



FRANCE

Il est temps (It is Time)

Artist: Virginie Pouchain



Ahh Virginie Pouchain... so very much like every other insipid, chanteuse Francaise d'Eurovision during the last 20 years. As the uninspired tune and lyrics dribble forth like tepid tea from the poorly-heated thermos of an Air France steward, one can only hope things improve after the flight is over.

Despite being a hairdresser, Virginie provides no great hairdo, haute couture or choreography to distract us. Virginie has chosen to let her song speak for itself ... but it doesn't have much to say.



UNITED KINGDOM

Teenage Life

Artist: Daz Sampson



The UK has a rich musical history, most notably in that revolutionary foursome that single-handedly changed the face of popular music - Bucks Fizz. It's no surprise then that this year's UK entrant lists "the Fizz" (as I call them) as his main influence, musically, spiritually and, yes, sexually. He has even taken a leaf from BF's book in the name department, rejecting the boring appellation (presumably Darren) slapped upon him at birth by unhip parents and subtly crafting a sexy, Bucks-Fizz-like pseudonym - **Daz**. According to the ESC website Daz's favourite food is "bread", and yet he enjoys "fine wines". Such is the complex, many-faceted nature of Daz. He is also an Eminem-wannabe whose anthem for repressed over-12s is predicted to take the UK to the top five this year. Kurt Cobain step aside, teen angst has a new face (see picture above).



CROATIA

Moja Štikla (English: My High Heel)

Artist: Severina



This song could best be described as mildly irritating. Like when workmen are jackhammering in the road out front of your house. The lyrics are unfathomable (they're in Croatian, duh!) - but even the English translation is somewhat mystifying (e.g. "do not put on your little socks"). Judging from her bio, Severina has achieved cult status in her home country, with many successful albums. This only proves that in Croatia, as in the West, the music industry has devolved to the point where any half-decent slapper with vocal cords and ample bosom can achieve pop stardom. Let me make it clear - this song is really bad. Luckily for Severina, Croatia is part of a former Yugoslav voting bloc that ensures an embarrassing last place finish will be avoided.



SLOVENIA

Mr Nobody

Artist: Anže Džan



Anže Džan performs the song "Mr Nobody" - or is it vice versa? Slovenia's entrant strays into dangerous territory with a song title that may be a self-fulfilling prophecy. Rumoured to be the illegitimate offspring of David Beckham and George Michael, young Anže has a hair product budget that exceeds Slovenia's GDP. He may also be a werewolf. If his video is anything to go by,

Anže enjoys the outdoors (beach, meadows etc) and insists upon changing clothes every 3.5 seconds. As for his song, all I can say is, nobody likes it more than me ... and I think it's sodding awful. It's so bad it may actually be good. In fact, it might just contain all the mandatory Eurovision ingredients: tempo change (check), key change (check), catchy chorus (lifted straight from "Phantom of the Opera", check), moussed-up werewolf in a cheap suit (check). It's a winner!



GERMANY



No no, never

Artist: Texas Lightning

Despite an unusual name for a German outfit, "Texas Lightning" have struck down on Eurovision this year like a bolt from above.

Devastatingly, there are no banjos featuring in this masterpiece however despite this obvious oversight, "Texas Lightning" show the world that they are not afraid of a little (or a lot of) mimed lassoing. And that, after all, is what it's all about.

It's like gold, Texas tea!



MOLDOVA



Loca

Artist: Arsenium feat. Natalia Gordienko and Connect-R

Words cannot bring to life this veritable kaleidoscope of 80's hiphop (?) with rap (?) interludes. Not to mention the onstage antics...(see above)

Perhaps looking to the lyrics themselves provides the greatest insight into the creative genius of Arsenium feat. Natalia Gordienko and Connect-R.

Hey, Loco, please, espera un poco
And I'll give you my choco
Do you want it or not?

"2006 y'all" could be their year!



BULGARIA



Let Me Cry

Artist: Mariana Popova

Throughout the first minute of the song, Mariana provides a menagerie of silky, fleshy, smoochy; satin sheets and hoochie. Then, just when you least expect it, she smacks you down with the Big Three: belly-dancing, followed by acrobatics and finished off with some rhythmic gymnastics.

If only the actual song was worth listening to, for in amongst the hoohaa, is a mediocre tune with a mediocre beat and a mediocre voice, at best.

So don't worry Mariana, you'll have plenty of opportunities to cry as this entry seems to be aiming you straight for the wooden salad-servers.



RUSSIA



Never Let You Go

Artist: Dima Bilan

Dima has come a long way since his performances in the school cafeteria...unfortunately his hair has not.

"I received my first round of applause in the second grade in the school canteen during lunch. During a long break, I stood up and began to sing 'Prekrasnoe Daleko' ('Wonderful future'). The noise died down and even people I had just played tricks on were staring at me with open mouths."

You may know Dima from one of his previous powerful and soaring hits such as "Night Hooligan". With the same unbridled passion, Dima delivers 'Never let you go' and it is this trademark - plus his flock of ballerinas - that makes him a sure thing for Eurovision 2006.



BELGIUM

Je t'adore

Artist: Kate Ryan



Kate Ryan seems to have what it takes to be a winner at Eurovision 2006 - bilinguality, a hasty blonde dye job, glittery bikini tops, & a willingness to "fall to the floor, anywhere you want, I'm yours".

Kate's sentiment "Je t'adore - and I really mean it" seems to be a sentiment echoed by the Biology Department's resident Belgians, who have been heard to say "She's hot, she has the sound, and the look". Her film clip shows she also has a very nice boat & a fetish for rolling on stone floors. Should do well.



UKRAINE

Show me your love

Artist: Tina Karol

Whiny little Tina Karol has little to offer for the discerning viewer besides a direct Ukrainian rip off of "Eye of the Tiger" for the first bars, and some fetching knickerbocker slacks.

If this is indeed Ukraine's 'Best Female Solo Artist' we can only hope never to hear the worst. Whilst Tina is obviously a valuable asset to Ukraine's School of Aviation, we don't understand why lyrics like "You'll be my part, That's why I came" could possibly make sense for any institution.

This deserves to come last, and I think it probably will.



MONACO

La Coco-Dance

Artist: Séverine Ferrer



Can life get any happier than young Séverine's song? I seriously doubt it! Sung in French and Tahitian, this cheery number conjures up images of the South Pacific and beach parties. The distinct 'Harry Belafonte' sounds also helps! Definitely a chance in the top 10!



SPAIN

Bloody Mary

Artist: Las Ketchup



These resolute young chicas make up 'Las Ketchup' who perform a song entitled 'Bloody Mary'.

Ketchup...Bloody Mary.....get it??? Despite the incredible hilarity, I think we'll need more than a Bloody Mary to get through this one.



GREECE

Everything

Artist: Anna Vissi



Against the general trend, Anna, born in Cyprus, brings us a classic ballad that indeed has 'Everything': piano, screeching guitars, heart-ache and the oh so important key change. However, it does 'Nothing' for me, and I am bewildered that this should be this year's favorite. Can Greece win Eurovision back to back???? As they say, winning Eurovision once is a success, twice, a disaster!



ALBANIA

Zjarr E Ftohtë

Artist: Luiz Ejlli



The BBC website tells us that 'The origins of the Albanian people are shrouded in some mystery'. What is far more mysterious is how this song made it to Eurovision. Luiz's song is entitled 'Fire & Cold' and those are just the type of emotions you will experience when the band starts producing those blood curling sounds from the Albanian equivalent of bagpipes. Surely bagpipes are banned from Eurovision or any civilized broadcasts? Still Albania may appeal to their eastern neighbors? Neuf pointes from Bulgaria perhaps?



ARMENIA

Without Your Love

Artist: André



André is the first Armenian to take part in Eurovision. He delivers a rocky love tune 'Without your love'. However there was a bit of confusion in the wardrobe department for his video. Was he trying to be eye candy for the young girls like Ricky Martin, or was he going for slightly older women, with his wannabe Bon Jovi tight pants? Go get em tiger.



NORWAY

Alvedansen

Artist: Christine Guldbrandsen

Dette er på norsk, men jeg kan ikke forstå. This is in Norwegian, but I cannot understand it. I should considering I lived there for a year.... Anyway the song is about Elves dancing, incorporating a violin and ladies rocking to and fro, that I am sure would either make the elves take off with the reindeers or make them want to come out dancing from the North Pole. Sweden eat your heart out.



SWITZERLAND

If We All Give A Little

Artist: Six4one



Look out, another wannabe pop group! This time incorporating both genders, but obviously this is no battle of the sexes because their song titled 'If we all give a little' is sung in a new age "round robin style" so everyone gets a fair chance.

ESTONIA

Through My Window

Artist: Sandra Oxenryd

A blond Estonian woman, with the backup singers wondering if they will succeed...With song lines like "when my hopes are high I have my pride, Show you what I am really like inside....." it makes me wonder, what singer Sandra is going to reveal us. Look out Eurovision 2006!



LITHUANIA

We Are Winners

Artist: LT United



Lithuania seems to have abandoned music and is instead using reverse psychology to win this competition. LT United is actually performing (in the loosest sense of the word) a song called 'We are the Winners', a finely crafted example of the Nursery Rhyme Pop subgenre of music.



ROMANIA

Tornero

Artist: Mihai Trăistariu



Mihai Traistariu's Tornero is destined for a hundred or so indistinguishable generic dance remixes. Nevertheless, Mihail sings with complete conviction as he sort of limps through an abandoned alley complete with weirdos in the background. Video highlight: he sings "I can feel you touch my face" and there are snakes wrapped around his neck. Excellent.



BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA

Lejla

Artist: Hari Mata Hari



Hari Mata Hari, with the song Layla, demonstrates how much of a Bono-wannabe he is, despite the fact that he's been called the Nightingale of Sarajevo. The BBC site claims he's singing a tragic love song, but it's obvious to any non-bosnia-herzegovinian that he is in fact bemoaning the lack of a viable tourist industry.



FYR MACEDONIA

Ninanjna

Artist: Elena Risteska



Elena Risteska's masterpiece of subtlety is titled "Come on boy, don't be afraid boy, I'm gonna give it to you'". Can't say too much about this one, except that it involves major promises and threats. Maybe we should be afraid.



MALTA

I Do

Artist: Fabrizio Faniello



Fabrizio Faniello sings "I do" accompanied by a brilliantly clichéd pastiche of just about a hundred thousand music videos, but all kudos to him for the use of split screen technology to portray two people doing exactly the same thing. Malta came in third last year at the Eurovision (or was it second) and I can't but wonder how that must have been.



ISRAEL

Together we are one

Artist: Eddie Butler



Israel's Eddie Butler blends a smooth voice with a poor wardrobe and a special touch of mediocrity. The photo above shows him amazingly continuing a performance after a shrapnel bomb exploded on stage. Apparently earlier in 2006, he proposed to his fiancée on public television, because nothing is more romantic than Israeli television. 'Hats off' to him for blending a Hebrew verse with an English chorus, but hats quickly back on again for we really don't want to encourage such utter trash this year in Athens.



POLAND

Follow my heart

Artist: Ich Troje



Ich Troje attempt to inject a Polish flavour into the Euro-hiphop scene but blatantly abandon it for safer ground with a stock-standard pop tune. They allude to the bureaucratic difficulties of Polish romance by singing "I'll put in a request for our eyes to meet". This is further highlighted by the boys from Ich Troje steadfastly gazing at Justyna Majkowska's torso, which apparently requires less paperwork. It is bound to be popular this year in Athens, although I have given up trying to figure out why.



TURKEY

Superstar

Artist: Sibel Tuzun



Although the Turkish undertones in "superstar" are subtle, they are present, and I am always impressed with Turkey's entries for this reason. The Eurovision judges have also been impressed with Turkey in recent years. She tells us "my brilliance will bedazzle you" and hopefully the number of sequins on her outfit will do the same. Ms Tuzun will not require a wardrobe malfunction to fire up the audience in Athens this year.



BELARUS

Mum

Artist: Polina Smolova



Belarus and the former soviet states are no stranger to distorted guitars and the general influence of heavy metal music. And generally the gift of metal does not smile on the good-looking.

However..... I believe that article 5.3 on the international metal agreement states that "you may have a beautiful lead vocalist, as long as she sings about her mother, and as long as the general rhythm digresses significantly from what we may consider metal".

So where does this leave us? Screaming guitars, beautiful Belarussian singer.....if someone were to bring me a slice of lemon meringue pie, it may well be the best three minutes of my life.



FINLAND

Hard Rock Hallelujah

Artist: Lordi



Fantastic!! This song is far removed from the usual boy bands and ballads that Eurovision is known for. The costumes are great and the song is even kinda catchy. Rock on!



LATVIA

I Hear Your Heart

Artist: Vocal Group Cosmos

Look out Backstreet Boys!! This a cappella number starts off badly, but by the end of the song the boys are actually in tune! Very impressive high notes, shame about the dance routine...



PORTUGAL

Coisas De Nada

Artist: Nonstop

It's the Portugese version of The Spice Girls! The song is reminiscent of Abba's 'Waterloo' but lacks the upbeat tempo and funky flares. The short skirts and FMBs might seem sexy to some, but these girls just can't seem to carry a tune.....



CYPRUS

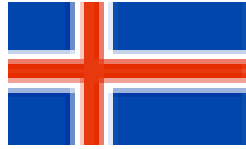
Why Angels Cry

Artist: Annet Artani



A pinch of Whitney, a drop of Mariah, a spoonful of Celine and presto: Annet from Cyprus afflicts us with her song: Why do Angles Cry? Yes, why indeed? The best way to endure this song is to (in Annet's own words): visualise a rainbow!

A big voice that will surely be rewarded by many many points from Greece!



ICELAND

Congratulations

Artist: Silvia Night



Silvia has her sights set on winning Eurovision and taking over the world. And who knows, she may actually do it, that's assuming Eurovision will ever pull free from Eastern Europe. I actually kind of like this song: it's upbeat and does not have any key changes. Apparently people tell Silvia that she reminds them of Mother Theresa, only rich and beautiful! Luckily the Vatican does not vote in Eurovision.



IRELAND

Every Song Is A Cry For Love

Artist: Brian Kennedy



Oh God, Ireland! First, the good news....there won't be Riverdancing or Irish fiddles in this song and for that Ireland deserves a point. Every song is indeed a cry for love, but this one especially. My ears hurt when I hear this song and my computer crashed twice downloading the song. Ireland should be permanently banned from Eurovision, while other good nations (such as Austria, sadly disqualified this year) should be given automatic entry.



NETHERLANDS

Amanbanda

Artist: Treble



This Dutch trio (hence the name) performs their song Amanbanda in their own special 'Treble' language. As if Dutch was not difficult enough! Using an imaginary language is of course not new in Eurovision. Back in 2003 Belgium's *Urban Trad* haunted us with their song 'Sanomi' which made it to an inexplicable second place. Can Treble double that?

We can all sing along to this one:

Amambanda amambanda Amambanda gwena
mambanda Amambanda amambanda



ANDORRA

Sense Tu

Artist: Jenny



Will Jenny (named after Jennifer Beals from the movie 'Falshdance') win Andorra's first Eurovision title? No, for two reasons: Andorra is simply too small to host Eurovision and none likes Andorra. But the song, you say? I think Jenny means well with it.



DENMARK

Twist Of Love

Artist: Sidsel Ben Semmane



I swear this song is a cut and paste job from a couple of hits: Bonnie Tyler's Total Eclipse of the Heart is in there somewhere, and that guitar riff sounds awfully familiar too.

Denmark of course won the Eurovision in 2000 with a melodic contribution by the Olson Brothers. At 17 Sidsel is Denmark's youngest Eurovision contestant, and with the help of greater Scandinavia she may have a chance of getting into the top 10 with this toe tapping number.



SWEDEN

Invincible

Artist: Carola



Carola is a Swedish superstar, who can't go shopping without being recognized by everyone! Sweden is obviously playing for gold here, as Carola already won Eurovision in 1991 (ABBA was unavailable). Certainly, Carola and her little tune have my vote....key change and all!