:	48 points (highest: 12 from Macedonia) 8th place
Grand Final:	Total: 184 points
Juries:	126 (12 from Azerbaijan)
Televote:	58 (12 from Italy, Macedonia) 11th place

- Albania was the first country to select its song for Lisbon and returned to the Grand Final for the first time since 2015. This was Albania's third-best finishing position of their 15 entries to date.

On a personal level, I was extremely happy to see my favourite song of the contest actually go through to the Grand Final. But this great singer with a great rock song deserved it! Of course it still doesn't explain why many Albanian singers have to virtually shout, but there you go. The act even made it through despite a simple staging. Eugent found it very difficult to cut the song down to three minutes from its original longer version, but obviously it all worked out fine.

ARMENIA

Song: Qami (Wind)**Performer:** Sevak Khanagyan**Songwriters:** Anna Danielyan, Victoria Maloyan, Sevak Khanagyan**ARMENIA****SF1:** Total: 79 points

Juries: 38 (10 from Austria)

Televote: 41 (12 from Belarus)

15th place

- Only the second of 12 Armenian entries to fail to make it to the Grand Final and the country's worst-ever finishing position.



AUSTRALIA

Song: We Got Love**Performer:** Jessica Mauboy**Songwriters:** Anthony Egizii, David Musumeci, Jessica Mauboy**AUSTRALIA****SF2:** Total: 212 points

Juries: 130 (12 from Denmark, France, Latvia)

Televote: 82 (10 from Malta)

Fourth place**Grand Final:** Total: 99 points

Juries: 90 (10 from Denmark, France)

Televote: 9 (6 from Malta)

20th place

- All of Australia's four entries to date have qualified for the Grand Final, but this was the first one that didn't finish in the Top Ten, and for the second year running Australia experienced a huge difference between high jury votes and low public votes in the Grand Final, finishing in last place in the televote.

Did Jessica seem a bit lost on stage? For such a great singer and song, the staging was very lacklustre. And her styling was all wrong as well! But regardless of the criticism, her professionalism stood out and she delivered her entry perfectly. But the lack of a 'wow' factor is probably why the song wasn't that popular with the public, because it was a smasher and deserved to do better (especially with that great drumbeat).

AUSTRIA

Song: Nobody But You
Performer: Cesár Sampson
Songwriters: Sebastian Arman, Cesár Sampson, Joacim Persson, Johan Alkenäs, Borislav Milanov

**AUSTRIA**

SF1: Total: 231 points
 Juries: 115 (12 from Belgium, Estonia, Israel)
 Televote: 116 (12 from Switzerland)
Fourth place
Grand Final: Total: 342 points
 Juries: 271 (12 from Belgium, Bulgaria, Estonia, Iceland, Israel, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, United Kingdom)
 Televote: 71 (10 from Denmark)
Third place

• Austria won the jury vote in the Grand Final with nine sets of 12 points – more than any other country – but was markedly less successful with televotes. Third place overall was Austria's third-best result of their 51 entries since joining the contest in 1957 – beaten only by their two winners in 1966 and 2014.

Cesar's deep gravelly voice really added to this mid-tempo and powerful anthemic performance. He started his act on a raised platform and eventually went on a tour around the whole stage. It was nice to see his backing singers in the shadows. The gospel/anthem-like qualities of the song really worked well. As performances go, this was one of the best in the contest and I thought it was one to watch out for. But even so, his high ranking was a pleasant surprise.

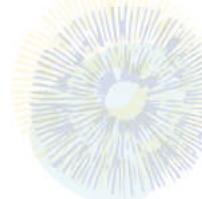
AZERBAIJAN

Song: X My Heart
Performer: Aisel
Songwriters: Sandra Bjurman, Dimitris Kontopoulos

**AZERBAIJAN**

SF1: Total: 94 points
 Juries: 47 (12 from Greece)
 Televote: 47 (10 from Czech Republic)
11th place

• Azerbaijan's first six entries all finished in the Top Ten and the next four all made it to the Grand Final, but this year the country failed to qualify for the first time, finishing 11th in Semi-Final 1, 14 points behind Finland.



Her name is inspired by the moon, but the tide finally came in for Azerbaijan. But quite undeserved! It was a great opener to the semi and her performance was decent enough. This was an impressive pop number with a nice electro-beat background that did deserve better treatment by the voters. (Their production team were mainly from Greece. They should try going ethnic one year!) But for Aisel, the emotion she got from the contest will live with her forever.

BELARUS

Song: Forever
Performer: ALEKSEEV
Songwriter: Kirill Pavlov

**BELGIUM**

Song: A Matter Of Time
Performer: Sennek
Songwriters: Laura Groeseneken, Alex Callier, Maxime Tribeche

**BELARUS**

SF1: Total: 65 points
Juries: 20 (12 from Azerbaijan)
Televote: 45 (12 from Azerbaijan)
16th place

• Ten of Belarus's 15 entries have failed to make it to the Grand Final, and this was one of the country's worst results. Only three juries voted for *Forever*.



There was something very charming about this act despite the corny scene where Alek gives the camera a red rose which then passes it off to a dancer. The bow and arrow with the bloodied shirt in the act were meant to show that love sometimes hurts. A good example was when his girlfriend at the time gave him an ultimatum – her or his music. He said goodbye to her as his career came first. Brutal. (He supports Arsenal football team so he really should've won the contest!)

BELGIUM

SF1: Total: 91 points
Juries: 71 (12 from Bulgaria)
Televote: 20 (8 from Lithuania)
12th place

• After three consecutive Top Ten places, a poor result in the televote meant that Belgium missed out on qualification this year, the Walloon broadcaster continuing to outperform the Flemish broadcaster's entries.



This was a disappointment for Belgium as it has become something of a powerhouse in recent years and the trend should've continued. Sennek performed her Bond-like theme perfectly, looking very sultry and making most of the stage, but again, the staging just didn't impress. It just lacked atmosphere – a few backing dancers could've told the story better. What a shame.

BULGARIA

Song: Bones
Performers: EQUINOX
Songwriters: Borislav Milanov, Joacim Persson, Brandon Treyshun Campbell, Dag Lundberg

**BULGARIA**

SF1: Total: 177 points
Juries: 107 (12 from Macedonia, United Kingdom)
Televote: 70 (10 from Cyprus)
Seventh place
Grand Final: Total: 166 points
Juries: 100 (10 Finland, Ireland)
Televote: 66 (12 from Cyprus)
14th place

Following its two best-ever results was never going to be easy for Bulgaria and, although they missed out on the Top Ten this year, Bones was the country's fourth-best performing entry out of 12 so far.



Bulgaria has really discovered its Eurovision mojo in recent years and the trend continued with EQUINOX and their mystic pagan-like sounds. The five singers really had good chemistry between them. They consider themselves as a family now. The act was expected to do better though. Maybe its mystic sounds were a bit too much for Eurovision viewers? Nevertheless this was a classy song full of great harmonies explaining that you can emerge from the dark into light.

CROATIA

Song: Crazy
Performer: Franka
Songwriters: Franka Batelic, Branimir Mihaljevic

**CROATIA**

SF1: Total: 63 points
Juries: 46 (8 from Belarus)
Televote: 17 (10 from Macedonia)
17th place

• Seventeenth in a semi-final marked Croatia's worst-ever result. In the televote only four countries voted for Crazy.



You couldn't really describe this performance as 'crazy' despite all the emotion put in to it by Franka. She was tall, elegant, beautiful and looked stunning in her organic-like outfit. She performed alone on stage, had a bit of a walk-about fighting against the wind machine... and that was it really. It hardly told the story of the song. She perfected her fabulous voice while performing in a church choir. She thinks that all children should attend church choirs because it can be fun...

CYPRUS**Song:** Fuego (Fire)**Performer:** Eleni Foureira**Songwriters:** Alex Papaconstantinou, Geraldo Sandell, Anderz Wrethov, Viktor Svensson, Didrick**CYPRUS****SF1:** Total: 262 points

Juries: 89 (12 from Albania, Ireland)

Televote: 173 (12 from Albania, Armenia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece)

Second place**Grand Final:** Total: 436 points

Juries: 183 (12 from Belarus, Greece, Ireland, Malta, Spain, Sweden)

Televote: 253 (12 from Armenia, Bulgaria, Greece)

Second place

• Cyprus and the Czech Republic were the only countries to achieve their best-ever results this year – the previous high water mark for Cyprus was fifth place, achieved three times. Cyprus won the televote in Semi-Final 1 by a wide margin and was the only country in the Grand Final to gain televote points from every other country.

Let's be honest, half of the gay guys in the arena turned straight after this performance! The Albanian-born Eleni was hot, hot, hot! She was the perfect performer for this dance number. Her success was a surprise – but it just goes to show that a powerful performance and a good backing group can do wonders! And a few on-camera special effects can only help. It was a dream come true to enter the contest said Eleni, despite finding it hard to sing and dance at the same time.

CZECH REPUBLIC**Song:** Lie To Me**Performer:** Mikolas Josef**Songwriters:** Mikolas Josef**CZECH REPUBLIC****SF1:** Total: 232 points

Juries: 98 (10 from Belarus, Belgium, Croatia)

Televote: 134 (12 from Iceland, Israel)

Third place**Grand Final:** Total: 281 points

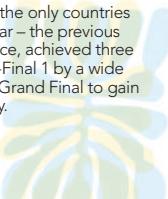
Juries: 66 (8 from Bulgaria)

Televote: 215 (12 from Austria, Israel)

Sixth place

• This was easily the Czech Republic's best result – their first Top Ten placing and only the second time in seven attempts that they have qualified for the Grand Final. *Lie To Me* received televote points from every other country in Semi-Final 1.

Before seeing all the rehearsals, I was convinced that the talented Mikolas was going to win the contest with his unique jazzy up-tempo dance number. It certainly was fun. He injured his back during rehearsals and had to go to hospital for a check-up (or a Czech-up if you like cheap jokes). Still, he was back for the Grand Final where he performed that back-flip perfectly. He described himself as a perfectionist – and that professionalism resulted in a great result!



DENMARK

Song: Higher Ground**Performer:** Rasmussen**Songwriters:** Niclas Arn, Karl Eurén**DENMARK****SF2:** Total: 204 points

Juries: 40 (12 from Italy)

Televote: 164 (12 from Australia, Hungary, Netherlands, Norway, San Marino, Sweden)

Fifth place**Grand Final:** Total: 226 points

Juries: 38 (12 from Hungary)

Televote: 188 (12 from Hungary, Iceland, Sweden)

Ninth place

• Another song much more popular with televoters than juries, Denmark finished in the Top Ten for the first time since hosting the contest in 2014. *Higher Ground* scored six sets of 12 points in the Semi-Final 2 televote, more than any other country.

The stage was all set for a Viking invasion! But fret not, they came in peace. Not that this performance was peaceful – it was all very foot-stomping, with mean looks, snow effects and a wind machine thrown in for good measure (showing off their long locks). It was a perfectly told story for this impressive anthemic entry. Rasmussen and his pals certainly looked the part. He tried to convince us that Vikings were really traders rather than invaders...

ESTONIA

Song: La Forza (The Force)**Performer:** Elina Nechayeva**Songwriters:** Elina Nechayeva, Ksenia Kuchukova, Mihkel Mattisen, Timo Vendt**ESTONIA****SF1:** Total: 201 points

Juries: 81 (12 from Switzerland)

Televote: 120 (12 from Finland, Lithuania, Portugal)

Fifth place**Grand Final:** Total: 245 points

Juries: 143 (12 from Macedonia, Moldova, Portugal)

Televote: 102 (12 from Finland, Lithuania)

Eighth place

• Elina gave Estonia its tenth Top Ten placing to date. In Semi-Final 1 televotes in every country except Macedonia awarded points to *La Forza*.

Who needs LEDs when you can have a psychedelic-like outfit? Elina couldn't move from her spot, but her voice and the effects projected on her outfit were outstanding – and, more importantly, memorable. She fell in love with opera when she was 13, when her mother inspired her to aim for the future. And what could be bigger than Eurovision? She originally wanted to be an astronaut as she loved everything about stars and space. She's now our star!

FINLAND

Song: Monsters
Performer: Saara Aalto
Songwriters: Saara Aalto, Joy Deb, Linnea Deb, Ki Fitzgerald

**FINLAND**

SF1: Total: 108 points
 Juries: 35 (7 from Israel)
 Televote: 73 (12 from Estonia)
 Tenth place

Grand Final: Total: 46 points
 Juries: 23 (6 from Israel)
 Televote: 23 (10 from Estonia)
 25th place

After three misses Finland scraped in to this year's Grand Final, but once there only four countries voted for *Monsters* in the televote, leaving the country second-to-last. Finland hasn't finished in the Top Ten since winning the contest with those other monsters.



Second place is the key word regarding Saara – so this time she comes second from last! It wasn't really deserved as her act was very inventive. You had a spinning wheel, strutting, storm trooping, mascara and a backward dive. Yes – the diva and the dive. Who could ask for more? Well apparently the voters wanted more! But at least she got through to the Grand Final which was an achievement for anyone this year!

FRANCE

Song: Mercy
Performers: Madame Monsieur
Songwriters: Emilie Satt, Jean-Karl Lucas

**FRANCE**

Grand Final: Total: 173 points
 Juries: 114 (12 from Ukraine)
 Televote: 59 (8 from Belgium)
 13th place

Mercy was the third consecutive French entry to finish inside the top 20 after a spate of poor results, but 13th place was a disappointment for one of the favourites.



Why France hasn't won this contest a dozen times since its last victory is beyond me. Year after year the French enter such powerful or quirky acts but the top slot always eludes them. Anyway, here we had the perfect duo, where hubby played the guitar and let the missus do all the talking. Sounds like a perfect marriage. So glad this serious song with a powerful message was sung in French – the best language for song!

GEORGIA

Song: For You
Performers: Iriaio
Songwriters: Irina Sanikidze, David Malazonia, Mikhell Mdinaradze

**GEORGIA**

SF2: Total: 24 points
Juries: 11 (8 from Ukraine)
Televote: 13 (5 from Latvia, Ukraine)
18th (last) place

• Eighteenth and last place in a semi-final is Georgia's worst-ever result. Only three juries and three countries' televotes awarded points to *For You*.

The Georgians must be congratulated for trying something different. It's just a shame that many semi-final viewers seem to be stuck in the *Diggi-Loo Diggi-Ley* mode. Musically this was one of the most unique sounds ever to feature in Eurovision. Surely such bravery should be rewarded? If their harmonies were off-key, then that could explain their low rating, but everyone was perfectly in tune.



GERMANY

Song: You Let Me Walk Alone
Performer: Michael Schulte
Songwriters: Michael Schulte, Thomas Stengaard, Katharina Müller, Nisse Ingwersen

**GERMANY**

Grand Final: Total: 340 points
Juries: 204 (12 from Denmark, Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland)
Televote: 136 (12 from Denmark, Netherlands)
Fourth place

• After two last places – including a 'nul points' – followed by second-to-last a year ago, German fortunes were dramatically restored with fourth place for *You Let Me Walk Alone*. This was the 15th time Germany has finished in the top four.



If any song really deserved to win the contest this year, it had to be this excellent ballad. Michael really delivered his touching tribute to his late father who died when he was a teenager. A magnificent animated backdrop just added to the emotion of this powerful performance. Michael just had enough angst in his voice to tell his story perfectly. Brilliant. Was there a dry eye in the house?

GREECE**Song:** Oniro Mou (My Dream)**Performer:** Yianna Terzi**Songwriters:** Yianna Terzi, Aris Kalimeris, Michalis Papathanasiou, Dimitris Stamatou**GREECE****SF1:** Total: 81 points

28 (10 from Azerbaijan)

53 (12 from Cyprus)

14th place

- Greece failed to qualify for the Grand Final for only the second time and, surprisingly, *Oniro Mou* received only eight points from the Cyprus jury.



Yianna looked like a Vestal Virgin as she sang her song with much passion. This was obviously the year where you either loved the ethnic sound or not. But this was one of the best! And the act was pure Eurovision with smoke, special lighting effects and, of course, the wind machine that showed off her long hair and sleeves. Her blue palm by the way was meant to represent Greece (no Smurfs were harmed). Should've been in the Grand Final!

HUNGARY**Song:** Viszlát Nyár (Goodbye Summer)**Performer:** AWS**Songwriters:** Örs Siklósi, Bence Brucker, Dániel Kókényes, Áron Veress, Soma Schiszler**HUNGARY****SF2:** Total: 111 points

23 (6 from Poland)

88 (12 from Serbia)

Tenth place
Grand Final: Total: 93 points
Juries: 28 (8 from Azerbaijan)
Televote: 65 (12 from Serbia)
21st place

- Hungary maintains its strong record of qualifying for the Grand Final, AWS making it eight in a row. The country beat Romania by just four points in Semi-Final 2 to secure the tenth Grand Final berth, ending Romania's 100% record of qualification.



Hurrah for a bit of head-banging! Hungary seems to do no wrong lately. And the contest could do with more hard rock numbers. Of course the lead singer probably went over the top by trying to pull his hair out, and running barefoot around the stage is never a good idea. And everyone's hair must've been singed by all the pyros. Why so much screaming? Apparently it's the best way to express emotion say AWS...

ICELAND

Song: Our Choice
Performer: Ari Ólafsson
Songwriter: Thorunn Clausen

**ICELAND**

SF1: Total: 15 points
Juries: 15 (7 from Belarus)
Televote: 0
19th (last) place

Following three consecutive non-qualifiers 2018 brought a new low for Iceland, finishing in last place in Semi-Final 1 and the only country in either of the semi-finals or the Grand Final to score zero points in the televote.



Bless him – Ari did try hard, but the only memorable thing about this act was his snazzy white jacket with the unique red stripes – which was meant to signify the pain (red) that lies beneath the surface (white). The only pain I could see was this talented young man having to sing this old-fashioned ballad that was going nowhere. To breathe properly Ari has a technique to empty his stomach of wind. Let's not go there.

IRELAND

Song: Together
Performer: Ryan O'Shaughnessy
Songwriters: Ryan O'Shaughnessy, Mark Caplice, Laura Elizabeth Hughes

**IRELAND**

SF1: Total: 179 points
Juries: 71 (12 from Lithuania)
Televote: 108 (12 from Austria, Belgium, Spain)
Sixth place

Grand Final: Total: 136 points
Juries: 74 (10 from Czech Republic)
Televote: 62 (10 from United Kingdom)
16th place

After four consecutive non-qualifiers, Ireland sailed in to this year's Grand Final, which was a huge relief for Eurovision's biggest winner to date. Sixteenth place was the country's best result since Jedward's Lipstick in 2011.



Well done to the Irish for showing that love means love no matter who's doing the loving. Chinese TV banned this song as it featured a male gay couple, so the EBU banned the Chinese broadcaster. (The Russians said they were just good friends.) Ryan deserved his ticket to the Grand Final, because this excellent gentle ballad was the best Irish song in ages. It was perfectly staged with the dancers expertly telling the story of the song.

ISRAEL

Song: TOY
Performer: Netta
Songwriters: Doron Medalie, Stav Beger

**ISRAEL**

SF1: Total: 283 points
 Juries: 167 (12 from Armenia, Austria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Finland, Spain)
 Televote: 116 (12 from Czech Republic)

Grand Final: Total: 529 points
 Juries: 212 (12 from Austria, Czech Republic, Finland, France, San Marino)
 Televote: 317 (12 from Australia, Azerbaijan, France, Georgia, Moldova, San Marino, Spain, Ukraine)

First place
 ● Israel moves up to sixth place in the overall leader board. In Semi-Final 1 all but one country voted for Israel in both the jury vote and the public vote. In the Grand Final Israel was third with the juries but won the televote by a wide margin.

Netta said that the chicken clucks were meant to show independence, empowerment – a bit of an antidote to bullying – which she says comes from fear and stepping on people's toes. She doesn't really need lyrics – she likes making sounds and improvising. Well good for her and for promoting the K-Pop genre for Eurovision. Though she wasn't a favourite at her national final, she was proud that her entry was a favourite in Lisbon. And what a favourite it proved!

ITALY

Song: Non Mi Avete Fatto Niente (You Did Nothing To Me)
Performers: Ermal Meta & Fabrizio Moro
Songwriters: Ermal Meta, Fabrizio Moro, Andrea Febo

**ITALY**

Grand Final: Total: 308 points
 Juries: 59 (12 from Albania)
 Televote: 249 (12 from Albania, Germany, Malta)

Fifth place
 ● Italy scored astonishingly badly among the juries, coming only 17th, but was third in the televote, only four points behind Cyprus. Overall Italy gained its sixth Top Ten result of the past eight years.



Ah, Italy – when are you going to win the contest again? This anti-war entry would've been a worthy winner – it was just outstanding. Maybe more could've been done with the staging, but the multi-lingual subtitles were a great touch. Listen and read carefully – we should all take the message seriously. If only Eurovision could solve the problems of the world. This was a great show-stopper with the duo displaying great chemistry between them.

LATVIA

Song: Funny Girl
Performer: Laura Rizzotto
Songwriter: Laura Rizzotto

**LITHUANIA**

Song: When We're Old
Performer: Ieva Zasimauskaitė
Songwriter: Vytautas Bikus

**LATVIA**

SF2: Total: 106 points
Juries: 92 (10 from France, Germany, Ukraine,)
Televote: 14 (7 from Georgia)
12th place

After coming last in their semi-final a year ago, this was an improvement for Latvia, but the country has now failed to qualify for the Grand Final for an eighth time in the past ten years. The juries liked *Funny Girl*, but only four countries' televoters were impressed.



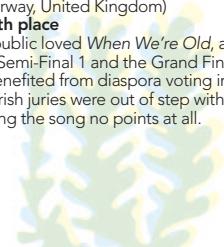
Laura looked lovely in red hot-pants and matching long tail. And her hand gestures were nice. And that was it. Why did the country even bother this year? This mid-tempo number was never going to go far despite a good singer. The act could've done with backing vocalists or dancers to help her along. Nice hair-flinging though. Still, the song did have a good message – Laura said don't be afraid of rejection, otherwise you could miss out on love. Good advice...

LITHUANIA

SF1: Total: 119 points
Juries: 57 (12 from Portugal)
Televote: 62 (12 from Ireland, United Kingdom)
Ninth place

Grand Final: Total: 181 points
Juries: 90 (12 from Croatia)
Televote: 91 (12 from Estonia, Ireland, Latvia, Norway, United Kingdom)
12th place

The UK voting public loved *When We're Old*, awarding it their 12 in both Semi-Final 1 and the Grand Final, and Lithuania again benefited from diaspora voting in Ireland. Both the UK and Irish juries were out of step with their televoters, awarding the song no points at all.



What a nice surprise to see this entry do so well. For once a simple staging worked beautifully and Ieva had just the right angst in her voice to tell the story of her gentle ballad – don't grow old alone – find someone to share your life with. Easier said than done of course, but the sentiment was there. And how lovely to see a 'real' person on stage – no tanned model – just her actual husband. Ieva says she's now a proud veggie.

MACEDONIA**Song:** Lost And Found**Performers:** Eye Cue**Songwriters:** Bojan Trajkovski, Darko Dimitrov**MACEDONIA****SF1:** Total: 24 points

Juries: 18 (8 from Albania)

Televote: 6 (5 from Bulgaria)

18th place

• Eighteenth place in its semi-final for *Lost And Found* was Macedonia's worst-ever result. Only one of the country's past 11 entries has made it to the Grand Final.

Someone really needs to sack their stylist. The Macedonians seem intent on turning their female singers into, well... let's not be too rude! There's nothing wrong with looking sexy, but the outfit Marija wore beneath her pink blouse (as above), even in this age of feminism, was so inappropriate – it looked very disturbing. They're better than this! Anyway, this was an interesting entry, but the deadly key changes were disastrous. The country needs a reboot!

MALTA**Song:** Taboo**Performer:** Christabelle**Songwriters:** Muxu, Christabelle, Thomas G:son, Johnny Sanchez**MALTA****SF2:**

Juries:

Televote: 93 (10 from Romania)

13th place

• Malta scored 'nul points' in the televote in its semi-final last year and this year wasn't much better. Only two countries awarded points in the televote, despite the fact that 14 of the 17 other juries voted for *Taboo*.

The Maltese brought along their own LED screens that produced some very interesting effects. It was a good story-telling act that showed mental illness as something dark and fierce, but which could eventually be cured. Christabelle looked very menacing in her dark outfit – a contrast to the image in the mirror dressed in white. What do you see when you look into a mirror? Well hopefully one day we'll see a Maltese victory!

MOLDOVA

Song: Our Lucky Day
Performers: DoReDos
Songwriters: John Ballard, Philipp Kirkorov

**MOLDOVA**

SF2: Total: 235 points
 Juries: 82 (12 from Romania, Russia)
 Televote: 153 (12 from France, Georgia, Romania, Russia, Ukraine)
Third place

Grand Final: Total: 209 points
 Juries: 94 (12 from Russia)
 Televote: 115 (12 from Romania, Russia)
Tenth place

- Moldova's third-best result to date, and the first time the country has finished in the Top Ten for two years running.

What fun! Pure Eurovision heaven – and in a good way. You had three good singers, three good backing vocalists, a great prop and an act that told the story! Plus the song was top-notch to begin with, as was the actual overall performance. Who doesn't love a saucy hotel-room farce? And all said in lovely prime colours to brighten up our lives. In case anyone is wondering, the extra pair of female legs actually belonged to the male backing singer dressed in red!

MONTENEGRO

Song: Inje (Frost)
Performer: Vanja Radovanovic
Songwriter: Vanja Radovanovic

**MONTENEGRO**

SF2: Total: 40 points
 Juries: 23 (7 from Romania, Serbia)
 Televote: 17 (10 from Serbia)
16th place

- In the televote Montenegro only received points from two of its neighbours. Sixteenth in its semi-final was exactly the same finishing position as last year.

Vanja's uncle (who taught him to appreciate music) and mother once performed together on stage, so he definitely came from a musical family. He was proud to be in such a powerful musical contest as Eurovision. However, it seemed that this decent ethnic number left a lot of viewers cold. It must've been all that frost...

NETHERLANDS

Song: Outlaw In 'Em
Performer: Waylon
Songwriters: Waylon, Ilya Toshinskiy, Jim Beaver

**NETHERLANDS**

SF2:	Total: 174 points
Juries:	127 (12 from Ukraine)
Televote:	47 (7 from Denmark, Norway)
	Seventh place
Grand Final:	Total: 121 points
Juries:	89 (10 from Belgium)
Televote:	32 (12 from Belgium)
	18th place

• The Netherlands' fifth qualifier of the past six years. Only two juries in Semi-Final 2 failed to vote for *Outlaw In 'Em*, which, like Hungary's entry, benefited from being the only song in its genre in the line-up, but televoters were less keen.

Well this certainly wasn't the Common Linnets. As country songs go, this was probably a decent entry, but only if you're into that genre. And if you weren't, maybe you appreciated that new dance craze called 'krumping'. Not convinced, huh? Well, enough voters were, as it got into the Grand Final. Waylon said the message of his song was that you should stand up for what you believe in even if you have to hurt people. Like Eurovision viewers apparently...

NORWAY

Song: That's How You Write A Song
Performer: Alexander Rybak
Songwriter: Alexander Rybak

**NORWAY**

SF2:	Total: 266 points
Juries:	133 (12 from Italy, Sweden)
Televote:	133 (12 from Denmark)
	First place
Grand Final:	Total: 144 points
Juries:	60 (12 from Italy)
Televote:	84 (10 from Belarus)
	15th place

• Despite winning Semi-Final 2, Alexander Rybak failed to follow Johnny Logan in to the record books with a second solo victory. Fewer than a third of the juries voted for Norway in the Grand Final, and fewer than half of the countries in the televote.

Look who's back – not that he ever went away! Dear Alex, now that you've entered the contest again, why not take a well-earned break? Hopefully it's now out of his system as this certainly wasn't the way to write a comeback song! Nevertheless you can't fault Alexander's professionalism. He's an excellent energetic performer who, usually, knows his stuff. But when the Eurovision bug has bitten you, you have no choice but to give in – so he'll be back...

POLAND**Song:** Light Me Up**Performers:** Gromee feat. Lukas Meijer**Songwriters:** Andrzej Gromala, Lukas Meijer, Mahan Moin, Christian Rabb**POLAND****SF2:****Total: 81 points**

21 (5 from Netherlands)

60 (12 from Germany)

14th place

● Poland would have just qualified for the Grand Final if the ranking had been based on the televote alone, but *Light Me Up* was much less popular among the juries. This was the first time Poland has missed out on the Grand Final in five years.



Now why did this impressive electro-pop dance number fail to get through to the Grand Final? It had all the ingredients of a summer club hit. I think the performance scarred the children. Gromee just looked menacing in his black hat – the sandman from your nightmares! Lukas had a decent voice and tried hard to make use of the stage, but his hat wasn't a good idea either. It's a shame the positive theme of the song never shone through.

PORTUGAL**Song:** O Jardim (The Garden)**Performer:** Cláudia Pascoal**Songwriter:** Isaura**PORTUGAL****Grand Final:** Total: 39 points

21 (7 from Lithuania)

18 (10 from Switzerland)

26th (last) place

● From first to last, sadly. After hosting the contest superbly with three great shows, the defending champions finished in last place in their own Grand Final. Only five juries voted for *O Jardim*, and among televoters only Switzerland and France awarded points.



Sometimes you wonder what Eurovision viewers really want or like. This beautiful and soulful gentle love ballad didn't deserve to come last! If anything Portugal should've done the double! Maybe everyone thought they were trying to do another Salvador? So what – a good song is a good song. The two ladies nevertheless gave a great performance. The staging probably let them down – there wasn't much imagination there. All that wasted passion and angst!

ROMANIA

Song: Goodbye**Performers:** The Humans**Songwriters:** Cristina Caramarcu, Alexandru Matei, Alin Neagoe**ROMANIA****SF2:****Total: 107 points**

67 (12 from Hungary, Moldova)

40 (12 from Italy, Moldova)

11th place

- Along with Azerbaijan and Russia, Romania was one of the countries that lost its 100% record of qualifying from the semi-finals to the Grand Final this year, and both Azerbaijan and Romania were runners-up in their respective semi-finals. Only Australia and Ukraine have now qualified from every semi-final they have entered.

The Humans just missed out on getting through to the Grand Final – where they were missed! They had a great solution to the six people on stage only rule – manikins! Creepy, yes – but they were perfect for the story of the song. This was a perfect rock song that started off slowly then exploded into rock goodness. The masks in the act were meant to signify inhumanity – but once you take them off humanity comes back.

RUSSIA

Song: I Won't Break**Performer:** Julia Samoylova**Songwriters:** Netta Nimrodi, Leonid Gutkin, Arie Burstein**RUSSIA****SF2:****Total: 65 points**

14 (7 from Moldova)

51 (12 from Latvia)

15th place

- A first-ever non-qualifier and a worst-ever result – along with the customary chorus of boozing from the audience – greeted Russia's return from self-imposed exile. Only three juries voted for *I Won't Break*.

You can't help but feel sorry for Julia – after all the negative press. But if we're honest, this entry just didn't cut the mustard. And the song was completely wrong for her voice. Sticking her on top of a mountain was also a dreadful idea. Why be embarrassed to show her wheelchair? It was actually her dream to enter Eurovision and she wanted everyone's dreams to come true for them. By the way, the two dancers were both 'under-age', so had to be accompanied by their mothers.

SAN MARINO

Song: Who We Are**Performers:** Jessika feat. Jenifer Brening**Songwriters:** Mathias Strasser, Christof Straub, Zoe Straub, Jenifer Brening, Stefan Moessle**SAN MARINO****SF2:** Total: 28 points

Juries: 14 (5 from Italy, Romania)

Televote: 14 (12 from Malta)

17th place

- Only two countries' televoters awarded points to San Marino, but one of these – Malta – awarded the 12, saving Eurovision's littlest competitor from last place in Semi-Final 2. Only one of San Marino's nine entries to date has made it to the Grand Final.



What do people have against this little country? This entry was a perfect blend of pop and rap. And those little 'bots were fab. Hands up who doesn't want one for Christmas? Jessika and Jenifer had great chemistry between them and their different styles really meshed well together. The message of their song was against bullying – there's light at the end of the tunnel and you can be whatever you want to be!

SERBIA

Song: Nova Deca (New Children)**Performers:** Sanja Ilic & Balkanika**Songwriters:** Danica Krstajic, Aleksandar Sanja Ilic, Tatjana Karajanov Ilic**SERBIA****SF2:** Total: 117 points

Juries: 45 (12 from Montenegro)

Televote: 72 (12 from Montenegro, Slovenia)

Ninth place**Grand Final:** Total: 113 points

Juries: 38 (12 from Montenegro)

Televote: 75 (12 from Croatia, Montenegro,

Slovenia, Switzerland)

19th place

- Eight of Serbia's 11 entries have qualified for the Grand Final. Although only nine countries' televoters voted for *Nova Deca* in the Grand Final, four of these awarded the 'douze points'. Among the juries almost all of Serbia's points came from Eastern Europe.



This is all white gowns and tall drums and... quite stunning – if you like the Balkan ethnic sound with a bit of pop thrown in. It was a brave effort from Serbia – that worked – as most of Europe just doesn't get the Balkan sound. But the performance here was top notch and very classy. The haunting sound they produced deserved to be heard in the Grand Final!

SLOVENIA**Song:** Hvala, Ne! (Thank You, No!)**Performer:** Lea Sirk**Songwriters:** Lea Sirk, Tomy DeClerque**SLOVENIA****SF2:** Total: 132 points67 (8 from Netherlands, Sweden)
65 (10 from Montenegro)**Eighth place****Grand Final:** Total: 64 points41 (7 from Czech Republic)
23 (8 from Serbia)**22nd place**

For many Slovenia was a surprise qualifier, but *Hvala, Ne!* made it out of its semi-final fairly comfortably, with jury points from 13 countries, the third time Slovenia has made the Grand Final in the past five years.

Oh dear – what went wrong? The music suddenly stopped! Oh dear – what went wrong? The music came back! Yes, this was another Marmite song. Lea (or her delegation) cleverly realised that she had to do something different to set her song apart from the more impressive entries. And the ploy worked. Lea looked dashing with her pink hair but it was meant to be bright red – it went wrong during the dyeing process.

SPAIN**Song:** Tu Canción (Your Song)**Performers:** Amaia & Alfred**Songwriters:** Raul Gomez Garcia, Sylvia Ruth Santoro Lopez**SPAIN****Grand Final:** Total: 61 points43 (10 from Romania)
18 (12 from Portugal)**23rd place**

Seven of Spain's last ten entries – and all of the last four – have finished outside the top 20 in the Grand Final. Second in the running order wouldn't have helped and in the televote only three countries voted for *Tu Cancion*, although this included a 12 from Portugal.

Now stop being mean to these two! Can't you tell they're in love? You know you want to admit that Amaia and Alfred looked so sweet together that it was almost sickening. But it was a fab love song, with their different vocals really working well together. I kept hoping Alfred would propose halfway through the song. That would've been a Eurovision first – a proposal in mid song! It would've been a perfect ending to this pre-night act (if she said "yes" of course).

SWEDEN**Song:** Dance You Off**Performer:** Benjamin Ingrosso**Songwriters:** MAG, Louis Schoorl, K Nita, Benjamin Ingrosso**SWEDEN****SF2:** Total: 254 points**Juries:** 171 (12 from Australia, Georgia, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, San Marino, Serbia, Slovenia)**Televote:** 83 (10 from Denmark, Norway)**Second place****Grand Final:** Total: 274 points**Juries:** 253 (12 from Armenia, Australia, Cyprus, Georgia, Germany, Latvia, Serbia, Slovenia)**Televote:** 21 (7 from Denmark)**Seventh place**

● Sweden was the runner-up in Semi-Final 2 and was second after the jury vote in the Grand Final, but scored incredibly badly among televoters on the big night: only seven out of 42 countries voted for *Dance You Off* in the public vote.

What is it about Sweden that they can enter any old rubbish and it'll do well? Not that this year's entry was rubbish – far from it – but the public on the big night had the right idea. The juries just seemed seduced by this up-tempo number. He's another performer who decided to leave his backing vocalists off stage to get all the glory of dancing in front of some bright tubes. But apparently he's inviting you to join his club...

SWITZERLAND**Song:** Stones**Performers:** ZIBBZ**Songwriters:** Laurell Barker, Corinne Gfeller, Stefan Gfeller**SWITZERLAND****SF1:** Total: 86 points**Juries:** 59 (8 from Belgium, Israel)**Televote:** 27 (8 from Austria)**13th place**

● Ten of Switzerland's past 12 entries have failed to make it to the Grand Final, including all of the past four. Twelve out of 18 juries voted for *Stones* in Semi-Final 1, but televoters were less impressed.

Was this too good for Eurovision? *Stones* was an impressive rock song that deserved to have gone through to the Grand Final!

The siblings both gave great performances - Coco looked very cool in her outfit! Now, what was her brother, Stee, up to?

It mattered not, as all eyes were on Coco. The siblings actually grew up apart – she in Switzerland and he in the UK. Apparently Mikolas from the Czech Republic helped iron Coco's outfit for a pre-show event.

UKRAINE**Song:** Under The Ladder**Performer:** MELOVIN**Songwriters:** Mike Ryais, MELOVIN**UKRAINE****SF2:****Total: 179 points**Juries: 65 (10 from Montenegro)
Televote: 114 (12 from Poland)**Sixth place****Grand Final:** Total: 130 points

Juries: 11 (6 from Azerbaijan)

Televote: 119 (12 from Belarus, Czech Republic, Poland)

17th place

Under The Ladder didn't bring bad luck for Ukraine, who are now the contest's most successful qualifier, having won a place in the Grand Final with all 12 of their entries that have featured in semi-finals. However, on the big night Ukraine placed last among the juries, only two of whom voted for the song that opened the show.

What some people will do to get noticed – like setting the stage on fire! Well, why not? It's better than wearing one contact lens or pretending to be a vampire. But we really shouldn't question these things – it's what keeps Eurovision alive – or dead if you're a goth emerging out of a coffin-like piano. If we didn't have this weirdness we would feel deprived. MELOVIN says he doesn't act on stage – he lives on stage! So there. Great song by the way.

UNITED KINGDOM**Song:** Storm**Performer:** SuRie**Songwriters:** Nicole Blair, Gil Lewis, Sean Hargreaves**UNITED KINGDOM****Grand Final:** Total: 48 points

Juries: 23 (8 from Israel)

Televote: 25 (10 from Ireland)

24th place

The UK suffered another hammering in the voting this year, finishing in 24th place for the third time in four years and the ninth time we have placed outside the top 20.

The UK and Irish televoters traded ten points, and Storm also received six points from Australian televoters, the highest points they have so far awarded the UK, which may have been their 'fair go' award after the stage invasion.

Let's thank SuRie for being absolutely fantastic! She was by far one of the best performers in the contest – and her professionalism shone through when she was man-handled by that intruder on stage! If anything let her down it was that Storm just didn't hit the right spot with the viewers. But this anthemic song did deserve to do better. SuRie could not have given any more than what she did. Bravo!

Medals table 1956-2018

Compiled by David Ransted

Rank	Movement from last year	Country	First year entered	Latest year entered	Number of years entered	Best result	Best year(s)	1st	2nd	3rd	Top 3	% in top 3	4th	5th	Top 5	% in top 5
1st	►	Ireland	1965	2018	52	1st	1970, 1980, 1987, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1996	7	4	1	12	23%	3	3	18	35%
2nd	►	Sweden	1958	2018	58	1st	1974, 1984, 1991, 1999, 2012, 2015	6	2	5	13	22%	2	8	23	40%
3rd	►	United Kingdom	1957	2018	61	1st	1967, 1969, 1976, 1981, 1997	5	15	2	22	36%	6	1	29	48%
4th	►	France	1956	2018	61	1st	1958, 1960, 1962, 1969, 1977	5	4	7	16	26%	7	2	25	41%
5th	►	Luxembourg	1956	1993	37	1st	1961, 1965, 1972, 1973, 1983	5	0	2	7	19%	5	1	13	35%
6th	▲	Israel	1973	2018	41	1st	1978, 1979, 1998, 2018	4	2	1	7	17%	2	2	11	27%
7th	▼	Netherlands	1956	2018	59	1st	1957, 1959, 1969, 1975	4	1	1	6	10%	2	2	10	17%
8th	►	Denmark	1957	2018	47	1st	1963, 2000, 2013	3	1	3	7	15%	2	5	14	30%
9th	►	Norway	1960	2018	57	1st	1985, 1995, 2009	3	1	1	5	9%	3	3	11	19%
10th	►	Germany	1956	2018	62	1st	1982, 2010	2	4	5	11	18%	4	2	17	27%
11th	►	Spain	1961	2018	58	1st	1968, 1969	2	4	1	7	12%	2	1	10	17%
12th	►	Switzerland	1956	2018	59	1st	1956, 1988	2	3	3	8	14%	5	2	15	25%
13th	►	Italy	1956	2018	44	1st	1964, 1990	2	2	5	9	20%	2	5	16	36%
14th	►	Ukraine	2003	2018	15	1st	2004, 2016	2	2	1	5	33%	1	0	6	40%
15th	►	Austria	1957	2018	51	1st	1966, 2014	2	0	1	3	6%	1	4	8	16%
16th	►	Russia	1994	2018	21	1st	2008	1	4	3	8	38%	0	1	9	43%
17th	►	Belgium	1956	2018	60	1st	1986	1	2	0	3	5%	4	2	9	15%
18th	►	Monaco	1959	2006	24	1st	1971	1	1	3	5	21%	3	2	10	42%
19th	►	Turkey	1975	2012	34	1st	2003	1	1	1	3	9%	3	0	6	18%
20th	►	Azerbaijan	2008	2018	11	1st	2011	1	1	1	3	27%	1	1	5	45%
21st	►	Greece	1974	2018	39	1st	2005	1	0	3	4	10%	0	2	6	15%
22nd	►	Estonia	1994	2018	24	1st	2001	1	0	1	2	8%	1	1	4	17%
23rd	►	Latvia	2000	2018	19	1st	2002	1	0	1	2	11%	0	1	3	16%
24th	►	Serbia	2007	2018	11	1st	2007	1	0	1	2	18%	0	0	2	18%
25th	►	Yugoslavia	1961	1992	27	1st	1989	1	0	0	1	4%	3	0	4	15%
26th	►	Finland	1961	2018	52	1st	2006	1	0	0	1	2%	0	0	1	2%
27th	►	Portugal	1964	2018	50	1st	2017	1	0	0	1	2%	0	0	1	2%
28th	►	Malta	1971	2018	31	2nd	2002, 2005	0	2	2	4	13%	0	1	5	16%
29th	►	Iceland	1986	2018	31	2nd	1999, 2009	0	2	0	2	6%	1	0	3	10%
30th	►	Bulgaria	2005	2018	12	2nd	2017	0	1	0	1	8%	1	1	3	25%
31st	▲	Cyprus	1981	2018	35	2nd	2018	0	1	0	1	3%	0	3	4	11%
32nd	▼	Australia	2015	2018	4	2nd	2016	0	1	0	1	25%	0	1	2	50%
33rd	▼	Poland	1994	2018	21	2nd	1994	0	1	0	1	5%	0	0	1	5%
34th	▼	Serbia & Montenegro	2004	2005	2	2nd	2004	0	1	0	1	50%	0	0	1	50%
35th	▼	Romania	1994	2018	19	3rd	2005, 2010	0	0	2	2	11%	1	0	3	16%
36th	▼	Bosnia & Herzegovina	1993	2016	19	3rd	2006	0	0	1	1	5%	0	0	1	5%
37th	▼	Moldova	2005	2018	14	3rd	2017	0	0	1	1	7%	0	0	1	7%
38th	▼	Croatia	1993	2018	24	4th	1996, 1999	0	0	0	0	0%	2	1	3	13%
39th	▼	Armenia	2006	2018	12	4th	2008, 2014	0	0	0	0	0%	2	0	2	17%
40th	▼	Hungary	1994	2018	16	4th	1994	0	0	0	0	0%	1	1	2	13%
41st	►	Albania	2004	2018	15	5th	2012	0	0	0	0	0%	0	1	1	7%
42nd	►	Lithuania	1994	2018	19	6th	2006	0	0	0	0	0%	0	0	0	0%
43rd	►	Belarus	2004	2018	15	6th	2007	0	0	0	0	0%	0	0	0	0%
44th	▲	Czech Republic	2007	2018	7	6th	2018	0	0	0	0	0%	0	0	0	0%
45th	▼	Slovenia	1993	2018	24	7th	1995, 2001	0	0	0	0	0%	0	0	0	0%
46th	▼	Georgia	2007	2018	11	9th	2010, 2011	0	0	0	0	0%	0	0	0	0%
47th	▼	Macedonia	1998	2018	18	12th	2006	0	0	0	0	0%	0	0	0	0%
48th	▼	Montenegro	2007	2018	10	13th	2015	0	0	0	0	0%	0	0	0	0%
49th	▼	Slovakia	1994	2012	7	18th	1996	0	0	0	0	0%	0	0	0	0%
50th	▼	Morocco	1980	1980	1	18th	1980	0	0	0	0	0%	0	0	0	0%
51st	▼	San Marino	2008	2018	9	24th	2014	0	0	0	0	0%	0	0	0	0%
52nd	►	Andorra	2004	2009	6	12th, SF	2007	0	0	0	0	0%	0	0	0	0%

Finishing positions 1956-2018

Compiled by David Ransted

	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989		
Albania	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-					
Andorra	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-					
Armenia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-					
Australia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-					
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	20	21	5			
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	11	18=	19		
Bosnia & Herzegovina	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-					
Bulgaria	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-					
Croatia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-					
Cyprus	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	5	16	15	16=	20	7	DQ	11			
Czech Republic	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-					
Denmark	-	3	8	5	10=	5=	10=	1	9	7	14	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	16	6	14	11=	17	17	4	11	6	5=	3	3		
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	15	20	7		
France	UU	2	1	3	1	4	1	5=	4=	3	16	3	3	1=	4=	10	11	15=	DNS	4	2	1	3	3	11	3	-	8	8	10	17	14	10	8		
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	2	14	14		
Greece	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11	-	13	5	8	8	13	8	DNS	14	-	16=	DNS	10	17	9=		
Hungary	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-					
Iceland	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	16	16	16	22				
Ireland	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	4=	2	4	7=	1	11	15	10=	7=	9	10	3	5	5	1	5	11	-	2	6	4	1	8	18	
Israel	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	7=	11	6	11	1	1	-	7	2	2	-	5	19	8	7	12	
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	-	3	12=	9=		
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	21	4	20		
Macedonia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Malta	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	18	18	-	DNS	12	DNS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
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	5=	9	15		
Norway	-	-	-	-	-	4=	7	10=	13=	8	13=	3	14=	13=	16	-	17	14	7	14=	18	18	15	20	11	16	20	12	9=	17	1	12	9	5	17	
Poland	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			
Portugal	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13=	13=	13	12=	11=	15	-	9	7	10=	14=	16	12	14	17	9	7	18=	13	11	18	14	18	16=		
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	19	11	6	
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	12	12=	4		
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	17	1	13		
Turkey	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	19	-	-	18=	DNS	15	18=	15	19=	12	14=	9	22	15	21
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	13	2	2		
Yugoslavia	-	-	-	-	-	8	4=	11	13	12	7=	8=	7=	13=	11	14=	9	15=	12	13=	17	-	-	-	-	15	14	4	18	-	11	4	6	1		
	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	196																														

EUROFACTS

Finishing positions 1956-2018

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018		
Albania	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	16	14 SF	17 SF	17	17	16	14 SF1	5	15 SF2	15 SF1	17	16 SF2	14 SF1	11	
Andorra	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	18 SF	23 SF	23 SF	12 SF	16 SF1	15 SF1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Armenia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	8	4	10	7	12 SF1	-	-	18	4	16	7	18	15 SF1	
Australia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	2	9	20			
Austria	10	22	10	14	17	13	10=	21	-	10	14	-	18	6	21	21 SF	-	27 SF	-	-	-	18	18 SF1	14 SF1	1	26	13	16	3		
Azerbaijan	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	3	5	1	4	2	22	12	17	14	11 SF1		
Belarus	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9=SF	13 SF	22 SF	6	17 SF2	13 SF1	24	14 SF2	16 SF2	16	16	12 SF1	12 SF2	17	16 SF1	
Belgium	12	16	20	25	-a	20	16=	-	6	12=	24	-	13=	2	22	22 SF	12 SF	26 SF	17 SF1	17 SF1	6	11 SF2	17 SF1	12	14 SF1	4	10	4	12 SF1	25	
Bosnia & Herz.	-	-	-	16	15	19	22	18=	-	7	-	14	13=	16	9	14	3	11	10	9	17	6	18	-	-	-	11 SF1	-	-		
Bulgaria	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	19 SF	17 SF	5	11 SF2	16 SF1	15 SF2	12 SF2	11 SF2	12 SF2	-	-	4	2	14	
Croatia	-	-	-	15	16	6	4	17	5	4	9	10	11	15	13	11	12	16 SF	21	18	13 SF2	15 SF1	12 SF2	13 SF1	-	-	23	13	17 SF1		
Cyprus	14	9	11	19	11	9	9	5	11	22	21	-	6	20	5	18	15 SF	15 SF2	14 SF2	21	18 SF2	16	15 SF1	-	-	22	21	21	2		
Czech Republic	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13 SF2	25	13 SF1	6			
Denmark	8	19	12	22=	-	5	DNQ	16	-	8=	1	2	24	-	13 SF	10	18	19 SF	15	13	4	5	23	1	9	13 SF1	17 SF2	20	9		
Estonia	-	-	-	DNQ	24	-	5	8	12=	6	4	1	3	21	11= SF	20 SF	18 SF	22 SF	18 SF1	6	14 SF1	24	6	20	12 SF1	7	18 SF1	14 SF2	8		
Finland	21=	20	23	17	22	-	23	-	15	-	18=	-	20	-	14 SF	18 SF	1	17	22	25	11 SF1	21	12 SF1	24	11	16 SF1	15 SF1	12 SF2	25		
France	2=	2	8	4	7	4	19	7	24	19	23	4	5	18	15	23	22	23	19	8	12	15	22	23	26	25	6	12	13		
Georgia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	11	DNS	9	9	14 SF2	15 SF2	11	20	11 SF1	18 SF2		
Germany	9	18	16	18	3	23	DNQ	18=	7	3	5	8	21	11=	8	24	15	19	23	20	1	10	8	21	18	27	26	25	4		
Greece	19	13	5	9	14	12	14	12=	20	-	-	3	17	17	3	1	9	7	3	7	8	7	17	6	20	19	16 SF1	19	14 SF1		
Hungary	-	-	-	DNQ	4	22	DNQ	12=	23	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	-	9	19 SF2	15 SF2	-	22	24	10	5	20	19	8	21		
Iceland	4	15	7	13	12	15	13	20	-	2	12	22=	-	8=	19	16 SF	13 SF	13 SF	14	2	19	20	20	20	17	15	15 SF2	14 SF1	15 SF1		
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Israel	18	3	6	24	-	8	DNQ	-	1	5	22	16	12	19	1= SF	4	23	24 SF	9	16	14	15 SF2	13 SF1	14 SF2	9	14	23	1	1		
Italy	1	7	4	12	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	9	7	21	3	16	6	5	
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Lithuania	-	-	-	-	25	-	-	-	-	20	-	13	23	-	16 SF	25 SF	6	21	16 SF2	23	12 SF2	19	14	22	11 SF2	18	9	17 SF2	12		
Luxembourg	13	14	21	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			
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Malta	-	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	8	23	11 SF2	12	16 SF2	13 SF2		
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Monaco	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	19 SF	24 SF	21 SF	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Montenegro	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	23 SF	14 SF1	11 SF1	-	-	15 SF1	12 SF1	19	13	13 SF1	16 SF1	16 SF2		
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Netherlands	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	2	14 SF1	11	11	18		
Norway	21=	17	18	5	6	1	2	24=	8	14	11	22=	-	4	24	9	14	18 SF	5	1	20	17 SF1	26	4	8	13 SF2	10	15			
Poland	-	-	-	-	2	18	15	11	17	18	-	20	-	7	17	11 SF	11 SF	14 SF	24	12 SF2	13 SF1	19 SF1	-	-	14	23	8	22	14 SF2	-	
Portugal	20	8	17	10	8	21	6	24=	12=	21	-	17	-	22	15 SF	17 SF	19 SF	11 SF	13	15	18	18 SF1	13 SF2	-	11 SF1	14 SF2	-	1	26		
Romania	-	-	-	DNQ	21	-	DNQ	-	22	-	17	-	9	10	18	3	4	13	20	19	3	17	12	13	12	15	DQ	7	11 SF2		
Russia	-	-	-	-	9	17	DNQ	15	-	-	2	12	10	3	11	15	2	3	1	11	11	16	2	5	7	2	3	DNS	15 SF2		
San Marino	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	19 SF1	-	-	16 SF1	14 SF1	11 SF2	24	16 SF2	12 SF1	18 SF2	17 SF2		
Serbia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	6	10 SF2	13	14	3	11 SF1	-	10	18	11 SF2	19	
Serbia & Mont.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	7	DNS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Slovakia	-	-	-	DNQ	19=	-	18	-	21	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	18 SF2	16 SF1	13 SF2	18 SF2	-	-	-	-	-	-	
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Spain	5	4	14	11	18	2	20	6	16	23	18=	6	7	8=	10	21	21	20	16	24	15	23	23	10	25	10	21	22	26	23	
Sweden	16	1	22	7	13	3	3	14	10	1	7	5	8	5	6	19	5	18	18	21	11 SF2	3	1	14	3	1	5	5	7		
Switzerland	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	13 SF2	13	17 SF2	18 SF2	12 SF2	13 SF1		
Turkey	17	12	19	21	-	16	12	3	14	16	10	11	16	1	4	13	11	4	7	4	2	13 SF1	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Ukraine	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	14	1	20	7	2	2	12	10	4	15	3	6	-	1	24	17
United Kingdom	6	10=	2	2	10	10=	8	1	2	12=	16	15	4	26	16	22	19	22	25	5	25	11	25	19	17	24	24	15	24		
Yugoslavia	7	21	13	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018		

Note: DNQ = Did not qualify DNS = Did not start DQ = Disqualified SF = Semi-Final

ONE MAN, ONE VISION



Gordon with
wife, Ann

Gordon Lewis, the outgoing Editor-in-Chief of **Vision**, first started producing the magazine when *Riverdance* was the biggest thing in the Eurovision firmament. At the time, OGAE UK had far fewer members than now, fans generally didn't have the opportunity to go to Eurovision and people wrote letters to the magazine. Over the years, the softly spoken Southampton resident has combined steering **Vision** and OGAE UK through over two decades of change, as well as seeing his young children grow up, graduate from University and enjoy a rewarding career in education, mainly providing careers advice to teenagers. **Marcus Keppel-Palmer** had the opportunity to sit down with Gordon to ask him more about his time at the helm of **Vision**.

MKP: What was your thought process when you put yourself forward to be the editor of **Vision**?

GL: It was early 1995 and **Vision**'s second editor, Steve Middleton, had decided to step down from the role. The late Barry Bowman, who was then OGAE UK President, kept the magazine going while appealing for someone to take over **Vision**. At the time I was coming to the end of my second year at university and, as a mature Eurovision loving undergraduate with too much time on his hands, I decided to volunteer my services expecting there to be many other people wanting to do the same. Needless to say, I was the only one who responded to Barry's pleas, although I never expected to be in post for nearly a quarter of a century!

MKP: Would you do it again, knowing then what you know now?

GL: Would I do it again? Thinking back to those first few years probably not, because it was my sole responsibility to produce **Vision** four times a year and, before email became the usual way of communicating, every handwritten or typed article sent to me had to be carefully checked and word processed before being printed and distributed to members. Today each article is received electronically, print quality photographs can be quickly sourced and I have had the support of Hassan Yusuf, David Ransted and a host of regular contributors, including yourself.

MKP: I think the fact there are so many regular contributors is a testimony to your support as editor. **Vision** has gone

INTERVIEW: GORDON LEWIS ■ ■ ■

through many changes during your years at the tiller. Which are the changes that you feel are the most significant?

GL: The biggest change has been the increase in membership since I became Editor/Editor-in-Chief. Issue 23, which was my first issue at the helm, saw me take just over 100 enveloped and stamped magazines to a post box near my home in two Asda carrier bags. **Vision** is now mailed out from our printer to around 1,500 members as there is no way I could possibly contemplate stuffing and stamping that many envelopes.

Another major change was the introduction of a colour cover, initially as a one-off to celebrate Birmingham hosting the Eurovision Song Contest in 1998.

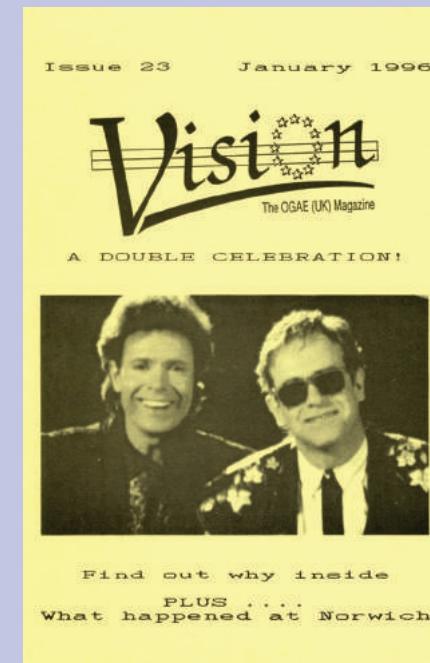
Barry Bowman was somewhat sceptical due to the additional cost involved, so we kept to a fairly simple design that was not unlike the usual black and white covers that were printed on coloured card. By the time of the 1999 contest, I had managed to persuade Barry that colour covers were the way forward and the rest, as they say, is history!

The third significant change was welcoming Hassan Yusuf as the second person on the editorial team in readiness for issue 67. I've just realised that this means Hassan has been involved in producing **Vision** for almost 12 years! Coming from a professional publishing background, Hassan's expertise has allowed **Vision** to become a high quality and full colour quarterly magazine, which is something I could never have achieved on my own. What's more, Hassan and I have worked extremely well together, and we even manage to agree on what should... and sometimes should not... be published.

MKP: I remember that first colour cover. It certainly did revolutionise the magazine at the time. So, what has been



The undergraduate Gordon. And don't think we haven't noticed the earring!



Gordon takes over **Vision**

the biggest challenge over the years to editing **Vision?**

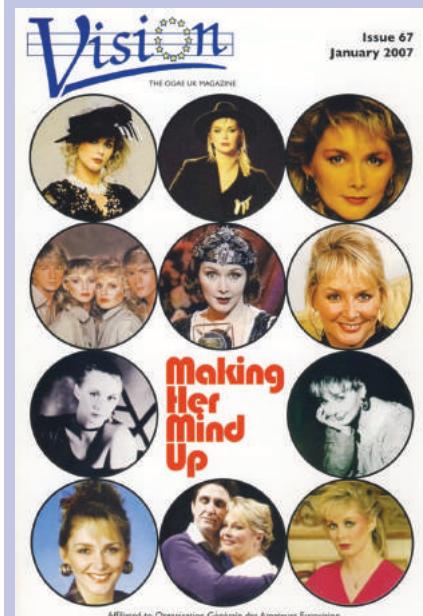
GL: Getting **Vision** out on time! OGAE UK and **Vision** is managed by volunteers and, believe it or not, we all have personal lives that do not revolve around Eurovision. Sadly, not all members realise this and, when we used to publish contact numbers in the magazine, it was not unusual for me to receive telephone calls at any time of the week, night and day, if someone thought that **Vision** was late arriving. This was one of the reasons it was decided not to publish numbers anymore, because we all need some privacy and a small number of members were unable to respect this. Thankfully, any delays can now be announced on OGAE UK's website and Facebook page, while those who are desperately waiting for the latest issue can email in preference to waking me up at 2.00 am in the morning. Yes, it did happen!

MKP: I do remember at one stage we talked about increasing the frequency of **Vision** to more than four editions a year. Over the years, you not only edited **Vision** but have also written considerable amounts. Looking back, which of the many articles you have written has been your favourite and why?

GL: Hmmm. That's a very difficult question to answer because there are so many to choose from. I particularly enjoyed putting together issue 70 which celebrated the United Kingdom's 50th Eurovision song. I was able to interview Patricia Bredin (UK 1957) and, even though this was done by long distance phone call to Patricia's home in Canada, it was an amazing experience to hear this often overlooked but incredible lady talk about her own Eurovision involvement. More recently, I was very satisfied with issue 103 which marked 40 years since Brotherhood of Man (UK 1976)



Vision gets a colour cover



Hassan Yusuf joins Vision

won the contest. Over the years I have met Lee, Martin, Sandra and Nicky several times, but working with them to produce this issue was particularly special for me.

However, I should also mention issue 38 that included an interview with Mike Nolan who, at that time, was performing as part of Buck\$Fizz alongside former Dollar member, David van Day. David had contacted me to say that the band were performing at a holiday camp at Selsey Bill, an hour's drive from my home, and invited me to join them backstage so that I could interview Mike. Little did I know that there was some tension between David and Mike, with Mike refusing to be interviewed in David's presence. Undeterred, Mike found the perfect place for me to interview him... a rather small gents toilet reserved for performers and barely large enough for one person. It was certainly one of the more unusual places to interview a past Eurovision winner!

MKP: OGAE UK has developed significantly since you started editing **Vision**. You have worked with several Presidents over the years. Can you sum up each one in a Eurovision song?

GL: Barry Bowman was the first President that I served under, but none of us were prepared for his sudden and untimely death at the end of 2001. Barry was always supportive of my role, even though he was sometimes a little too cautious when it came to introducing new ideas. I know that Barry always supported the Greek and Israeli entries, and so I want to dedicate the 2002 Israeli song to him. It was the first contest without Barry, meaning that *Light A Candle*, performed by Sarit Hadad, is particularly poignant in memory of him.

Following Barry's death, Richard Crane was willing to become Acting President before being appointed President a few months later. Richard and I became good friends and we both represented OGAE UK at the 2000,



2001, 2002 and 2003 contests. I remember being with Richard at Stockholm's Vasa Museum for one of Eurovision week's many parties in 2000, when we found ourselves talking to Stefan Raab (DE 2000). My lips are sealed when it comes to the actual conversation exchanged between ourselves and the German TV star, but to Richard I can only say *Wadde Hadde Duppe Da!!!*

Another song from 2002 sums up Paul Marks-Jones, who succeeded Richard as OGAE UK President, and that song is *Europe's Living A Celebration* (ES 2002). Richard and I had struggled to keep the OGAE UK Convention going as an annual event, but once Paul had offered his services the convention soon morphed into the increasingly popular celebration that we all know as EuroBash. Alongside his presidency, Paul continued to organise the annual event until last year and, in many ways, has proved that membership of OGAE UK is also providing us all with a legitimate reason to celebrate all things Eurovision!

That just leaves Alasdair Rendall who is the current OGAE UK President. I have no idea if Alasdair likes this song or not, but I'm going to choose the ultra-camp *Flying The Flag* by Scooch (UK 2007). Being OGAE UK President... being part of the OGAE UK committee... is often a thankless task, but Alasdair has the particularly unenviable role of being the first point of contact for numerous media enquiries in the weeks preceding Eurovision: You Decide and Eurovision itself. Whether it's the tabloid press or ITV's *Good Morning Britain*, Alasdair is always there to fly the flag for Eurovision.

MKP: All four of those Presidents have stamped their own identity on OGAE UK. You have been involved in many aspects of the OGAE UK club, not least the conventions, as you mentioned. I will always be thankful to the convention held in Southampton featuring Niamh Kavanagh, which was a watershed

Stefan Raab singing Wadde Hadde Duppe Da



Rosa leads the way singing Europe's Living A Celebration



Flying The Flag with Scooch



moment in my own Eurovision fandom. Which are your favourite memories from those conventions?

GL: I have to begin with the 1997 convention, which you mentioned, which was held in my own city of Southampton. Having met Niamh Kavanagh (IE 1993) in Dublin earlier that same year, I was able to arrange for her to be our special guest and she did not disappoint. Niamh and her agent flew by Ryanair from Dublin to Bournemouth where I met both of them... only to remember that the cash fee had been left at my home. When I explained this to Niamh, she was so relaxed about everything and didn't mind in the least that I made a detour to my home on the edge of Southampton to collect the money before travelling to the historic Star Hotel where the convention was being held. How many other people can say a Eurovision winner has been to their house?!

The following year the convention moved to Manchester and, although most of the organising was carried out by Richard Crane, I arranged for another Irish winner, Linda Martin, to be the special guest. Linda was every inch the professional, but the same cannot be said about the hotel venue! Her flight from Belfast to Manchester had been delayed by several hours and, when Linda arrived at the International Hotel, all she wanted to do was go to her room, freshen up and unwind... except the hotel had double booked her room and there was already someone in it (who, for the record, wasn't attending the convention). After a few heated discussions with various hotel staff, this guest was evicted and Linda was finally able to relax. However, I am still not convinced that the room staff actually had time to change the sheets and towels before Linda took up residence!

One year later the convention moved to Birmingham, where Martin Faulkner was involved in the organisation. As well as Pearl Carr & Teddy Johnson (the latter of whom



Niamh Kavanagh



Pearl Carr & Teddy Johnson

we recently lost), who were celebrating 40 years since performing *Sing Little Birdie* (UK 1959) at Eurovision, Chiara was invited to give a cabaret performance on the Saturday evening. Together with OGAE member Anthony Ping, we met the Maltese songstress at Heathrow, but Chiara was the last person arriving from Valletta to come into the arrivals hall. She had been busy signing autographs for the many Maltese passengers who could not believe that they were flying on the same plane as Chiara herself! But the story didn't end there. I had already arranged to take Chiara to an olde worlde restaurant in Warwick before driving on to Birmingham's Chamberlain Hotel. Unfortunately, our special guest had very different ideas! As we passed Sainsburys, Chiara spotted another shop and exclaimed "fish and chips!" And so it was that Anthony and myself enjoyed a fish and chip lunch with Chiara, while sitting in my car that was parked in the shoppers' car park at a branch of Sainsburys in Warwick.

MKP: I think we all have our memories of Chiara from that convention, not least when she led a late-night trip out to various bars and nightclubs on Hurst Street. If there was one artist you would have liked to have interviewed, who would that be? And is *Lonely Symphony (We Will Be Free)* still your favourite entry?

GL: You have a very good memory! *Lonely Symphony (We Will Be Free)* (UK 1994) is probably the most underrated UK entry of all time, both musically and lyrically. I had also followed Frances Ruffelle for around three years before her Eurovision appearance. The song is still my favourite song from the UK, but it is no longer my favourite overall. That honour currently goes to *Fiumi Di Parole* (IT 1997) which was performed by Jalisse. I got to know Alessandra and Fabio during Dublin's Eurovision week and met up with them immediately after the contest. "I am so



Gordon with Chiara



Frances Ruffelle



Jalisse

sorry you didn't win", I told this lovely Italian couple. "But why?", Alessandra replied, "your country has just won!"

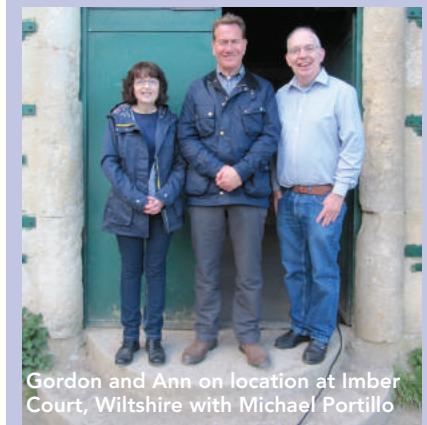
But back to the first part of your question and there are many people I would have loved to interview, and far too many to list here. Instead, I will mention the one that got away, who was none other than Sir Terry Wogan. There was always a love/hate relationship between Sir Terry and Eurovision fans, with the latter often critical of his commentating style while the Irish gentleman was always cynical, if not completely distrustful, towards the fans. I decided to approach Sir Terry's agent and was very close to securing an interview... until someone claiming to be a representative of OGAE UK decided to openly criticise Sir Terry as part of a radio phone-in about Eurovision. This was around 2005 and I remember being at work when my mobile rang, only to be told that the interview would no longer go ahead... and I hadn't even heard the offending broadcast at that stage. The person concerned is no longer a member and I respect everyone's right to have an opinion, but I also believe what I was taught many years ago – "it's not what you say, it's how you say it". Unfortunately, one former member was completely inappropriate in his comments and **Vision** was never again offered an opportunity to interview Sir Terry Wogan.

MKP: I do agree. I would love **Vision** to have interviewed Terry Wogan. Though of course we have had interviews with various BBC commentators, most notably Ken Bruce. In your reviews of the conventions, you often remarked on the welcoming nature of a cup of tea in your reviews of conventions. What is the perfect cup of tea – or do you really drink coffee?

GL: I drink both, depending on the time of day! I wake up to a cup of strong black



Sir Terry Wogan



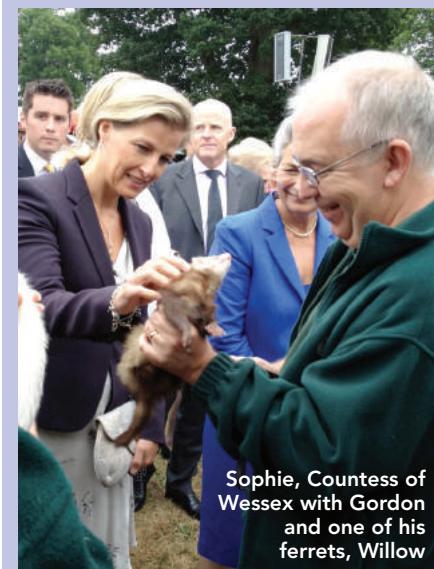
Gordon and Ann on location at Imber Court, Wiltshire with Michael Portillo

tea with no sugar, but at work I tend to drink milky coffee with a teaspoon of sugar. But whether it's tea or coffee, both drinks are always welcoming and can certainly be used to break down barriers and start conversations. That's why I've always thought it very important to have tea (or coffee!) at the start of any event including the convention. It gets people talking and, before you know it, lifelong friendships are being formed!

MKP: You have many interests outside Eurovision. Can you say a few words on these?

GL: Where can I begin? Apart from Eurovision, my main passion is genealogy and my late father's paternal grandmother came from a very wealthy Wiltshire family who had associated with King Henry VIII at the time of the Reformation. As a teenager I thought it would be good to find out about my ancestors, find the hidden family wealth... and never have to work for a living. Unfortunately, I discovered that the wealth and country estate had been lost in the early 19th century to pay the debts of a gambling ancestor who was not very good at backing winners. I do have one claim to fame though. HM Queen Elizabeth II is my 13th cousin once removed... and she is definitely someone I would love to meet and interview!

For the last 12 years, I have also been rescuing ferrets which, despite their reputation, are some of the most affectionate and intelligent creatures that you could ever wish to meet. Sadly, some of the ferrets have been seriously injured before coming to me, but thankfully my youngest daughter is a Registered Veterinary Nurse and, although I still have to pay for treatment, I do get a small discount on veterinary bills. Most years I help out with ferret racing at various country shows which is great fun, and I've



also taken part at ferret shows (like Crufts, but for ferrets!), winning Supreme Champion on a couple of occasions. However, nothing beats meeting HRH Prince Edward and his lovely wife, Sophie, Countess of Wessex, with both of them stroking my ferret back in 2013. Am I allowed to say that Sophie had a far better grip while stroking my ferret than Edward did??!!

MKP: You have modestly not mentioned your recent appearance on television talking about the deserted village of Imber on Salisbury Plain, another passion of yours I know, as your wife, Ann, who came to a number of conventions, has family who were displaced when the village was taken over by the Army in 1943. But moving back to Eurovision – finally, what in your view are the biggest changes in the club and Eurovision over your time editing Vision?

GL: OGAE UK has become far more democratic in recent years, and that is only right and proper. I don't want to criticise previous committees, of which I was a member, but we were viewed as being somewhat distant from the actual membership. That has all changed and, whenever possible, we try to include members in the decision-making processes even though the constitution only allows five elected members to serve on the committee at any one time. We have elections every three years and members can attend an AGM meeting every November. There is a far greater sense of belonging than there was when I first became involved 23 years ago.

As far as the Eurovision Song Contest is concerned, my second issue at the helm was also the pre-contest issue for Oslo 1996. It's amazing to think that just 23 countries took part in those days, although another five countries had already been eliminated at the untelevised pre-qualifying round. A relegation system was then introduced,

before a semi-final in 2004 and two semi-finals since 2008 that have all helped to make the contest much larger than anyone could have imagined when it first began back in 1956. With around 43 countries currently taking part each year, and indications that more are waiting to join, I have some personal reservations about the long-term sustainability of Eurovision, especially if some countries fail to qualify every single year. On the other hand, having so many countries compete has, in my opinion, also increased the quality of songs now being entered. That's not to say there isn't the occasional... let's say "less popular" song, but overall the songs are better now than they ever have been.

And the third biggest change of the last 23 years? I guess it has to be the fact that I am no longer the Editor-in-Chief of **Vision** once this issue reaches people's letterboxes! During these past two decades, I have met so many wonderful people, both performers and fans, all of whom are connected through that strange phenomena called Eurovision. Through my involvement with **Vision**, OGAE UK and the Eurovision Song Contest itself, I have made many friends who have become an integral part of my life. I will definitely miss being directly involved, although Hassan Yusuf has already twisted my arm to write occasional articles for the magazine. And I am also the longest serving Editor/Editor-in-Chief which is something I am immensely proud of, having produced 91

issues (including the one you are reading at this moment). I would be more than happy for someone to nominate me for a CBE, MBE or even the lesser BEM but, more seriously, I would also like to wish Jamie McLoughlin the very best of luck in his new role at the helm of **Vision**. It will take him a very long time to equal my record though... !! ■

SURIE WHIPS UP A STORM!



David Ransted was at the UK Ambassador's residence to capture these images of SuRie and her backing vocalists perform a mini concert for the lucky audience. Ambassador Kirsty Hayes certainly got into the spirit of things!



UK Ambassador
Kirsty Hayes

The BBC's Head of Delegation, Helen Riddell, introduces proceedings



PRESIDENT'S PAGE

A message from OGAE UK President, Alasdair Rendall

Congratulations Israel!

Despite being the pre-contest favourite, the days leading up to the contest saw a number of other countries stake their claim to victory and, by the time Saturday night came along, it seemed like we were set for a very open contest. The results bore that out but, in the end, Netta and her TOY took the crown and – as it stands at the moment – we'll be (somewhere) in Israel for Eurovision 2019. As yet, official confirmation about dates and venues are still to be forthcoming, but hopefully we'll have news in due course.

As for the UK, it was unfortunately another disappointing result. Despite the poor placing for *Storm*, I think we can all agree that SuRie will go down as one of the nicest, friendliest, professional and down-to-earth singers to represent the UK. Whether it was her engagement on social media, her stunning performance at the Ambassador's reception or the calm and professional way she dealt with the idiotic stage invader, she did us proud, and I have a sneaking suspicion that it's not the last we've heard of her (more of that later...).

It is, of course, no secret that the lead-up to Eurovision 2018 was one of the more stressful of recent years but thank you to all of you for bearing with us as we dealt with issues that were often out of our control. As for Lisbon itself, for those who were lucky to get passes to the EuroCafe we ended up with a fun venue with a great atmosphere. We acknowledge that the situation was more difficult for people who did not have EuroCafe passes – for example, the Eurovision Village was poorly organised and queues in the venue were unacceptable. But despite all that, it was great to see such a huge turnout of OGAE UK members and thank you to those of you who came to our UK fan gathering. Once again this was a great success with coverage from the event broadcast on both BBC and ITV national news. Thank you as well to OGAE UK member James Sheen for organising two successful wine tours for club members, sampling the delights of the Setubal region and joined on one occasion by a star of Eurovision 2014, Portugal's Suzy! Following

on from the success of the Chernobyl tour last year in Ukraine, we hope to make tours and events during Eurovision week a more regular occurrence.

We may now be in the off-season, but there are lots of Eurovision events coming up. First and foremost is, of course, our very own Eurobash. This year we're returning to our (and your) preferred date of the first weekend of October (5th and 6th to be precise), but we're in a brand-new city, crossing the Pennines from Manchester to Leeds. We've got a great line-up too – with our guests confirmed as the UK's very own SuRie, Bulgarian pop diva Poli Genova and former Eurovision Executive Supervisor Svante Stockselius! We look forward to hearing their pearls of wisdom and are already very excited about live performances from SuRie and Poli. I hope as many of you as possible are able to attend our new-look Eurobash!

Speaking of a new look, there's a new-look to the OGAE UK Committee following the recent elections. I was delighted, of course, to be returned unopposed for a second term, as was Secretary/Treasurer Simon Bennett, and **Vision** Editor Hassan Yusuf. We congratulate Danny Lynch on his re-election as Ticket Co-ordinator and warmly welcome Jamie McLoughlin as the new Editor-in-Chief, overseeing **Vision** and the website. I must, however, pay an extremely fulsome tribute to his predecessor Gordon Lewis. Gordon has been an absolute rock for the club over more than 20 years and has made **Vision** what it is today – by far the biggest and most professional Eurovision fan club magazine. Thank you, Gordon.

With the new committee taking office this summer, we expect a number of changes to take place over the coming months. We're evolutionary not revolutionary, but do keep an eye on your emails, as well as our website and social media channels, for details of any planned changes.

I hope you all have a lovely summer and, until we meet up again in the autumn for Eurobash, Happy Eurovisioning! ■



It's Netta!

EUROVISION 2018 ANALYSED

Simon Bennett returns with an analysis of this year's Eurovision results.
Photographs by David Ransted.



This year's contest was generally seen as the most open in many years and so it is quite interesting that the eventual winner was the fan favourite that had topped most of the pre-contest polls. Netta's victory was emphatic and she scored consistently with both the juries and the public. Given the openness of this year's contest, much had been made in the run up to the Grand Final of the possibility of the televote winner not emerging as the overall winner. In the end, perhaps surprisingly, many juries placed TOY quite highly thus avoiding any such voting embarrassment.

Voting change

This year, the EBU introduced a further refinement to the jury voting system designed to reduce the influence of individual jury members. The new 'Exponential Weight Model' was touted as a way of ensuring that points reflected the view of the combined jury, reducing the impact of any outlying scores given by any one particular juror. Non-statisticians seem to have struggled to understand the precise details of the new system, but suffice it to say that it places more weight on the scores awarded by jurors to their favourite songs when calculating the final points to be awarded.

Based on the information and data available, the adoption of this new calculation method did have an impact on actual scores. Just looking at the jury points awarded by the UK in the Grand Final, it would seem that the old calculation method would have resulted in the UK's two and one points being awarded to the

Czech Republic and Cyprus rather than to Sweden and Spain. Similarly, it would seem that Albania and Bulgaria, and Norway and Finland would have swapped positions in the final UK tally. No doubt some Eurovision statistician will rework the entire scoreboard using the old calculation method, but it is highly unlikely that the final result would be affected.

UK votes and jury

The EBU has established fairly detailed guidelines as to the composition of national juries and how they should score the songs. The rules state that "There shall be a balance among the members of each National Jury to ensure sufficient representativeness in terms of gender, age and background." It is therefore rather disappointing that the BBC selected two jurors who were 20 years old, one who was 23 and two who were 43. This hardly seems an appropriate range of ages and certainly doesn't accurately reflect the age of Eurovision fans. Surely it would have been possible to select one juror born in each of the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, 1980s and 1990s!

Unlike some national juries, the UK jurors had varying views on the songs, although a definite consensus emerged. Four of the five placed Austria first or second in Semi-Final 1 although juror D placed them eighth. Indeed jurors A and D were responsible for several slightly divergent placings.

In the Grand Final, Hungary unsurprisingly divided opinion, being ranked 25th by one juror but sixth by another. It was also interesting to note



ISRAEL: Emphatic

HOW THE UNITED KINGDOM VOTED

The United Kingdom Jury

- A Richard Beadle (Musical Director/Orchestrator/Composer)
- B Michelle Escoffery (Singer/Songwriter)
- C Natalie Shay (Musician/Artist)
- D Toby Lawrence (Club and Radio DJ)
- E Eady Crawford (Singer)

SEMI-FINAL 1 (The UK did not vote in Semi-Final 2)

	Jury rankings					Jury rank	Televote rank	Televote points
	A	B	C	D	E			
Albania	2	2	3	10	5	4	7	10
Armenia	10	9	6	8	11	9	2	18
Austria	3	4	1	5	1	2	10	11
Azerbaijan	11	18	18	16	7	16	-	15
Belarus	12	14	17	9	8	14	-	14
Belgium	5	8	16	15	15	11	-	13
Bulgaria	4	1	2	3	2	1	12	5
Croatia	6	6	9	13	4	6	5	19
Cyprus	15	10	13	7	17	15	-	3
Czech Rep.	19	15	8	6	19	13	-	9
Estonia	8	3	5	14	6	5	6	7
Finland	16	11	11	2	10	8	3	4
Greece	17	7	7	18	13	12	-	8
Iceland	9	19	14	17	14	17	-	16
Ireland	14	13	10	4	9	10	1	2
Israel	7	5	4	1	3	3	8	6
Lithuania	18	17	15	19	16	19	-	1
Macedonia	13	16	19	12	12	18	-	17
Switzerland	1	12	12	11	18	7	4	12

GRAND FINAL

	Jury rankings					Jury rank	Televote rank	Televote points
	A	B	C	D	E			
Albania	3	5	4	3	8	4	7	16
Australia	13	11	16	22	23	21	-	10
Austria	1	2	1	8	1	1	12	19
Bulgaria	14	1	2	4	5	3	8	5
Cyprus	7	14	15	7	21	12	-	3
Czech Rep.	6	23	8	10	16	11	-	6
Denmark	20	24	22	12	24	24	-	9
Estonia	15	3	7	16	2	5	6	11
Finland	11	7	13	6	6	7	4	14
France	19	13	17	15	15	22	-	21
Germany	22	12	23	21	10	19	-	8
Hungary	9	6	14	18	25	15	-	12
Ireland	18	10	9	2	18	8	3	2
Israel	5	4	5	1	4	2	10	4
Italy	25	25	25	25	17	25	-	17
Lithuania	16	8	12	23	12	17	-	1
Moldova	8	9	18	9	22	14	-	7
Netherlands	10	20	6	17	20	16	-	13
Norway	4	21	3	11	7	6	5	15
Portugal	21	15	19	19	13	23	-	18
Serbia	24	22	24	14	9	20	-	25
Slovenia	12	18	21	5	11	13	-	24
Spain	17	17	11	24	3	10	1	22
Sweden	2	16	20	20	19	9	2	20
Ukraine	23	19	10	13	14	18	-	23



HUNGARY: Divided opinion

predictable, with Israel topping the vote ahead of Cyprus, albeit by just 21 points, with the Czech Republic, Austria and Estonia taking the remaining top five places. Ireland did spectacularly well, finishing in sixth place, arguably reflecting the greater fan participation in semi-final votes.

Bulgaria did not do as well as many expected, perhaps reflecting some slightly suspect vocals. Lithuania received a rapturous reception in the arena, but only scraped through to the Grand Final in ninth place, ahead of Finland's Saara Aalto who threw almost every known Eurovision gimmick into her performance. Interestingly, Saara only received three points from the UK televote, where her relatively high profile might have been expected to earn a few more points.

The remaining qualifying position was taken by Mall from Albania, which must rank as this year's Marmite song given that it left some people totally unmoved while inducing utter rapture in others. Eugent



FINLAND: Gimmicks

that one juror placed Spain third whereas the other four jurors took a much less favourable view. In the end, the UK jury awarded its 12 points to Austria, followed by Israel, Bulgaria and Albania.

The UK televotes in the Grand Final mirrored the vote in the first semi-final with 12 points being awarded to Lithuania and ten to Ireland, both countries with big expatriate communities living in the UK. Lithuania certainly seemed to benefit from Poland not being present in the Grand Final. Cyprus only managed eight points despite the close links between the two countries, with Israel taking seven points.

The Semi-Final of Death

The first semi-final was arguably one of the toughest ever, earning the title of the 'Semi-Final of Death' from some quarters and worthy of being a Grand Final in its own right. In the end, the results were pretty



ALBANIA: Rapture

Bushpepa owed his qualification very much to the national juries, garnering 126 points from no fewer than 20 juries, while only receiving 58 points from televoters in eight countries, all of which have large Albanian expatriate communities.

Had the results been determined by the televoters alone Cyprus would have won ahead of the Czech Republic and Estonia, with Israel and Austria tying for fourth place. The televotes would have seen Greece replacing Albania in the Grand Final. Conversely, had the results been determined solely by the juries, Israel would have won very convincingly, with Belgium and Switzerland replacing Lithuania and Finland as qualifiers.

Despite the perceived closeness of this semi-final, the jury and televote were pretty well aligned with only four countries registering a difference of more than 50

points between the two voting categories, namely Cyprus (84 point difference), Albania (66), Belgium (51) and Israel (51).

Traditional vote deniers, Armenia and Azerbaijan, were drawn in the same semi-final and their voting pattern lived up to its reputation. All five Azeri jurors placed Armenia's Qami last in their rankings, a position mirrored in the televote. Neighbouring Armenia returned the favour with all five jurors similarly unanimous in placing Azerbaijan last, although in the televote, in what must rank as a near miracle, the Armenian public found Iceland's *Our Choice* even more unpalatable than Aisel's song. This is a shameful repetition of the now traditional voting behaviour of these two quarrelling neighbours. The juries at least should behave in a more impartial manner, but it seems politics and national sentiment still rule the day. Ironically, both countries failed to qualify this year, with Azerbaijan in 11th place, just 15 points short of making it to the Grand Final. Votes from Armenia could well have changed this result, although even if Azerbaijan had awarded Armenia a maximum 24 points they would still not have qualified.

Ry-back on top

After Tuesday's epic contest, the second semi-final on Thursday was a less frantic affair and a much more open competition. Norway's Alexander Rybak won the semi-final receiving points from every jury and televote, 133 points from the 20 juries and 133 points from the 20 participating countries' televoters, quite a mathematical achievement!

Sweden finished second, scoring very well from the juries but, as would be revealed in the Grand Final, failing to make the same impact on televoters. The remaining top five places were taken by Moldova, Australia and Denmark, all well ahead of the rest of the field. The race to



NORWAY: Achievement

further six countries' jury and televote scores differing by more than 50 points: Sweden (88), Malta (85), the Netherlands (80), Latvia (78), Moldova (71) and Hungary (65).

The three main Scandinavian countries were all drawn in this semi-final and awarded each other 106 of the 144 points available. This seems generally reasonable given that each had a very strong song, but it is interesting to note that the Swedish and Norwegian juries failed to give Denmark any points at all!

At the other end of the continent, some traditional Balkan voting relationships seem alive and well. Moldova and Romania happily awarded each other a maximum 24 points, and Montenegro awarded Serbia 24 points but only received 17 in return. The Hungarian jury got in on the act by awarding its 12 points to neighbouring Romania. The arguments about shared musical and language traditions are all well and good but it is still interesting to observe these voting patterns.

qualify was particularly tight with just ten points separating Hungary, Romania, Latvia and Malta, with the controversial offering from Hungary grabbing the final qualifying position thanks mainly to the televotes.

The results were much less consistent than in the first semi-final with major discrepancies between jury and televotes. Denmark won the televote ahead of Moldova, with Norway only taking third place. Had the results been determined by the televotes alone, Poland would have replaced the Netherlands in the Grand Final. However, the position would have been radically changed had the jury votes alone been used, with Sweden winning the semi convincingly and Malta, Latvia and Romania going through at the expense of Serbia, Denmark and Hungary.

Denmark received 124 more points from the televoters than from the juries, with a

AUSTRIA: Surprise



AZERBAIJAN; Politics

worrying is the continuing trend for the juries from front-runner countries to award somewhat 'unusual' votes. The Swedish jury's 12 points went to Serbia, while the Cypriot jury gave Israel no points at all, a favour duly returned by the Israeli jury! This did prompt some to wonder if, knowing that their own songs were in a strong position, some juries avoided adding to the points tally of rivals.

There were some interesting jury vote discrepancies between the semi-finals and the Grand Final. Norway in particular only scored 60 points from the juries despite having received 133 points in the semi-final when far fewer points were available. Australia and the Netherlands both scored considerably less than they had in the semis, although Moldova and, particularly, Sweden both increased their jury votes. This phenomenon can probably be explained by the relative strength of the songs in the first semi-final. Indeed only two of the juries' top ten songs came from the weaker second semi-final.

At the end of the jury voting, to many people's surprise, Austria had an 18-point lead over Sweden, with Israel in fourth, Germany in fifth, and Cyprus trailing some 88 points off the lead. Then the real fun started!

The Melodifestival-style voting format is still not to everyone's liking, and the final result is arguably somewhat marred by the announcement of the second song making the winner obvious. It is noticeable that the production team choose not to show a countdown of the remaining points available to try to increase the suspense still further.

The televotes were slightly more predictable than the juries, although there were inevitable surprises for those inside the Eurovision bubble. Many had convinced themselves that Australia was a potential winner and Jessica Mauboy had received a rapturous reception in the arena,

so there was widespread consternation when the song finished last in the televote scoring just nine points. The thousands of Spanish in the arena and the countless more in Lisbon that weekend were similarly devastated when *Su Cancion* finished second last with just 18 points, the same as Portugal. More shocks were to follow, with Sweden's Benjamin Ingrosso finishing in an abysmal 23rd place with just 20 points. After that things settled down and became a bit more predictable, with the possible exception of Italy's surprisingly strong finish.

The televoters of Portugal awarded 12 points to Spain, although this may have had something to do with the invasion of Spanish fans somehow accessing the local voting numbers. There were other examples of traditional neighbourly voting, most notably with the UK and Ireland swapping ten points, and Albania scoring well from its neighbours. Similarly, the diaspora votes were still evident, with Portugal receiving all its televote scores from countries with large Portuguese communities (France and Switzerland). However, the absence of Russia, Belarus and the Caucasus republics from the Grand Final opened up votes that otherwise have traditional homes, with Israel seemingly the prime beneficiary.

As too often in recent years, the points received by the UK were few and far between. SuRie did not manage to score any coveted 12 points but picked up ten from our neighbours across the Irish Sea, as well an eight and a six from the juries in Israel and Italy respectively. The French jury awarded the UK three points and two points were received from each of the juries in Montenegro, Latvia and Croatia. The televoters of Australia delivered six points, with Denmark and Albania both awarding three. The balance of SuRie's score was made up of single points from the televoters of Malta, San Marino and Germany.

The UK eventually finished in 24th place

with 48 points, perhaps not surprising given the field, but SuRie's professionalism, enthusiasm and bravery in the face of the disgraceful stage invasion surely deserved a better result. It seems that the UK's reputation for coming second during the 1960s and 1970s is now matched by the current struggles to escape the bottom of the table.

In the end, Israel stormed to victory with 64 televote points, and 93 overall points ahead of Cyprus. Netta secured points from every country with the notable exception of Estonia, although it is interesting to note that Cyprus' Eleni Foureira went one better and gained points from every single country, giving the island nation their best Eurovision result ever.

Israel and Cyprus inevitably owed their success to scoring well with both the juries and televoters. This gave them the all-important edge over the other strong songs where there were substantial differences between their jury and televote



CYPRUS:
Best ever
result!



UKRAINE:
Opening slot

order, the earliest winning position for many years and continuing the trend of winners coming from the first half of the order rather than the traditionally favoured later positions.

More native languages but English still dominates

Salvador's victory in 2017 was the first non-English language winner since Serbia's Molitva in 2007, and only the fifth winner in 30 years not to include any English lyrics. This, along with Salvador's comments after winning, meant that an increase in the number of entries in native languages was expected, and 13 of this year's 43 songs were indeed in languages other than English. A very respectable nine of these songs made it to the Grand Final, although eight of the eventual top ten songs were sung in English, with the remaining two both being in Italian.

All in all, the 2018 Eurovision Song Contest was one of the most exciting and memorable of recent years. The organisation and staging may have been a little less polished than usual, but the songs were of a generally high quality and the voting was enthralling. The eventual winner, despite being a fan favourite, was something of a surprise as many doubted that it would score well with the juries.

The behaviour of some juries continues to tarnish the voting process but seems impossible to solve. Once again some juries had exactly the effect that they were designed to eliminate when they were re-introduced in 2009, reinforcing rather than compensating for national bias. It is a shame that supposed music industry professionals seem to still be influenced by politics and national prejudice. Nevertheless, the best songs and performances did end up taking the top spots, and the quirky behaviour of jury and televoters just adds to the fun of Eurovision. ■

scores. Jury winner Austria scored 200 points less from the televoters than the professional juries, Sweden scored 232 points less. Conversely, Italy scored 190 points more from the televote than the juries, Denmark 150 points more and the Czech Republic 149 points more.

It's not all in the draw

The contrived running order is still controversial among fans, with many preferring the fairness of a simple draw. However, the production team certainly structured the running order to create a show with great pace and energy. Giving Ukraine the opening slot did slightly seem like an attempt to minimise the chances of returning to Kyiv after all the complications of 2017, and placing Spain second seemed a little cruel.

The winner sang seventh in the running

RETROSPECTIVE 2018 PART 1



Darren Jenkin returns with his often controversial and always tongue in cheek review of the latest Eurovision Song Contest. Prepare to disagree! Photos by **David Ransted** taken at press conferences in Lisbon

No, it really wasn't a dream. Lisbon was finally hosting the Eurovision Song Contest thanks to Salvador's sublime entry of last year. It was great to see him back and looking so much healthier too – and for the second year in a row he sang the best song of the night in *Mano A Mano* as part of the interval act. Sadly, his constant sniping at what he feels is inferior music to his own at the contest is now bordering on musical snobbery and Salvador should be more respectful towards his fellow artists, regardless of any personal opinions he may have.

On the whole RTP (the national broadcaster) did a decent job with the staging and I did not miss the LED screens. Indeed, it seemed to force a few countries into really thinking out of the box and there were more than a few great visual performances on offer. Not so keen on the idea of four female presenters, and only Filomena seemed rehearsed and capable of dealing with the live shows. The Grand Final really dragged on with a ludicrous amount of voting time this year. Too long for even us ardent fans of the show – so casual viewers would've been bored rigid.

Of course, the major incident of the night was the invasion during SuRie's performance by that gutless idiot who scared the living daylights out of me when I saw he had a backpack and momentarily thought that he might detonate something. This really should have been addressed during the live show, along with the explanation of the offer of another chance to sing and SuRie declining. It felt as if it was all being brushed under the carpet. Security at these shows really has to be improved as they are becoming far too frequent. The tribute to Lys Assia was too brief also. A minute could've been taken to show a few photos and play an extract from *Refrain*.

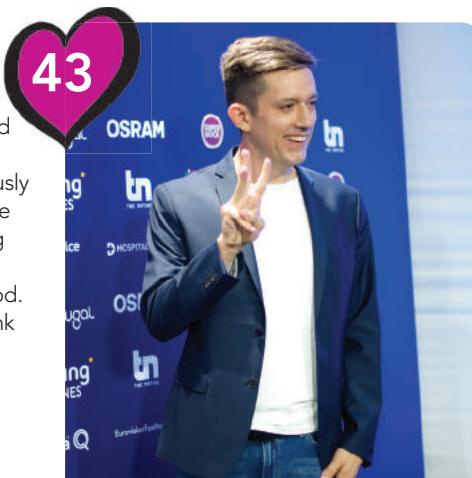
Finally, before I head on to the songs, I just wanted to say thank you to Gordon Lewis for all he has done for **Vision** over the many, many years. He was a fantastic editor to work with and I wish him all the best, while hoping that he enjoys the spare time he now has with his family and ferrets!

MONTENEGRO

Song: *Inje (Frost)*

Performer: Vanja Radovanovic

So basically there was nothing particularly bad with this entry. I just felt that I had heard this about four or five times in the contest previously and by stronger artists. Vanja looked ill at ease on stage and quite pained at times. The song meandered and never really got going, and then he fluffed one of his final notes. Not good. If he wore a hood matching his suit then I think we may have found someone to play Andy Pandy for the 21st century.



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BELARUS

Song: *Forever*

Performer: ALEKSEEV

The problem with Belarus' entry was the pointless revamping of the song just before the contest where a decent pop song was slowed into a more balladlike form. For me it just totally lost its form and veered into a mundane zone. Plenty to watch though... I mean, what on earth was that all about? It looked like he could've grown those roses in his eyebrows. If anybody ever wants to visit ALEKSEEV I'm not too sure of his home address, but I do know that he has a back garden...



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NORWAY

Song: *That's How You Write A Song*

Performer: Alexander Rybak

I was never *Fairytale*'s biggest fan, but Alexander staged it so well back in Moscow and I got the appeal of both him and the song. Now older, the *Glee* style staging looked a tad contrived and, if I'm to be honest, it all got a little nauseating on screen and he really carries an air of smugness. Any song with such a lectured title needs to be bang on for effect, but it was irritating and, as he only made number 40 here, that's definitely not how to write a song!



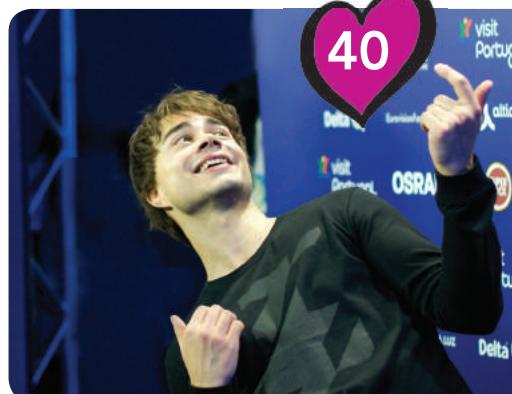
41

POLAND

Song: *Light Me Up*

Performers: Gromee feat. Lukas Meijer

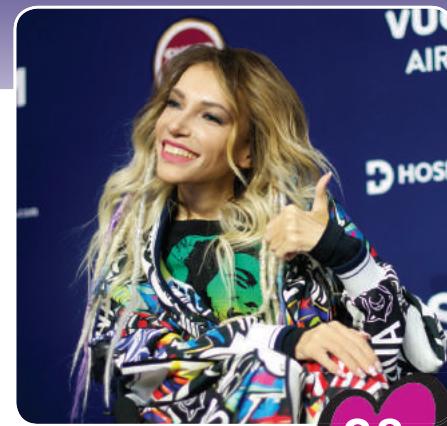
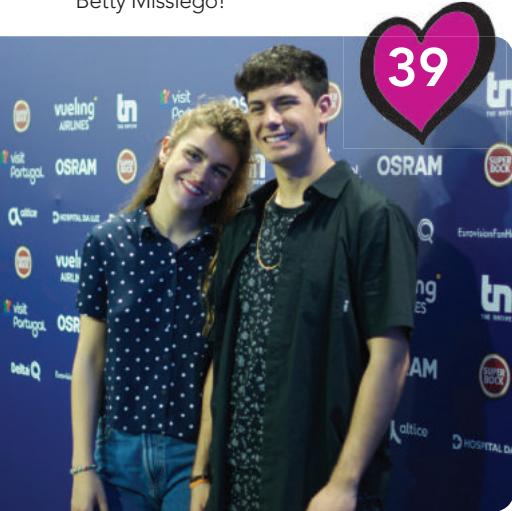
I was glad this failed to make the Grand Final. As tunes go it was pretty catchy but, after seeing a video of their win in the national final, I just knew that this would be a vocal car crash in Lisbon and it most certainly was. Lukas really shouldn't have been given the gig here. It wasn't even a difficult song to sing and as for the ridiculous deejay with the demented seal hand moves... well, it was more Grimee than Gromee.



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SPAIN**Song:** Tu Canción (Your Song)**Performers:** Amaia & Alfred

I mean, where do I begin? This was pretty embarrassing. Amaia and Alfred looked so dated and uncool for two so young – and the song was so saccharine I needed insulin at the end. Imagine if they were to breed? Graham Norton was sublime when commenting on this so I cannot compete. I'll just say change the *Tu* to *Su* and bring back Betty Missiego!

**RUSSIA****Song:** I Won't Break**Performer:** Julia Samoylova

I was glad that the Russians stuck to their word and welcomed Julia back for 2018. When I heard the song, I was even more so as it was nowhere near as soft as *Flame Is Burning* – indeed the chorus was quite striking. However, it soon became apparent that Julia's voice was not suited to the song and to just have her drowned out by the backing vocalists during the chorus was poor. To add further insult she was stuck on top of this ludicrous mountain and had her wheelchair hidden which was in very bad taste. She looked so uncomfortable and I really felt for her. Russia's first non-qualifier and rightly so.

**ROMANIA****Song:** Goodbye**Performers:** The Humans

This one took an absolute age to engage with me. I just couldn't get the melody at all and it all seemed like a jigsaw puzzle with missing pieces. And then there was that ending where it suddenly just stopped. The staging was bizarre too, although some of the mannequins had more natural presence than the two 'dummies' with the guitars. On the plus side, Cristina was really vocally strong and saved this from total disaster. Another one where the 100% qualification record was correctly abolished.

MALTA**Song:** Taboo**Performer:** Christabelle

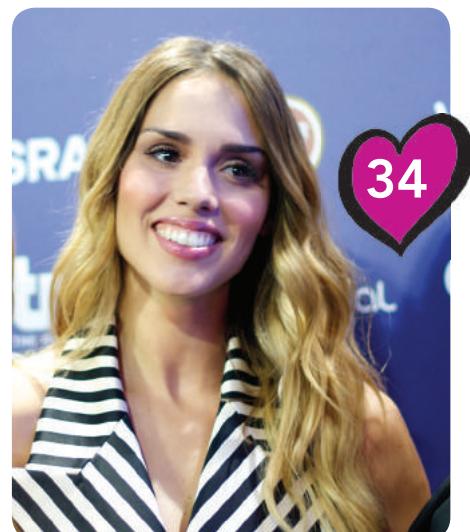
There were a couple of entries this year that hit the over-staged button and Malta was definitely one of them. I found it was all a bit too busy and very distracting. Interesting subject matter but, lyrically, I didn't pick up on the message even though the chorus was easy to sing along to. This was possibly because the title *Taboo* wasn't prominent when sung. Christabelle did very well though and held her own. She did remind me of Scarlet Moffatt.

**GREECE****Song:** Oniro Mou (My Dream)**Performer:** Yianna Terzi

I never quite got the mass appeal of this one with so many fans tipping this for great things. It was great that Greek was used as it's such a lyrical language, but the song was a tad insipid and the staging was... well, there wasn't really any. Yianna seemed to sing weaker as the song progressed and really struggled at the end. Not sure what the blue hand was about either. Had she been manhandling Smurfs before she came on stage?

**CROATIA****Song:** Crazy**Performer:** Franka

I quite liked this when I heard it for the first time, but interest waned as time went on and I found it to be a little annoying. Franka, though, put her heart and soul into this and I thought she really sold it well. She had a natural presence on stage, and I'd gladly listen to and watch her perform any number of songs. Just sadly not this one.



SLOVENIA

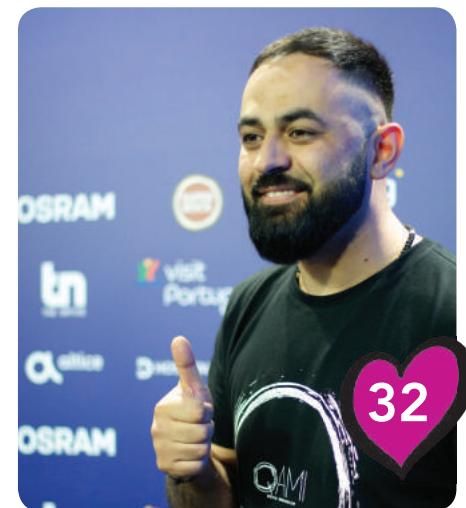
Song: Hvala, Ne! (Thank You, No!)
Performer: Lea Sirk

At the time I was pleasantly surprised that this made it to the Grand Final. Already my interest in this has subsided and it's all down to the stupid decision to stop the song. I know it's not the first time this has happened on a Eurovision stage, but here I found it interrupted the flow of the song and, especially in the Grand Final, it was a poor idea. Lea was pretty impressive, but now it's all a bit meh for me.

**ARMENIA**

Song: Qami (Wind)
Performer: Sevak Khanagyan

This was last in my rankings for ages. It wasn't until I heard Sevak singing this live that I got some kind of feeling for the song. Saying that, I still feel that his voice wasn't quite big enough for this song especially towards the end, but he is still a very capable singer. If he could beard up a little more and put on weight he could easily become the Armenian Rag'n'Bone man.

**BULGARIA**

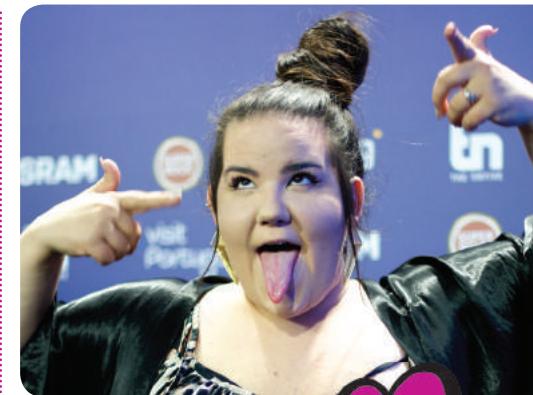
Song: Bones
Performers: EQUINOX

One place above Armenia for ages was Bones. Really disliked the song until I heard it live and then it lands 11 places higher – but ironically still just above Armenia! I mean the harmonies were pretty much flawless and with five very capable vocalists, especially Johnny Manuel, I thought this was going to win. I guess the song does have the final say though, and this one really wasn't strong enough and seemed to get lost in the crowd.

**ITALY**

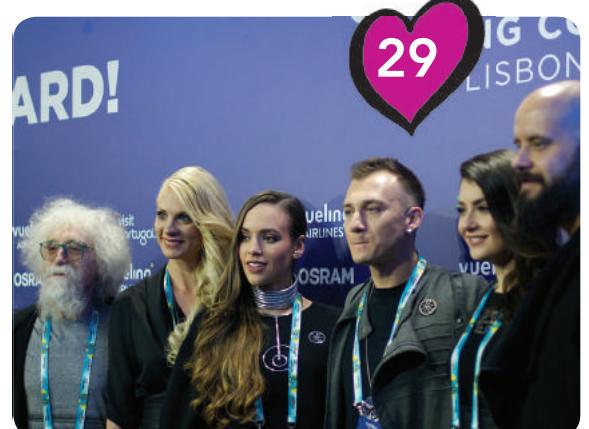
Song: Non Mi Avete Fatto Niente (You Did Nothing To Me)
Performers: Ermal Meta & Fabrizio Moro

Given Italy closed the show in 2015 they were lucky to get another end of show billing with a song that was hardly worthy of it. Lyrically, of course, this packed a punch I suppose and, speaking of lyrics, there are always so many in Italian entries. I couldn't believe the staggering televote this received. Maybe viewers were just glad it was the last one! A good, but not great song. Makes me wonder if Tozzi and Raf ever had offspring?

**SERBIA**

Song: Nova Deca (New Children)
Performers: Sanja Ilic & Balkanika

Sanja and company were the other victims of the stage invasion as they would've been backstage mentally preparing, only to get delayed while security was sorting things out. They did well, although I thought the intro was too long and was a minute wasted as the chorus was pretty good. He looked sinister, lurking behind the female singers, but sang very well. Long gone are the days of consistently strong placings from the Balkan nations. Indeed, they seem to be getting a little left behind.

**ISRAEL**

Song: TOY
Performer: Netta

This might be a shock placing to some of you, but I was gutted that this was our victor this year. I didn't mind the chorus so much – which was quite infectious – and I certainly agreed with the lyrical sentiment. It was the annoyingly ridiculous chicken noises that Netta kept making that was pure nonsense and very irritating. Songs like this at Eurovision just keep adding fuel to the fire of absurdity that sceptics love to throw back at us fans. I just hoped that poultry would be off the menu in Europe on 12th May. Sadly, it wasn't to be. Clucking awful.

HUNGARY

Song: Viszlát Nyár (Goodbye Summer)
Performers: AWS

Well this music is a genre I guess. Not particularly a style I enjoy listening too, but from the off it had melody, a strong chorus and, ironically, an actual Eurovision chord change near the end! I have to hand it to lead singer Ors who gave two astoundingly energetic performances – and what a voice he had! Hopefully they all regrouped backstage after each performance with a soothing tot of Benylin.

**NETHERLANDS**

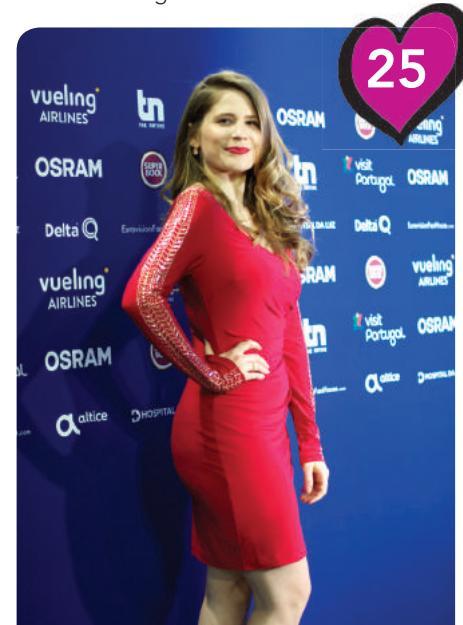
Song: Outlaw In 'Em
Performer: Waylon

I mean, let's do the song first. As you may remember I loathe any country sound and really despised the Common Linnets, so was more than surprised that I thought this was okay at first – and now have it this high - as Waylon totally kicked butt in Lisbon. He owned the stage and his experience totally shone through. Very impressive. But what was that performance? When did Nashville cross over to Krumping? This was all totally bizarre and I assume whoever staged this has since been sectioned. If not, then they should be.

LATVIA

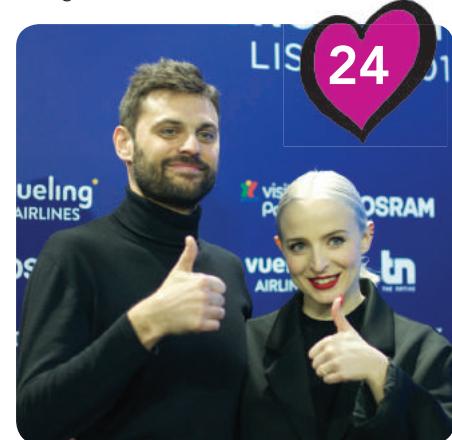
Song: Funny Girl
Performer: Laura Rizzotto

Oh Laura. Time and time again I write about great vocalists who deserve better songs. Well, you can flip that statement for this entry as Laura was very, very poor. I really liked the way the song developed and the chorus was one of the best in the whole contest with its slightly poetic structure. Thank heavens then for auto tuning in the recording studio – at least I have a copy of the song I can listen to without wincing.

**FRANCE**

Song: Mercy
Performers: Madame Monsieur

Another song which many fans became slightly obsessed with was this year's French entry. Not sure why really. It meandered rather than really getting going, and the staging offered little in the way of explaining the context of the lyrics. So much imagery or wording could've been used against the backdrop to help bring the song's message to the fore. They looked like a cute couple though, even in those stupid pantaloons. I can never remember the song's title though...

**LITHUANIA**

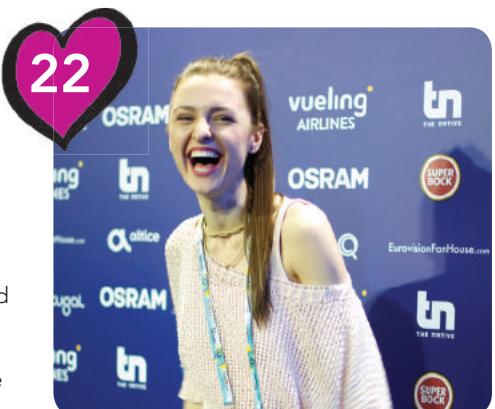
Song: When We're Old
Performer: Ieva Zasimauskaitė

I just knew this would do well. Staged to perfection and ticking so many boxes with sentiment, (not over) emoting and, in Ieva, a beautiful singer. The verses were almost whispered as if she couldn't really sing, but when she held the note while singing the word "old" in the chorus she proved she had quite a strong voice. Meeting her husband on the bridge was a soppy moment but had more genuine affection than the entire three minutes of the Spanish duo.

**ESTONIA**

Song: La Forza (The Force)
Performer: Elina Nechayeva

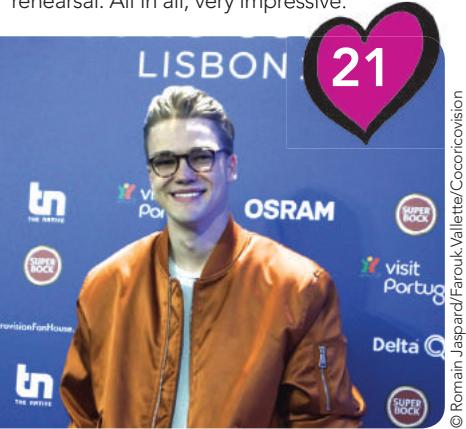
I guess this is in the same vein as Hungary – a genre that some love and others hate. And like Hungary it's getting a middle of the pack placing from me. I mean, Elina couldn't be faulted and didn't put an octave wrong throughout the week. I was quite transfixed by her shoulders too! I bet she had a few stares taking her dress to be dry-cleaned the following Monday and having to explain away the stains of flowers, whirlpools and lava!



CZECH REPUBLIC

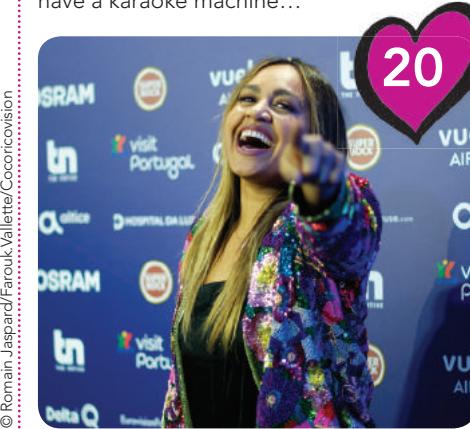
Song: Lie To Me
Performer: Mikolas Josef

Now I'm getting on a bit, so *Lie To Me* was far too fresh and current for me to get over excited about. However, I doff my cap to you, Mr. Josef, as you were actually quite brilliant. For one so young he turned in two blinding performances. It was slick and quite clever with the backpack trick, yet never over fussy either. I could've watched it for a lot longer without getting bored. I think he was very brave to do his backflip in the final considering the near disaster of his first rehearsal. All in all, very impressive.

**AUSTRALIA**

Song: We Got Love
Performer: Jessica Mauboy

Well, Jessica was dressed like the purple one from a tin of Quality Street and, like that sweet, there were definitely nuts involved! Great song and she tried to match that with a good vocal, but too often she shrieked, although her final performance did improve a little. She looked as if she was having a lot of fun on stage and I don't think she could've given much more to the performance. Great girl to invite to your party as long as you don't have a karaoke machine...

**BELGIUM**

Song: A Matter Of Time
Performer: Sennek

I thought Belgium had come up with the goods again this year. Another contemporary entry from them that I thought would take them to another top ten placing. Sennek looked like a younger version of Alanis Morissette and I thought the idea to perform off the main stage was a good one. Her choice of outfit was dreadful though and maybe that, and the slight repetition of the word "echoes", sealed her fate. A tad undeserved. Maybe they were a decent backing singer short...

**SAN MARINO**

Song: Who We Are
Performers: Jessika feat. Jenifer Brening

The sign read "size doesn't matter", but the size of their vote did as it was another poor year for the Sammarinese. It was all a bit of fun though. Seriously loved the robots, especially in an age where graphics can over dominate performances – and there was a lot of laughs with displayed messages during rehearsals I know. Sadly, Jessika's vocals really went off the boil towards the end so thank heavens for rap goddess Jenni B. She taught P Diddy all he knows you know...

AZERBAIJAN

Song: X My Heart
Performer: Aisel

There were a few mumblings that the Azeris were doomed to failure this year. I felt this was one of their better efforts, a decent pop song and a great chorus hook. Aisel just wasn't up to it vocally. She wasn't out of tune, but she wasn't strong enough to really sell the song and it needed a bigger voice. Liked the staging with slopes and all of them in white. It's like they were filming a promo for yoghurt or something.

**Macedonia**

Song: Lost And Found
Performers: Eye Cue

This should've been at least ten places higher in my rankings. I thought this was a belter of a tune and totally unique to the other entries – and in a positive way! Macedonia seem to be getting onto a slippery slope of continuously downgrading their chances with poor staging, weak singing, dodgy outfits or, sadly in the case of Eye Cue, all three. Even the backing singers were out of tune for most of it. Gutted.



FINLAND

Song: Monsters
Performer: Saara Aalto

I would have been gutted for Saara had she not made the Grand Final as both she and the song were both worthy. As expected, everything was thrown into the performance including Saara herself. Way too dark for my liking though. This really needed some colour with costume and staging. She held her vocal well during the choreographic moments and, at the end of the day, this is a really strong song.

15

**DENMARK**

Song: Higher Ground
Performer: Rasmussen

Well it was a very strong year for the beard, but I guess these guys should take the ultimate hirsute accolade. The verse had momentum building into a good chorus which would have had more impact had Rasmussen been vocally stronger. A surprisingly high televote I thought, but I guess this style is on trend currently. It was Vikingesque with a slight wink to camera and the 'walk with me' stomping part. A Dane of Thrones if you will.

14

**ALBANIA**

Song: Mall (Yearning)
Performer: Eugent Bushpepa

If the Danes won the best beard award in 2018, surely Albania could double that with the best surname (possibly ever!) and certainly the best singer. Eugent was on the money and some of those notes he hit were absolutely insane. He brought this song very much to life. What is it with Albanian singers? I quite liked his jacket too, but in protest against hypocritical David Beckham loving China, I think he should've flung it off and got his tats out!

13



12



11

CYPRUS

Song: Fuego (Fire)
Performer: Eleni Foureira

So everybody got a little bit excited and started dreaming of Nicosia or Limassol in 2019. Well it wasn't quite that good, but Eleni was another singer that held it all together during the routine. What was most impressive was how the vocal volume rise for the chorus made it rousing and certainly got the crowd going. You've already read my thoughts on the winner so, for the last 30 seconds of the voting, I was team Cyprus – but overall still a huge result for the small nation.

IRELAND

Song: Together
Performer: Ryan O'Shaughnessy

I was so pleased to see our neighbours make the Grand Final again as it was richly deserved. The chorus was poignant and lilting, and Ryan sang it beautifully, especially in the semi-final. Ballads like this can easily get lost though, which is why whoever was behind the staging deserves huge respect. Bringing the promo video to the stage was clever and the snow effect just gorgeous. Of course, with his higher placing he has bragging rights over uncle Gary too.

SWITZERLAND

Song: Stones
Performers: ZiBBZ

The Swiss were really hard done by this year. Had they been drawn in the second semi then I'm sure a top eight position would've been obtained and thus a place in the Grand Final. Corinne had a look of Madonna about her and sang really well. Possibly the only song of the 43 where the verse was actually stronger than the chorus. Didn't like her speaking to the audience – although I guess the message was sadly relevant as the last country to qualify was announced and I suspect they both had another reason to put their hands up.

10

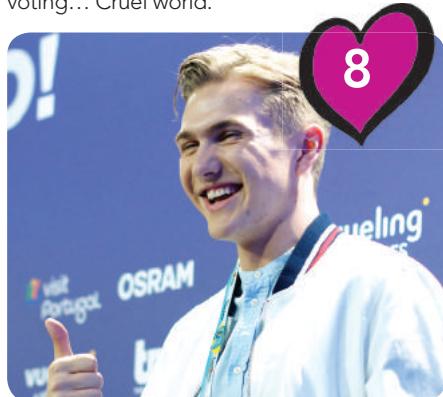


UKRAINE**Song:** Under The Ladder**Performer:** MELOVIN

For the third year in a row the song closing the second semi-final went on to open the Grand Final itself. MELOVIN had a touch of Dracula in his appearance and sought guidance from last year's hosts in perfecting his Ukraine'glish accent perfectly. Loved the tempo changes throughout the song and he did do a good job – and the song was a perfect show stopper and starter. Mercifully the song ended when it did, as those flames were getting higher and he may have been saddled with an anus horribilis.

**ICELAND****Song:** Our Choice**Performer:** Ari Ólafsson

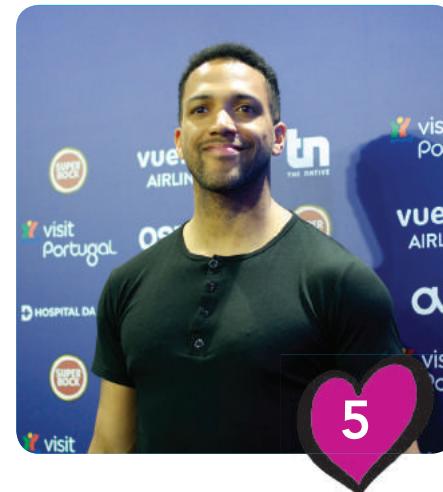
While my seventh and sixth choices seem to have a little bit of online love pre-contest, poor Ari was getting slaughtered by pretty much everyone and I'm still not sure why. I do get the dated accusation as this was a little old fashioned and the musical theatre hater wouldn't buy into it. But among the online doom and poll placements, off he went to Lisbon with the biggest smile – and also one of the better voices who sang his heart out and won mine. Never met him, but just know I'd like him. The boy did well. Until the voting... Cruel world.

**MOLDOVA****Song:** Our Lucky Day**Performers:** DoReDos

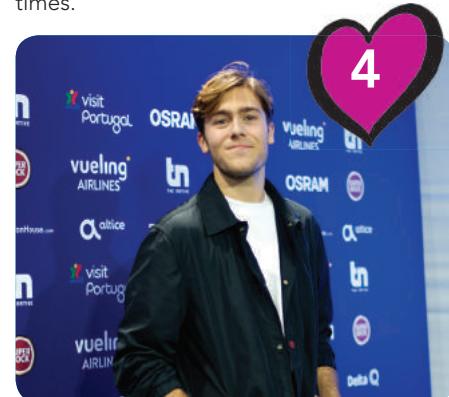
There were hints that the Moldovans had something up their sleeves and it was more than adopting Jason Manford as one of its lead singers. However, *Play Away* (you have to be at least 40 for this) the musical was still very unexpected. Totally dated and completely watchable, they injected some fun into the show. I always felt the song was catchy and, yes, very Eurovision, but they don't always work. This one did, and it was great to see the backing trio right on stage with them at the end and not kept in the prop.

**GEORGIA****Song:** For You**Performers:** Iria

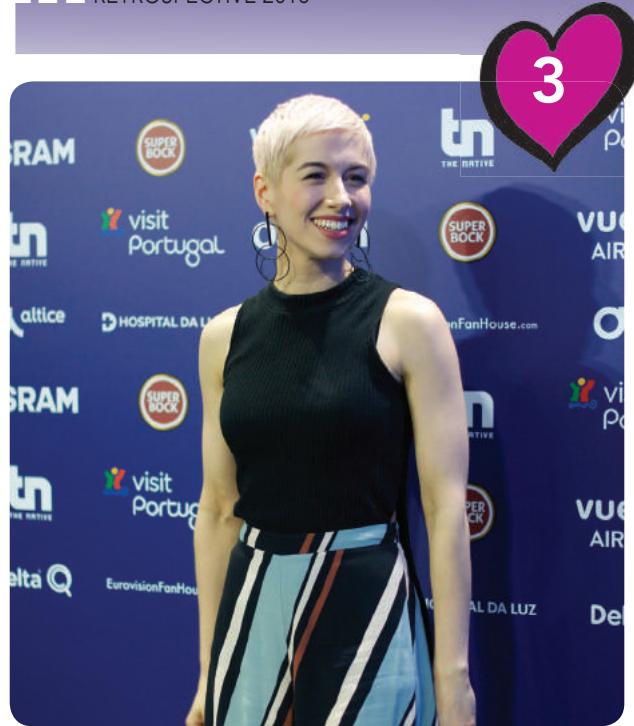
I mean, who else would have the last three all in their top ten?! I just don't know what to write here, except that I do understand the loathing most feel for this. Not flowing lyrically or musically and not having an easily recognisable melody but, just vocally, the three of them had it to my ears. I really did like the song and when the last chorus gathered momentum they sounded sublime and the goose-bumps appeared. Stunning.

**SWEDEN****Song:** Dance You Off**Performer:** Benjamin Ingrosso

Long gone are my non-UK national final viewing days, so the Swedish performance was new to me in Lisbon – and I have to say I thought it was very strong. They were onto a winner with Benjamin who performed this to perfection but, like last year, I would've expected the jury and televote to have been reversed. Overall though, another stellar showing from Eurovision's strongest nation of recent times. His vocals were slightly chipmunk-ish at times.

**AUSTRIA****Song:** Nobody But You**Performer:** Cesár Sampson

He may not have won the contest but I was beyond pleased that Cesár won the jury vote and led at the halfway stage. Loved this from the first time I heard it. A subtle yet soulful vocal and a chorus to die for. I thought he did a better job in his semi-final than the Grand Final itself. A shame that such a jury hit was buried in slot five at the Grand Final.



UNITED KINGDOM

Song: Storm

Performer: SuRie

Yes, I did watch our final but with no prior knowledge of the six songs. This as the winner was the obvious outcome. The song built strongly and the audience singing along with the chorus was wonderful to hear. SuRie just won me over. So professional and she had a great image. Our staging was strong and it all looked and sounded like a top ten placing song. It pains me to write this, but I cannot see us doing anything in this contest for the foreseeable future – and no, it has nothing to do with what we are sending.

PORUGAL

Song: O Jardim (The Garden)

Performers: Cláudia Pascoal
feat. Isaura

Well last was a little harsh! I don't really think *O Jardim* worked at all in its studio form. It was when I went online and watched the national final performance that I got its charm. There it looked like Claudia had been forced to bring her straight-jacketed friend along while she sang, so stuck her at the back on a chair. They went for sophistication in the Grand Final and the blend of her fragile vocal coupled with Isaura's more soothing tone was subliminal for me. And that's more ammunition for you, the readers of this, to get me terminated from writing these Retros!



GERMANY

Song: You Let Me Walk Alone

Performer: Michael Schulte

Do you know I have been writing these since Hass actually had hair on his head (*Thanks for reminding me!* – Hass), yet I still get so pleased when I can write about a favourite that has actually done very well in the contest. I know being in English helped, but the honest lyric was such a tribute to, as he sang himself, “his hero” while on the verge of hopefully becoming one to his own son. This just hit the spot both emotionally and musically, with a beautifully creative backdrop adding even more sentiment. Pretty much perfection.



You can come out now... I've finished! My post and inboxes have been busy already as you retaliate with your own votes and musings. And feel free to get in touch if you still want to be heard in Part Two. You can use the voting form which came with the pre-contest edition of **Vision** or just jot down your Top Tens for both semi-finals, the Grand Final and an overall Top Ten along with any comments on any or all of the songs before emailing me at a new address **dazjenkin@yahoo.co.uk** Looking forward to hearing from you. Until Part Two...

THE ESSENTIAL TOP TEN UNSUCCESSFUL BALKAN ENTRIES



Paul Marks-Jones, former OGAE UK President, runs down his choice of Balkan entries he thinks were treated harshly by the voters

The (Socialist) Federal Republic of Yugoslavia debuted at the Eurovision Song Contest in 1961, participating 27 times before the break-up of the country which happened around the time of the 1992 contest. The following year, 1993, saw the first entries from the new states and, apart from a blip in 2013, the Balkans have been present at every Eurovision final since then. There have been so many great entries from these territories, but only two wins (Yugoslavia in 1989 and Serbia in 2007) so far. Inevitably some songs have undeservedly missed out on glory for varying reasons, so let's look at some of those which failed to impress on the international stage.



10 Yugoslavia 1984 **Vlado & Isolda** *Ciao Amore*

Yugoslavia performed very well during the 1980s so it's hard to find a deserving entry from that era. This duo put forward a risqué preview video and tried to recreate that chemistry on stage. They managed that to a point, but what didn't work for this one was the orchestra – it just didn't sound quite right. The singers sounded and looked good, but the juries possibly weren't ready for that rasping voice and the song finished second last which was thoroughly undeserved.



9 Montenegro 2013 **Who See** *Igranka (The Party)*

Generally we don't like rap type songs in Eurovision, but this one really deserved a place in the Grand Final. The televoters agreed, placing *Igranka* in fourth position. I'm not saying it should have been Top Ten in the Grand Final, but it was fresh and modern with a powerfully delivered vocal by Nina Žižić. But Montenegro found itself in a strong semi and had to be content with 12th!

8 Serbia 2009 **Marko Kon and Milaan** *Cipela (Shoe)*

This had finalist stamped all over it – a quirky performer with striking hair, a traditional sounding instrument and an OTT performance with ditzy woman, crazy choreography and incongruous old school graphics. The song had even been recorded in several different languages, ranging from Hebrew to Finnish, so it was a big shock when it wasn't drawn out of one of those coveted semi-final envelopes. It actually finished tenth, but it was in the day when jurors had a golden ticket for one of the entries and clearly they didn't like a song that was about a shoe – it was, in fact, a bit more interesting than that and was a critique about materialism.



7 Yugoslavia 1973 **Zdravko Colic** *Gori Vatra (The Fire is Burning)*



Zdravko won the Yugoslav selection representing Bosnia in 1973 with a song about the love that was burning inside both him and his lover. It must have been an intense love because he dramatically belts it out with gusto using the orchestra to full effect. The result? Joint 15th with Sans Toi from France. HARSH!

6 Slovenia 2015 **Maraaya** *Here For You*

Headphone wearing couple Marjetka and Raay (see what they did?) qualified for the Grand Final in fifth place, but then their slice of modern day cool was positioned first on the night thanks to the producer-led running order. This basically scuppered any chance the song had of getting the points it deserved and it unfairly ended up in 14th place.



5 Yugoslavia 1976 **Ambassadori** *Ne Mogu Skriti Svoju Bol (I Can't Hide My Pain)*

Last up on the night and well regarded by many, this slice of 1970s Balkan folk-pop was expected to do well. But it didn't! After all the votes had been announced it sat bottom of the pile and I am sure there were many bewildered faces wondering what had happened. In a strange twist and an unattentive scrutineer (it had been a long night!), it was discovered that the French jury hadn't awarded their four points. Guess what? Yes, these points were for Yugoslavia, lifting the country to 17th position above Norway. The Yugoslavs still weren't impressed and it is claimed that this bad result is one of the reasons Yugoslavia sulkily withdrew until 1981.



4 **Bosnia & Herzegovina 2012**
Maja Sar
Korake Ti Znam (I Know Your Steps)

This was a classy number from Maja who had previously been in the contest in 2004 and 2011 and knew what she was doing. What she didn't expect was to come away with Bosnia & Herzegovina's worst result to date (at that time). It's a lovely lilting ballad delivered with pure emotion. To appreciate it fully, watch the preview video – it's beautifully shot. Still, you don't get a preview video on stage and, being drawn among a cluster of other ballads and immediately before some Russian grannies, Maja was always going to get an unjustified result.



3 **Yugoslavia 1992**
Extra Nena

Ljubim Te Pesmama (I'm Kissing You With Songs)



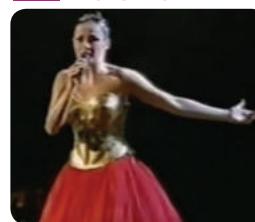
The voice, the lyrics, the accordion and the never ending dress! It had top five stamped all over it! An authentic Balkan tune delivered immaculately by Extra Nena, but even the key change could only help it limp

to 13th place. A very sad way for Yugoslavia to end its Eurovision career.

1 **Croatia 2006**
Severina
Moja Stikla (My High Heels)

Croatia weren't supposed to be in the Grand Final of 2006's Eurovision, but because of the controversy in Serbia & Montenegro and their entry selection, they were promoted 'direktno do finala' and didn't have to go through the semi. How this song failed to finish top five is a mystery – it has everything you want! Balkan sounds, traditional dress, ethnic chanting and a detachable skirt. And it's a song about high heels! With some of the most spectacular lyrics ever to be sung on the Eurovision stage and the immortal Africa Paprika, I defy any of you not to find some enjoyment in this masterpiece of Balkan pop.

2 **Macedonia 2002**
Karolina



Od Nas Zavisi (It Depends On Us)

Back in 2002 I was convinced this would be in the final shake up. It had a true ethnic feel to it, an air of mystery and plenty of style. Karolina looked stunning as she ripped off her dress and carried that gold bodice off effortlessly. She even had backing vocalists doing movements that Loïc Nottet's team borrowed more than a decade later. It was the classiest song of the night in Tallinn – unfortunately just too classy for everyone apart from Romania who gave it 12.



EURO QUIZ

In this edition we ask questions about those many groups that have performed at Eurovision

1 Aleksander Covic is the leader of which group?

2 John Beeby and Maggie Jay can be found in which group?



The Music Stars provided backing vocals for which singer?

8 Marie Bergman (Sweden 1994) was originally a member of which Eurovision group?

9 Which three groups qualified from the 1993 Eastern Bloc pre-selection to be represented in Millstreet?

10 Zhana, Trey and Johnny are members of which 2018 group?

ANSWERS

10 EQUINOX (Bulgaria 2018)

9 1993) HEPZEGOVINA 1993); AND PUT (CROATIA

8 1x BAND (SLOVENIA 1993); FALZA (BOSNIA &

7 FAMILY FOUR (SWEDEN 1971/SWEDEN 1972)

6 THE NEW SEEKERS (UNITED KINGDOM 1972)

5 BLUE DANUBE (AUSTRIA 1980)

4 PIERO ESTERIO (SWITZERLAND 2004)

3 LIVE REPORT (UNITED KINGDOM 1989)

2 REGINA (BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA 2009)

1 ROCK ME (YUGOSLAVIA 1989)

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EUROVISION: A NEW ZEALAND PERSPECTIVE



'Down under' doesn't just refer to Australia. While its neighbours, New Zealand, might not be as Eurovision savvy, one super-fan is making it her mission to inform and educate all those in her small town. **Fiona Guest** is a force to be reckoned with – read how her mission is progressing...

Oh, is that still going?" "I've heard of it, but what is it?" "Euro-what"? Every time Eurovision crops up in conversation here in New Zealand, the responses are always worth waiting for and often highly entertaining!

So is Eurovision thriving in New Zealand then? Well, judging by the above responses and the reactions I usually get, it appears to be as well-known here as the Pukeko or Whangamamona are in Europe! As an aside, I would like to add that I have no intention of making either famous in Europe (they will have to find a different writer to promote them, I'm afraid), but I am certainly doing my best to get Eurovision off the ground here in the city of Napier even if the chances of TVNZ sending a singer to Israel next year are about the same as the UK sending Adele for each of the next three years running. I know I'm certainly not the only fan here in

Aotearoa, but at times in the small city of Napier it can feel like it.

Ever since I emigrated down under a couple of years ago, it has been fascinating watching the reaction of my Kiwi friends and family when I mention my favourite pastime. In the UK I used to get "what's the point, we never win", "it's all political" or "it's such rubbish so I don't bother watching it anymore" as reactions which, as many of you are familiar with such negativities know, don't exactly warm you towards starting an in-depth exposé of the vocal abilities of the Albanian backing singers. Well, I am delighted to say that the reaction of everyone down here has been either genuine curiosity or very positive. "Euro-what?" might be a typical verbal reaction, but no one has ever said a bad word about it or tried to belittle it in the way that is all too common back in the UK. In fact, quite the opposite! They want

So what's so special about Napier?



to know more about it, seem amazed that the likes of ABBA and Celine Dion began their careers at the contest, and appear even more astounded that Cliff Richard, Bonnie Tyler, Lulu and Australia (don't ever mention 'Stralya!) have taken part. For those Kiwis who had heard of it before this year's contest was mentioned on the TV news (more later), who do you think is the most famous person in Eurovision down here... Måns Zelmerlöw? (nope – they've never heard of him)... Ruth Lorenzo (who? – I know, I know, it's a massive omission and I'm coming to terms with it slowly)... Maybe Nicki French (Ah, well, er, nope. Sorry Nicki, not yet, but one of my friends was totally jealous when he found out we are Facebook friends!). So who could it be? A typical response to the question is "didn't that German bearded lady win Eurovision a few years ago?". Even if the likes of Netta,

Salvador or Loreen produce a totally blank look, Conchita would appear to have a ready audience if she ever decided to do a New Zealand tour and, let's face it, Germany and Austria are neighbours and both around 18,000 kms away, so let's not get hung up on the detail!

The Napier Fan Club

Isn't it funny how things turn out sometimes? Last year I wasn't able to make the long, long trip back to Europe so I decided to hold a preview party in the vague hope that some friends would be interested enough to spend an evening watching singers they'd never heard of, sing songs they'd never listen to again, representing countries whose existence they were vaguely aware of, as long as no one asked them to put a pin in a map to locate Macedonia or Moldova. Now I'm not saying my friends are geographically challenged or that the most musical thing they listen to is the Rugby Haka, but down here, Vanuatu and the Solomons are much more likely to crop up on the news than Moldova's relationship with Transnistria, or Greece's insistence on Macedonia changing its name.

So what does it take to be a fan in New Zealand? I'm not sure I can speak for others, but I like to think the word is 'dedication' or, more probably, 'insanity'! Getting up at 6.00 am to watch the live TV shows, streaming eurovision.tv over muesli and coffee instead of pizza and wine (surprisingly a glass of Sauvignon Blanc (or Sav as we say here) at 6:30 am alongside Hubbard's Berry & Nut mix isn't my thing) must be proof of that dedication or that insanity. Mind you, not having Scott Mills talking over the interval acts is certainly part of the appeal of watching it down under, since we





THE NAPIER EUROVISION FAN CLUB IN ACTION!



can't watch the live BBC or catch-up shows as they are geo-blocked. Having said that, Scott's humour would have been a lot more preferable for me this year than the David Attenborough parody in the advert breaks of the semi-finals. I have to say that I thought his moustache, brown uniform and slicked back hair made him a little too similar to Hitler for my liking, but I'm sure some people enjoyed his humorous look at Portugal.

Other things needed to be a Kiwi fan of Eurovision are patience and understanding. At last year's preview party, I cheerfully asked people to come dressed to support a country of their choice and bring some food from there to share with everyone. While we did get Greek Feta salad, Baguette and Brie and 'Devonshire Tea' (That's Devon Cream Tea to those of you not familiar with the Antipodean phraseology), one of my friends brought Sushi and dressed as a beautiful Geisha wearing a Kimono. I actually think she's ahead of her game and would be perfect in a couple of years as we celebrate Japan's first win at Asia-Vision! Without the background knowledge of growing up in Europe, lacking any detail or understanding of what Eurovision is about and having heard that Australia take part, why wouldn't Japan be one of the competing countries? As they say... never say never...

Novelty acts?

Now you might say people from other English-heritage countries would have at least heard of Eurovision, but no! It might be broadcast in the USA and, until recently, China, but to my South African friends who have lived in New Zealand for nearly 20 years, it's as unknown as Speights Cider is in Wetherspoons. When I asked them what they thought it would be like, they guessed it might be like *The Voice* where each song is voted on immediately with only the best singers going through various heats to reach a final. One South African friend also expected there to be some awful singers and novelty acts like those on *Britain's Got Talent*. Maybe she has watched it before...

So back to that dedication. Getting up at 6.00 am was so last year... this year, myself and my partner just HAD to go, (they made



Looking
gorgeous
in red,
white and
blue:
Selina
Hargreaves,
Fiona and
Sylvia Rook

me, honest!), so no muesli and coffee this May. It was Pastel de Nata at midnight in the arena food court and rattling around Old Lisbon on Tram 28, but only after 56 hours in the air and 40.000 kms in eight aircraft to travel more than half way around the world! Now that's insanity not dedication!

Insanity

As further proof of our insanity, we had to fight for tickets in the public 'bun-fight' at 3.00 am due to the 12 hour time difference and the lag time to get to the front of the queue at position 35,296. It cost a small fortune, yet it was worth every dollar... although that third scrambled egg breakfast in 24 hours somewhere over Papua New Guinea was a little hard to stomach and stretched the word 'dedication' to new limits. But what of my friends who wanted another year of croissants and live shows before going to work? Well, only last night I asked one of them if they would like to come round to watch the DVD when it arrives, and she nearly snapped my hand off. A couple of days ago, another friend who came to our preview party asked if we could do a post-Eurovision party to see the acts again. Yet another asked if we had looked back at the spreadsheet of votes we all made at that party, to compare with the



actual winners and losers. I think I've started the Napier fan club! Even more telling was the comment from another friend who observed that our marks seem to be the opposite to Europe. Last year they rated the UK, Germany and Malta highly, and the ape from Italy and this year's Israeli chickens very low. Maybe New Zealand is not yet ready for Eurovision after all...

However, Eurovision did make the news this year, I've been told. While we were sleeping off those Pastel de Nata, that hideous stage-invasion during SuRie's performance and Netta's win were shown on TVNZ, so maybe I was just a couple of years too early to begin the task of bringing Eurovision to Napier. If I'd waited until now, maybe I wouldn't hear "Euro-what?", but instead I'd be greeted with "Ah, wasn't that the show where some idiot interrupted the Belgian singer" or something! Still, even so, the first year we had ten people for the preview party and this year it was 19, so I'm thinking I might need to hire a small hall next year and who knows... the upside-down version of *Boom Bang A Bang* might be on the horizon in 2020.

I wouldn't like to boast or claim that I've changed lives (well, maybe I have for my partner who is now as big a fan as me) or that I've given some Napierites a Damascus-road moment, but let's just say that in early February I was asked "When is Eurovision this year?" and "Are you having a preview party again and, if so, when is it and can I bring a friend?" My job is done.... Nicki – you will be famous down here, Ruth – your Napier tour is imminent and Måns – I'll get Love Love, Peace Peace in the New Zealand charts one day, you mark my words... ■



Fiona's new
mission...

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO...



MARION RYAN



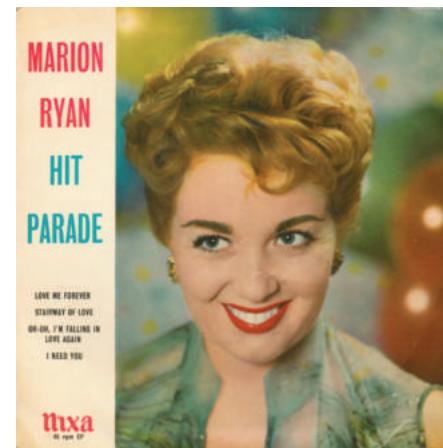
In this edition of the series looking at those who have participated in the pre-selection for the UK, **Marcus Keppel-Palmer** goes all the way back to 1956 and 1957 to look at the career of Marion Ryan

these days we know the pre-selection as Eurovision: You Decide. It is probably most commonly referred to as Song For Europe, but when the UK first held its competition to send a song to represent it on the thrilling fields of Europe, the name was the Festival of British Popular Songs. The 1957 edition saw Patricia Bredin become our first representative with *All*, and no doubt many will know that in 1956 the BBC ran the festival, but that the final was not held in time for the winning song to go forward to Eurovision. One quirk of the time in both 1956 and 1957 was that almost every song was performed twice, once each by a

different lead performer, some of which were instrumental versions.

In 1956, song three in Heat 2 was a novelty song, in waltz time, called *Play Barrel Organ*. It took four people to write the song which was performed by Marion Ryan with the Stanley Black Orchestra and by the vocal group, the Johnston Brothers with the Semprini Quintet. This was Marion Ryan's first brush with Eurovision.

Marion Ryan came from Middlesbrough and was born on 4th February 1931, although later biographies claimed she was born in 1933. Blessed with charming looks and a fine voice, Marion was dubbed 'the Marilyn Monroe of popular song' because of her



pert blonde looks. She went to school in Leeds and studied music as a schoolgirl. She won a local beauty contest one summer and this led her down the show business route. She married a music producer called Lloyd Sapherson aged just 17 and gave birth to twins the following year.

Her first engagement in show business, in common with others of the era, was singing in a dance band. She did this in the evenings in Leeds, while holding down a day job in a lingerie shop. She came to the attention of Ray Ellington and signed to sing with his group in 1953. Ray Ellington performed the musical interludes in *The Goon Show* radio shows, the anarchic comedy created by Peter Sellers, Michael Bentine, Harry Secombe and Spike Milligan, much beloved of Prince Charles and credited with inspiring the generation of comedians who came after. Perhaps the rise of Swinging London in the 1960s had as much to do with these comedians as it did with The Beatles and the rise of British Beat.

Twin sons

Marion sang with Ellington's band and quartet for a couple of years, before leaving for a solo career and signing for Pye-Nixa Records. She had been combining her career with looking after her twin sons, Paul and Barry, who had been born during her brief teenage marriage. In 1956, Marion's solo career took off and the twins moved to live with their grandmother. Not only did Marion sign a solo recording deal in 1956, but she also signed on to be a part of the quiz show *Spot The Tune* in which she appeared as the resident singer for over six years. In this quiz show, contestants would be asked to identify a song from a few notes sung by Marion. This made her ideal to be asked by the BBC to appear in one of the heats of the Festival of British Popular Songs.

Just a mere four weeks after starting on *Spot The Tune*, Marion was competing in the Festival of British Popular Songs. Sadly



Paul and Barry Ryan

One of Marion's 1958 singles, *The World Goes Round And Round*, has the curiosity value of being the first stereo single released in the UK

Play Barrel Organ did not qualify for the final – the results from the heat are lost – and so Marion had to wait a further year for a tilt at Eurovision glory. In 1957, Marion appeared in Heat 1 of the contest, this time singing two songs. The first of these was called *Teenage Waltz* composed by Tony Osborne, the band leader. Unusually in this heat, Marion's version of the song, performed with the Malcolm Lockyer Quintet and the Bill McGuffie Orchestra, was the only version performed. The other songs were performed with either the Quintet or the Orchestra. Tony Osborne worked with Marion at Pye-Nixa Records. The second song sung in the heat by Marion was called *Turn Around And Face The Sun* which was written by Cliff Adams, who had previously sung with Pearl Carr in a quartet, and George Elrick, who would present *Housewives' Choice* on BBC Radio. John Hanson, the well-known light opera singer, sang the other version of the song. Sadly for Marion, neither song progressed through to the next round.



Marion recorded and released several singles for the Pye label between 1956 and 1959, but her solitary chart entry was *Love Me Forever*, which reached number five in 1958 and remained on the Hit Parade for 11 weeks. On *A Couple of Crazy Kids*, also from 1958, she duetted with Gary Miller, who had several chart hits including *Robin Hood*



from the TV series and would go on to sing *Aqua Marina* over the end credits of the puppet series, *Stingray*.

One of Marion's 1958 singles, *The World Goes Round And Round*, has the curiosity value of being the first stereo single released in the UK. As recording technology advanced in leaps and bounds, it is easy to forget that, until the 1960s, most singles were only mastered for mono sound, to be played on Dansette record players, and recorded at most in four-track recording studios.

In 1960, Marion signed for Columbia Records and released four singles over the next couple of years, all without chart success. Away from her recording career, she remained in demand on television. As well as appearing in *Spot The Tune* (hosted variously by Jackie Rae, Ken Platt and Ken Ray), Marion was a regular performer in light entertainment TV shows in the 1950s and early 1960s. She appeared on shows like *Sunday Night At Blackpool*, *Six-Five Special*, *Cool For Cats* and was even given a guest

role in the hit comedy, *The Army Game*. Granada TV later gave Marion her own show, *The Marion Ryan Show*.

Marion had a brief film career comprising a short Hammer picture and then the full-length musical starring Tommy Steele, *It's All Happening* (also known as *The Dream Maker*), which was one of the fairly common British musicals of its time, featuring performances from a number of established stars. Among others in the film were the George Mitchell Singers, who appeared in the 1957 Festival of British Popular Songs.

Retired

During the early 1960s, Marion realised that her star was waning and retired early from show business, leaving it to her sons to assault the pop charts. As a duo, Paul and Barry Ryan, then only 17, first hit the charts in 1965 with *Don't Bring Me Your Heartaches* and over the next two years followed that success (it reached number 13) with seven further hits. In 1968 Barry had the family's biggest solo hit when he reached number two in the charts with Paul's song *Eloise*, later covered by the punk band, *The Damned*. In 1968 Marion released one further single, *Better Use Your Head*, before she moved to the USA and married Howard Davison, a multi-millionaire from show business. It catapulted Marion and the twins into the circles of Frank Sinatra, who became Godfather to the twins and subsequently recorded songs written by Paul. Barry continued to have solo hits until the early 1970s. Paul died in 1992 and Barry retired from show business and took up photography. Marion died in 1999 following a heart attack.

Marion Ryan was one of the most well-known girl singers of the pre-Beatles era in the UK, vying perhaps with Alma Cogan for the title. Her looks and personality ensured that her television career was more successful than her singing career, and she certainly brought glamour to the early years of the UK Eurovision pre-selection. ■

CARRY ON ABROAD

OGAE UK once again organised a mass gathering of its members in Eurovision's host city. The EuroCafe was jam-packed and much fun was had by all!

Photographs by David Ransted, Robin Scott and Hass Yusuf



CLUB UPDATE

CLUB UPDATE ■■■

PERSONAL DATA

As you will no doubt have noticed, new data protection regulations were introduced in May. In order to comply with the new requirements, OGAE UK has conducted a review of our current activities and the way we gather and use members' personal data.

We wrote to all members by email back in June explaining the steps we had taken and setting out our data privacy policy which is set out below:

OGAE UK takes your privacy very seriously indeed. We only gather and use your personal data in connection with your membership of the club. Your details are used so that we can send you **Vision** magazine as well as periodic electronic newsletters, event information and membership expiry notices.

Personal data we collect

We collect your name, address, email address, phone contact numbers and date of birth. This is usually done when you first join OGAE UK through the registration process. We hold this information in our membership database maintained by the club secretary.

How we use your personal data

Your personal data is used to allow us to communicate with you in relation to your membership of the club.

Your date of birth is used as an identification tool and to permit us to select individuals for panels etc, where we need to ensure an appropriate mix of age groups.

Your phone number will only be used to communicate with you in exceptional (and urgent) circumstances.

Should you fail to renew your membership by the due date, we will retain your data for eight

months pending any late renewal decision on your part. We will retain your name for up to four years after the expiry of your membership so that we can identify you as a previous member should you subsequently apply to rejoin the club.

Do we share your data?

We do not share your personal data with any third party for commercial purposes.

Your data may be provided to OGAE International and relevant ticket agencies where you specifically apply for Eurovision tickets. In such circumstances we would seek your specific authorisation.

Your name and photo are shared with OGAE International and a plastic card manufacturer in order for OGAE International membership cards to be produced. This is only done with your specific authorisation.

Your surname and OGAE card number may be provided to the Eurovision merchandise store so that you can access the club's discount.

We will only use data sub-processors which can provide a written contract that respects GDPR. You will be provided with 28 days notice of the proposed use of any new sub-processor, and will be able to object in writing within 14 days of that notice, providing legitimate reasons. We will resolve your objection either by changing the sub-processor arrangements or by terminating your membership.

How you can access and control your data

You may request a copy of the personal data we hold for you by contacting The Secretary at 101d Clarendon Road, London W11 4JG or at ogaeuk@gmail.com. You have the right to make changes to this data at any time.

ELECTION RESULTS

Two posts were up for election in the recent OGAE UK committee elections. No one stood against the incumbents for the posts of President, Secretary & Treasurer and **Vision** Editor.

The two posts up for election were Editor-in-Chief of **Vision** and Ticket Coordinator. The results:

Editor-in-Chief

Gordon Lewis	43%	38 votes
Jamie McLoughlin	57%	51 votes

Congratulations to Jamie and Danny, and many thanks to independent election coordinator, Marcus Keppel-Palmer.

Turnout was a very disappointing 5%. While voting was all legal and democratic, the organising committee are looking at ways to increase voting and perhaps introducing a threshold to make any future elections more inclusive of the wider membership.

Ticket Coordinator

Simon Holt	33%	30 votes
Danny Lynch	67%	60 votes

IMPORTANT NEW MEMBERSHIP PROCEDURES

We have been very busy since this year's Eurovision. As discussed at our 2017 Annual General Meeting, we have been looking for ways to improve our club administration and to reduce our reliance on manual procedures. We wrote to all members early in July explaining that we have now selected **Membermojo** to be our new membership platform.

We will be migrating to **Membermojo** during August and members will start receiving automated messages from the system. We will email members when the migration is complete and the new system is up and running, providing more detailed information and user instructions. At that stage it would be very helpful if members could log on to the new system and check their personal data. Our current data is very incomplete with quite a few joint members failing to provide even basic information such as names!

The implementation of **Membermojo** has meant that we have needed to review and reformat our membership database and you will therefore see a number of important changes. We will provide full details when we roll out the new system, but the most obvious change will be that all members will receive a new membership numbers. Joint members will now be recorded in a different way, with each member having their own unique membership number rather than sharing the same number as before. For joint members the system

DIARY DATES

To celebrate 20 years since the UK organised the contest in Birmingham, there will be a special celebration at The Wellington pub in Birmingham on Saturday, 3rd November 2018. Details to follow.

IMPORTANT For the last year we have been using the **MailChimp** mailing service to send regular emails to members. All members who have provided a valid email address should be receiving periodic email newsletters and updates.

In accordance with current regulations, the **MailChimp** messages explain that individuals are receiving the emails because they are current members of OGAE UK and offer the opportunity for recipients to opt out of receiving future emails. This is based on the idea that the emails are sent to a mailing list rather than to paid up members of the club.

A few members have used the system to request to be deleted from the mailing list. Unfortunately, this means that the individuals concerned need to be deleted from our membership database altogether and their membership terminated. Please be aware of this if you are considering opting out of the mail messages. In order to better assist you, if any member wishes to terminate their membership before the anticipated expiry, please contact ogaeuk@gmail.com rather than using the email opt-out.

is based on primary and linked secondary members. This is purely how the system is structured and has no impact on the status of either member. However, once we start using **Membermojo** to produce **Vision** mailing labels it is probable that, for joint members, the magazine will be addressed just to the primary member rather than to both as has been the case in the past.

Members will be able to log on to the membership system (without the need for a password) and will then be responsible for ensuring that all their personal data is correct. Members will be able to change their address directly on the system.

Once the new system is operational, it would be extremely helpful if **ALL** members could ensure that they have provided a mobile phone number and their date of birth. It would also be helpful if joint members could provide separate email addresses rather than using just one.

OGAE International is currently discussing the possibility of implementing a new electronic membership card system to replace the existing plastic cards. If this goes ahead, it will be very important that we have as complete records as possible of members' email addresses, mobile phone numbers and dates of birth. We will provide more information about this new card system once this has been agreed.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

This year's OGAE UK AGM will be held on Saturday, 24th November 2018. The venue is yet to be confirmed, but will probably be in central London. Details to follow.

THE VISION PANEL

Alasdair Rendall leads another panel where OGAE UK members give their views on Eurovision subjects. Photos by David Ransted.



Alasdair



Blair



Denise



Scott



Jamie

AR Alasdair Rendall

BH Blair Houlston

DW Denise Watts

SR Scott Ross

JM Jamie McLoughlin

AR: Another contest over – another disappointing result for the UK; what went wrong?

BH: I wouldn't say one particular thing went wrong. I personally loved the song, but it didn't have enough 'razzamatazz' to stand out in what was an extremely strong year. I thoroughly believe SuRie should have sung again after the invasion, and this might have helped slightly, but the main problem lies in the fact that our entry just doesn't get enough promotion across Europe. SuRie didn't do any public performances in Lisbon.

DW: We just can't get it right can we? SuRie's effort was amazing, she was a great ambassador for the UK and Eurovision, sang *Storm* flawlessly AND survived a stage invasion. It was a great song but versus the competition it just didn't stand up. Such a pity that the artists at Eurovision: You Decide in Brighton didn't perform on the night, as I think one of those songs would have done better given the competition this year.

SR: It was a good song with a good singer. However, the much-hyped revamp wasn't as

strong as we all hoped. I also think the song needs to be heavily promoted around the whole of the UK first to really get the public behind it, before we venture out across Europe to do any promotion.

JM: The devil in me just wants to say 'we didn't pick *Legends!*' but it should have been given to an older singer with more stage experience in their pipes and whose life experience was more appropriate to the lyrics. It's no surprise first-time listeners didn't go for it in its Brighton form but there's no point worrying about that now. You just can't fault SuRie. What an incredibly positive, uplifting soul to fly the flag, and who you sense will have the fans' backs for a long time to come like a favourite big sister. Sadly, *Storm* was just too safe and inoffensive to stand out among 25 other songs. I'll admit, I'm still baffled as to how it got such an uproarious response at Eurovision: You Decide – but you have to go with the democratic vote.

AR: It feels like we ask this question every year, but where next for the BBC?

BH: I think the BBC should continue with the Eurovision: You Decide format as it seems to be providing us with a bit more national pride and accountability. However, they need nationwide, and indeed Europe-wide, promotions of our acts – get them out there!



DW: It's unlikely anything will change next year. I believe that the BBC will battle on the same way with Graham Norton and Ken Bruce doing their thing on Grand Final night, plus the two semi-final commentators (Scott Mills and Rylan Clark-Neal this year) battling their way through it all as always. I think the BBC coverage is loved by so many they will be reluctant to do anything drastic.

SR: Eurovision: You Decide is getting more popular by the year and no one can deny that those sent forward to Eurovision have been great ambassadors for the UK. I firmly believe the song is key; that's what the BBC need to concentrate on. We do tend to stay in the safe zone by singing about unity, life's hurdles or self-belief (*Believe In Me*; *I Can*; *It's My Time*, etc.).

JM: There's no point re-inventing the wheel. However, it's already becoming clear that songs you wouldn't describe as safe choices for Eurovision were submitted for consideration in 2018 (SuRie's *Taking It Over* for a start), but we're still not taking the sort of risks song-wise that have been paying off (largely) for the likes of Belgium in recent years. There's no need to panic, just make sure that the songs in the final next year all have that killer instinct. Or, if an absolute belter of a song is submitted before the closing date, one that's head and shoulders above everything else, have the courage to cancel the final and divert all the resources into getting that song into vote-hoovering shape production-wise, staging-wise and with the perfect act performing it.

AR: Sum up your overall thoughts of Eurovision 2018 – a classic? Or one to be forgotten?

BH: For me, this was one of the strongest Eurovisions in recent years, probably since Vienna. The staging was great, the arena was great and the music was spectacularly varied

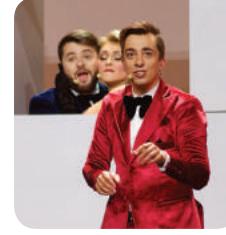
this year. Definitely one of the strongest for music, maybe going back to 2009, which was one of my favourite years.

DW: Definitely not to be forgotten! I think this year had some fabulous songs. In fact as I watched and listened in the arena most days during the week, the contestants improved greatly and I even grew to like performances I had previously not been keen on. It was really obvious how the jury voting differed from the televote, starting with the fact that several different countries received 12 points leaving the competition wide open for a while. By the time of the jury final it was difficult to choose a winner. I felt it could have gone either way as it was a very strong field.

SR: Not taking anything away from Ukraine or Portugal's wins in 2016 and 2017 respectively, but Eurovision needed a boost of enthusiasm and energy. Therefore, 2018 will be remembered for delivering just that. It had many rousing and upbeat numbers. The staging was great, but the interval act was arguably the least entertaining of the last ten years. Four hosts were too much; Filomena and Daniela could have easily managed together or on their own. Somehow they lost my phone number as I would have easily stepped in.

JM: It was fine! The shadow of Stockholm 2016 still looms large over recent contests and I don't envy any TV company which has to stage Eurovision in the next three years or so because they'll have to come up with their answer to *Love Love Peace Peace* (the *Riverdance* of the teenies). Fado will never be my thing and that was a risky start to the show (hardly Saturday night fun and glitter) but time will be kind to Lisbon 2018 – it was to Rome 1991 eventually.

AR: Every year there are always some changes or tweaks to the contest; is



there anything that you'd like to see changed or rules that you'd like to see ended?

BH: I think the jury panel needs less influence. Maybe 75-25 in favour of the televote. After all, it's the 180 million of them that the artists are trying to impress. Perhaps also have a way for the arena to vote, maybe as a 'country' revealed at the end of voting. Get a sense for what went down well in the arena although, of course, checks and balances would need to be put in place to stop home-voting.

DW: Ticket sales. I know it's a thorn in the side, but something has to change about third party ticket-sellers as it was heart-breaking seeing so many people refused entry as their ticket had been scanned/used already. Controversial I know, but the Big Five and host country should have a fixed spot where they sing every year... maybe first five of second half? Just a thought! And I feel this only applies because Israel won, but the EBU/ESC has a duty of care to protect fans travelling to wherever the contest is to be held, but with conflicting information circulating already it's beginning to create concerns around safety and security.

SR: To promote Europe's diversity of languages, introduce a rule that entrants must sing in their national language in the semi-final and, if they qualify, they can opt to change to English (or another language) for the Grand Final performance.

JM: I've been thinking about this for five minutes and the fact I'm thinking about it proves I can't be that worried about Eurovision in its current form. I wouldn't mind a less protracted voting sequence, but I can't see how that's logically possible. Logistically possible. What a sexy phrase to end my answers with... ■

Small TALK with Richard Taylor

David Ransted posed the questions



Occupation: Many of you know me for being a blogger for Eurovision Ireland, but my actual job is working for Tesco. I am a Customer Service Desk Assistant, but also work in our Cash Office from time to time. As a side line, I am our store's Community Champion where I deal with donations, bucket collections, charity weekends, Race for Life - to name a few things!

Favourite Eurovision year: For some reason, 1999 seems to always be on my must watch list. Sadly, it was the first contest without the orchestra, but Jerusalem proved the contest didn't require big LED screens to put on a great show - just like Lisbon this year.

Which Eurovisions have you attended? I first attended Eurovision back in 2008. I've attended every contest since 2010 - making Lisbon my tenth. I've also attended every Junior Eurovision since 2014 and travelled to Glasgow for the Eurovision Dance Contest back in 2008 too.

Favourite Eurovision entry: My favourite Eurovision entry is Carola's *Fångad Av En Stormvind*. It's a Swedish winner I know - but

not the obvious one many would pick, but I love all things Scandinavian. I'm also a fan of Johnny Logan's *Hold Me Now*.

Favourite UK entry: There have been a few songs that could be named here, but SuRie's *Storm* is a definite favourite. What happened in Lisbon was a shame, but after seeing her on her Eurovision Unplugged tour in Harlow, she is an amazing singer, an amazing songwriter and, most importantly, can joke about what happened without getting upset - a true professional.

Favourite Eurovision host city: My favourite host city is Oslo. While expensive, when you look beyond that aspect, everything is in close proximity or easily accessible. I fell in love with the city back in 2010, when we all descended on the city for the contest, but have also been back a couple of times in the winter for *Melodi Grand Prix*.

Favourite city or place: I love Tallinn. I know it was a Eurovision host city, but I've only experienced it during *Eesti Laul* time, when the majority of the people are Estonian.



Interests outside Eurovision: I enjoy participating in our local pub quiz every other Wednesday - which is literally across the road from my house! I also enjoy *Nordic Noir* and other foreign language TV dramas. I like to record them, then curl up on the sofa on a Sunday afternoon to watch them.

A night on the town or a quiet night in? Definitely a quiet night in after a nine hour shift at work. A glass of wine or two on the sofa, accompanied by a classic Eurovision or *Nordic Noir* boxset on the television.

What was your most embarrassing moment? Turning up to Granny's 80th birthday with a bruised face. This was due to a pub crawl during the first year at University. Thankfully, the cuts have disappeared - my face had met the pavement several times!

What is your most treasured possession? My most treasured possession is Billy Bear. He was given to me by my uncle Dick when I was born and he is still with me today - even making some of my earlier foreign trips too.

Favourite book: I'll admit to not being a big reader, but I've recently got into Jo Nesbo's *Harry Hole* series, which is based in and around Oslo.

Which six people, alive or resurrected, would you invite to your fantasy dinner party? * There are so many people! Winston Churchill would be one and I think we would all be interested in his views on Brexit. I'd love to invite Svante Stockselius and Vladislav

Yakovlev to hear their current views on how the Eurovision family of events is going. After this year's contest, I'd have to invite SuRie for her fun personality. I also have to include some Swedes - so Carola and Måns Zelmerlöw would get the final two invitations.

What would your superpower be? I'd love a superpower to silence people! Whether it's customers at work or others, it would be great to click my fingers and see various people go into mute mode!

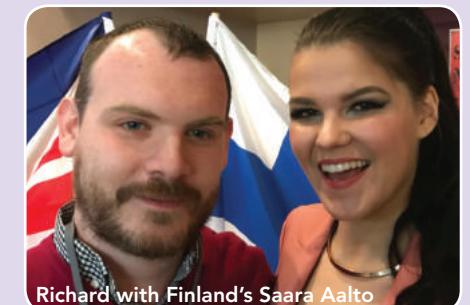
What is top of your bucket list? During sixth form, 18 years ago, I went on a school exchange to Townsville and Sydney in Australia. I'd love to go back there, followed by a trip to New Zealand.

Favourite non-Eurovision song: While I can't pick one song in particular, I was brought up with music from the 1970s.

Apart from Eurovision, who was the last music act you saw perform live? I saw Michael Ball and Alfie Boe last December in Bournemouth for their *Together Again* tour. I booked the tickets for myself and Mum as part of her Mother's Day present last year.

What's on your playlist at the moment? I've recently downloaded Step's *Party On The Dancefloor* and Alcazar's *Disco Defenders* on the phone. However, I still play the Eurovision album in the car! ■

* Richard should be pleased that Svante Stockselius and SuRie are set to be guests at this year's Eurobash!



THE LAST WORD



By Vision Editor
Hass Yusuf

Let me begin by paying tribute to Gordon Lewis. It's going to be strange not working closely with him from now on. What he has achieved for **Vision** and the club has been amazing! I would like to personally thank him for taking me on as his assistant many moons ago and for eventually promoting me to Editor. He's certainly made me sound decent over the years and corrected many errors!

He once had a plan of stepping back a bit – but that never happened – he was still busy as ever with the magazine, managing stuff for the website, tickets, etc. His role can never be underestimated!

But this isn't the end of Gordon's involvement with **Vision** or the club.

I'm glad he's agreed, for the time being, to carry on as Editorial Consultant as part of the handover process to the new Editor-in-Chief. It would be absolutely foolish to lose all the knowledge and skills that Gordon has built up over the years.

Though I am disappointed that so many of our members failed to vote in the elections, both Danny Lynch and Jamie McLoughlin won their roles democratically, so well done to both of them. It's good to see Danny back in his old role and let's give a warm welcome to Jamie. Jamie is a very experienced journalist who will help keep up the high standard of writing in **Vision**. I'm sure we're going to develop lots of new ideas over the coming years. He's already bagged an exclusive interview for the next edition.

With the change in personnel, a few members have contacted me concerned that they had heard rumours that **Vision** would

only be available online. Let me correct those rumours – it's not going to happen. **Vision** will stay in its printed form for quite a while yet! But that's not to say that we won't produce an online version as well in conjunction with the magazine. We did experiment with an online version some time ago, but the results weren't good enough. However, this is something that Jamie and our web guru, Sagi, will be looking at.

While some do consider the print medium to be a dinosaur, I'm sure you'll agree that **Vision** still packs a loud roar! And it has to be remembered that, for the vast majority of the membership, **Vision** is the main benefit of their subscription. Most members do not apply for Eurovision tickets or even attend Eurobash.

Over the coming months we'll be looking at ways to improve and evolve **Vision** – which we have been doing for many

years now. Many magazines have a major facelift every so often, so we'll be looking to upgrade **Vision** again, possibly with a new visual identity and such like.

If you have any suggestions or ideas for articles

please contact me on hassan.yusuf@hotmail.com. Check out our Info page (inside front cover) for deadlines. And this Last Word feature is open to any member who would like to express an opinion on a topic. Just get in touch.

Let's end this edition by welcoming Jamie again – and raising a glass to Gordon Lewis to thank him for all he has done for **Vision** and OGAE UK over the decades! ■



Gordon



Jamie

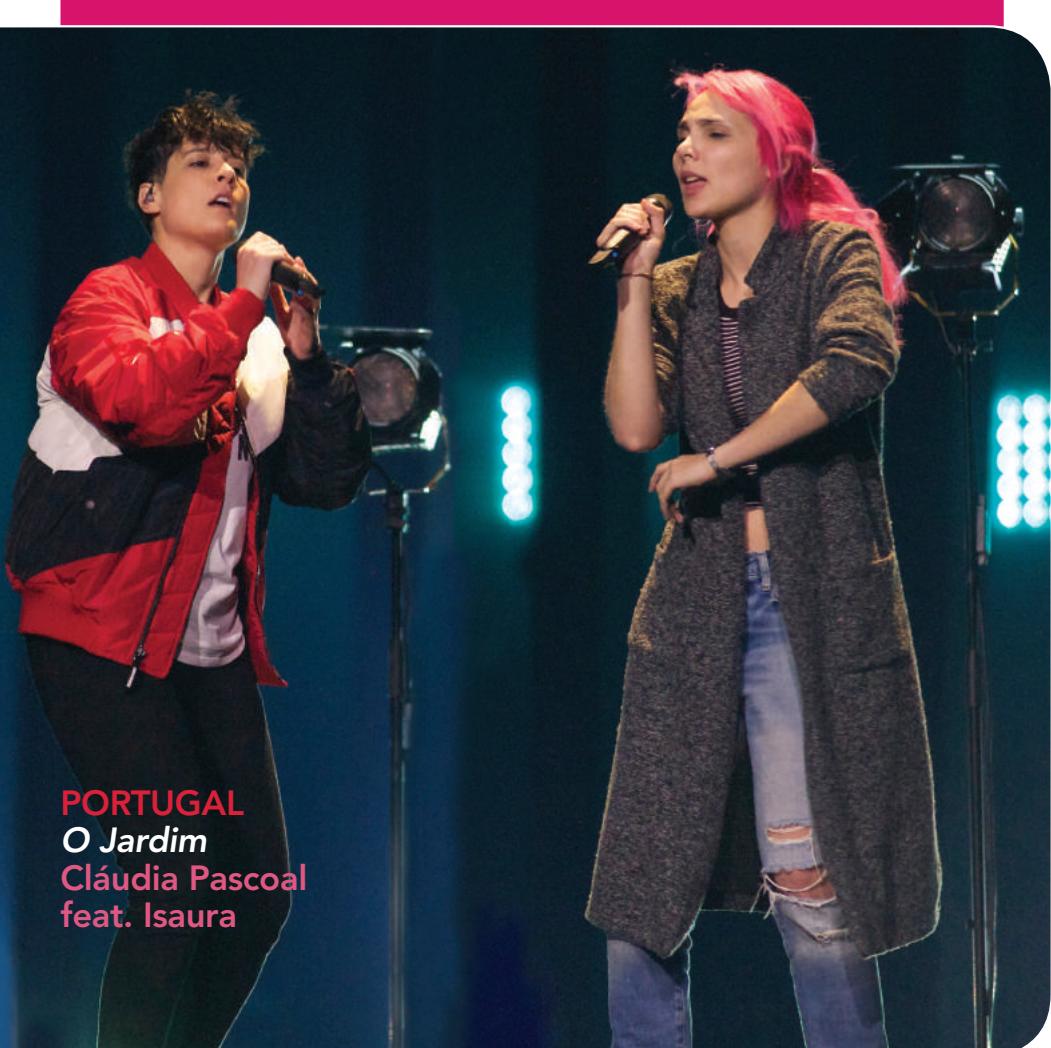
PARTING SHOT

We'll leave you with this shot of Italy's Ermal Meta and Fabrizio Moro performing *Non Mi Avete Fatto Niente (You Haven't Done Anything To Me)*, taken by David Ransted in the Dress Rehearsal for the Grand Final in Lisbon. Italy performed last in the line-up and finished in fifth place with 308 points. The song, which won the Sanremo Music Festival in the Big Artists section, made number two on the Italian singles chart.



THE 'LAST' PAGE

GRAND
FINAL
2018



PORTUGAL

O Jardim

**Cláudia Pascoal
feat. Isaura**

Photo by David Ransted

Received 39 points

(Seven from Lithuania, six from Ireland, three from both Estonia and Switzerland, two from the Netherlands and 18 from televoters)