



BELGIUM



Artists: Copycat

Song: Copycat

Reviewed by Aaron Harmer

Elvis isn't dead, he's just been taking it easy in Belgium. Who could blame him, waffles and Jean-Claude van Damme, Belgium has it all.

But on a serious note, as an ardent Elvis fan I find this song offensive. 'Copycat' goes as far as to claim Elvis was too fat to rock'n'roll. Outrageous! Some of the greatest rockers of all time have been horizontally challenged — Meatloaf, Fats Domino, Chubby Checker to name a few. He then goes on to claim Elvis is too dead to rock'n'roll. We all know Elvis has sold more albums posthumously than when he was alive.

In a year with more than half the entries sung in English, Belgium would have been better off with a haunting Flemish vocalist or a soothing saxophonist (the sax was invented by a Belgian in 1846).



SERBIA



Artists: Marko Kon & Milaan

Song: Cipela

Reviewed by Aaron Harmer

There's an old saying that "a gentleman is a man who knows how to play the piano accordion, but chooses not to". This year Serbia assaults the Eurovision stage with 'Cipela', a heady combination of nearly sub-sonic bass and twangy piano accordion stylings.

But in all honesty this song is actually pretty good, and the effect is only enhanced as Marko Kon's swivelling hips exert their control over the tides of northern Europe. It's a little known fact that Marko Kon is actually the love child of Barry White and Guy Sebastian, and sings so low he can actually be measured on the Richter Scale. With a devastating whafro to boot, look out for Serbia in the top 3 this year.



CZECH REPUBLIC



Artists: Gypsy.cz

Song: Aven Romale

Reviewed by Aaron Harmer

Rapping gypsies, red spandex jump suits, non-sensical lyrics and a complete lack of musical talent, this song's got it all. In a year dominated by a lot of middle of the road schmaltz, Gypsy.cz stands out with a subtle mix of in your face, grammatically depauperate rap and ever cheerful gypsy violins.

Simple but effective dance moves, a hint of facial hair and a smattering of black leather in the background, the Czech Republic's song has everything we've come to expect — nay demand — from Eurovision entries. As Gypsy.cz himself puts it, "Music is the miracle, rhythm is the mirror". Who could argue with that?



THE NETHERLANDS



The Toppers / Shine

Review by Rachael Gallagher

I think someone has mistaken the letter 'p' for the letter 's' when devising the name of the Netherlands entry this year. And perhaps the 'n' in Shine should really be a 't'. This is truly awful. Yet another Eurovision entry attempting to heal the world in three minutes. Here is a lyrical glimpse of a UN resolution, Eurovision style:

There are so many wars right now in this World
There are so many things not right
There are to many people hurt in this World
There are to many men that fight
Time is now to make the change
Time is on our side
Love will make us glow in the dark
So open up your heart!
Are you ready for a brand new start!

For three guys with such a heavy burden to bear about the state of the world perhaps they should switch off some lights. The film clip looked like it was filmed in a gigantic solarium. After all 'love will make them glow in the dark' and they are full of it. Botox that is.



THE UNITED KINGDOM



Jade Ewen / It's My Time
Review by Rachael Gallagher

In times of crisis the English always look to the past. Margaret Thatcher was unavailable, so Andrew Lloyd Webber has been defrosted and commissioned to write this year's Eurovision entry. Not that it matters much anyway, as the UK have about as much chance of winning as David Beckham has of becoming Secretary-General of the UN. Despites Jade's insistence it is not her time... no-one has voted for the UK since 1976, so it will never be 'her time'. Although it is pleasant enough I could not help thinking that it's my time... and it has been wasted listening to Jade warble her way through this sappy tune. Give me Starlight Express any day!



FINLAND



**Waldo's People / Lose Control
Review by Rachael Gallagher**

Where's Waldo's People? This is the question that will be asked across Europe when this little number hits the Eurovision stage. The film-clip features a man (presumably Waldo) lying on the side of the road and a woman (presumably homeless...or Waldo's wife) warming her hands over a fire in a 40 gallon drum. Is this a comment on society or a glimpse into the future of the Waldo's People as their short-lived careers leaves them out in the Moscow cold with a record company debt? The song itself is an upbeat number that harks back to the bad old days of 90's electronica and teamed with the film clip makes for an archetypal cultural non-sequitur we have come to expect from Eurovision...remember Lordi?

Slovakia



Artist: Kamil Mikulčík & Nela Pocisková

Song: Let' Tmou

The harmony, the drama, the sexual tension, could it be? Yes, the Eurovision duet! Could there be a more pleasant form of cacophony? My Slovakian isn't the best so I can't exactly tell you what the song is about but if I had to guess I would say it's about something very important. It's a big song! Grand piano big! So big there are fireworks and a cello! To sum it up in one word... Inspirational! The euphoric crescendos and emancipating key changes make you want to climb a mountain and do cartwheels. Or perhaps you could quit your job to go rollerblading in the rain. Or light fires around campus while singing the national anthem. Whatever you enjoy doing Slovakia's latest entry is sure to raise your spirits, burst your eardrums and set you free!



Spain
Artist: Soraya



Song: La Noche es Para Mi
Review by James O'Hanlon

This year Spain solicits the skills of a sultry sassy-pot to seduce your voting sensibilities. The sexy Spaniard sings a salacious sonnet to get you swinging and shaking. Such a saucy song should sell to the masses. So, should your selection be this song you shall not sit in solitude. Soraya sings her soulful song, surrounded by silhouetted sons dancing side by side. This song may seem simple, yet simplicity is oft the staple of success. Let the sounds of this Spanish songstress soothe your senses as you slide into a silent slumber. Should you sense this summary to be somewhat stupid, you can stuff it up your sinkhole. Sorry...

As you can probably guess I didn't have much to say about this song, it's pretty ordinary. Check out Belarus instead they've got a much more entertaining song.



Sweden

Artist: Malena Ernman

Song: La Voix

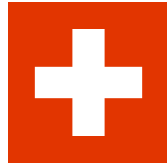


Review by James O'Hanlon

By all common logic this song should win Eurovision this year. It ticks all the boxes!

- ✓ Attractive singer with a big voice
- ✓ Danceable beat
- ✓ Peroxide bloneness
- ✓ Fake tan
- ✓ Bilingualism
- ✓ Superfluous dance troupe
- ✓ Ridiculous costumes
- ✓ Key change near the end (subtle but its there)

But will it win Eurovision? Who knows? The intricacies of the Eurovision song contest are becoming more and more complex. Who can predict what block voting scandal will be the talk of this years contest? Who could have predicted that Dustin the Turkey wouldn't even make it to the finals last year? What exactly is the Lordi effect and does it actually exist? I believe it was Stephen Hawking who noted that the human mind may simply not be capable of comprehending the functioning complexities of the Eurovision song contest. Still that doesn't stop us trying does it? Will this year take us one step closer to musical perfection? Or will it take an abysmal leap backwards? Come along to the Eurovision morning tea on Monday the 18th to find out!



Switzerland

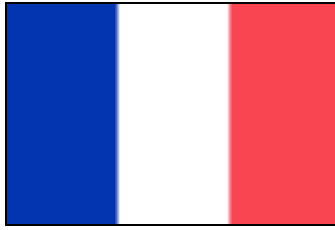
Artist: Lovebugs



Song: The Heighest Heights

Review by James O'Hanlon

Don't go getting excited about the band name, there wasn't a single reference to insect mating systems in this whole song. As far as I can tell the song is about high things, and falling from them. Not in a suicidal kind of way, but a rock ballad-hugs and kisses kind of way. You know, metaphors and all that. The Lovebugs are apparently one of the biggest bands in Switzerland, with three number one albums under their belt and a recent gig supporting the Rolling Stones. Despite their fame this song is a bit underwhelming. It's not that it's a terrible song, it's just that it's your average friendly sing-a-long. This unfortunately seems to be a common theme of Eurovision this year. It seems most countries have entered something quite... well... sensible??? Where is the ridiculousness we have come to love? Eurovision is a special time of year, like Halloween and St Patrick's Day rolled into one. It's the one time of year we can rejoice in all things ridiculous and embarrassing. Bring on the Fabio look-a-likes, the Serbian Spice Girls, organ grinder monkeys in three piece suits, fishwives in spandex! I don't even think there is a single puppet involved in this years contest! Shame on you Europe! Actually, you know what hasn't been tried yet? Amputees! That's just my suggestion for next year, take it or leave it...



FRANCE



Artist: Patricia Kaas

Song: Et S'il Fallait Le Faire

Reviewed by Mariella Herberstein

My God, Patricia Kaas, one of the countries great singers will perform for France at Eurovision this year. This can only mean one of two things:

- 1) Patricia has outstanding gambling debts and this is the only way she can pay them off or her legs will be crushed by an angry bookie called Cosmo.
- 2) France really really wants to win this. And who can blame them, after all they (along with Germany and the UK) have been paying for Eurovision for decades.

The song is a classic chanson to which one should smoke several packets of Gauloises and eat goose fat.



ALBANIA



Artist: Kejsi Tola

Song: Carry me in your dreams

Reviewed by Mariella Herberstein

Similar to last year, Albany is banking on the 'youth' factor, with yet again, the youngest participant at Eurovision. Kejsi is barely seventeen years old, but according to her biography has been performing for the last 18 years. On stage Kejsi will be supported by an industrial strength windmachine and three hopping lads. The song is ho hum – Balkan disco beat, key change and those highly annoying Albanian pipes. I cannot imagine this will go further than the semi-finals!



SLOVENIA



Artist: Quartissimo featuring Martina

Song: Love Symphony

Reviewed by Mariella Herberstein

What do a string quartet and an economic student have in common? That's right an inexplicable desire to perform at Eurovision. Quartissimo fiddle up a storm while Martina hides behind a canvas. So far so good. This goes on for over a minute...even better. Eventually Martina starts to sing, which is bearable but far from inspiring. Obviously Slovenia is banking on the sex-appeal of a string quartet – good luck, I say!



CYPRUS



Artist: Christina Metaxa

Song: Firefly

Reviewed by Mariella Herberstein

Wow, this song is uncharacteristically subtle for Cyprus. A far cry from their 2007 entry, Evridiki, and her spray-on pants. A delicate tune fuelled entirely by the angst only a teenager, such as Christina, can generate. Pay no attention to the gaff Christina sprouts about 'finding the light we have inside' 'negative challenges of today's world' and 'reaching our dreams'. Just enjoy the song, until the next Eurovision performance featuring fireworks, spandex and knee-boots robs us of our senses.



NORWAY



Fairytale

Artist: Alexaner Rybak

Review by Mariella Herberstein

Uh, this is more a nightmare than a fairytale. A young lad on a fiddle (here's where the trouble starts), singing off key (nothing new in Eurovision, but it does not help), an unimaginative song (category: worlds funniest beer-songs). And this is supposed to be the favourite! Heaven help us!



UKRAINE

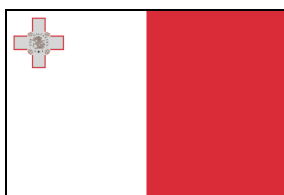


Artist: Svetlana Loboda

Song: Be my valentine

Reviewed by Mariella Herberstein

Who would have thought that things in the Ukraine could get any sleazier following last year's performance by Ani Lorak entitled 'Shady Lady'. You'd be surprised! Behind the benign sounding title lurks a spandex clad lass, who, I believe, wants you to be more than just her valentine. Svetlana (douze points for the name alone!) is regarded as 'a local icon in many areas'. But wait, there is more. Apparently, 'the creative potential of Svetlana doesn't end up with the described!' I am sure it does not!



MALTA



Artist: Chiara

Song: What if we

Reviewed by Mariella Herberstein

Ever since Chiara catapulted Malta into third place in 1998 she is condemned to perform at Eurovision for the rest of her natural life. This is her third appearance with a schmalzy ballad. She can sing – clearly a plus at Eurovision, although not essential, but I am not sure that this will get her near the top five.



ARMENIA



Artist: Inga & Anush

Song: Jan Jan

Reviewed by Greg Holwell

"How can I be without me?" This question kept Rousseau awake at night and drove Kierkegaard to despair. Now Armenia's Inga & Anush bring this question to the Eurovision stage and the answer seems to involve "jumpin up with NOR PAR JAN JAN". Fresh from their success in the *Zvonkie Golosa* contest in Omsk in 1994, fifteen years of reflection has resulted in a performance that is truly frightening. While the allure of Armenian sisters caterwauling cannot be denied, the Ken Done-inspired sleeping bags they are wearing send shivers up my spine. The philosophical implications of Inga & Anush's performance will certainly be debated for decades, but they are unlikely to triumph on the night.



AZERBAIJAN



Artist: AySel & Arash

Song: Always

Reviewed by Greg Holwell

After a disappointing result in the Former Soviet Beach Volleyball Mixed Doubles championships earlier this year, Aysel & Arash have returned to what they do best: looking attractive and pretending to play traditional Azerbaijani instruments. I didn't like the result and I doubt if you will.



BELARUS



Artist: Petr Elfimov

Song: Eyes that never lie

Reviewed by Greg Holwell

A white suit, a screaming guitar, a chest like a boab tree and a vague resemblance to Warwick Capper. That is all it takes to impress this reviewer. I am tipping Petr Elfimov to a least make the top 3 this year. With the eastern bloc on his side, and the recent trend towards more metal on the eurovision stage, he stands a strong chance. His new album "Glance of love" is sure to the be a treat as is his stage performance in Moscow.



TURKEY



Artist: **Hadise**

Song: ***Dum Tek Tek***

Reviewer: Greg Holwell

Hadise, like many of Turkey's recent Eurovision entries will hold a lot of appeal for at least the y-chromosomes in the audience in Moscow. Her first singles "Sweat" and "Stir me up" apparently delivered what they promised and her song for Moscow this year "Dum tek tek" is likely to do the same. With a strong Turkish rhythm, hips that don't lie and a powerful voice, Hadise is likely to be popular on the Moscow stage. Curiously, in her clip, her pelvis appears to have been attacked by spiderman. Check it out.



ESTONIA



Artists: Urban Symphony

Song: Rändajad

Reviewed by Aaron Harmer

Six beautiful and talented girls are representing the tiny Baltic country of Estonia this year. They can play their own instruments, sing haunting harmonies and don't feel the need for reckless key changes, costume changes or cavorting back-up dancers. In other words, they've got all the ingredients you need if you DON'T want to win Eurovision.

Without that 'WOW' factor, as in 'wow, I can't believe how bad this is', I just don't think Urban Symphony are going to strike a chord with voters. It's a shame they are so good, otherwise they might just have had a chance at winning.



GERMANY



Artists: Alex Swings Oscar Sings!

Song: Miss Kiss Kiss Bang

Reviewed by Aaron Harmer

He looks like Ben Affleck and sounds like Michael Bublé, it can only mean one thing, Germany return to their traditional swing roots this year with a stellar entry. Germany were unlucky in 2007 with a strong swing performance, but return better than ever with a slick, toe-tapping number that will have you dancing in your living rooms and singing into your hair brushes.

With brown leather jackets worn without shirts and just a hint of waxed chest, the wardrobe department have excelled themselves. Also, keep an eye out for the sneaky little tap solo in the middle and the introduction into German swing of an increasingly popular musical innovation, the slow scat.

Greece



This is our night



Sakis Rouvas was born on Corfu, but it appears none of the charm so lavished by Gerald Durrell has enchanted this young man. Described as the “ultimate pop-star” and with a long list of awards, he is the world’s best selling Greek artist and this reviewer suggests, Eurovision’s biggest pretty-boy. The performance is up tempo and features lighting to dazzle and amaze. You can expect the girls to be squealing for Sakis as he takes the stage come Sunday.

Key changes: 1
Real instruments: 0
Languages featured: English
Blonde Dancers: 5

Unfortunately, it might just be his night

Hungary



Dance with me



Did Peter Andre move to Hungary? Lots of great dancing in the film clip – it’s a catchy dance number! Only three dancers will be with Zoli for his performance in Moscow. (Actually, I think it’s actually very close to Brittany’s “Baby, One More Time”, but plagiarism aside...)_This song has a good chance at taking out Eurovision this year. According to sources on the ground at Eurovision central, Zoli is ready to conquer Europe by singing his song *Dance With Me*.

Key changes: 1
Real Instruments: 0
Languages featured: English
Blonde dancers: countless and varied,

Some are predicting “best entertainment of the audience”

Iceland



Is it true?



A cross between ‘Our Nicole Kidman’ in looks and ‘Our Tina Arena’ vocally, Yohanna is likely to knock their socks off with a big voice and a big heart to match. Unfortunately, this is the fancy lettuce in the Eurovision Focaccia, looks great but is more often tolerated than enjoyed. The analogy also extends to the sheer abundance and commonness of fancy lettuce, songs like these are everywhere, all trying to be something more than they are.

Real instruments: violin, electric guitar, piano

Key changes: 1

Languages featured: English

Sorry Iceland, I’d prefer to be left out in the cold.

Ireland



Et Cetera



Ireland has reached a new low in the Eurovision contest. This reviewer has has the task of reviewing Ireland each year for the last three years, they are always way off the mark and this year’s entry is no exception. I think the Veronica’s met Hi5 is the

“According to them they will ‘rock Russia’ with their song *Et Cetera*!”

Key changes: 1

Real Instruments: electric guitar

Languages featured: English

Simply horrible (sorry James)



ISRAEL



Artists: Noa and Mira Awad

Song: There Must Be Another Way

Reviewed by Anne Wignall

Have we found Israel's answer to the Corrs? The entry from Israel this year cries out 'My pain has no name'. I'd like to suggest a name for their pain...lyrics.

Despite this, I like Noa and Mira. They have style, charisma and the elusive Eurovision talent of harmony. Their song features some big notes, big dresses and a big musical climax. Another big advantage is Noa's history of writing James Bond scores. Who can resist voting for anyone associated, however remotely, with Daniel Craig? When combined with performance experience from Mira's appearances in the musical My Fair Lady, Israel may be the team to watch.



ANDORRA



Artist: Susanne Georgi

Song: La Teva Decisió (Get A Life)

Reviewed by Anne Wignall

Andorran artist Susanne Georgi has been given the illustrious credit of having created an entirely new style of Danish pop music. After listening to 'Get a Life' (English translation), I strongly suspect this new pop style contains a subliminal message. Listen and see. Before you know it, your left foot will begin tapping. Then your head will start nodding. General feelings of inspiration and social motivation may begin after the first chorus. Be careful – Andorra uses wind machines and large sleeves to glue unwary viewers to their television screens.

The antidote? Who cares, I'm going to listen to the song again...and again...and again...and again...



ROMANIA



Artist: Elena

Song: The Balkan Girls

Reviewed by Felipe M. Gawryszewski

I recommend that you block your ears when Elena appears on TV to sing. The Balkan "Spicy" Girls is the average pop music. Using the same formula of the other Spicy Girls, Elena presents herself surrounded by other sexy girls, performs the same non-imaginative choreographies and sighs about nightlife and love. However, I expect that the old formula works well for the Eurovision audience, giving Romania many votes, and perhaps the maximum Prize!



PORTUGAL



Artist: Flor-de-Lis

Song: As Ruas do Amor

Reviewed by Felipe M. Gawryszewski

Flor-de-Lis e sua música são um transbordo de melodrama. Caso, você leitor, vá escutar essa música, eu recomendo que tape seus ouvidos.

O ritmo da música é aparentemente uma mistura de Fado com o pior da cena musical do norte do Brasil. Uma combinação que não deu, e me arrisco a dizer, nunca dará certo. Embora com provável apelo popular em Portugal, eu diria que as chances de Flor-de-Lis chegar a final da Eurovision 2009 são nulas.

Nada mais tenho a dizer. Termino minha crítica aqui para evitar ter que escutar dona Flor pela terceira vez.

Google translation:

Fleur-de-Lis and his music is transferred from a melodrama. If you reader, go listen to that song, I recommend that cover your ears. The pace of música is apparently a mixture of Fargo with the worst of the music scene of northern Brazil. A combination that has not, and I venture to say, will never catch on. Although likely to appeal popular in Portugal, I would say the chances of lily reach the final of Eurovision 2009 is void.

I have nothing more to say. End my criticism here to avoid having to listen dona Flor for the third time.

