

2020

WE LOOK BACK AT THE PAST DECADE

VISION

THE OGAE UK MAGAZINE

SPRING 2020 1

WWW.OGAE.UK

ISSUE

119



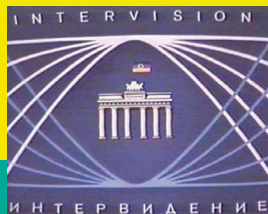
EURO BASH!

FULL REPORT ON
OUR ANNUAL EVENT

WHO WON THE ONE THAT GOT AWAY?



INTERVISION EUROVISION BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN



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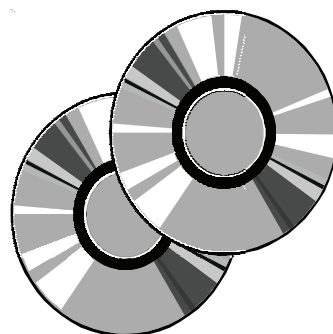
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EDLINES

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I've mentioned in previous Edlines how there's always been a healthy fan presence in the north west of England, my home and stomping ground, and I'm writing this just a few days after our Christmas get-together in Liverpool.

As expected, the chinwagging turned towards 2020 and if the news the UK is scooping a song from the more lucrative pool of a major label and all that could potentially offer is a positive one.

For the first time in a wee while, we allowed ourselves a dash of cautious optimism. After so many years of false hope, could something in the stars align for us on the scoreboard this year? Well, we'll see.

Congratulations to everyone who secured a ticket package to Rotterdam in the OGAE ballot. I have to publicly thank Danny Lynch and Simon Bennett for all of their amazing work surrounding the ticket allocation. At times, I imagine it requires the kind of diplomacy skills that secures someone a role in the UN but they coped with any pressures brilliantly.

As usual, I tried my luck in the public ballot as my partner isn't an OGAE member. I'd love to tell you how close I came to tickets but as anyone else who tried will tell you, I don't know if I was next in line or somewhere closer to the Belgian border before the sales closed. Still, there's always the next wave.

Finally, a big thank you to everyone who embraced The One That Got Away poll launched in **Vision** 118. At time of typing, I don't actually know who came first in your votes so I'll find out when you do later on in this issue.

By the time you read this, we should also be knee-deepish in national finals season. Have you heard the winner yet? If so, give us a shout, I'm always rubbish at picking it.

CONTENTS

Eurobash 2019	4-11
The One That Got Away: Results	12-18
President's Page	19
That Was The Decade That Was	20-25
Intervision: Behind The Curtain	26-33
Sharing The Joy	34-41
Euro Quiz	42
Editor's Choice	43
Ten More Essential Connections	44-47
EuroStarz: Relive The Moment!	48-49
The Naughty Scoreboard	50-52
AGM and OGAE UK Reports	53-61
Small Talk	62-63
Silver Linings	Back Cover

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NEXT ISSUE: OUT IN APRIL
Full preview on

EUROVISION
SONG CONTEST
ROTTERDAM 2020

CONSTITUTIONAL REVIEW

As you will be aware, we carried out a consultation on proposed changes to our constitution this year. A vote on the new constitution will take place soon. Details of the vote – which will be carried out on an online voting platform in line with our GDPR policies – will be sent out via email.



eurobash

LEEDS 2019

Jamie McLoughlin reports on OGAE UK's annual event



What do you get when you wedge a couple of hundred Eurovision fans into a conference suite for the best part of 24 hours, add music, alcohol, and various props and taffeta?

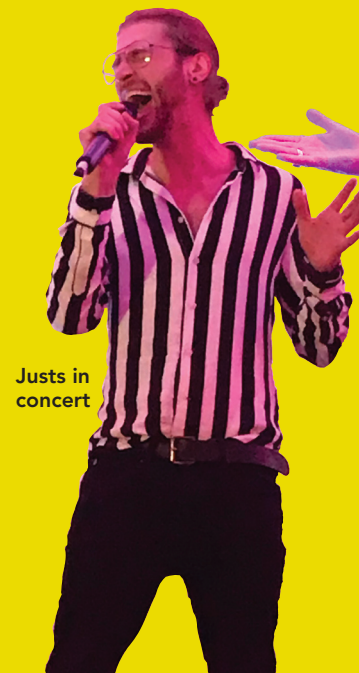
Well, Eurobash. What else were you here to read about?

Leeds welcomed OGAE to the City Hilton again in October for some more hi-jinks with a heavy emphasis on key

changes and even more alcohol and taffeta.

In what's becoming a cosy new home for us, President Alasdair Rendall welcomed us to our temporary sitting room for the day, a family gathering if you will, where you can quibble over the quiz questions in the first hour or crack on with an early glass of fizz.

Once the Battle of the Bash had crowned the winners it was time to



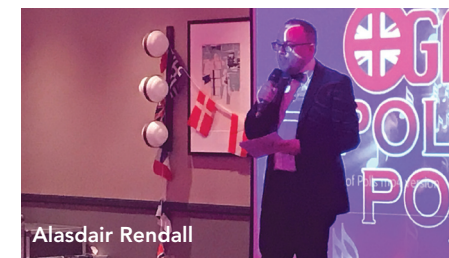
Justs in concert



Esther in concert



Getting ready for the rush



Alasdair Rendall

assemble a top table of Eurovision royalty that was destined to give the gossip klaxon a bit of a wobble, thanks to Monty Moncrieff's masterclass in juggling questions between four guests.

Justs, Latvia's entrant of 2016, seems to have taken his Stockholm experience in his stride. While belting out some lo-fi on behalf of the nation may not have been the career inspiration he scrawled on the back of his pencil case

as a nipper, it's good to see he's still fond enough of his experiences three years down the line. Before anyone forgets, it's all round to Esther Hart's house if you can't get a ticket to the final in May as the Netherlands' 2003 entrant lives in Rotterdam and couldn't wait to tell us all about the place. She's also a big fan of Liverpool FC's Virgil van Dijk, an opinion which surely makes her the greatest Dutch entrant of all time, perhaps even

the greatest Eurovision act of all time. What's that? Don't let your local loyalties impact on this review? Oh, alright then.

Michael Rice, bless his wee socks, has embraced the Eurovision circus in a way only he possibly can. We don't really care that he can't remember Conchita's name (but loves her song) and we'll back him up against the social media trolls anyway. What was almost worth the entry fee alone was the revelation that

Michael began his You Decide journey by recording a demo of *Freaks*, the song Jordan Clarke ultimately took to the business end of the national final. In the end, he preferred *Bigger Than Us*.

But if one person was made for conventions, it's Linda Martin. The 1992 winner for Ireland could read you the instructions from her boil in the bag cod mornay and you'd be so entertained you'd ask for the list of ingredients as



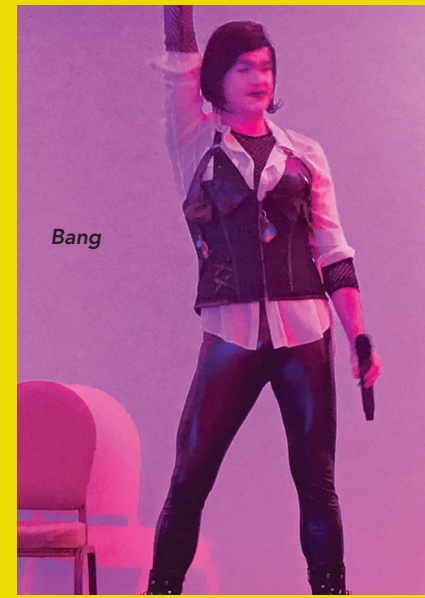
Michael in concert



Linda in concert



EUROSTARS Sasha Lynch and Marc Mulligan are two thirds of Keiino



EUROSTARS Carlo Ventisei is Maruv



Quiz hosts Jamie McCloughlin and Eddie De Souza



The quiz winning team!



Monty introduces the guest panel



Hosting Eurostars Vaughan Staples and John Bennett

an encore. Cheeky, mischievous, sassy and blunt, if you've crossed Ms Martin's path on the Eurovision circuit, you'll know how much of a giggle she is. Not afraid to pepper her reminiscences with the odd naughty adjective (which make them loads more fun), we heard how Mary Spiteri's dress in Malmo earned her the nickname Rising Damp and Terry Wogan's admittance during rehearsals that his heart belonged with

Why Me? rather than *One Step Out Of Time*. And if she could have nailed The Herreys' golden boots to the floor, oh how she would...

So, I suppose at this point we should get on with Eurostars.

Vaughan Staples and John Bennett have slipped into the presenter roles here like Eleni from Cyprus into a twirly cat-suit. Hopefully their pre-show medley of the Contest-that-has-been



Beauty
Never
Dies

EUROSTARS
Vanessa Kinsey-Thatcher is Bojana



It's My
Life

EUROSTARS
Will Howells is Cezar



La Det
Swinge

EUROSTARS
Michael Edwards (and friend) is Bobbysocks



It Hurts

EUROSTARS
Jamie McMahon is Lena Philipsson



will become a fixture of many a Bash to come.

Congratulations to everyone who took part, but in the end it was between Andy Brook's startling impersonation of Domenico Mudugno (that hair!) with Italy's 1958 bronze medallist *Nel Blu Dipinto Di Blu* (oh, alright, *Volare*) and Stuart Wilders' masterfully confident take on MELOVIN and his 2018 Ukraine entry *Under The Ladder*. It went on to

take the crown, and Stuart? He lovin' it.

But dear reader, our Bash was not yet over. Four hours of glorious shimmying to the finest pop Eurovision has ever given us was ours for the taking and thank you if you please, we were more than ready to grab it.

It meant a glorious end to the night. But if you ever ask Alasdair Rendall about Eurobash 2019, never, ever mention the midnight chips. It might get nasty. ■



EUROSTARS
Elaine Dove is Katrina (without The Waves)



EUROSTARS Emily Roberts and Eloise Flint are Inga & Anush



EUROSTARS
Andy Brook is Domenico Mudugno



EUROSTARS
Stuart Wilders wins as MELOVIN



THE ONE THAT GOT AWAY: THE RESULTS



In the last edition of *Vision*, we posed the question - what if? What if the UK had sent a different song from its national selection to Eurovision? In an unfortunate oversight, we forgot to book Mystic Meg to give us the precise answer but instead, we asked our readers to vote for the greatest song which never got the opportunity to represent Britain on one of the biggest stages in pop. Vote you did, and this edition we get to reveal the results and announce, once and for all, The One That Got Away. **Jamie McLoughlin** reports.

But you know what polls are like. Before we get to our overwhelming winner, we'll rank up the tension by revealing the results in reverse order. Because we're horrible.

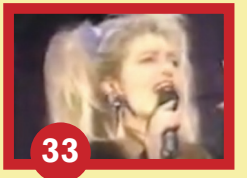
The Ones That Finished In Your Bottom Five

We asked you to vote in the usual Eurovision style, with 12 points for your favourite song from our shortlist of 37 unsuccessful entries in the UK heats, down to one point for your act in tenth place. Although that was a far more generous spread of scores than the postcard vote afforded to the songs in Lulu's 1969 Song For Europe, that didn't stop Elton John and Bernie Taupin coming last again in a public vote. In a bit of a shocker, your last place song is *I Can't Go On Living Without You*. Despite developing a reputation as a fan curio in the years since its failure, it scraped together just 13 of your points in this poll.

Throwing a ringer in to the list didn't quite work out either as Mal Pope's *Everybody* was a point and a place higher with *Everybody* (but do seek out that harmonica solo even if it finished 36th out of 37). The new wave *Door In My Face* from Fruit Eating Bears and the 1978 A Song For Europe never gathered much traction on the scoreboard in the Royal Albert Hall or in your votes. Under exposure and the passage of time possibly explains why Lulu's *Come September*, again from 1969, was another one of your bottom five but the biggest surprise from this group of blushes was the song in 33rd place. Ann Turner's *Too Hot To Handle* has always been one of the UK's

37th <i>I Can't Go On Living Without You</i>	13pts
36th <i>Everybody</i>	14pts
35th <i>Door In My Face</i>	19pts
34th <i>Come September</i>	20pts
33rd <i>Too Hot To Handle</i>	23pts

Eurovision 1980s shoulda-woulda-coulda moments, but here it just didn't stand out from the crowd. Bad luck (again), Ann.

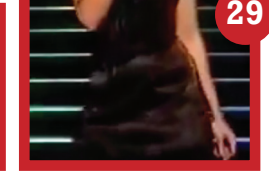
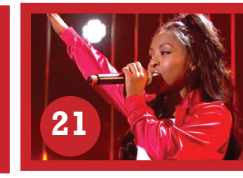
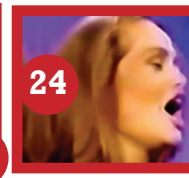
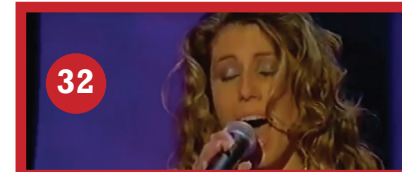


The Ones That Didn't Quite Embarrass Themselves

There's no shame in finishing somewhere between 21st and 32nd, as any good coach may just tell you. We're willing to evoke a similar sentiment for this more mediocre section of your results which sees some 1990s movers and 21st Century shakers jostling for your scraps.

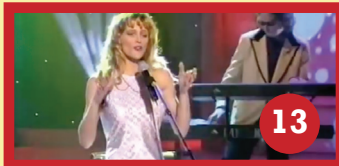
We begin with Alberta's second attempt at representing the UK, 1999's tres new language rule embracing *So Strange*. Sadly, there'll be no awooga's from her corner this time around as you had her 32nd with 28 points. Emily Reed may have been touted as the performer who would never have replicated Jemini's complete lack of points in 2003 but you didn't love her enough to chuck more than 29 of them her way. Also making up the number here is 1982's *Dancing In Heaven (Orbital Be-Bop)*. Q-Feel finished even further behind the winners here than they did 38 years ago but can still remain smug about it being the only song on the shortlist that appeared in the film *Girls Just Wanna Have Fun*. Frances Ruffelle's chanty/speaky *Sink Or Swim* can also be found lurking in this corner of the results, as is the most recent song on the list, Kerrie-Anne's *Sweet Lies*, squeaking India's *Wherever You Go* from 2000 for 27th place. If one song sticks out like a sore thumb from this chunk of tunes, it's Jump's *Don't Hang Up On Love* from 1986, their innovative use of Lycra and Elnette landing them in a pool of talent that features Catherine Porter, Sonia, Luke Galliana and Hyrise. But there's another shocker in 21st place. The song which many touted to be Britain's much-needed renaissance in teenies Eurovision, Asanda's *Legends*, scored a meagre 50 points, missing out on the top 20 through a bit of countback bad luck. Maybe it wouldn't have been such a legendary choice after all?

32nd <i>So Strange</i>	28pts
31st <i>Help Me</i>	29pts
30th <i>Dancing In Heaven (Orbital Be-Bop)</i>	31pts
29th <i>Sink Or Swim</i> (higher on countback)	31pts
28th <i>Wherever You Go</i>	32pts
27th <i>Sweet Lies</i>	34pts
26th <i>To Die For</i> (higher on countback)	34pts
25th <i>Don't Hang Up On Love</i>	38pts
24th <i>A Little Love</i> (Sonia's ASFE)	45pts
23rd <i>Crazy</i>	48pts
22nd <i>Leading Me On</i>	49pts
21st <i>Legends</i>	50pts



The Ones Which Actually Did OK

20th <i>Separate Lives</i> (higher on count back)	50pts
19th <i>Angel Eyes</i>	54pts
18th <i>Woo (U Make Me)</i>	55pts
17th <i>As Dreams Go By</i> (higher on count back)	55pts
16th <i>What Do You Say To Love?</i>	57pts
15th <i>Promises, Promises</i> (higher on count back)	57pts
14th <i>Another Time, Another Place</i>	66pts
13th <i>Yodel In The Canyon Of Love</i>	74pts
12th <i>Wake Up</i> (higher on count back)	74pts
11th <i>Don't Panic</i>	75pts



And so to your Top 20. It's probably fair to say that if you made it here, you could make it onto the Eurobash dance floor. Unless you're ballad, or Susan Black's *Separate Lives* which is amazing in its 'would the UK ever really send something like that?' quirkiness and is the first entry in the Top 20. One Vision voter, giving this their full 12, said "I remembering listening to it on the radio – it just sounded so unique! I wanted to hear it again - but never did until years later!" That 12 enabled Susan to finish ahead of Asanda.

One of the most entertaining reader responses came stapled to the 12 points for Michael Ball's *As Dreams Go By*, his Song For Europe runner-up. It read "One Step Out of Time only got through in 1992 because it had a better draw (seventh against third) and was closer to what the great British public thought (and still think) is Eurovision rather than the soaring musical eleven-o'clock showstopper they decided, incredibly, not to give to theatre star Michael Ball. He still nearly won in Malmo with his awkward OTT pop performance; imagine how he would have done with something which could have really shown off his voice and singing style."

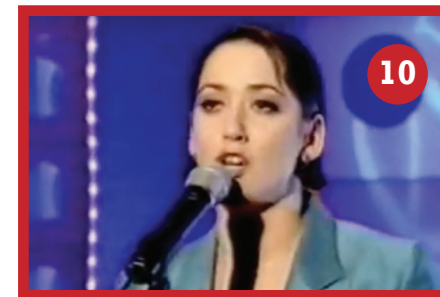
There was also a lot of love for Rags' *Promises, Promises* of 1977, seen as an early favourite to represent the UK on Wembley's home turf. A suitably enthusiastic opinion read "I loved this when I first heard it, bought the single and still play it as a great pop record. I feel this would have won."

Some online talk suggests that people who take part in Eurovision-flavoured polls these days ignore songs from before the new century. If you need any reassurance that this isn't the case, the lower half of the Top 20 is where a good representation of songs from the 1970s can be found, arguably the decade where the UK had its Eurovision game so precision engineered there should have been a steward's enquiry. Or is that a mixed metaphor? You may also marvel here that *Yodel In The Canyon of Love* (somehow) managed a nosebleed-inducing 13th place - yes, it finished higher than Olivia Newton-John's *Angel Eyes* - while pitying Liquid Gold, two points away from a place in the Top Ten. Still, there's no need for them to panic.

The Ones Who Should Be Rather Proud Of Themselves

From this point on, every song has done something no UK entry has achieved in the past decade, a place in the Top Ten. That's worth an extra order from the bunting shop on its own. Some scored average points regularly to surprise in the final tot-up while others were no shock at all.

Sapphire's *I'll Never Be Lonely Again* from 1998's Great British Song Contest went completely under the radar into tenth place but ninth wasn't such a revelation. A recent mainstay of DJ Jason D'Arcy and the Eurobash thang-shaking playlist, First Division's frankly exhausting *Where The Action Is* was safely into the upper echelons. One soul who bestowed their 12 on this said "The ultimate boy-girl Eurovision group! Key-change after key-change, amazing microphone action and a dance routine that embedded itself on my 11 and a half year old mind so much that when I saw it again on YouTube years and years later I could still (sort of) keep up. Although anyone watching me on the Eurobash dance floor after a few vodka and diet cokes probably wouldn't recognise it...." In a tight-knit rough and tumble between ninth and seventh, Dear Jon's *One Gift Of Love* had the less catchy sounding gift of eighth. But when it came to the songs of the 1960s, Sandie Shaw left Lulu's also-rans in a wake of gravel and dust as *Tell The Boys* took advantage of

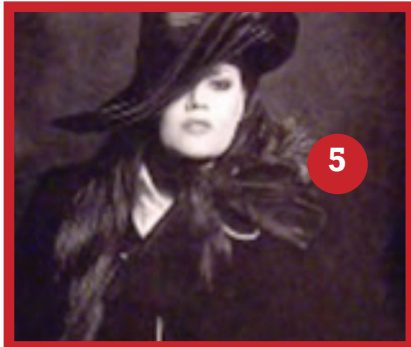


10th <i>I'll Never Be Lonely Again</i>	77pts
9th <i>Where the Action Is</i>	84pts
8th <i>One Gift of Love</i>	85pts
7th <i>Tell the Boys</i>	88pts
6th <i>I'll Leave My Heart</i>	96pts
5th <i>Never In a Million Years</i>	98pts
4th <i>I Want To Be Me</i>	108pts



First Division being absolutely knackered after another 873 key changes to sneak ahead by a solitary no-shoed point.

We're getting closer to your winner and the songs which managed to break the 100-point barrier. Doing neither of those, however, is Cyndi, the woman who could have saved us from Scooch (Barrowmaaaaaan!) with *I'll Leave My Heart*. This got a smashing endorsement from one voter **"There is a reason why most of these songs didn't make it to Eurovision and that is because what went was far better. Not in the case of Cyndi – if only Terry Wogan had stuck to his guns and awarded the win to her, instead of giving it to Scooch, we definitely would not have finished 22nd in Helsinki but would have smashed into at least the top half of the table"**



Your fifth spot went to the disqualified *Never In A Million Years* from Zee Asha in 2002. As someone who remembers the near-universal Eeyore sighs this received from the British fan message boards at the time, it's an impressive act of revisionism that saw this finish ahead of 32 others on the list. One approver mused **"It had class. Zee has an amazing voice. The tune is catchy enough to be remembered by voters; it was one of the few that I found myself singing along to before the end. If Jessica Garlick hadn't been our choice I think we would have done well with this."**



We're almost there. The top three were too far ahead to be caught in the end but Pussyfoot made the best job of catching them, breaking a century and coming fourth, the same place they finished at A Song For Europe 1980. Much like that night 40 years ago, those cats either got the high votes or the dregs from your Top Tens. One voter said **"This song was so much more contemporary, by the standards of 1980, than Prima Donna. I love the fact it's slightly kooky, plus the lead singer has a great voice!"**

And then there were three.

The One That Didn't Quite Win



3rd A Little Bit of Heaven 140pts

You really love *A Little Bit of Heaven*. You really do. Frustratingly for Lorraine Craig, her song seems to have third place written all over it, with the Song For Europe result of 1991 repeating itself here.

And your remarks on this song were rather heavenly too. Check these out: **"An extremely well performed, simply choreographed ballad, which had a powerful message and a great hook. I think this song would have finished top five in Rome!"**

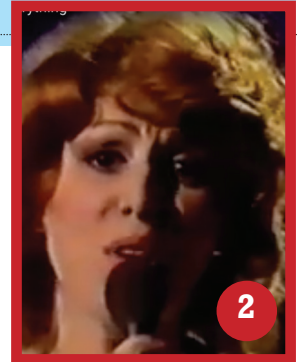
"This was the song that stood out in A Song For Europe 1991 and shockingly failed to get voted through to Eurovision. Ear catching, anthemic and well presented and would have been a far more worthy entry than the awful one that got through." Amen to that. With apologies to Samantha Janus.

The One That Almost Won

2nd Happy Everything 159pts

It didn't even have to come to a tiebreak this time around. Just as in 1980, Maggie Moone's *Happy Everything* and its Christmassy carnival sound which positively reeks of the Woolworths catalogue, is your silver medallist.

Again, we'll let you have your say: **"While the lyric is a little trite, the melody and innocence of the song has stood the test of time and has been covered by a number of people - from the straight-laced Roger Whittaker to the knowingly ultra-camp trio of songstresses Frecuencia Mod from Chile. You can't help but feel happy listening to this song."**



"Happy Everything is pure Eurovision happy pop. It was one of the very few runners up to be played on Radio 2 a lot, particularly by Terry Wogan. The problem that year was that it was up against Love Enough For Two, which was also a worthy winner and didn't do too badly at Eurovision."

"I have played this song to so many people over the decades and everyone, without exception, loves [it] and cannot believe it is now only remembered for being an also-ran, without any chart history. Forget Kate Ryan, Maggie Moone's name should be associated with the biggest injustice in Eurovision history!" Happy with that?

But your winner? It romped ahead from the start.

The One That Got Away

1st

I Need You

230pts



With two songs in your Top Ten, A Song For Europe 1995 must have been doing something very right. The first song up on that night was doing something even right-er. Finishing 71 points clear of the opposition, Deuce's *I Need You* is now, officially, the greatest song which never represented the UK at the Eurovision Song Contest. Obviously, this will be recognised by the EBU*, possibly even the UN, and some form of statue will be erected in honour of the group's delayed achievement in the members' respective home towns. And it's all thanks to you, OGAE members and **Vision** readers. Thank you for your votes, thank you for your support, thank you for making it to the end of this frankly exhausting summary of the results. The final words should only be yours:

"It would have won Eurovision 1995 amongst all the dreary ballads that took part that year."

"A piece of perfect pop, shot through with feel-good-factor and impossible not to dance to!"

"It beggars belief that Love City Groove beat what would have been celebrated as one of the greatest UK entries ever sent, and I still believe that, out of all the songs in this list, that if this was to go to Eurovision today, it would do incredibly well for us. Oh well, it will have to live on as one of the best songs at the next Eurovision disco instead!" ■

*It won't



PRESIDENT'S PAGE

A word from OGAE UK President Alasdair Rendall

What's Another Year? someone (almost 40 years ago in fact!) once wrote. And as we come to the end of yet another Eurovision year, it's a question worth asking. Another year of ticket dramas, another year of national finals, another year of fan favourites missing out, another year of some kind of scandal in the build up to the contest, and another year of amazing songs, amazing people and amazing memories.

As we come not just to the end of the year but to the end of the decade, it's worth reflecting on how far OGAE UK – if not the UK's Eurovision efforts – has come in the past ten years. We were delighted to recently pass the 2,000 barrier in terms of membership levels, a milestone that we have become tantalisingly close to before but never reached. Changes to our ticket policy to ensure that members who joined before the previous year's contest had taken place got priority in the ballot didn't put people off, nor did a run of poor results for the UK. But the growth of the club is first and foremost down to you the members for making it such a great club to be a part of.

There is always room for further improvement, and our AGM gave us food for thought, particularly on how we increase the range and diversity of our events and ensure that new members feel as welcome as possible.

When I wrote the President's Page for the last edition of **Vision**, our Eurobash was a matter of days away. It's now been and gone, and a review appears elsewhere in the magazine. However I just want to put on record my thanks to all those who came along and made it such a fun weekend, and of course our brilliant range of guests – Esther Hart, Justs, Michael Rice and Linda Martin. The feedback forms showed that you overwhelmingly enjoyed it as well. Planning is already underway for the first Bash of the new decade. Watch this space for more details!

Much of the past few weeks has been taken up with the annual joy – if that is the word – of ticketing. Thankfully the ticketing process has been much earlier this year, even if it did put a

bit of a dent in people's Christmas budgets, and despite a quick turnaround, seemed to pass off relatively smoothly. Of course, huge credit needs to go to our ticket co-ordinator Danny for all his work here, as well as to Simon in his role as President of the OGAE International Bureau for negotiating tickets for OGAE. It's worth reminding members that fan packages are by no means automatically guaranteed and the OGAE network has to put the case for them every year, and although negotiations do take place, ultimately the price and the format is a matter for the organisers.

Speaking of all things Rotterdam our plans are stepping up a gear to ensure all those members travelling to the Netherlands have an amazing time. There will be the annual OGAE day out and the Thursday afternoon fan party. Given the large numbers of people travelling there may be a bit of a get-together earlier in

the week as well. And once again we're seeing if there can be an OGAE UK party for those staying in the UK and enjoying the contest from afar.

Hopefully by the time this edition of **Vision** lands on your doormats we'll have some idea of how the UK will be revealing the song to represent us at the Ahoy Arena. Things have been a little quiet on that front – but

that's not necessarily a bad thing; we'd rather the BBC and BMG took their time and got things right rather than getting something out in a rush (but do leave enough time to do a proper publicity push!)

And a bit of good news to end on... for the second year in a row OGAE UK has won the OGAE Song Contest! Thank you to Fin Ross Russell for organising an excellent contest, and to all those members who contributed whether through shortlisting songs, voting, or sending in postcard videos. Well done to our victor Lewis Capaldi, and we look forward to hosting contest in 2020 – and who knows, maybe we'll do just as well in the real thing as well??

All that remains is for me, on behalf of the whole OGAE UK Committee, to wish you all a prosperous and Eurovisiontastic 2020! ■



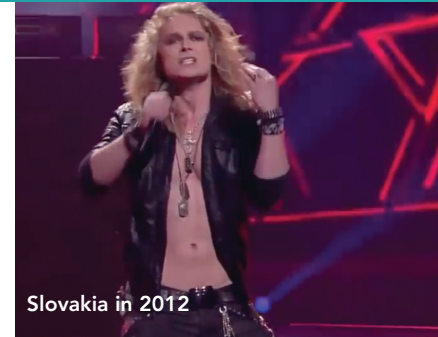
THAT WAS THE DECADE THAT WAS



The past decade has seen some major changes and developments in the contest. **Lisa-Jayne Lewis** looks back at the teens and turns Mystic Meg in predicting what we may see in the 2020...

Lost and Found - Who's In and Who's Out...

Joining the greatest party on earth this decade have been Australia. Debuting in 2015 in Vienna, Guy Sebastian had the honour of flying the first Aussie flag at Eurovision with his oh-so-fun pop number *Tonight Again*, invited as a one off for the contests 60th anniversary a fifth place finish saw them invited back the following year where Dami Im gave them their best result to date coming second with *Sound Of Silence*. Australia have established themselves very quickly as one of the most successful debuting nations at the contest and are now on a five year invitation instead of waiting for their annual call from



the EBU to let them know if they are in or not, and I for one am very pleased to have them.

Sadly in the teens we've said goodbye to a few countries too, these may or may not be permanent, only time will tell. Bulgaria left us after the 2018 contest, due to financial issues and a different focus for the BNT, but as it turned out we weren't sad for long, as shortly after Tel Aviv, BNT announced a return to the contest in 2020. Bosnia & Herzegovina were last with us in 2016, but with debts to the EBU that the broadcaster has so far not been able to settle, a return to the contest is not looking

likely anytime soon, if I had a spare few million Euros hanging around I'd pay it off for them because I'd love to see B&H back, there is a hole in my beloved Balkan region that I'd like to see closed! We lost Slovakia from the roster back in 2012, having not made the final at all since their return in 2008, the broadcaster pulled out citing a lack of interest from the Slovakian public and music professionals. Also leaving the contest in 2012 was Turkey, they did not like the concept of the 'Big 5' and subsequently said that Conchita's win in 2014 was further reason for the country to abstain from the contest.

The Winners:

- Lena**
Satellite (Germany)
- El & Nikki**
Running Scared (Azerbaijan)
- Loreen**
Euphoria (Sweden)
- Emmelie de Forrest**
Only Teardrops (Denmark)
- Conchita Wurst**
Rise Like A Phoenix (Austria)
- Måns Zelmerlöw**
Heroes (Sweden)
- Jamala**
1944 (Ukraine)
- Salvador Sobral**
Amar Pelos Dois (Portugal)
- Netta**
Toy (Israel)
- Duncan Lawrence**
Arcade (Netherlands)





Flying the Flag – What’s new decade...

(OK, I know Scooch were 2007, but what else could I call it when I’m about to talk about flags in the next sentence?!) The parade of flags is something that seems so established at Eurovision that you’d be forgiven for thinking it’s been around for decades, however this was introduced in Malmo in 2013 and actually comes from the Junior Eurovision Song Contest where it has been in place since 2004.

You might think that the well-known phrase “Europe, start voting now” has been around as long as the televote, but you’d be wrong. Prior to 2012 TV viewers had been able to vote during the songs, with the voting window closing 15 minutes after the final act performed, but in Baku that changed and the phone/SMS voting window that we know today was introduced.

The running order that had previously been decided by a draw became a thing of the past in 2013, and what we now see

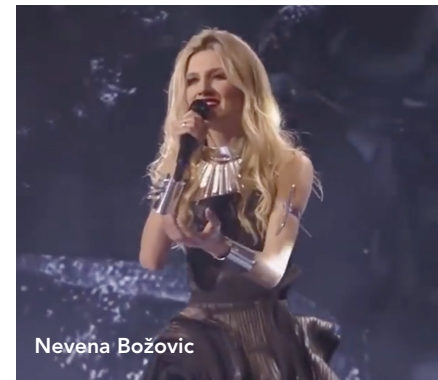
as the producer-lead running order came into being, this was in order to produce a better formatted show for TV and prevent too many songs of the same genre appearing in a row on the running order and to make sure that show openers and closers were suitable for those places in the show. I suspect a large part of that is due to the rather painfully slow start to the Grand Final in 2012. To continue to keep it balanced, the host country would continue to draw their place at random, but no other countries would do so.

In this decade we saw our first cross over artist from the Junior Eurovision Song Contest to take to the stage. Nevena Božovic had represented Serbia at JESC in 2007 coming in third place and in 2013 she was a member of the Serbian group Moje 3, she returned again to the contest in 2019 as a solo artist representing Serbia.

Anti-boosing technology became a

feature of the contest, largely due to the reaction of the audiences towards Russian artists. The Tolmachevy Sisters from Russia had been distraught during the 2014 show, as they were booed by the crowd during their performance and during the voting segment. The 2014 contest was held just weeks after Russia had annexed Crimea and there was a particularly anti-Russian vibe in the air. In Vienna anti-boosing technology was installed and Green Room host Conchita Wurst quite literally told the audience off on air for booing as she sat with 2015 Russian artist Polina Gagarina on the green room sofas.

Partnering with Twitter in 2015, we saw the dawn of #hashflags, which meant everytime you used a hashtag with the country’s ICO code, a little Eurovision heart with the country’s flag appeared in your tweet!



Nevena Božovic



The Tolmachevy Sisters

Fly With Me – Our geographical extremes...

The teenies have given us our most east and west contest, Baku in 2012 saw the contest travel as far to the East as is possible (unless Russia decide to host in Vladivostok should they win again, I suspect this is unlikely – Vladivostok, not a second Russian win!) following Azerbaijan’s win in 2011 with *Running Scared*. In 2018 we saw the most western contest by about 300 metres. Back in the spring of 2018 I did some rather complicated longitudinal mathematics and was able to plot the Altice Arena in Lisbon just short of 500m further west than the equestrian centre in Millstreet, Ireland, venue of the 1993 contest, yes I am that kind of nerd! (Incidentally, our most northerly contest was Helsinki in 2007, and the most southerly has been Jerusalem 1979 and 1999).



Host Cities: (A useful visual aid when muggles moan on about how Eastern countries win all the time!)

- Oslo
- Dusseldorf
- Baku
- Malmo
- Copenhagen
- Vienna
- Stockholm
- Kyiv
- Lisbon
- Tel Aviv

My Friend – The rise of the Eurovision community...

Sure there was some social media going on before 2010 but this past decade has seen the global rise of fans interacting with each other in a way that wasn't available before. Not only have fans been able to connect to each other but websites, blogs, vlogs and YouTubers are now a much loved part of the Eurovision community. It's worth noting that there is something for everyone, from the Uber-millennial Wiwibloggs to the more academic ESC Insight, from the much loved live-stream of ESCXtra to the somewhat insanity of Eurovision Apocalypse, from the 'almost Eurovision' of Second Cherry to the alternative reflections of OnEurope and the number of daily news sites each with their own take on things, no stone is left unturned in the coverage of the contest.

Euphoria - Points mean prizes (well, only one prize really)

The scoring has changed a few times in the past decade.

Our first scoring change happened not in the Grand Final, but in the semi final – in 2010 the system was changed to align it with the 50/50 jury/televote system in the Grand Final, previous to that the top nine televote winners qualified and the tenth place was the highest jury point winner that had not already got a place.

We then saw a change in the way that jury's ranked the songs. In 2013 jurors were asked to rank all of the songs in first to 25th place (26th in 2015) instead of only awarding their Top Ten as before, obviously not including their own countries entry in their ranking. We also saw in 2013 the introduction of voting via the official Eurovision App. Then in 2014, to add to

voting transparency, the names of the jurors were published prior to the show and their scores made public after the Grand Final. There was also a rule introduced that a juror could not have been a part of the previous two juries, meaning that a country couldn't use the same people over and over again.

Three years later the jury points and the televote points separated out from each other and 2016 saw what was probably the biggest change in the scoring system as the points were announced *Melodifestival* style, in general this was met with huge approval from the fans making the scoring much more exciting and eliminating the rather annoying element of the winner being known before the final results had come in. However, in 2019, the way the

New languages in songs:

Swahili (2011)
Udmurt (2012)
Georgian (2012)
Azerbaijani (2012)

Some numbers:

408 Songs
30 Hosts
10 Venues

points were announced changed again, now instead of the televote points being announced in the reverse order they were announced in the order of how they had fared with the juries. This was much more controversial and lead to many angry fans annoyed that Keiino from Norway, missed out on their moment to shine as the fact that they had won the televote became buried in the whole points segment.

In 2015 we saw the greatest extreme of points, for the first time the top four countries all scored over 200 points and Polina Gagarina representing Russia became the first non-winner to crack the 300 point marker. At the other end of the table Austria became the first host nation to score a big zero, causing The Makemakes to record a parody of the winning song for their social media using the line 'we are the zero's of our time'!

The themes:

Share the Moment
Feel Your Heart Beat
Light Your Fire
We Are One
#joinus
Building Bridges
Come Join Us
Celebrate Diversity
All Aboard
Dare to Dream

Lie To Me – Predictions for the future

OK, you can hang on to this to prove me wrong in 2029, but I reckon over the next decade we will see more native language winners. The only native language winner of the decade was in 2017 (though Jamala did give us a few lines of Crimean Tartar in 2016) – in fact the previous native language winner prior to Salvador was Marija Šerifovic in 2007.

At some point in this next decade, and I'd say sooner rather than later, I we'll finally get online voting. It's in place, albeit a bit clunky, at Junior Eurovision and as it stands at the moment the contest looks a little stuck in the past because there is still only televoting and, in certain countries, app voting. It has to happen, someone has to figure out a way for it to become a reality. Yes, it will lead to voting controversies, but Eurovision without voting controversies would be like football without a ball!

I'm going to stick my neck on the line and predict first time wins for Slovenia, Cyprus and Malta. I'm also fairly confident that Sweden will relocate the magic that it seems to have lost and achieve that seventh win they are so craving, I also think we will see a second win for Russia and maybe also for Serbia.

During the next decade I am expecting to see more use of specialised stage effects like Netta's smoke bubbles and maybe coloured pyro (seriously coloured pyro has been around for ages, why hasn't anyone used it yet?) I'm sure there will be some development in broadcast technology which I cannot predict, maybe we'll get our first ever contest in 3D or even VR!

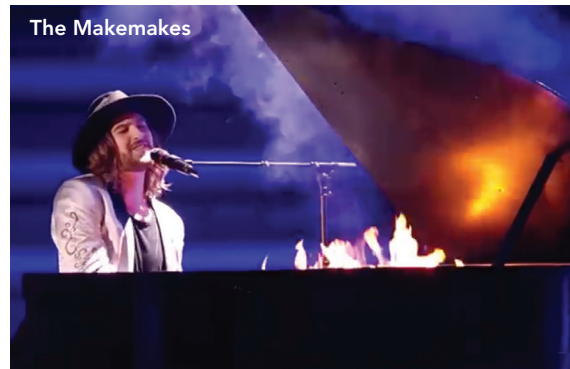


Oh, and I'm predicting that Slavko will be back... ■

Polina Gagarina



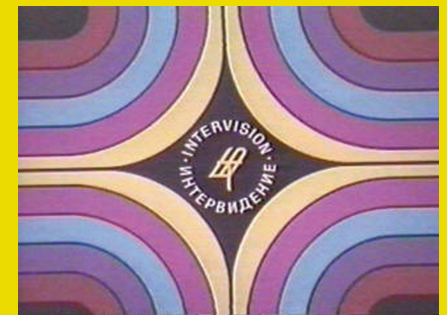
The Makemakes



INTERVISION: BEHIND THE CURTAIN



Marcus Keppel-Palmer looks back on the rival to the Eurovision Song Contest behind the iron curtain



What a simple idea – sharing television programmes across countries. As Europe was picking itself up and pulling itself together after

World War II, television was growing in popularity and importance, and state broadcasters found a use for satellites. Eurovision was born on the English riviera and gradually viewers in Bonn, Rome, Paris and Copenhagen could see occasional programmes seen by viewers in London and Vienna. As we know, taking the example of the San Remo song festival, the greatest and most enduring of these programmes shown through the Eurovision network is of course its own favourite song contest.

The continent was a divided one, Germany was split and countries that fell under the Soviet sway – rule more or less direct from Moscow under an ideology

of communism – existed behind an Iron Curtain, so called by Winston Churchill in 1945, first virtually during the Cold War and then physically behind a Berlin Wall and series of fences and boundaries from the early 1960s. Just as Western Europe had the EBU, so to did the East have OIRT or as it was more commonly known, InterVision. One of the anomalies of InterVision was that YLE, Finnish state television, was a member of both Eurovision and of InterVision. Aside from that, membership consisted of Soviet states and their areas of influence east of the Iron Curtain.

Eurovision and InterVision developed a programme of co-operation from 1960 onwards, an exchange of programmes. In truth it was more one-way with InterVision taking many more programmes offered by Eurovision (mostly sport) than vice versa. However, events in the Soviet Union, such as space flights and reception

ceremonies for cosmonauts, were shown by members of the Eurovision network in addition to sports. The triumphant space flight of Yuri Gagarin was one such exchange programme that originated from InterVision.

Inspiration

International music events have long played a significant part in European television. Long before the Eurovision Song Contest started, and before World War II, the then International Broadcasting Union broadcast a series of music events called *The European Concert Series* between 1931 and 1939. As most readers will know, the *San Remo Festival* in Italy, the inspiration for the Eurovision Song Contest, was broadcast on television first in 1954, having been radio only on RAI from 1950 – Eurovision started in 1956.

From the mid-1960s onwards, the

Eurovision Song Contest was also broadcast across the InterVision network. Not every country took the show, but hosts acknowledged the InterVision audience at the outset of shows, for example in 1967 Austrian hostess Erica Vaal greeted viewers in Russian. Of course, songs representing Yugoslavia and Finland performed most years, ensuring that InterVision viewers had some representation. Politics played a part. When Israel hosted in 1979 almost every InterVision broadcaster declined to show Eurovision that year.

The broadcasters that made up InterVision started early in seeing festivals as music as good ways to show off national culture, but also international exposure for artists. These festivals may have been seen as alternatives to western pop music culture, but although quality was at the forefront, these festivals moved in line with the development of music from primarily



Marion Rung



“There all the competitors are like one big family. All are friends with each other, and all produce a programme together.”

light orchestral through the 1960s to a schlager-pop style. The first of these was the *Festival of Light and Dance Music* in Leipzig in 1959. The festival stretched over several days and featured a number of concerts that could be relayed on radio and television. By the mid-1960s, Intersvision relayed several song festivals or contests annually: the ‘Golden Clef’ *Intersvision Competition of Dance Songs and Chansons*, organised for the first time in 1965, held in Bratislava in connection with the *International Television Festival* in Prague; the international song festival at Sopot; the *Golden Stag Festival* in Brasov Romania held between 1968 and 1971; and the *Golden Orpheus* song contest at the Bulgarian Black Sea coast resort of Sunny Beach from 1967 onwards.

YLE in Finland broadcast these festivals as well as Eurovision, in which it participated of course, but it was reported

that the Intersvision originated festivals were rather better received than Eurovision. The Eurovision Song Contest was seen as a rush, a song contest squeezed into one and a half hours, whereas the East European festivals were proper music festivals where first-class singers performed in front of large audiences over a period of several days. When Finland withdrew from Eurovision in 1970 (but only for one year), YLE’s Aarno Walli explained: “Unlike in Western countries, music has always been appreciated as an art form among East European countries. ... The countries of the Eastern bloc love good singing, be it opera, lied, folk music, or schlager music in easy listening form.” Eurovision was also criticised as being a commercial marketplace for publishers and record companies whereas the East European song festivals epitomised musical quality and non-commercialism, values that



Jacques Hustin



Therese Steinmetz



Ann-Louise Hanson

were compatible with public service broadcasting ideals and seen to be lacking in Eurovision. The competitions in these festivals were judged by expert juries, not lay people as in Eurovision, which meant that the aim was to find high-calibre songs.

Strange destructive tension

Marion Rung compared her experiences representing Finland at Eurovision in 1962 and in 1973 and at song contests in Intersvision countries, saying that while Eurovision was characterised by a ‘strange destructive tension’, the atmosphere at East European festivals was quite different: “There all the competitors are like one big family. All are friends with each other, and all produce a programme together.” Marion won competitions at Sopot on two occasions.

However, despite the criticisms of Eurovision and the praise for Intersvision,

the Finnish audience identified more closely with the Western contest. The fact that the festivals ran over several days meant that exhaustion set in – indeed the festivals were more shown as highlights with coverage carried on radio. Audiences found it hard to follow the competition over that period, something that viewers of San Remo for example can sympathise with, while technical problems inherent in the network made it a less stable undertaking than Eurovision. Expert juries may have ensured the quality of the winner, but the voting process was held in secret unlike Eurovision’s on-screen process. Viewers preferred the latter. The winners of Eurovision, a commercial undertaking for record companies and publishers, found a post-contest fame and publicity which brought them into the public eye or kept them there. All these helped give Eurovision and precedence among the viewers.

The Intersvision broadcast festivals, taking place over several days, hosted international performers from countries other than those from Intersvision, performers who may have supplied interval acts and those who participated in festival competitions. Many of these performers are well known from their Eurovision participations. For example, three of the four winners of the *Golden Stag* competition during Intersvision times were Eurovision stars (past and future):

- 1968 – Jacques Hustin of Belgium (Eurovision 1974)
- 1970 – Therese Steinmetz of Netherlands (Eurovision 1967)
- 1971 – Ann-Louise Hanson of Sweden (13 times in *Melodifestival*)

If one festival is most associated with being known as the *Intersvision Song Contest*, it is the *Sopot Festival* held on the Baltic coast in Poland. For four years, 1977-



Helena Vondrackova



Alla Pugacheva



80, the *Sopot Festival* formally became the *Intervision Song Contest*, but around those dates the festival was informally linked to *Intervision* as the prime song contest rival to Eurovision. Just as Marcel Bezancon is the inspiration behind Eurovision, so too is Wladyslaw Szpilman, a Jewish musician who had worked for Polish Radio before World War II, who is the father of the *Sopot Festival*. The film *The Pianist* is based on Szpilman.

The first festival and contest took place in August 1961, not actually in Sopot, but in Gdansk. A shipyard was not the ideal venue for Szpilman's song contest. In 1964 his musical extravaganza relocated up the coast to the Polish seaside resort of Sopot. The spectacular open-air amphitheatre, the Forest Opera, became the annual home of the *Sopot Music Festival*. Entrants from all over the world, not just from behind the Iron Curtain, took part in the festival and

the contest. In 1977, the competition was officially rebranded the *Intervision Song Contest*. Behind the name change lay an intention to compete with Eurovision.

Extravagant

Of course, there were differences between *Intervision* and Eurovision. First, the contest was always to be held at Sopot in Poland. Second, the three-minute rule was not one that *Intervision* had – the festival went on for three days. Thirdly, although Eurovision at the time was still a contest where artists primarily sung behind microphones, some dance routines were becoming more extravagant; however, *Intervision* frowned on excesses. When Russian singer Alla Pugacheva (later to represent Russia in Eurovision) ended her performance making the sign of the cross, broadcaster TVP came under fire.

Participation in *Intervision* was not limited to the Soviet Union and its satellite states.

In a bid to outdo Eurovision and establish itself as the world's premier music festival, the competition was open to artists from all over the world. Cuba was a regular. *Sopot* was won by artists from USA, UK, Canada and Finland; Marion Rung winning in 1980 with *Where Is The Love?*

The 1980 contest was held against the background of strikes at the Gdansk shipyards, less than ten miles away from Sopot. As a result of the upheaval and the seismic political rise of the Solidarity union, no contest was held in 1981, nor in 1982 and 1983. By the time the festival returned, the name *The Intervision Song Contest* was dispensed with and the contest returned to the *Sopot Festival* title it had held officially before 1977. *Sopot* has held a festival since 1984 most years, the festival always held in late summer, although different TV companies have broadcast the festival over the years. *Intervision*, the network,

was disbanded in 1993 and television companies joined the EBU and as we know these countries have joined Eurovision and taken part with great success since then. There was an attempt to revive the *Intervision Song Contest* in 2008, with a four night festival held in Sochi. But since then no further editions have been held.

Concentrating on the four official *Intervision* contests, the four winners were:

- 1977 Czechoslovakia
Helena Vondrackova *Malovany Dzbanku*
- 1978 USSR
Alla Pugacheva *Vsyo Mogut Koroli*
- 1979 Poland
Czeslaw Niemen *Nim Przyjdzie Wiosna*
- 1980 Finland
Marion Rung *Hyvasti Yo*

Helena Vondrackova first rose to fame as a teenager winning a national talent contest before representing her country in the inaugural *Bratislava Festival* in 1966. She returned to the contest in 1969 and from 1974-77, but also performed at festivals in Knokke, Rio de Janeiro, Tokyo, and both the *Golden Stag* and the *Golden Orpheus* festivals. As well as winning *Intervision* in 1977, Helena had numerous successful recordings in Czechoslovakia and toured outside the country. Her winning song, *Malovany Dzbanku*, had already won the 1974 *Bratislava Festival*, so was well known to the judges. In 1978 she tried to represent Germany in the Eurovision Song Contest, but finished 12th behind Irene Sheer. Later in her career, she moved into musicals appearing as Fantine in *Les Miserables*. In 2007, she was in consideration to be the first Czech Republic entrant in Eurovision, but her song *Samba* was withdrawn from the pre-selection as it had been released too early. Most recently Helena has taken on the role of Donna in *Mamma Mia* in Prague.

Alla Pugacheva is every bit as much an



Czeslaw Niemen



Samatha Jones



Opera Lesna, Sopot



Herreys



icon in Russia as Vondrackova is in the Czech Republic. Unlike the latter, Pugacheva has performed at Eurovision representing Russia in 1997 with *Primadonna*. She has sold 250 million albums in her career, including 55 million of the soundtrack to her 1979 film *The Woman Who Sings*, probably the high point of her career. As well as recording, touring, appearing in films and on TV, Pugacheva is well known for her private life, married five times, including to Philip Kirkorov and most recently to a comedian nearly 30 years her junior.

1979 winner Czeslaw Niemen was a rock and jazz musician from Poland releasing albums in several bands including *Enigmatic*. He composed frequently, including for Marlene Dietrich, and released several albums in English. Unlike the two previous winners, his career never took him near Eurovision and he died in 2004.

Marion Rung is of course familiar to

readers of **Vision** as one of Finland's leading artists of the Eurovision era, and for a long time holder of Finland's best finish at Eurovision. She first came to prominence in Finland in 1961 with a single called *Brigitte Bardot* and the following year appeared at Eurovision with *Tipi-Tii*. In the 1960s and 1970s, she was constantly in the forefront of Finnish pop music, often with covers of international hits including versions of *My Boy Lollipop*, *El Bimbo* and *Y Viva Espana*. In 1973 she returned to Eurovision with *Tom, Tom, Tom*, and the following year she was the winner of the *Sopot International Festival* with *Uskon lauluun*. After her Intervisio win, Marion continued with national success and also a career in Germany. When Finland brought out a series of Eurovision stamps in 2007, Marion was of course pictured on one of them.

The *Sopot Festival* has now been going for 53 editions, not far short of Eurovision.

In August 2019, Frans won for Sweden with his Eurovision song *If I Were Sorry* from 2016, underlining that Sopot was not necessarily about new songs. Eric Saade had won for Sweden in 2012 with *Hotter Than Fire*. The very first Sopot contest was won for Switzerland by Jo Rolland, who had been an ever present in the Swiss pre-selections in the early years of Eurovision. The 1962 *Sopot Festival* was won by Yovanna for Greece, who in 1965 would represent Switzerland at Eurovision. Henri Des won the *Sopot Festival* in 1969 and the following year also represented Switzerland in Eurovision.

Obscure

Two Polish Eurovision contestants have won at Sopot: Piasek and Kasia Kowalska. Away from Eurovision, the UK had three winners of Sopot over the years. In 1971, Samantha Jones won with *He Moves Me*. She had

been a member of The Vernon Girls, recorded a number of Northern Soul songs and worked with Mark Wirtz (of *Teenage Opera* fame). In 1973, it was the turn of Tony Craig with *Can You Feel It?* and two years later the even more obscure Glen Weston with *I Still Love You*.

Only one artist has won both Eurovision and Sopot. In 1985, The Herreys repeated their success from the year before on the Eurovision stage, this time with a song called *Summer Party*. Congratulations to them and to songwriters Lasse Holm and Ingela 'Pling' Forsman, staples of *Melodifestival*. It is easy to think of the *Intervisio Song Contest* as the Eastern Bloc's competitor to Eurovision – and indeed a number of artists turned up in both competitions – but they had separate and distinct lives, and the Eastern Bloc's tradition of song festivals has endured long after Intervisio has disbanded. ■

SHARING THE JOY



Gordon Lewis looks back at the recent Junior Eurovision Song Contest held in the Polish city of Gliwice-Silesia



all eyes were on the Gliwice Arena on Sunday, 24th November 2019 when Poland hosted its first ever Junior Eurovision Song Contest. Presented by Ida Nowakowska, Aleksander Sikora and, of course, 2018 Junior winner Roksana Wegiel, a short film of the surrounding area introduced the show before the 19 participating acts were welcomed to the stage accompanied by their national flags. The applause was somewhat muted at first, but the arrival of the host nation's singer certainly encouraged the live audience to show its enthusiasm which then continued throughout the afternoon. Ida and

Aleksander explained that the results would be a combination of juries (50%) and online voting (50%) with the controversial announcement that people could vote for their own country!

Australia opened the contest with piano playing teenager, Jordan Anthony (14), singing the contemporary sounding *We Will Rise*. Casually dressed and accompanied by four backing singers, this was a song worthy of global chart success and, if Australia remain in the adult Eurovision show, Jordan could reappear on the international stage in the not too distant future.

Represented by 14-year-old Carla, *Bim Bam Toi* (*Bim Bam You*) was the French

Junior Eurovision Song Contest 2019

Country	Performer	Song	Points
Poland	Viki Gabor	<i>Superhero</i>	278
Kazakhstan	Yerzhan Maksim	<i>Armanynnan Qalma</i>	227
Spain	Melani Garcia	<i>Marte</i>	212
Netherlands	Matheu	<i>Dans Met Jou</i>	186
France	Carla	<i>Bim Bam Toi</i>	169
North Macedonia	Mila Moskov	<i>Fire</i>	150
Italy	Marta Viola	<i>La Voce Della Terra</i>	129
Australia	Jordan Anthony	<i>We Will Rise</i>	121
Armenia	Karina Ignatyan	<i>Colours Of Your Dream</i>	115
Serbia	Darija Vracevic	<i>Podigni Glas</i>	109
Belarus	Liza Misnikova	<i>Pepelny</i>	92
Ireland	Anna Kearney	<i>Banshee</i>	73
Russia	Tatyana Mezhentseva & Denberel Oorzhak	<i>A Time For Us</i>	72
Georgia	Giorgi Rostiasvili	<i>We Need Love</i>	69
Ukraine	Sophia Ivanko	<i>The Spirit Of Music</i>	59
Portugal	Joana Almeida	<i>Vem Comigo</i>	43
Albania	Isea Çili	<i>Mikja Ime Fëmijëri</i>	36
Wales	Erin Mai	<i>Calon Yn Curo</i>	35
Malta	Eliana Gomez Blanco	<i>We Are More</i>	29

offering for 2019. A self-assured singer dressed in pink with four dancers wearing white, this was probably the most catchy and infectious song of the show. Carla was confident throughout her performance and a colourful light show completed what many considered as a possible winner.

Tatyana Mezhentseva (9) and Denberel Oorzhak (13) were the child duo chosen to represent Russia with the English titled *A Time For Us* (*Vremya Dlya Nas*). Despite his young age, Denberel's voice contained a husky maturity although Tatyana's vocals sounded much more childlike. Wearing





AUSTRALIA: Jordan Anthony



KAZAKHSTAN: Yerzhan Maksim

shimmery tracksuits and obvious off-stage backing singers, this was not unlike Ich Troje (Poland 2003/2006) in its overall style.

Representing the newly renamed North Macedonia, Mila Moskov (14) performed the familiar sounding *Fire* with all the confidence expected from a much older singer. Dressed in orange and black, and the first performer to be unaccompanied on stage, Mila's vocals were strong, her eyes expressive, her ethnic dance moves cleverly choreographed... and surely another contender for Eurovision in the future!

At this point there was a short interval which reminded viewers of the voting procedure, followed by brief conversations with the singers from Australia and France.

Having returned after a 13-year absence, Spain was considered to be a pre-show favourite for victory. Reminiscent of Michelle García (Netherlands 2001), 12-year-old Melani García commenced the Spanish song while sat on stage. *Marte (Mars)* was a pop-opera number which was possibly too challenging for the young singer. Despite having

four backing singers on stage, Melani's performance seemed to lack confidence and her vocals revealed more than a little nervousness.

Three times winner Georgia was represented by 13-year-old Giorgi Rostashvili performing the jazz-sounding *We Need Love*. Another confident singer who was far less annoying than some of his Georgian predecessors at Junior Eurovision, this had 1930s New York written all over it. Once again, the backing singers were hidden from view, meaning that yellow jacketed Giorgi took to the stage alone.

One of just two countries to have competed in all 17 Junior shows, Belarus had chosen its very own young Britney Spears in the form of 14-year-old Liza Misnikova. Wearing a combination of turquoise and green, and supported by four brightly dressed dancers, Liza was certainly confident but seemed to shout throughout most of *Pepelniy (Ashen)*. Another singer could easily turn this song into a contemporary hit.

Despite sounding and looking older than

her 14 years, Maltese singer Eliana Gomez Blanco was dressed in a gold and white outfit that made her look much younger, despite Celine Dion (Switzerland 1988) winning the main show while wearing a similar skirt. *We Are More* was another strong song from the Mediterranean island, but the overall staging and vocals that bordered on screaming were unlikely to receive too many votes.

Hidden hearts

Returning for its second successive appearance, Wales was represented by 13-year-old Erin Mai and the lilting *Calon Yn Curo (Heart Beating)*. Dressed in a full-length dress of black and crimson, Erin was joined on stage by four dancers halfway through her performance, before opening up her dress to reveal numerous hidden hearts as the song reached its conclusion.

There was another break at this stage, with further reminders of the voting procedures and conversations with the singers from Spain and Belarus.

Also returning after its debut in 2018 was

Kazakhstan and the formally dressed boy soprano, Yerzhan Maksim (12). *Armanyannan Qalma (Don't Waste Your Dreams)* was a strong classical number which could easily be transferred to musical theatre across the globe, although the four dancers were dressed in somewhat unusual outfits that did not really add anything to the performance.

Loud applause and cheering accompanied 12-year-old Viki Gabor as she took the stage for Poland with the uptempo *Superhero*. Dressed in jacket and trousers with a silver and yellow theme, German-born Viki was joined by three dancers and two backing singers. Clearly singing about Greta Thunberg-inspired environmental issues, this was certainly catchy but not the best song of the afternoon.

With its haunting Celtic sounds and a singer resembling a medieval princess dressed in white, Ireland was represented by Anna Kearney (13) performing *Banshee*. This was an emotive and strong performance with lots of expression but, sadly, one that would be quickly forgotten. However, Anna is not



IRELAND: Anna Kearney

the first member of her family to perform at Eurovision – her mother, Eileen, was one of the original dancers when Riverdance was the interval act back in 1994.

Wearing a pale pink outfit, the delicate vocals of 14-year-old Sophia Ivanko perfectly suited *The Spirit Of Music (Koly Zdaietsia)*. Representing Ukraine, this gentle sounding number was another one that would soon be forgotten and, towards the end of her performance, Sophia's voice developed a strange harshness that seemed misplaced.

Chasing its second Eurovision victory for 2019, Netherlands was represented by Matheu (13) and what was almost certainly the strongest and most professional song of the show. Accompanied by his four street-dancing friends, the young singer seamlessly changed between Dutch and English while performing *Dans Met Jou (Dance With You)*. An accomplished singer who should certainly represent his country again in a few years from now.

A third break followed and yet another reminder of the voting procedure, after

which further conversations were held – this time with the singers from Ireland and Ukraine.

Next to Poland, Armenia received the greatest applause from the audience as two ballet dancers opened ornate gates to welcome 13-year-old crimson-clad Karina Ignatyan to the stage. Another two dancers appeared as Karina confidently performed *Colours Of Your Dream (Guynery Dzer Yerazank'i)* which contained strong ethnic influences throughout. Based on audience reaction alone, this was expected to score well.

Saving the world

Representing Portugal, Joana Almeida (10) performed the second song influenced by Greta Thunberg. Like her Swedish, albeit non-singing, counterpart, Joana was also trying to save the world through the uptempo *Vem Comigo (Come With Me)*, but without the impact that Greta has so far made. With weak vocals, especially on the Portuguese lyrics, this was another song



NETHERLANDS: Matheu

likely to be overlooked in the voting.

And straight after Portugal came Italy, with yet another environmentally themed song. Ten-year-old Marta Viola nervously sang her way through *La Voce Della Terra (The Voice Of The Earth)* while wearing the second Celine-inspired skirt of the afternoon. However, despite an apparent lack of confidence which was coupled with weak vocals, Marta's performance would be rewarded when it came to the voting.

The penultimate song saw young Albanian singer Isea Çili (12) perform an emotive ballad with a confidence far beyond her age. *Mikja Ime Fëmijëri (My Friend Childhood)* told the story of a child growing up, with Isea accompanied by off-stage backing singers. However, she was another singer who seemed to be dressed inappropriately for both her age and the song.

It was left to Serbia to close the show and the country was represented by 12-year-old Darija Vracevic. Wearing an apricot coloured dress, Darija performed *Podigni Glas (Raise Your Voice)* to its powerful finale which was

only slightly marred by some strained high notes towards the end. The song also confirmed once again that Serbia is certainly the leader when it comes to Balkan ballads.

Once all 19 songs were performed, the three hosts returned to the stage to continue the online voting process which was accompanied by the customary reprise of all the performances. It was then time for another performance, this being the 2018 Junior winning song, *Anyone I Want To Be*, which was expertly performed by Roksana Wegiel. Still aged 14, Roksana has certainly developed into a confident singer with an appearance that resembled a young former Girls Aloud singer, Cheryl. Roksana's co-host, Aleksander, then presented her with a platinum disc and she was obviously delighted to receive this award for her music.

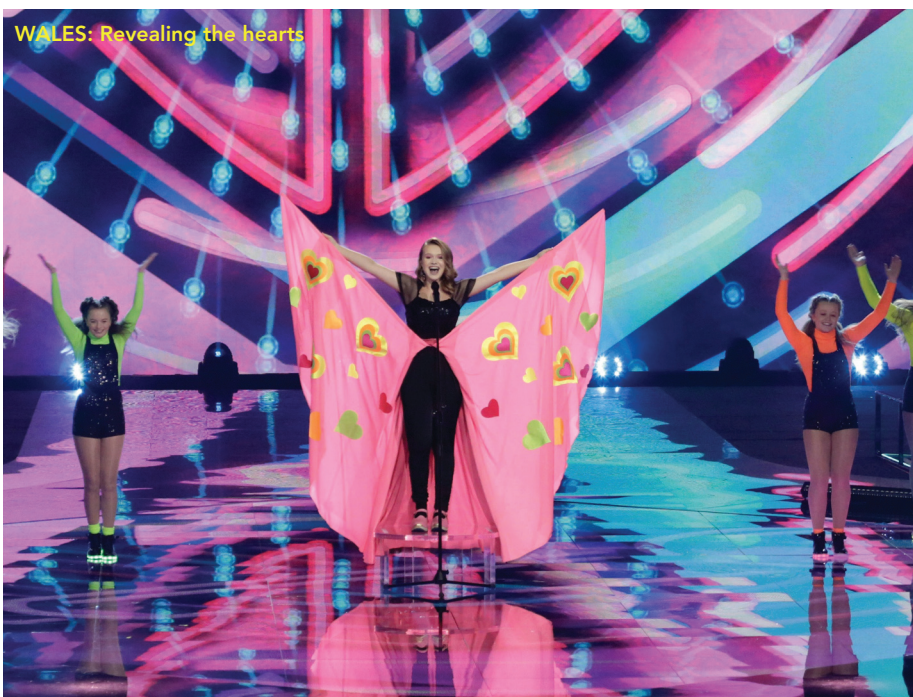
After the second reprise of all competing songs, the 19 acts assembled on stage for the 2019 theme song entitled *Share The Joy*. The concept of having all the performers unite in one song probably wouldn't work



WALES: Erin Mai



Sharing the joy



WALES: Revealing the hearts

at the main show, but it is incredible how singers from many different countries can be united in one song... and with less than seven days to rehearse (alongside their own respective individual rehearsals too!).

Following the now familiar ten second countdown, online voting concluded and was followed by a short musical interlude that featured young Polish ballet dancers. EBU spokesperson, Gert Kark, confirmed that the votes were in order, allowing the hosts to go straight to the jury votes. As each country gave its vote in performance order, Netherlands took the lead until seventh jury had announced its scores. This saw Kazakhstan jump to the top of the scoreboard, but there was still strong competition coming from Netherlands, Poland and Spain.

Tension!

Once all jury votes had been confirmed Kazakhstan found itself in first place, but the online votes were still to be announced by hosts Ida and Aleksander. As tension rose at

the top end of the scoreboard, France took the lead with just five sets of votes remaining. Netherlands then jumped into first place, only to be pushed back by Spain who were then pushed back by Poland. The online vote for Kazakhstan was the only one left to be announced, but a lower than expected score meant that one of Junior Eurovision's newest countries had to take second place, leaving the host nation, Poland, to claim victory for the second year running.

As Viki Gabor returned to the stage to receive her trophy from the previous Polish winner and co-host of the show, Roksana Wegiel, it was clear that Poland had certainly shared the joy with 18 other nations, but wanted to make sure that the trophy was not shared with anyone! However, there were no hard feelings and, at the end of the broadcast, all participating acts joined Viki on stage as she reprised her winning song, *Superhero*.

Congratulations to Viki Gabor from Poland on her victory and, of course, Telewizja Polska (TVP) for an excellent show. ■

EURO QUIZ

This issue we offer a question for every year of the past decade



- 1 Which duo performed the interval act in 2010?
- 2 What, at the time of the 2011 contest, was the official name of the Düsseldorf arena?
- 3 What was Loreen's winning score in the 2012 Grand Final?
- 4 Which insect was the logo of the 2013 contest?
- 5 Which members of the Danish royal family attended the 2014 contest?
- 6 Which country opened the first semi-final in 2015?
- 7 Alongside *Heroes*, which song did Måns Zelmerlöw perform in the Grand Final of the 2016 contest?
- 8 How many juries awarded Portugal 12 points in 2017?
- 9 Silvia, Daniela and Filomena. What is the name of the missing presenter in 2018?
- 10 Which band memorably performed *A Million Dreams* during the second semi-final in 2019?

THE ANSWERS	
10	Shalva Band
9	Caterina
8	18
7	Fire In The Rain
6	Moldova
5	Crown Princess Mary
4	Crown Prince Frederik and Butterfly
3	372
2	Esprit Arena
1	Madcon



SAVE THE DATE

Sunday 29th March

EDITOR'S CHOICE

"The stars are not always visible" sing Zala & Gasper from Slovenia. Well they're certainly visible here as captured by Robin Scott as the starry-eyed lovers rehearse *Sebi (Self)*. The couple didn't believe in personal space, but space was the perfect backdrop to their love song. I especially like the way the singers seem to be merging into a block of colour. HY



TEN MORE ESSENTIAL

Films & TV Shows With Eurovision Connections



In the third edition of the looks at films and TV shows related to Eurovision, however tenuously, **Marcus Keppel-Palmer** must have reached the outer limits – or has he?

Father Ted 1996

Famously in season 2, the priests of Craggy Island enter a song into Eurovision. Father Ted, in the episode called *Song For Europe* is determined to enter a song when his bitter rival Father Dick Byrne enters a song to represent Ireland in the Eurosong 96. However, Ted's first attempt written with Father Dougal is a tuneless dirge. However, discovering an old Norwegian entry that was a flop, Ted and Dougal come up with *My Lovely Horse*, a sure-fire winner even with a saxophone solo. However, on the night of the contest Ted and Dougal have to revert to their original melody. Will they beat Dick Byrne? Will their awful song go on to represent Ireland?

Monsterman 2015

In this documentary, Mr Lordi is in focus. Having won Eurovision, was it all too much for the Finnish monsters? Had the Arockalypse come and was it time for Mr Lordi to give up his monster fantasy? This film follows his quest to return to the limelight, shrug off depression, find their way out of debt and back on to the stage that Mr Lordi and his band derive their inspiration from. Redemption is not far away, but can Mr Lordi find it?



9

10



8



Jobs For The Boys 1998

In the episode *Gareth and Norman Write a Song for Europe*, Hale & Pace turn their hand to songwriting and entering a song for the Song For Europe. A cast of Eurovisionistas past and present crop up to give assistance to the two comedians, include Cheryl Baker, Bruce Welch, Johnny Logan, Lynsey De Paul and Katie Boyle. With the help of Gary Barlow and Andrew Lloyd Webber they write a song *More Than Enough For One Life* which is then recorded by David Shannon. Sadly it doesn't make Song For Europe!

Eurofalsh 2012

In this documentary, a group of Israeli Eurovision fans who have been performing for 13 years in a local Tel Aviv gay bar, dancing to Eurovision hits, are profiled. The group, named Eurofalsh, has gained fans in Israel and abroad. The film follows the members of the group, both in their everyday life and when they perform in *Evita* in Tel Aviv. Did you see them during Eurovision 2019?



7

The High Life 1995

In one episode of the BBC sitcom *The High Life*, called *Dug*, the members of Air Scotia entered a Song For Europe, later going on to achieve the glorious score of 'Nil Points' for their song *Pif, Paf, Pof* where Sebastian goes on to bemoan the fact that that was, "worse than Lynsey De Paul and Mike Moran in 1977 with *Rock Bottom* and they were sh**e". When Shona falls for sexy pop star Guy Wersch, and looks to leave the airline, Sebastian wants to be a rock star himself. However, he ends up composing Scotland's first song for Eurovision, performed by the crew but sadly they end up with a zero score.

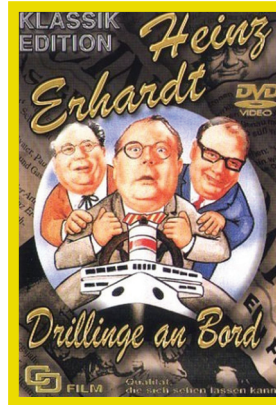


6

5

Drillinge An Bord (Triplets At Sea)
1959

This German film stars Heinz Erhardt who plays triplets. The film starts with one brother entering a song into the German Schlager Competition, which looks very much like the 1959 Eurovision selection, *Charming Boy* which ends up winning as sung by Paul Kuhn, who conducted the German 1972 Eurovision entry and also participated in the 1957 pre-selection. The prize for the winning songwriter is a cruise for one, but as the song was stolen from his two brothers, all three believe they should go on the cruise. When the triplets are first mistaken for jewel thieves by the police and then for police by the jewel thieves, will any of the triplets survive the cruise unscathed?



2

Monty Python's Flying Circus
1970

In series 2, the Pythons did a sketch called *The Europolice Song Contest*. Sergeant Duckie (Terry Jones) and Inspector Muffin (Michael Palin) sing a song called *I'm A Little Bit Lonely* following which Eric Idle appears as the hostess of the show announcing the scores in numerous languages, before announcing that Monaco was the winner (how prescient).

Graham Chapman appears as Inspector Zapathique of the Monaco murder squad to reprise the winning song *Bing Tiddle Tiddle Bong* (no, nothing like *Boom Bang A Bang* at all!).



4

The Punk Voyage
2017

This documentary from Finland (and sequel to the documentary *The Punk Syndrome*) follows the voyage and end of punk band PKN who represented Finland in the 2015 Eurovision finishing last in semi one. The film follows the quartet as they become celebrities, perform at Eurovision and travel worldwide. It also follows the tension between the members of the band and tracks them as they argue and finally call it a day.



3

Ik Ben Joep Meloen
1981

This Dutch film is a vehicle for the comedian, André van Duin, who plays a piano tuner who writes songs in his spare time. When his publisher describes his latest song as the worst ever, Joep Meloen tries to commit suicide by jumping into a canal. He meets Dorien, a singer, who also wants to end it all. Somehow, Joep and Dorien end up entering the 1980 Dutch Eurovision pre-selection, meeting Marlous Fluitsma who hosted that year's Eurovision, with Joep's song. However, everything ends up going wrong and the pair flee to the USA.



1

The Catchpenny Twist
1977

This entry in the long-running *Play For Today* series was another play that looked at the Irish Troubles, but from a comedic point of view. Three music teachers leave their jobs in the North and move to Dublin to try their luck. Down there Roy and Martyn write Eurovision pop songs for Monagh to sing in prisons. One song they write, *Cry Baby*, is then chosen to be the Irish entry for that year – no not Eurovision – but *Ettelbruck Song Contest*. Unfortunately, they are unsuccessful at the contest and then on the way home, the troubles catch up with them again. Frances Tomelty, who was married to Sting, starred in the programme.



RELIVE THE MOMENT!

On Saturday 17th August 2019, London played host once again to EuroStarz in Concert for its fourth year



For those of you who haven't heard of EuroStarz (where have you been?!), it is an annual concert that showcases some of your beloved artists from different countries and decades of the Eurovision Song Contest. Each artist performs a number of tracks and then the evening is rounded off with a fabulous DJ set from everyone's favourite OGAE President (Thanks Alasdair!).

This year brought in artists from Poland, Finland, United Kingdom, Belgium and Malta, in a line up from the most recent decade of the contest.

Martin Fitch (Poland 2010) opened the show this year with a sample of songs from his latest album (due for release very soon), as well as his dramatic Eurovision track. Martin was a welcome return for us as he was a special guest at our very first concert, performing a beautiful duet with Karl William Lund. It was great to give him the chance to perform a full set.

Next up was SuRie (United Kingdom 2018). A firm fan favourite, she performed a fabulous selection of Eurovision classics as well as her latest single *Only You And I* and

of course her UK Eurovision entry *Storm*. SuRie has a great sense of humour and a real connection with the audience, which came through in her performance.

Following Surie, it was Axel Hirsoux, who represented Belgium in 2014 with *Mother*. Unfortunately, Axel failed to qualify to the Grand Final in 2014, although what a voice he has! Axel stunned the crowd with an array of French language Eurovision classics including Luxembourg's *Tu Te Reconnaîtras*, the 1973 winning song by Anne-Marie David (another friend of EuroStarz). He also treated us to a haunting rendition of *Arcade*, 2019's winning song by Duncan Laurence and a fun packed performance of *Diva* by Dana International – and yes, we can confirm he did perform the song live!

A highly energetic performance from Glen Vella, the Maltese representative in 2011, got the second half going. Glen sang a wonderful medley of Eurovision favourites, and had the whole crowd singing along to *Save Your Kisses For Me*. He also had an extra surprise for everyone during the middle of his set! Being a very dedicated vocal coach, Glen

works with a number of Maltese artists, inspiring them into a lifetime of music, one of which made a special guest appearance on stage. Gianluca Cilia, who was a participant in Junior Eurovision 2017, came on to perform his track *Dawra Tond* and raised the roof with his lively performance!

Our headline act was the wonderful Krista Siegrids, who represented Finland in 2013. Krista has been host for her native country's national final and commentates on Eurovision Grand Final night for YLE – the Finnish broadcaster. With quick wit and wonderful vocal range, she sang a selection of Eurovision tunes as well as some of her own music.

At the end of the show, all of the artists came together to conclude a fun evening with a Eurovision medley. SuRie brought the house down with *TOY* by Netta, Axel wowed the crowd with a fabulous rendition of *Fuego* by Eleni Foureira. Martin then joined him on stage to duet a flawless rendition of *Grande Amore* by Il Volo. Glen and Krista sang *Give Me Your Love* by Fame, Krista sang the Carola classic, *Captured By A Lovestorm*, and then everyone came back on stage to close the show with *Love Shine A Light* – the perfect way to end the live performances of the evening.

It was then over to Alasdair to turn up the volume with more Eurovision floor-fillers as the curtains came down on yet another glorious EuroStarz event.

In 2020, EuroStarz turns five and we would like to invite you all to come and join the party with us once more! We will have some extra special surprises to mark five years of the event so get your glow sticks and glitter ready for 15th August 2020 and come and relive the moment with us once more!



We will be back in 2020 for our best show yet!

Come celebrate our 5th Birthday with us!

15 AUGUST 2020

Follow us online for the latest ticket information and artist announcements

www.eurostarz.co.uk

@StarzConcert

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EuroStarz in Concert

@eurostarz

SuRie



Martin



Alex



Glen



Gianluca



Krista



THE NAUGHTY SCOREBOARD



When it comes to finding participants for the Naughty Scoreboard interview, Eurobash is dead good. This year's willing, and very appropriate, interviewee was Netherlands' 2013 entrant Esther Hart. If you can imagine Michael Rice's booming vocal during a sound check, you'll also have the backing track to the first half of our chat. It was a talk that involved the finest places Rotterdam has to offer, the wonder that is Virgil Van Dijk, relaxing thrillers and how many guilders a decent second-hand car could set you back pre-Euro.

Jamie McLoughlin: Esther, could we have your first country from the board please?
Esther Hart: Belgium.

If I was to visit your hometown, where would you recommend is a good place to visit?
Esther: Do You know what my home town is?

No?
Esther: Rotterdam.

Great! Well, I wonder what you're going to say...
Esther: I know! So come to Eurovision! But Rotterdam is a very nice place.

When Eurovision's not on, where's a good place to go?
Esther: There's a lot that we have. A lot of nice, modern architecture, we have a very nice museum called the Kunsthal and that's where there's a lot of exhibitions and nice art. The new food hall is also very modern but very beautiful, with paintings. Take a

nice walk along the river because we have two beautiful bridges and a nice street filled with more galleries and restaurants is Witte de Withstraat.

Maybe you should do a walking tour at Eurovision.
Esther: (laughs, politely)

Could you pick another country for us please, Esther?
Esther: United Kingdom.

OK. What is a good book to read on the beach?
Esther: On the beach?

Or anywhere?
Esther: I like reading and when I'm on holiday on the beach I always bring thrillers with me. The latest I read is Nicci French.

Not the UK Nicki French singer, the other one?
Esther: (it isn't our Nicki French) Yeh, yeh. I always like those books because

THE NAUGHTY SCOREBOARD

MOLDOVA		IRELAND	
FINLAND		HUNGARY	
AZERBAIJAN		BULGARIA	
MONTENEGRO		AUSTRIA	
NORWAY		DENMARK	
BELGIUM		ALBANIA	
GEORGIA		UNITED KINGDOM	
PORTUGAL		SPAIN	
SWEDEN		NETHERLANDS	
ISRAEL		POLAND	
SLOVENIA		FRANCE	
GERMANY		SAN MARINO	
SERBIA		ICELAND	
SWITZERLAND		ITALY	
LITHUANIA		RUSSIA	

immediately, you're always right into the book and then it's very relaxing.

Excellent. Another country, please.
Esther: Netherlands.

I thought you'd go for this one, so I've got a question prepared especially for you.
Esther: Thank you.

If you could have one more night in Leeds, how would you spend it?
Esther: Ah! Wow! It's my first time here. I'm happy with it the way it is. I'm here with my older sister, we just have a nice weekend off and we have nice talks together and laughing together. I'm going to have a walk around later on and experience the city a little bit and that's what I always do when I'm on Eurovision trips, try to see a lot of the city.

[Jamie should have recommended a night for Esther and her sister in The New Penny in Leeds city centre. They'd have had a grand old night.]

You must see a lot of cities. Do you get invited to a lot of events like this?
Esther: Yes, I've been in Berlin, in Stockholm, in London, Munich last year. That's what I like, to see a little bit of the world.

I don't blame you. Another country please.
Esther: France.

Do you support any football teams?
Esther: Yes.

Which one?
Esther: Feyenoord Rotterdam.

Oh, silly question!
Esther: I'm a really big football fan, I watch it a lot. Sometimes I go to the games and also when the Dutch team has to play. Watching sports on television, I don't do a lot of sport myself, but I like to watch it.

Do you support any of the British teams? (*whispers* 'Say Liverpool...')
Esther: (Totally unprompted) Yeh, Liverpool of course. Van Dijk is in it, and he is very good, I like him very much.

That is the right answer to give to a Liverpool fan. Thank you. We love him too.
Esther: But he is really a very nice guy, also in his interviews. He's really calm and says sensible things. Very relaxed, and he's good for the Dutch team too.

Another country please, Esther.
Esther: Sweden.

What was your first time on stage like?
Esther: I was really nervous. I think I was like, 14 years old, when I was in my first band. Before that I was in a children's choir, I had solo parts, so I knew what it was to live perform. I must say, singing is sort of a second nature for me. When I was very young, we had this Dutch party; Sinterklaas (St Nicholas). He was coming to school and

I was only four, the teacher asked if I wanted to sing and I said yes. I wasn't scared to sing, but my first big performance on a big stage in my high school, I was very nervous.

Do you remember what you sang?

Esther: The guys were already 18. I was 14 and I sang one of the songs they had written. It was fantastic.

Now, one more.

Esther: Let me see... Portugal.

It may be that it's a different set-up in Netherlands, so apologies in advance if so – but how many attempts did it take for you to pass your driving test?

Esther: (proudly) I did everything in one time!

I'm very envious. Was that nerve-wracking too?

Esther: I was very relaxed. I had a lot of lessons, it took a while before they let me do the exam. The good thing was that after my exam I could buy the car from my older sister and she's here with me today, for only 500 guilder then, I remember. I said to the guy who tested me, 'Yes, and I already have a car!'

What are the roads in Rotterdam like? In case we need to know before Eurovision.

Esther: It is not so hectic as in Amsterdam. I don't like driving there. There are wider roads and trams also, that can take care of that. And there's also the Metro. If you're going to the Ahoy, just go by Metro, that's the easiest thing and you just walk up and you're right there.

That's good advice

Esther: Yeh.

Are you involved in the organisation at all?

Esther: Not in the organisation but I have



taken a couple of bookings already to do with the Eurovision.

[Jamie has now completely abandoned the concept of the Naughty Scoreboard and is just having a lovely chat with Esther instead.]

How did you feel when Duncan won?

Esther: I was so happy and Duncan did such a good job and then I was also VERY happy that it was in Rotterdam and not in Maastricht.

It would have perhaps been an unusual choice, Maastricht.

Esther: Yeh, it's a lovely city but Rotterdam is so easy for everyone to travel to. If you go to Schiphol Airport, it's only 25 minutes for everyone to get there by train. If you stay in Delft or The Hague, everything is so close.

A huge dank je wel to Esther for playing the Naughty Scoreboard. If you have any other traffic-related questions related to Rotterdam, don't forget to ask a kindly police officer during your visit as Esther may be busy with her walking tour at that time. ■

OGAE UK 2019 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

OGAE UK's Annual General Meeting was held on Saturday, 9th November 2019 at the Morpeth Arms, Millbank, London. After President Alasdair Rendall had welcomed attendees and recorded the names of those present, the minutes of the 2018 meeting were unanimously approved. For those who were unable to attend, a summary of the main discussions is provided for this issue of *Vision*. Photos are from the AGM.



OGAE UK President's Report 2019

Proving an enjoyable, busy but at times stressful year for the club, 2019 however was one in which we hit record membership levels, surpassing the 2,000 barrier for the first time. This report sets out an overview of the club activities this year and accompanies the annual reports drawn up by the Membership Secretary and Treasurer.

OGAE UK and Eurovision: You Decide

Once again the BBC asked OGAE UK to help with the shortlisting of public submissions, but once again this was a fruitless – if eye-opening – process as no song from the public submissions made it through to the Eurovision: You Decide final.

A different process was used this year with the BBC pre-eliminating some of the lowest quality entrants before they were subject to shortlisting by the OGAE UK panellists. This meant that members did not have to sit through some of the poor-quality recordings that often had

to be endured. It is questionable as to whether this led to a noticeable increase in the standard of songs being submitted, however. As the years have gone by, many members have questioned whether the club still wants to be involved in this process. OGAE UK believes that the club has gone in to the process with its eyes wide open, and with no unreasonable or unrealistic expectations, however we recognise that it has been ultimately without success. It is of course a moot point as to whether the club is involved next year, as the BBC have already announced a change in process (see below).

As for the national final itself, a good contingent of OGAE UK members travelled to MediaCity UK for the live Eurovision: You Decide show. The BBC offered the club a large number of tickets to the show, for which we are very grateful. As usual, a ballot was held to ensure distribution of the tickets was done as fairly as possible.

For those who couldn't see the show



in the studio, OGAE UK organised a screening of the show at Bar Pop in Manchester and the ever-popular after show disco. OGAE UK would like to thank Bar Pop for their support for this and other Eurovision-related events over the year.

Although Michael Rice was a popular winner of Eurovision: You Decide, it soon became obvious that expectations were low and the final result in Tel Aviv bore this out. He is a fine singer and a very engaging young man – we wish him all the best for the future.

Eurovision 2019

The build-up to the contest in Tel Aviv was a very difficult and stressful few months. Not least the issues surrounding tickets, with a lack of concrete information until the very last minute and a very large increase in prices. Tel Aviv was always expected to be an expensive contest, but the scale of the price increase took many people by surprise. OGAE UK would like to thank the OGAE International Bureau for their hard work and effort over what was a very difficult few months, which did at least secure cheaper jury final packages to ensure as many people could enjoy the Eurovision experience as possible. We must also thank OGAE UK's Danny Lynch for now overseeing four very different ticket ballot processes, often in very trying circumstances.

As for Eurovision week itself, the majority of those travelling to Israel had a great time. In fact the overall feedback was that Tel Aviv

put on a better week than some previous contests. If anything there was too much on offer for the fans, with a good sized EuroCafe, a vast EuroClub and a host of other events taking place in Tel Aviv. OGAE UK would like to thank our friends at OGAE Israel, as well as all at KAN and the EBU, for all the work to ensure the fans had an enjoyable, productive and memorable week (or two) in the sun.

As ever, a fan gathering was held for OGAE UK members on the Thursday afternoon. This is now a well-established part of the Eurovision week and is particularly welcome by newer members or those travelling alone, as a way of making new acquaintances in the Eurovision bubble. Once again the gathering was attended by the BBC and ITV, with *Good Morning Britain*, as ever, being particular fans of all things OGAE UK!

There was also a good social gathering on the Monday of Eurovision week, with a large contingent of members receiving invites to the annual UK Ambassador's reception. Allocation of tickets is outside the control of the club – this year the Embassy decided to offer tickets to those members with finals tickets, although obviously OGAE UK would like as many members as possible to be invited.

Another tradition that has grown in recent years has been the OGAE UK 'day out' on the Wednesday. This year a group of members travelled to the Holy City of Jerusalem. An interesting walking tour allowed us to see the sights of this magical and historic city. Thoughts are already

turning to which of the sights in the vicinity of Rotterdam can be a day out for members in next year's Eurovision week!

OGAE UK President Alasdair Rendall attended the annual OGAE International President's Meeting that took place during Eurovision week. During the meeting, elections were held for the International Bureau with the following results:

- **President:** Simon Bennett (OGAE UK)
- **Secretary:** Anthony Cige (OGAE Iceland)
- **Treasurer:** Morten Thomassen (OGAE Norway)
- **Bureau members:** Klaus Woryna (OGAE Germany), Frank Sevriens (OGAE Netherlands), Marcus Davey (OGAE Rest of the World), Tamas Vamos (OGAE Hungary)

The presidents also decided to set up a sub-group to look at the rules and processes for the various OGAE Contests – OGAE UK's Alasdair Rendall is a member of this working group. In addition OGAE Bulgaria were formally welcomed as a full member of the OGAE International Network – congratulations!

Events

As ever there have been a number of Eurovision events throughout the year to keep OGAE UK members busy.

In addition to the aforementioned fan party in Tel Aviv for Eurovision and Manchester for Eurovision: You Decide, the highlight of this year was, as ever, the annual Eurobash.

This year's Eurobash returned to the Hilton in Leeds, with special guest appearances from Linda Martin, Michael Rice, Justs and Esther Hart. OGAE UK would like to thank everyone who made it such a great success, in fact Eurobash 2019 was the biggest ever, with almost 200 guests in attendance. There is a balance to be struck between making the Eurobash as big as possible whilst still maintaining the intimate and welcoming atmosphere it is known for, so it is unlikely that the Eurobash will expand in size in the near future. The Organising Committee is currently looking at a number of venues for next year's Bash, with a decision to be taken soon.

For those who could not make the long journey to Israel, a highly successful Eurovision gathering was held in Manchester for OGAE UK members. We would like to thank OGAE UK member Jason D'Arcy for his work in organising this, and the participation of a range of Eurovision stars including Suzy, Lindsay Dracass and – reforming especially for the event – Belle & The Devotions.

We have long recognised that there are many parts of the country poorly served by Eurovision events, so we were delighted to see the launch of Scotland's first Eurovision event, Ne Party Pas Sans Moi which, alongside the established Manchester Calling, gave special offers for OGAE UK members.

The old favourites Eurofest, EuroStarz and Boom-Bang-A-Bang also returned in



2019 and should be back next year. OGAE UK's Emily Roberts also put on a fantastic Eurovision musical – *Let Me Be The One* – with performances in Knaresborough and London and a good OGAE UK turnout at both locations.

Once again OGAE UK was an official sponsor of the London Eurovision Party. This year the club was delighted to bring to London one of the come-back stars of 2019, Sweden's Anna Bergendahl. Such was her popularity that she was soon snapped up to be the headline of Eurofest's summer party later in the year.

It is regrettable that there are still some parts of the country that do not have as ready access to Eurovision get-togethers, and we will look at ways of utilising our small events fund to increase the number of small-scale events in various parts of the country, along the lines of the North West meet-up that has been established in recent years.

Further afield, and OGAE UK has been represented at events held by our partner clubs in Germany, Netherlands, Finland, Spain and Denmark. Likewise we always enjoy welcoming guests from other OGAE clubs to events held here in the UK.

Communications

Vision magazine has gone from strength-to-strength this year, with some excellent content and design from our editorial team of Jamie McLoughlin and Hassan Yusuf. We are delighted to see new and a more

diverse range of members contributing to the magazine. There has also been increasing tie-up with our website and social media platforms, including the club's Instagram account which launched in the past year.

OGAE UK would like to put on record our continuing thanks to the club's webmaster, Sagi Chaitas, for his work in maintaining and overseeing the club's website.

After well-documented issues on the Facebook group earlier in the year, the decision was finally taken to close it and replace it with a member-only group. Although there were some concerns about the logistics around this, the transition to a new group was smoothly overseen by Danny Lynch and has been a very popular – and long overdue – move. The new member-only group is a much more welcoming and friendly place for OGAE UK members to chat and share Eurovision news and gossip.

OGAE Contests

Throughout the year there are three OGAE-wide competitions – the OGAE Song Contest, the Second Chance Contest and the OGAE Video Contest. In the Second Chance Contest, the UK was represented by Kerrie-Anne, coming 13th (for the second year in a row) with 82 points. The OGAE Video Contest has just been launched, and we are represented by Jack Savoretti & Mika with *Youth And Love*.

The highlight for this year has been OGAE UK's hosting of the OGAE Song Contest, following the club's victory in 2018 by Steps with *Scared Of The Dark*. The contest was hosted throughout October, with the result being announced on the night of the AGM. OGAE would like to thank Fin Ross Russell for his expert hosting of this year's contest, in his first year as OGAE Song Contest Co-ordinator, and we look forward to a good result from our own representative Lewis Capaldi with *Someone You Loved*.

Constitutional Review

As mentioned at the last AGM, the club has been carrying out a constitutional review, its first since the club established a constitution in the first place. A consultation was carried out in **Vision** in the spring, and the revised constitution will be put to members in the next few months.

Key changes include:

- Increasing the size of the committee from five to seven.
- Removing gendered language.
- Shifting the election timetable so it takes place in the summer rather than the spring (so nobody risks losing their committee position in the weeks leading up to Eurovision).

Eurovision 2020

After some disappointing results it has been time for a re-think for the UK's selection process for Eurovision 2020.

At the time of writing we do not know the exact process that will be used, but we know that the BBC will be teaming up with record label BMG, dropping the Eurovision: You Decide format. OGAE UK is giving a cautious welcome to this, as BMG is a well-established record label with both a publishing arm and a roster of well known artists, although of course that does not mean that one of these superstars will end up representing the UK, but you never know...!

Perhaps unsurprisingly we had over 900 applicants for tickets for Rotterdam, breaking our previous record of almost 600 in Lisbon. At last year's AGM it was agreed that the process for applying for tickets would change, meaning that the vast majority of tickets will go to people who joined the club BEFORE this year's contest – rewarding loyalty to the club whilst at the same time not barring new members from the process altogether.

OGAE UK would like to thank our ticket co-ordinator Danny Lynch for his work once again in managing the ticket process, and to colleagues at OGAE International for their negotiations with the host broadcaster and the EBU.

Thank you

I would like to thank all members of the committee, and all those who have helped the club throughout the year, and of course the members as well for their support, participation and friendship throughout the year.

OGAE UK Secretary's Report 2019

It was a year of consolidation after the big changes in 2018. The club has continued to grow at a very healthy rate and recently passed the 2,000-member mark, something which was facilitated by **Membermojo** which has proved an invaluable tool in recruiting new members and in making membership administration much more efficient.

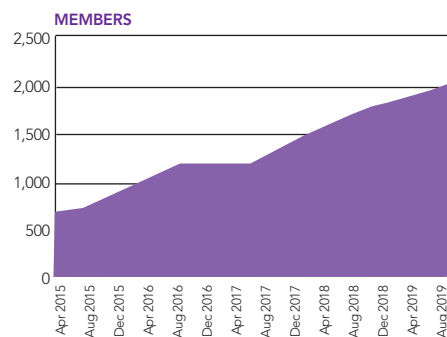
Constitution and elections

There were no elections this year. The next Committee elections are due in 2021 subject to any constitutional changes.

We had planned to submit proposed changes to the constitution to the membership before the end of 2019 but require a bit more time to finalise the voting procedures.

Current membership

Once again, membership has continued to grow with new applications for membership every week. Membership has tripled over the last decade.



As at 31 October 2019 OGAE UK had the following:

- 932 sole members
- 1,123 joint members
- 16 honorary members

This makes a grand total of 2,055 paying members and 16 honorary members, a net

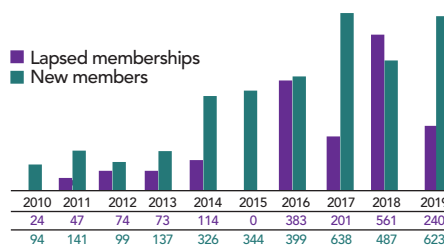
increase of 171 or 9% over last year. Since 1 November 2018, 623 individuals have joined – a 28% increase over the same period last year but this does mean that over 400 members did not renew in November 2018, more than double the number who let their membership lapse in 2017. This probably reflects the huge surge of members who joined purely to get tickets for Lisbon.

As at the end of October we had 466 female members, representing about 23% of the total paid membership. The number and overall proportion of female members continues to increase each year.

In the autumn of 2019, OGAE UK became the first of the 45 national clubs ever to have more than 2,000 members, cementing our position as the largest national club.

Year	Lapsed members	After chasing
2007	71	34
2008	67	52
2009	54	24
2010	157	24
2011	139	47
2012	165	74
2013	237	73
2014	419	114
2015	N/A	N/A
2016	409	383
2017	623	201
2018	561	452
2019	240	

LAPSED AND NEW MEMBERSHIPS



Membership system

The new membership system, **Membermojo**, was implemented in August 2018 and has proved a tremendous success. Most members have commented that the joining and renewal process are very easy, and the new system represents a huge reduction in administrative work for the secretary.

Interestingly, a lot of people register to join the club but then do not follow through and make the necessary payment. Over the last year several hundred people have gone through the effort of inputting their details but then failed to pay the subscription despite numerous chaser emails. Such applications are deleted from our system after 28 days in order to comply with data protection rules. This year's renewal process went remarkably smoothly, with many members renewing before the expiry of last year's membership. The vast majority of members opted to pay using the automated PayPal link with only 30 paying by BACS and 15 by cheque (to date).

Some members still cannot get used to the fact that they can check their membership details on-line and should update their personal details themselves. We still get a lot of emails asking when memberships are going to expire, for membership numbers and to change contact details.

Only 12 members still do not use email and require renewals and all essential communications to be sent and chased by post.

Data security

We have continued to strengthen our data security procedures in line with the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). During the recent renewal process, members were asked to acknowledge that they had read and agreed to our data protection policies which have been posted on our

website. **Membermojo** assists greatly with data protection compliance as lapsed members' data is automatically deleted from the system a few months after the end of their membership.

We provide members' data to the Cardskipper membership card app and are also proposing to share email addresses with the SurveyMonkey tool in connection with elections and votes. In both cases members were advised and given an opportunity to object in accordance with our policies.

Website

We continue to make improvements to the website. Once again, we must thank Sagi Chaitas for his invaluable assistance with the site.

Subscriptions

After last year's restructuring of our subscription rates, no changes have been made over the last year. The current subscriptions rates combined with the continued increase in members mean that the club has sufficient funds to operate.

Membership cards

As reported last year, a new membership card system was introduced in 2019. Cards are now delivered in an electronic format through the Cardskipper system direct to members' mobile phones. The UK was loaded on to the app in early 2019 and in October 2019 we had over 2,000 members set up on the system. Only 1,736 members had actually downloaded the app to set up a card and quite a few members have still not added a photo to their electronic cards.

Cardskipper is much easier to administer and maintain than the old plastic card and sticker system. Although we pay for each member loaded on the system regardless of whether they actually download the app, the costs compare favourably with those involved in sending out new plastic cards and the annual validity stickers. The system also has

the benefit of being more environmentally friendly. Maintaining the system still requires some effort but this is manageable.

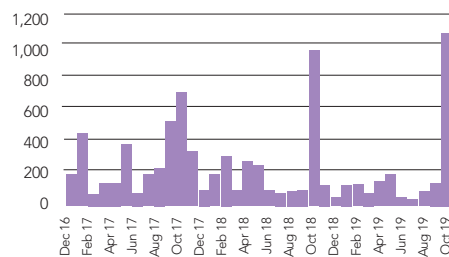
Members are asked to remember that Cardskipper belongs to and is controlled by OGAE International and is not linked to Membermojo. Cards need to be updated separately and hence there may be a delay in changing the details shown on membership cards after members renew on **Membermojo**. Similarly, changes to phone numbers made on **Membermojo** will not be transferred to Cardskipper, members should update their details on Cardskipper themselves.

Emails

We have continued to use the Mailchimp service during the last year to produce almost all our membership email communications. As reported previously, some members used the opt out buttons on Mailchimp and this made it impossible

to use the system properly. We have found an interim solution with messages coming from the normal **ogaek@gmail.com** address and have created a way for members to opt out of email newsletters. We are happy to report that the club is in good financial health thanks to careful expense control and the increasing membership numbers. During the 2018-19 financial year we had a surplus of £2,061.35, slightly less than the previous year.

MONTHLY EMAIL VOLUMES



OGAE UK Treasurer's Report 2019

Budgeting and Subscriptions

We undertook a major budgeting exercise last year that anticipated postage costs increases and so remains valid. We aim to raise £26,000 per year to cover expenses and contingency, and aim to maintain reserves equivalent to one year's operations.

We finished the 2017-18 membership year with cash reserves of £14,000 and 2018-19 with reserves of £20,000 so we are still a little below our preferred level of cash reserves, although sufficient for a full year of **Vision** production and distribution.

We do not need to make any changes to current subscription rates but will continue to monitor costs, particularly in relation to overseas postage.

Events Fund

We maintain a segregated events account funded by membership fees. Each year, £1 of

each members' subscription is transferred to the events fund which is at the disposal of the Events Committee to provide money to facilitate member events around the country.

In the 2018-19 financial year £2,330.42 was spent on a variety of events, a 58% increase on the £1,473.02 spent the previous year. This figure is broken down as follows:

Eurobash 2018	£336.94
AGMs	£470.00
AGM Travel Expenses	£271.81
London Eurovision Party 2018	£420.00
Lisbon 2018 Party	£512.86
Berlin 2016	*£318.81
Total	£2,330.42

* Fees for attending the Berlin Eurovision weekend in 2016 had been collected by

OGAE UK from UK attendees but the organisers had never provided details of where the money should be paid, and we had considered the matter closed. However, they requested the money two years late and we agreed to pay.

Cash Positions

OGAE UK receives the vast majority of its income in October/November with the annual renewal payments. This money is then used through the year to pay for **Vision** and other expenses.

We continue to operate four bank accounts and the PayPal account, although all main activity flows through our Lloyds Bank accounts as these can be monitored over the internet. The balance on the PayPal account is periodically transferred to the main Lloyds account.

Cash Position as at 31st March 2019

HSBC #1	£1,514.13
HSBC #2	£2,728.63
Lloyds main account	£10,335.28
Lloyds events account	£319.11
PayPal account	£17,224.79
Debts	£0
Total assets	£32,122.01

Cash position as at 30th September 2019

HSBC #1	£1,515.99
HSBC #2	£2,743.63
Lloyds main account	£13,179.52
Lloyds events account	£319.11
PayPal account	£7,289.01
Debts	£0
Total assets	£25,047.26*

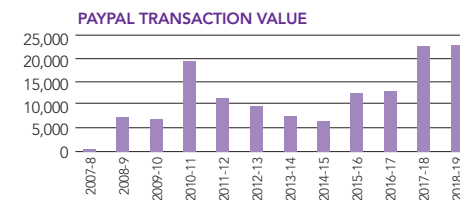
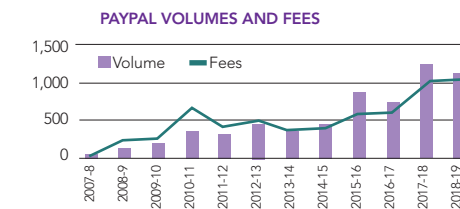
* £4,538.29 has now been paid for reprints of **Vision** 117 and for **Vision** 118, the last edition of the membership year. We therefore finished the membership year with £20,508.97 which represents our reserves.

Detailed (unaudited) income and expense statements for the 2018-19 financial year are as follows:

INCOME	
Subscriptions	£25,391.05
Bank interest	£2.07
	£25,393.12
SURPLUS	
	£2,061.35
EXPENSE	
Vision printing	£9,072.40
Vision postage	£8,022.41
Membership cards	£2,271.78
Membership system	£285.88
Expenses	£28.46
Events	£2,330.42
Website	£319.67
PayPal fees	£1,029.21
	£23,331.77

Paypal

We continue to rely heavily on PayPal which has an automatic interface with **Membermojo** allowing seamless renewal of membership. This naturally comes at a cost and we paid over £1,000 in fees to PayPal during the 2018-19 financial year.



The total volume of PayPal payments has declined slightly although the value has increased. ■

SMALL TALK WITH... BRYAN THOMAS

David Ransted posed the questions



What's your occupation? I retired just over five years ago from an international women's medical charity, where I was Administrative Director. It involved a lot of travel (which was great) but did limit the time I could spend on things like Eurovision.

Favourite Eurovision year: Probably 2016 – if only because it was the first year I was able though OGAE UK to actually be there! For the previous 30 or so years, I had held a house party every year and a lot of my friends were really upset when I deserted them for Stockholm! Now they keep their fingers crossed that I don't manage to get tickets so that I'll throw a party again.

love *Eres Tú* (by Mocedades, Spain 1973) and more recently *Euphoria* (by Loreen, Sweden 2012). My all time favourite/guilty pleasure, though, is – whisper it softly – *Diggi-loo Diggy-ley* (by Herreys, Sweden again 1984).

Favourite winner: The aforementioned *Diggi-loo Diggy-ley* (by Herreys, Sweden 1984).

Favourite UK entry: I have enormous admiration for SuRie and her determination to finish her performance of *Storm* at the Grand Final in Lisbon in 2018 was incredible. Further back, I would have to choose *Beg*,

What are your interests/hobbies outside Eurovision? I love travelling generally – although I have perhaps not done as much as I thought I might since I retired – as well as going to the theatre and music concerts (of all types).

What trait do you most deplore in others? Not knowing when to shut up.

And what trait do you most deplore in yourself? Not knowing when to shut up.

How do you relax? With a good audio book (I suffer from macular degeneration so 'proper' reading is hard for me and I miss it

Favourite movie: It changes by the day but *Casablanca*, *The Wizard Of Oz* and *Grease* are usually somewhere at the top of the pile.

Who would play you in the film of your life? Leonardo DiCaprio.

What is top of your bucket list? Seeing the Pyramids and sailing down the Nile (which I will be doing this year!).

Apart from Eurovision, who was the last music act you saw perform live? John Legend at the O2.

Guilty pleasure: Pop Chips.



Bryan with Michael Rice



Singing along with Pearl and Teddy



Whisper it...



A lot of love for Mocedades



A Wonderful Life by Black



John Legend live

Which Eurovisions have you attended, if any? Since I retired, I have been to Stockholm (2016), Lisbon (2017) and Tel Aviv (2019) but sadly it looks like I won't be going to Rotterdam this year. My friends are VERY pleased...

Favourite Eurovision entry: How do you choose? When I was five years old in 1959, I would sing along to *Sing Little Birdie* by Pearl Carr & Teddy Johnson even though at the time I had no idea what Eurovision was or what impact it would have on my life. I

Steal Or Borrow by The New Seekers from 1972.

Favourite city or place: I live in London and love the energy of the place. Maybe because it was the first place I travelled to for Eurovision, Stockholm was a city that (pleasantly) surprised me – I'd go back in a second!

When were/are you happiest? Sitting on a completely deserted beach on Koh Phi Phi in Thailand.

terribly. Audio books are a decent substitute though).

What is your most treasured possession? My dad's wrist watch.

What did you want to be when you were growing up? An astronaut, of course!

What advice would you give your 16 year-old self? Go to Eurovision at the earliest opportunity and don't wait until you get too old to stand for hours/days on end...

Favourite non-Eurovision song: *Wonderful Life* by Black. I have no idea why but it has been my favourite since the first time I heard it. Amazing video too!

Tell us a secret: I got accidentally hit in the face years ago by an over-enthusiastic fan at an Iggy Pop concert that left me with a black eye; I told my work colleagues I had slipped getting out of the bath and they believed me - largely because they could never imagine me at an Iggy Pop concert.

SILVER LININGS

COMING SECOND



2005 MALTA
Chiara
Angel



2006 RUSSIA
Dima Bilan
Never Let You Go



2007 UKRAINE
Verka Serduchka
Dancing Lasha Tumbai



2008 UKRAINE
Ani Lorak
Shady Lady



2009 ICELAND
Yohanna
Is It True?



2010 TURKEY
magNa
We Could Be The Same