

**T.C.
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**A THREE-MINUTES-MESSAGE
FOR THE EUROPEAN AUDIENCE:
SEMIOTICS & AUTHENTICITY OF THE WINNERS
IN 2000S EUROVISION SONG CONTEST**

Master Thesis

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ÖZET

AVRUPALI SEYİRCİ İÇİN 3 DAKİKALIK BİR MESAJ: 2000 SONRASI EUROVİZYON ŞARKI YARIŞMASI BİRİNCİLERİNDE GÖRÜLEN OTANTİKLİK VE SEMİOLOJİLER

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Eurovision Şarkı Yarışması, 1950’lerden günümüze kadar gelebilen Avrupa’nın, hatta dünyanın en uzun soluklu televizyon yayınlarından biridir. Günümüzde izleyici sayısı 200 milyona ulaşan yarışmaya her sene kırkın üzerinde Avrupa ülkesi katılır ve canlı yayında üçer dakikalık performans sergilerler. Bu üç dakikayı en etkili şekilde kullanmak; seyircinin beğenisini kazanmak ve verilmek istenen mesajı en iyi şekilde aktarabilmek açısından ülkeler için büyük önem taşır. Eurovision bu yönüyle çok özgün bir televizyon şovudur; kurallarıyla, sahne şovlarıyla, izleyici ve katılımcı arasında oluşan uluslararası etkileşimiyle, kendine has bir görsel formata ve iletişim diline sahiptir.

Gelişen teknolojiyle birlikte, özellikle 2000 sonrası Eurovision Şarkı Yarışması birincilerinin performanslarında bazı ortak özellikler görülür; özel sahne efektleri, spesifik kamera hareket ve açıları, değişik dans koreografileri, etnik müzik ve kostümler, sembolik şarkı sözleri... Bütün bunlar verilmek istenen mesajı aktarmada etkili olan ve seyirciyi büyük oranda etkileyen dolayısıyla da oylarına yansıyan ve genellikle birinciliği garantileyen, günümüzün ideal Eurovision şarkı ve ‘şov’ formatını oluşturan öğelerdir.

Birinci bölümde, Eurovision’un oluşum hikayesinden başlayarak yarışmanın hangi metodolojiler üzerinden anlatılacağı belirtilmiştir. İkinci bölümde, yarışmayla ilgili genel özellikler ve kurallar (oy verme sistemi, katılımcı ülkeler, şarkılarda uyulması gereken kurallar vs.) anlatılmış ve 2000li yıllara kadar olan dönemlerde hangi tarz müzik ve performansların ön planda olduğu incelenmiştir. Üçüncü bölümde, 2000li yıllara damgasını vuracak olan sahne şovlarında görülen ortak özellikler detaylı bir biçimde anlatılmıştır. Dördüncü bölümde, 2000li yılların galipleri tek tek bu özellikler üzerinden detaylı bir biçimde analiz edilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Eurovision, Popüler Kültür, Avrupa, İzleyici, Canlı Yayın, Televizyon Prodüksiyonu

ABSTRACT

A 3-MINUTES-MESSAGE FOR THE EUROPEAN AUDIENCE: SEMIOTICS & AUTHENTICITY OF THE WINNERS IN 2000S EUROVISION SONG CONTEST

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Eurovision Song Contest is a unique TV-production that has an authenticity and its own language. There is a huge challenge among the participating countries every year, especially in 2000s this challenge step up into a new level with the developing technology in stage production. This study deals especially with the winners in 2000s Eurovision Song Contest. Participants got only three minutes to tell their stories; how can you impress the audience in three minutes? Pyrotechnics, special effects, lightings, camera angles and movements, symbolic lyrics, gestures, ethnic music, choreographies, interesting styles of the performers; all these features became the classic winning elements during the performances in the past fifteen years. Somehow, they have an impact on the audience and countries who use those secret winning codes, usually win the contest.

Starting with the history of Eurovision and explaining what is Eurovision about (the rules, the voting system, the participating countries etc.), in the following chapters, I will focus on the past 15 years' winners and their stage shows. Some secret signs, signifiers and finally what is being signified in those winning songs, will be explained. I'll seek for the right answers behind the facts like; music & lyrics, camera angles & movements, special effects, style and image of the performers, stage and dance choreographies, lightings, costumes... With the European audience's official voting results so far, my thesis is generally based on describing the ideal format of a winning song in 2000s Eurovision Song Contest, over the semiotics and authenticity theory.

Keywords: Eurovision, Popular Culture, European Audience

CONTENT

TABLES.....	vii
FIGURES.....	viii
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 METHODOLOGY.....	2
1.1.1. Semiology Theory.....	3
1.1.2. Authenticity Concept.....	6
2. WELCOME TO THE “EUROVISION SONG CONTEST”.....	8
2.1. THE RULES & THE VOTING SYSTEM.....	9
2.2. THE WINNER TAKES IT ALL (WINNERS 1955-2016).....	10
2.2.1. Classy Mid 50s & 60s.....	11
2.2.2. Colorful 70s.....	13
2.2.3. Bands & Solos in 80s.....	15
2.2.4. Complicated 90s.....	17
2.2.5. Choreographic 2000s.....	19
3. WHAT DO YOU NEED TO BE A WINNER IN 2000S? THE IDEAL FORMAT AND THE CLASSIC WINNING ELEMENTS.....	22
3.1. Special Effects.....	24
3.2. Warm Lighting/Cold Lighting.....	25
3.3. Camera Angles, Movements & Transitions.....	26
3.4. Symbolic Lyrics & Gestures.....	27
3.5. Ethnic Music & Dance Choreography	27
3.6. Image & Style of the Performers (Costumes, Make-Up).....	28
4. DETAILED EXAMINATION OF THE WINNERS IN 2000S OVER THE IDEAL FORMAT & THE CLASSIC WINNING ELEMENTS.....	30
4.1. 2002 LATVIA (MARIE N – I WANNA).....	31
4.2. 2003 TURKEY (SERTAB ERENER – EVERYWAY THAT I CAN)....	34
4.3. 2004 UKRAINE (RUSLANA – WILD DANCES).....	38
4.4. 2005 GREECE (HELENA PAPARIZOU – NUMBER ONE).....	42

4.5. 2006 FINLAND (LORDI – HARD ROCK HALLELUJAH).....	45
4.6. 2007 SERBIA (MARIJA SERIFOVIC – MOLITVA).....	51
4.7. 2008 RUSSIA (DIMA BILAN – BELIEVE).....	56
4.8. 2009 NORWAY (ALEXANDER RYBAK – FAIRYTALE).....	59
4.9. 2010 GERMANY (LENA MEYER LANDRUT –SATELLITE).....	62
4.10. 2011 AZERBAIJAN (ELI&NIKKI – RUNNING SCARED).....	67
4.11. 2012 SWEDEN (LOREEN – EUPHORIA).....	70
4.12. 2013 DENMARK (EMILIE DE FOREST – ONLY TEARDROPS)...	74
4.13. 2014 AUSTRIA (CONCHITA WURST-RISE LIKE A PHOENIX)...	78
4.14. 2015 SWEDEN (MANS ZELMERLÖW – HEROES).....	82
4.15. 2016 UKRAINE (JAMALA – 1944).....	88
5. CONCLUSION.....	96
REFERENCES.....	99

TABLES

Table 2.1: Winners in 50s & 60s of Eurovision Song Contest	11
Table 2.2: Winners in 70s of Eurovision Song Contest	13
Table 2.3: Winners in 80s of Eurovision Song Contest	15
Table 2.4: Winners in 90s of Eurovision Song Contest	17
Table 2.5: Winners in 2000s of Eurovision Song Contest	19
Table 4.1: Greek TV-ratings in 2001-2008	42
Table 4.2: Official results of Eurovision 2016	89



FIGURES

Figure 3.1: Swedish hosts giving the formula to win the Eurovision Song Contest.....	29
Figure 4.1: Marie N on the stage after the winning results in 2001, Tallinn-Estonia.....	31
Figure 4.2: Marie N's interesting dance choreography and changing her clothes on the stage.....	33
Figure 4.3: Lyrics of <i>I Wanna</i>	34
Figure 4.4: Sertab Erener performing <i>Everyway That I Can</i> in Eurovision 2002, Riga-Latvia.....	35
Figure 4.5: Lyrics of 'Everyway That I Can'.....	37
Figure 4.6: Ruslana dancing on the stage <i>Wild Dances</i> , 2004 Istanbul-Turkey.....	39
Figure 4.7: Lyrics of <i>Wild Dances</i>	41
Figure 4.8: Helena Paparizou on the stage in 2005, Kiev-Ukraine.....	43
Figure 4.9: Dancers making the 'one' number with their body parts on the Eurovision stage.....	44
Figure 4.10: Lordi on the stage in Greece, 2006.....	46
Figure 4.11: Some real flames at the begining of the performance of Hard Rock Hallelujah.....	48
Figure 4.12: Pyrotechnics used on the stage for Finland's performance for the first time in Eurovision.....	48
Figure 4.13: Lyrics of <i>Hard Rock Hallelujah</i>	49
Figure 4.14: Marija Serifovic and her back-vocals performing on the stage in Helsinki, 2007.....	51
Figure 4.15: Lyrics of <i>Molitva</i>	52
Figure 4.16: Serdutchka doing some inappropriate but funny moves on Eurovision stage	56
Figure 4.17: Lyrics of <i>Believe</i>	58
Figure 4.18: Russia on the stage with their song <i>Believe</i> in Belgrade, Serbia 2008.....	59
Figure 4.19: Alexander Rybak representing Norway is on the stage in Moscow, 2009.....	60
Figure 4.20: Lena Meyer on the Eurovision stage in Oslo, Norway, 2010.....	65
Figure 4.21: A medium shot of Ell and Nikki - getting closer under the pyrotechnics.....	68
Figure 4.22: Pouring pyrotechnics from the ceiling towards the ending.....	69
Figure 4.23: Loreen on the Eurovision stage in Baku, Azerbaijan, 2012.....	70
Figure 4.24: Loreen opening up her hands to the sky and singing, 'Why? Why can't this moment last forevermore?'	71
Figure 4.25: Her finger, giving signals of getting the first place, signifying victory.....	72
Figure 4.26: Loreen doing some 'aduket' moves and it's snowing on the stage.....	73

Figure 4.27: Emilie De Forest on the Eurovision stage in Malmö, Sweden, 2013.....	75
Figure 4.28: Emilie's hypnotizing hand gestures.....	77
Figure 4.29: Conchita Wurst on Eurovision stage in Kopenhagen, Denmark 2014.....	80
Figure 4.30: Real flames and warm lightings used for Austria's stage.....	80
Figure 4.31: Tweet of San Marino's entrance.....	83
Figure 4.32: Sweden's technological stage in 2015.....	84
Figure 4.33: Special effects shot.....	85
Figure 4.34: Transition into real shot.....	85
Figure 4.35: 2011 Billboard Awards.....	85
Figure 4.36: 2015 Eurovision Song Contest.....	85
Figure 4.37: Cold, blue lighting with some Roman Empire figures at the backscreen reminding Italy.....	87
Figure 4.38: Jamala on the stage in Stockholm, Sweden - singing her winning song 1944.....	89
Figure 4.39: Russia with it's crazy stage show.....	91
Figure 4.40: Lazarev hypnotizing the audience with his finger doing the number '1' sign, referring to the 1st place	92
Figure 4.41: 'The holy tree' special effect that comes out suddenly behind Jamala's back.....	94
Figure 4.42: Jamala's demanding gestures at the end of her performance.....	95

1.INTRODUCTION

The purpose of my thesis is to find out, examine and discuss over some classic winning elements; the authenticity concept and the semiotics of Europe's biggest broadcast TV-show: the 'Eurovision Song Contest'. Starting with the history of it and explaining what is Eurovision about (the rules, the voting system), in the following chapters, I will later on focus on the past 15 years' winners and their stage shows. Especially after 2002 we will see how stage visuality became more important than a good voice or music in terms of winning the contest (In 2000 and 2001, the winners still didn't have very specific stage shows). I'll mention about some signs, signifiers and finally what is being signified in those winning songs. I'll seek for the right answers behind the facts like; music & lyrics, camera angles & movements, special effects, style and image of the performers, stage and dance choreographies, gestures, lightings, costumes... With the European televoters' voting results so far, my aim is generally based on; to describe the ideal format of a winning song in 2000s Eurovision Song Contest.

Eurovision Song Contest is a very unique TV-show that brings nearly 200 million European audience together (for the past two years even the Australian and the American audience), it's worth to question why audience like it so much; or what makes it so 'watchable'. With the developing technologies, that kind of big productions are getting more and more super-visual and interesting to watch.

According to the datas given on Eurovision's official website; last year, in May 2016, the contest was seen by more than 200 million viewers. The 3 live shows from Stockholm, Sweden on 10th, 12th and 14th May reached 204 million people across 42 markets – 5 million more than in 2015. The 2016 Grand Final achieved, on average, an audience share of 36.3% across 40 markets - more than double the average prime-time viewing share for the same group of channels (15.7%). Not only on television but also on the internet, online audiences around the globe tuned into the Eurovision Song Contest in huge numbers. There were 2.6 million live streaming sessions in 196 territories across the three shows on Eurovision.tv and YouTube and a total of 5.3 million on-demand requests.¹

¹ Based on the information on Eurovision's official site.

http://www.eurovision.tv/page/news?id=eurovision_song_contest_attracts_204_million_viewers

Besides the fans of it, there are of course haters of it, too. Some people around Europe who find the show very political and unfair in terms of the voting system.² But the contest is not totally about politics or a country/a jury supporting another country with its votes (especially its neighbor) at all. There is a huge challenge among the participating countries every year, especially in 2000s this challenge step up into a new level with the developing technology in stage production. It's a fact that Eurovision Song Contest is a unique TV-production that has an authenticity and it's own language. Participating countries try to do their best on the stage every year and they've got only 3 minutes to express themselves. On a broadcast show, what can you tell in three minutes? The best story-teller in three minutes duration becomes the winner. But how can you tell a good story only in three minutes? If you look at the past 15 years' winners, you will see some common very-effective-story-telling-features among them. Pyrotechnics, special effects, lightings, camera angles and movements, symbolic lyrics, gestures, ethnic music, choreographies, interesting styles of the performers... All these features became like a trend, therefore also the classic winning elements in the past 15 years. Somehow, they have an impact on the televoters. Participating countries who use those features or codes, usually win the contest based on my research and thesis argument.

1.1. METHODOLOGY

I will use one theory and one concept during my examinations of 2000s winners of Eurovision Song Contest; the semiology theory and authenticity concept. I'll demonstrate the codes and signs – or let's say in general the path that leads to the stairs of success after a “3-minutes-message” (song/story).

² Turkey for example. That's why ‘we’ don't participate in the contest recent years, ‘we’re kind of protesting the unfair voting system (<http://tr.euronews.com/2017/05/11/turkiye-eurovizyon-a-neden-katilmiyor>, <http://www.trthaber.com/haber/medya/turkiye-eurovisiona-neden-katilmadi-101153.html>) But seems like Eurovision officials don't care about ‘our’ decision and why should they? The show must go on...

1.1.1. Semiology Theory

We seem as a species to be driven by a desire to make meanings: above all, we are surely *Homosignificans* - meaning-makers. Distinctively, we make meanings through our creation and interpretation of 'signs'. Indeed, according to Peirce, 'we think only in signs' (Peirce 1931-58, 2.302). Signs take the form of words, images, sounds, odours, flavours, acts or objects, but such things have no intrinsic meaning and become signs only when we invest them with meaning. 'Nothing is a sign unless it is interpreted as a sign', declares Peirce (Peirce 1931-58, 2.172). Anything can be a sign as long as someone interprets it as 'signifying' something - referring to or *standing for* something other than itself. We interpret things as signs largely unconsciously by relating them to familiar systems of conventions. It is this meaningful use of signs which is at the heart of the concerns of semiotics.³

Semiotics, loosely speaking, is the study of signs. Simple enough. What becomes difficult is defining what a 'sign' actually is. A sign must have both a signifier (the *form* which the sign takes) and a signified (the *concept* it represents). You cannot have a totally meaningless signifier or a completely formless signified (Saussure 1983, p.101). A sign is a recognizable combination of a signifier with a particular signified. What a sign 'means' is often determined and refined by culture, even for indexical signs. What meanings are dominant, what symbols correlate to what ideas, is constructed by culture. This brings us to the concept of codes. In all the communication you have participated and been exposed to, we have had to 'read' and deconstruct the signs presented in context. We all bring to bear on the act of meaning-making our understanding of that context, and prior experiences with those signs to help make sense of the message being transmitted.⁴

Are books the only mediums that we read? For sure, not. We also 'read' television, movies... They are all forming a medium and have their own language; we are the ones who give a meaning to anything that we read through the media. "Semiology therefore aims to take in any system of signs, whatever their substance and limits; images, gestures,

³ Chandler, D. 2017. Semiotics for Beginners <http://visual-memory.co.uk/daniel/Documents/S4B/sem02.html>

⁴ <https://mediatexthack.wordpress.com/category/semiotics/>

musical sounds, objects, and the complex associations of all these, which form the content of ritual, convention or public entertainment: these constitute, if not languages, at least systems of signification”, says Barthes (1964) and continues; “There is no doubt that the development of mass communications confers particular relevance today upon the vast field of signifying media, just when the success of disciplines such as linguistics, information theory, formal logic and structural anthropology provide semantic analysis with new instruments.”

Visual media contain languages with syntax and "punctuation," as if were written in English. Viewers learn this system of encoding, just as they learned to read. Dr. Mark Goodman from Department of Communication at Mississippi State University, says that:

“An argument could be made that reading television is more difficult than reading a book. An understanding of English grammar, punctuation, syntax, and vocabulary are necessary to read the latest Tom Clancy novel. Television and film, however, bring together a multitude of languages presented to us in sound, visuals, motion, and color. The following is not meant to be comprehensive list of all visual languages, which become conventions because they are generally recognized by producers and students of film.”

So how does this apply to media? Bart (2012) in a blog-article says that, “producers use symbols constantly so that they can effectively communicate their messages to audiences. This is based on the theory of social constructionism which assumes that audiences are actively processing media, interpreting it based on their personal experiences, and then relaying their understandings.”⁵ This understanding is only half of the equation, however; “Active audience members use the media’s symbols to make sense of their environments and the things in it, but those definitions have little value unless others share them – that is, unless the symbols also define things for other people in the same way.” (Baran & Davis, p.309)

Media is not simply about one individual’s interpretation of content – it is about the larger interpretation, and how society uses it. Symbols or signs are important for any type of media that is trying to convey a message. The symbols may be visual or could be words that have a secondary meaning. The ability for people to learn from the semiotics is what media producers rely on. Media consumers might not remember every word that was said or every action made, but they do take something away from the symbols they are

⁵ Bart, I. 2012 (Media Influence Spring 2012 blog maintained by Dr. Burns' MSS 495 class at Quinnipiac University.) <http://mss495s12.blogspot.com.tr/2012/04/semiotics-in-television.html>

supposed to interpret. When viewers pay close attention to a program they may be looking for something deeper than what is being said or done. If everything media producers were trying to communicate had to be said, television shows and movies would have to be much longer so every word would fit in. That's why Eurovision producers decided on the rule that the performances should be no more than three minutes.

There is a number of different types of codes constituting the meaning of signs (Rayner, Wall, Kruger, 2001)⁶. What we will usually see in Eurovision winners of 2000s are these ones;

- *dress codes*: serve to define meanings related to status, class, age, gender, rank, role, glamour, sophistication, "style," sex appeal, etc.
- *color codes*: In many cultures, red means glamour/excitement or danger; black means death or destruction; blue means openness; pink means femininity
- *non-verbal codes defining meaning of gestures or body language*: the meaning of handshakes, kisses, winks, staring, proximity, signals, etc.
- *cinematic/technical codes*: define the meaning of uses of close-up, long, medium shots, angles (high/low), framing, cropping, etc.

These codes and signs will be examined in detail in chapter four; 'The Detailed Examination Of The Winners In 2000s Over The Ideal Format & The Classic Winning Elements'.

⁶ Teaching Film, Television, and Media <http://www.tc.umn.edu/~rbeach/teachingmedia/module4/4.htm>

1.1.2. Authenticity Concept

Television shows, especially soap operas and sitcoms, are usually considered by English as a second language practitioners as a source of authentic spoken conversational materials presumably because they reflect the linguistic features of natural conversation.⁷ What is meant by authenticity in the events industry? Getz (2007) identifies three types of authenticity relating to event consumers.

- *Object-related Authenticity*: that the performance, design features, and other elements are true reflections of the culture being portrayed.
- *Existential Authenticity*: that the event consumer's have their own meaningful experience which they perceive as authentic.
- *Relative Authenticity*: depending on the event consumers' social condition, authenticity is a subjective notion which varies from person to person.

In Eurovision Song Contest we will see more of the 'object-related authenticity' where the true reflections of a participating country's culture will be portrayed. Cultural identity can be seen as a large element in the Eurovision Song Contest. Identity can correlate to the cultural sounds of the songs, specific instruments, folk attire, or the lyrics of the represented song. The songs are forbidden to include politics, though many song have found loopholes to identify the situation that their country maybe in at that time. There is the identity of being part of European that also seems to have it's charm and sense of community. It is the notion of moving away from abusive authority such as communism in counties including Germany and the Ukraine.⁸

Authenticity is an outstanding concept which we see Eurovision Song Contest performances. ESC Insight's Ellie Chalkley mentions in her article that the most beloved Eurovision winners represent a very specific combination of authenticity and construction. The opposition of authenticity and construction can help to explain why non-pop genres tend to underperform at the contest. Chalkley states that;

- An authentic song presented in an *authentic manner* is, for example, a singer-songwriter playing their own song at the piano, a traditional folk music group playing a song they wrote on traditional instruments or things like rock, country, indie or rap groups presenting their own songs in the manner they would outside of Eurovision.

⁷ Mansoor Al-Surmi 2012, Authenticity and TV Shows: A Multidimensional Analysis Perspective

Published by: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc. (TESOL) <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43267884>

⁸ Authenticity, Lived Experience, and Identity, November 15, 2016. <https://13005902esc.wordpress.com/2016/11/15/authenticity/>

- Authentic songs presented in a *constructed manner* is where the Eurovision magic happens. This is where a big, theatrical performance lacking in the traditional signifiers of musical authenticity supports and accentuates the inner emotional truth or ongoing artwork of the performer.

This is where we find many recent winners and top ten finishers. The connection of real emotion with an amazing theatrical performance makes it easier for the audience to identify with the act and pick up the phone. Mr. Lordi even had a good stab at explaining how Lordi are an example of an authentic construct in the winner's press conference back in 2006:

Press: "Could you tell us what is under the masks?"

Mr.Lordi: "What masks? I started the band 14 years ago, and 12 years ago I had the idea of monsters. These are our working outfits. It's a bit like Father Christmas – if I took off the mask it would spoil the illusion. These are the characters and we leave them on the stage. It builds the mystery: this is Lordi!"

The other way you can enter the 'authentic construct' group is by being able to fake the authenticity of your performance sufficiently well that the majority of viewers of the performance aren't able to distinguish your inauthentic signifiers of authenticity from authentic ones. For example, let's say that someone like Emmilie de Forrest did a really good job at performing the authenticity level of her material. When the whole performance is being mediated by the giant constructs that are the Contest itself and the television presentation of it, the performers are able to use that extra margin of uncertainty to reinforce their use of signifiers of authenticity.

We can see which acts are adding additional signifiers of authenticity or construction to their stage shows – it seems like many countries are going for showy projections, large theatrical elements and generally building up layers of images that act as semiotic reinforcement for their themes.⁹

⁹ Chalkley, E. (2016). Staging, Symbols, And Semiotic Realness: Construction Versus Authenticity. <http://escinsight.com/2016/05/08/serving-semiotic-realness-at-the-eurovision-song-contest/>

2. WELCOME TO THE “EUROVISION SONG CONTEST”

Established in 1956, the Eurovision Song Contest sought to unite a continent still recovering from the ravages of World War II. It started as a sober affair with women in ball gowns singing classy chansons. Over time it loosened up, a process that intensified with the breakup of the Soviet Union. As competitors from fledgling Eastern European states flooded the contest, they raised hemlines, cranked up the wind machines and greatly expanded notions of good taste. In 2000s, Eastern countries have dominated, with Estonia winning in 2001, followed by Latvia, Turkey and Ukraine and so on. Western fans saw their country's fortunes decline rapidly, perhaps best exemplified by the British act scoring exactly zero points in 2003 - the dreaded “zero points”. The notion of Europe has continued to expand, and so has Eurovision, which had an audience of roughly 200 million people last year.¹⁰

The Grand Final in 2015 saw an average market share of 41.6% amongst young adults, compared to 39.8% in 2014. "These numbers show that the Eurovision Song Contest is very much alive across Europe, and that our audience is getting younger. This is crucial for the long-term success of the contest and important for the contestants," says Jon Ola Sand, Executive Supervisor of the contest on behalf of the European Broadcasting Union.

Not only the audience is getting younger, but also the platforms of Eurovision are getting more comprehensive, especially due to those young audience and their way of consuming technology and media. The way we consume media has changed. We now use multiple platforms or devices, such as web, television, or our mobile phones. Broadcasters must therefore rely on integrated media production to form their content so it can easily be integrated across these different outlets. Eurovision Song Contest broadcasts not only from TV channels but also live from its Youtube channel in the recent years. Contest even has a Snapchat account. Last year they send many snaps from their official account on Snapchat. During the finals, snaps were especially consisting of the backstage events; such as performers getting their make-up done, rehearsing towards the mirrors of the backstage, some of them being nervous, some of them too much comfortable... Active

¹⁰ Adams, W.L. 2016. *Why I Love Eurovision, and Why You Should, Too* - The New York Times.
https://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/14/opinion/why-i-love-eurovision-and-why-you-should-too.html?_r=0

social media users and fans of Eurovision were able to watch those kind of interesting acts and emotions going on on the backstage, through this Snapchat account.

With all its media platforms, huge production, stage shows, music, entertainment, participating performers, audience, fans, crew... Eurovision welcomes everyone who is interested in such a big broadcast show, continuing for a half century (1956-2017).

2.1. THE RULES & THE VOTING SYSTEM

Such a big production and organization should consist of some rules, for sure. Here are the most important rules and the explanation of the voting system in the Contest. They're all considering the needed information to understand the details in the following chapters. According to the official website of the contest, the main rules in the recent years are:¹¹

- A maximum of 46 Members shall be allowed to participate (the "Participating Broadcasters"). Members from a maximum total of 26 countries shall compete in the Final. There shall be six guaranteed places therein (i.e. one for the producing organization (the "Host Broadcaster"), five EBU Members from France, Germany, Spain, Italy and the United Kingdom). Apart from the six broadcasters with guaranteed places, all Participating Broadcasters from a maximum of 40 countries shall compete in one of the Semi-Finals for the remaining places in the Final.
- The Shows are presented on stage, in both English and French, by the international presenters.
- Viewers in the countries of the Participating Broadcasters are invited to vote for their favorite songs (without the possibility of voting for the song representing their own country) by means of televoting (votes of the National Audiences), which shall be implemented in all the countries of the Participating Broadcasters.
- In addition, in each participating country, there shall be a National Jury to be appointed by that country's Participating Broadcaster to vote in the Semi-Finals and in the Final. Members of the National Juries must pursue one of the following professions within the music industry: radio DJ, artist, composer, author of lyrics or music producer.
- The points of the National Juries and of the National Audiences shall be combined according to a ratio which is determined by the EBU, subject to the Reference Group approval.
- For example, if the ratio is 50-50, the points of the National Jury carry the same weight as the points of the National Audiences.
- The maximum duration of each song is three minutes. Any song/performance which is longer may be disqualified by the EBU Permanent Services after consultation with the Reference Group.
- Each performance may consist of a maximum of six people on stage.
- Each Participating Broadcaster is free to decide the language in which its artist(s) will sing.
- Artists shall perform live on stage, accompanied by a recorded backing-track which contains no vocals of any kind or any vocal imitations aiming at replacing or assisting the live/original voice of the Contestant(s).
- No lyrics, speeches, gestures of a political or similar nature shall be permitted during the ESC. No swearing or other unacceptable language shall be allowed in the lyrics or in the performances of the songs. No messages promoting any organization, institution, political cause or other, company, brand, products or services shall be allowed in the Shows and within any official ESC premises. A breach of this rule may result in disqualification.

¹¹ <https://eurovision.tv/about/rules/>

As EBU's Jean Philip De Tender emphasizes, Eurovision is an expressly apolitical event - unless one would define politics as all-inclusive. Hypersensitive to political messages, the organizers have rigorous policies regarding flags, for instance. "If a country uses the event for expressly political statements, it will be expelled from the competition," explains De Tender. A notable exception, he adds, is the rainbow flag, held high by the LGBT community, which is not considered a political entity but fits the Eurovision ethics of inclusion and diversity. But no one doubts that this explicitly non-political event can have an impact on the international community.¹²

2.2. THE WINNER TAKES IT ALL (WINNERS 1956-2016)

Eurovision Song Contest will celebrate its 61th birthday in 2017. Such an old organization and production has witnessed many changing eras and trends starting from the 50s and coming to nowadays the 2010s. With the changing world, time and the living people on this planet, every decade was a different era with its own style. That was reflected on Eurovision Song Contest's stage and performers, too. Like the changing eras and trends in cinema history (such as British New Wave, French New Wave etc.) Eurovision also had some eras and trends in its own history. Every decade in Eurovision Song Contest was very specific, each time getting more and more colorful, more developed, interesting and attractive. I will now examine those changing decades - the eras that have been created by time in both the world (especially Europe) and the Eurovision stage.

¹² <http://www.dw.com/en/behind-the-scenes-at-the-eurovision-song-contest/a-19258146>

2.2.1. Classy Mid-50s & 60s

Table 2.1: Winners in the 50s & 60s of Eurovision Song Contest

Year	Date	Host City	Winner	Song	Performer	Points	Margin	Runner-up
1956	24 May	Lugano	Switzerland	"Refrain"	Lys Assia			Never announced
1957	3 March	Frankfurt	Netherlands	"Net als toen"	Corry Brokken	31	14	France
1958	12 March	Hilversum	France	"Dors, mon amour"	André Claveau	27	3	Switzerland
1959	11 March	Cannes	Netherlands	"Een beetje"	Teddy Scholten	21	5	United Kingdom
1960	29 March	London	France	"Tom Pillibi"	Jacqueline Boyer	32	7	United Kingdom
1961	18 March	Cannes	Luxembourg	"Nous les amoureux"	Jean-Claude Pascal	31	7	United Kingdom
1962	18 March	Luxembourg	France	"Un premier amour"	Isabelle Aubret	26	13	Monaco
1963	23 March	London	Denmark	"Dansevise"	Grethe and Jørgen Ingmann	42	2	Switzerland
1964	21 March	Copenhagen	Italy	"Non ho l'età"	Gigliola Cinquetti	49	32	United Kingdom
1965	20 March	Naples	Luxembourg	"Poupée de cire, poupée de son"	France Gall	32	6	United Kingdom
1966	5 March	Luxembourg	Austria	"Merci, Chérie"	Udo Jürgens	31	15	Sweden
1967	8 April	Vienna	United Kingdom	"Puppet on a String"	Sandie Shaw	47	25	Ireland
1968	6 April	London	Spain	"La, la, la"	Massiel	29	1	United Kingdom
1969	29 March	Madrid	Spain	"Vivo cantando"	Salomé	18		No runner-up
			United Kingdom	"Boom Bang-a-Bang"	Lulu			
			Netherlands	"De troubadour"	Lenny Kuhr			
			France	"Un jour, un enfant"	Frida Boccara			

Source: Eurovision Song Contest's official website, eurovision.tv

The first decade of the contest was obviously under the influence of the 40s, 50s & 60s Hollywood movies. Both male and female singers were looking very chic on the stage; they were all well-dressed, men with suits and bow-ties, well-tended short hair and no beard, women with diligent dresses and accessories - usually wearing shiny diamond earrings or bracelets, short haircuts and voluminous hairstyles, thin eyebrows, cat-eye make-ups... All reminding sort of a character from those romantic Hollywood movies of that era. Also the European music in that era was influenced by American music. During the 1950s European popular music give way to the influence of American forms of music including jazz, blues, swing and traditional pop, mediated through film and records. You can hear especially elements of jazz in the 50s and 60s winning performances. All of the performers moving politely on an unsophisticated stage; singing in front of a classic microphone with their beautiful qualified soft and deep voices. The maestro swinging his hands, the musicians were playing their instruments at the background, especially popular instruments were the violins, the flutes, and the saxophones because of the influence of jazz music in that era.

There was no color TV at that time and the footages were all black&white, although the first regular color broadcasts in Europe started by the United Kingdom's BBC2 on July

1st, 1967 (PAL¹³). West Germany's first broadcast occurred in August (PAL), followed by the Netherlands in September (PAL), and by France in October (SECAM¹⁴). Norway, Sweden, Finland, Austria, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary all started regular color broadcasts before the end of 1969. In 1969, Eurovision was held in Amsterdam, Netherlands, a country who had already colorful broadcasting since September 1967, so the Eurovision broadcast could be finally shown in colors that year. But only the countries who had color broadcast that time could watch the color Eurovision broadcast. For example, one of the founders of Eurovision Song Contest - Italy passed to color transmissions not before 1972-73s, until that time they were watching the contest all in black&white while the other European countries can already see all the colors. On the other hand, imagine Turkey who couldn't watch the contest until 1984 when they first meet with the color-television.

In 50s and 60s era, - like there were no colors in broadcasting till 70s - there were also no special effects, just a few changing camera angles (max. three), again a few camera movements (no spider-cam or steady-cam, just a stable camera who is able to do some zoom-in or outs, nothing else), no symbolic lyrics, no dance choreographies (just a few polite dance moves or body gestures), no ethnicity in music (classic music or jazz was more popular). Also not many countries were participating back then, in 1956 it started with only seven participating countries, until 1970's the number raised to eighteen countries (now in 2017 there are forty-three participating countries, including Australia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia which are not even a part of Europe). In the beginning, it was obvious for the participants that they should sing in their country's national language. However, as the Swedish entry in 1965, *Absent Friend* was sung in English, the EBU set very strict rules on the language in which the songs could be performed. National languages had to be used in all lyrics, including Maltese when the island nation made its debut. Songwriters across Europe soon tagged onto the notion that success would only come if the judges could understand the content, resulting in such entries as *Boom-Bang-A-Bang* and *La La La* (Table 2.1). The lyrics were allowed to contain occasional phrases in other languages, which was utilized for example by the Yugoslavian song in 1969.

¹³ Phase Alternating Line (PAL) is a colour encoding system for analogue television used in broadcast television systems in most countries broadcasting at 625-line / 50 field (25 frame) per second (576i)

¹⁴ Siquentiel Couleur @ Mmoire (Sequential Color with Memory), also written *SÉCAM* is an analogue colour television system first used in France.

With all its black and whiteness, strict rules considering singing in national language, no special effects or interesting camera movements, the 50s and 60s may look and sound not very interesting for some people, especially for the youth nowadays who are expecting more visuality and stage shows. But those years were actually the golden years of Eurovision history. The whole competition started with those features, kind of trying to show how glamorous and classy the Eurovision as a contest and Europe as a union was.

2.2.2. Colorful Seventies

Table 2.2: Winners in 70s of Eurovision Song Contest

1970	21 March	 Amsterdam	 Ireland	"All Kinds of Everything"	Dana	32	6	 United Kingdom
1971	3 April	 Dublin	 Monaco	"Un banc, un arbre, une rue"	Séverine	128	12	 Spain
1972	25 March	 Edinburgh	 Luxembourg	"Après toi"	Vicky Leandros	128	14	 United Kingdom
1973	7 April	 Luxembourg		"Tu te reconnaitras"	Anne-Marie David	129	4	 Spain
1974	6 April	 Brighton	 Sweden	"Waterloo"	ABBA	24	6	 Italy
1975	22 March	 Stockholm	 Netherlands	"Ding-a-dong"	Teach-In	152	14	 United Kingdom
1976	3 April	 The Hague	 United Kingdom	"Save Your Kisses for Me"	Brotherhood of Man	164	17	 France
1977	7 May	 London	 France	"L'oiseau et l'enfant"	Marie Myriam	136	15	 United Kingdom
1978	22 April	 Paris	 Israel	"A-Ba-Ni-Bi" (א-ב-נ-ב-י)	Izhar Cohen and the Alphabeta	157	32	 Belgium
1979	31 March	 Jerusalem		"Hallelujah" (הללויה)	Gali Atari and Milk and Honey	125	9	 Spain

Source: Eurovision Song Contest's official website, eurovision.tv

In 1970s most of Europe was finally able to watch the Eurovision Song Contest in color. No more black and white screen, as a result no more colorless performances especially in terms of costumes of the performers. The 70s were by itself a colorful era in Europe. The decade began with a hippie look, giving a distinct ethnic flavor to the clothes. Hippie practitioners of free love favored a unisex look with long hair, tie dye and flower power motifs, bell bottoms, sandals... Those kind of colorful looks were seen in the winning performances of 1969, 1970 and 1973 ESC. Of course, although the hippie look was widespread, it was not adopted by everyone. Many women still continued to dress up with more glamorous clothes, inspired by 1940s movie star glamour. The 1971 and 1972's winners were those kind of glamorous winners, both winners were wearing black long chic dresses (although even the 1972's winner was wearing a black dress and carrying a flower brooch on her collar, a sign of the hippie era).

In the mid-70s the hippie style gave its way to disco style. The popular disco music genre spawned its own fashion craze in the mid-70s. All styles of clothing were affected by the disco style, especially those of men. Men began to wear stylish three-piece suits (available in a bewildering variety of colours) which were characterized by wide lapels, wide legged or flared trousers, and high-rise waistcoats (US vests). Young people gathered in nightclubs dressed in new disco clothing that was designed to show off the body and shine under dance-floor lights. Under the shiny disco clothes, platform boots were at the height of their popularity, also. In Eurovision after 1973 we see that look starting with ABBA. The thing is, it's not clear whether the disco style era inspired ABBA and their look or ABBA's look inspired the style of disco look itself. Because after their victory - giving also to Sweden its first triumph in the contest, they became one of the most commercially successful acts in the history of popular music, topping the charts worldwide from 1974 to 1982 and managed to influence other musicians with their style. Before them, there were no performers looking or sounding like them at all in Europe. They may be influenced by the British glam-rock of that time, especially from David Bowie as Ziggy Stardust who used to wear shiny clothes and glittering make-ups. But his music genre was more based on rock, whereas ABBA's was only pop music. Their pop music and disco-look image brought them the fame starting in Eurovision and continued for a long time in that era. They used to wear very complex outfits such as eye-catching-colored silky pants or skirts, shiny blazers with some small diamonds or thin chains on it, luminous platform-boots and so on. Also their make-up was consisting of some small glitters around their eyes. Bowers in his online article for the *Guardian* (2014) states that;

"The glittering hotpants, sequined jumpsuits and platform heels that Abba wore at the peak of their fame were designed not just for the four band members to stand out – but also for tax efficiency. According to Abba: The Official Photo Book, published to mark 40 years since they won Eurovision with Waterloo, the band's style was influenced in part by laws that allowed the cost of outfits to be deducted against tax – so long as the costumes were so outrageous they could not possibly be worn on the street. Björn Ulvæus said: "In my honest opinion we looked like nuts in those years. Nobody can have been as badly dressed on stage as we were."

But Eurovision had never been so shiny or colorful and cheerful before them, they definitely started a new era in Eurovision and the whole world with that disco-pop look, that's for sure. They obviously were not honoured in vain at the 50th anniversary celebration of the Eurovision Song Contest in 2005 when their hit *Waterloo* was chosen as the best song in the competition's history. After their victory in 1974, the following years winning contestants were all influenced by this disco-pop style. Netherlands' *Ding-*

a-dong in 1975, UK's *Save Your Kisses for Me* in 1976, Israel's *Ah-Bah-Nee-Bee* in 1978 and *Hallelujah* in 1979 (Table 2.2), they were all inspired by ABBA in terms of image and music. That inspiration will be continued also in the 1980s Eurovision.

In terms of camera angles and movements in 1970s, there were also some new looks and developments. Cameras started to take extreme-wide-shots of the stage, more zoom-ins and close-ups were used, detail angles of some instruments being played were added to the broadcast, even at some parts there was a camera shooting performers' backs from the back of the stage. These were all appreciable developments in terms of variety of story-telling. Eventually Eurovision is a platform where each country tries to tell it's own story through it's song. Telling this story literally from many point of views (angles), effects the audience in a way. It's more interesting, more out-standing and more exciting to watch other than seeing maximum three angles like it was used to be broadcasted in 50s and 60s' Eurovision.

2.2.3. Bands & Solos In Eighties

Table 2.3: Winners in 80s of Eurovision Song Contest

1980	19 April	The Hague	Ireland	"What's Another Year"	Johnny Logan	143	15	Germany
1981	4 April	Dublin	United Kingdom	"Making Your Mind Up"	Bucks Fizz	136	4	Germany
1982	24 April	Harrogate	Germany	"Ein bißchen Frieden"	Nicole	161	61	Israel
1983	23 April	Munich	Luxembourg	"Si la vie est cadeau"	Corinne Hermès	142	6	Israel
1984	5 May	Luxembourg	Sweden	"Diggi-Loo Diggi-Ley"	Herreys	145	8	Ireland
1985	4 May	Gothenburg	Norway	"La det swinge"	Bobbysocks!	123	18	Germany
1986	3 May	Bergen	Belgium	"J'aime la vie"	Sandra Kim	176	36	Switzerland
1987	9 May	Brussels	Ireland	"Hold Me Now"	Johnny Logan	172	31	Germany
1988	30 April	Dublin	Switzerland	"Ne partez pas sans moi"	Céline Dion	137	1	United Kingdom
1989	6 May	Lausanne	Yugoslavia	"Rock Me"	Riva	137	7	United Kingdom

Source: *Eurovision Song Contest's official website, eurovision.tv*

In a mixed order, it's seen that half of the winners in 80s Eurovision are still under the influence of what ABBA started in mid-70s – the disco-pop music and look. On the other hand the other half of 80s winners, it's all about performing romantic solos. Nothing new was seen more in this decade - except more dancing moves, shoulder paddings on the costumes of the performers and some interesting camera angles.

Henderson in his online article (2010) says that; “The 1980s saw the emergence of dance music and new wave. As disco fell out of fashion in the decade's early years, genres such as post-disco, Italo disco, Euro disco and dance-pop became more popular”¹⁵. Especially the reinvention of Michael Jackson and Diana Ross, the superstardom of Prince and the emergence of Madonna, Whitney Houston, and Janet Jackson - who were all the most successful musicians during this time, became a permanent fixture on MTV and gained a worldwide mass audience. Michael Jackson was the one who had the biggest impact around the world especially with his dance moves in his videoclips starting in the late 70s. Apparently those dance moves influenced the Eurovision dance-pop winners too in the 80s, they were not doing some classic rhythmic body movements according to the music on the stage (such as thrifting or swinging to the right then to the left repeatedly, like ABBA used to do for example), it was more than this, they started to literally dance on the stage. UK's Bucks Fizz in 1981 for example; participating as a band, all members were dancing with each other while also singing on the stage. This continued with Sweden in 1984, the trio Herreys consisting of three-male-members, they were also doing some dynamic dancing moves (reminding Michael Jackson) on the stage during their performance. Bobbysocks! from Norway (winners in 1985), Sandra Kim from Belgium (1986's winner) and Riva from Yugoslavia (1989's winner) also danced on the stage. Of course, they were not professional dancers performing some professional choreographies like we will later witness in 2000s and late 90s, but still there was a dance 'action' going on on the Eurovision stage for the first time. Besides fast dancing songs, there were also some slow and romantic solo performances winning. Johnny Logan (two times winner in that era), Nicole, Corinne Hermes, and Celine Dion were all singing alone (only backvocals at the chorus parts come along) on the stage.

There were also some new and specific camera angles in 80s Eurovision. Especially in 1986's winner Sandra Kim from Belgium with her song *J'aime la vie* (Table 2.3), the screen was divided into four parts, each part showing Sandra in different angles; she was like dancing and singing to four different Sandras, it was sort of a kaleidoscope effect for the European audience, which looked very cool and different on television screen.

¹⁵ Henderson, Alex. (2010) <https://web.archive.org/web/20101025103728/http://allmusic.com/explore/essay/disco-t2151>

2.2.4. Complicated Nineteens

Table 2.4: Winners in 90s of Eurovision Song Contest

1990	5 May	 Zagreb	 Italy	"Insieme: 1992"	Toto Cutugno	149	17	 Ireland  France
1991	4 May	 Rome	 Sweden	"Fångad av en stormvind"	Carola	146	0	 France
1992	9 May	 Malmö	 Ireland	"Why Me?"	Linda Martin	155	16	 United Kingdom
1993	15 May	 Millstreet		"In Your Eyes"	Niamh Kavanagh	187	23	 United Kingdom
1994	30 April	 Dublin		"Rock 'n' Roll Kids"	Paul Harrington and Charlie McGettigan	226	60	 Poland
1995	13 May	 Oslo	 Norway	"Nocturne"	Secret Garden	148	29	 Spain
1996	18 May		 Ireland	"The Voice"	Eimear Quinn	162	48	 Norway
1997	3 May	 Dublin	 United Kingdom	"Love Shine a Light"	Katrina and the Waves	227	70	 Ireland
1998	9 May	 Birmingham	 Israel	"Diva" (דיבה)	Dana International	172	6	 United Kingdom
1999	29 May	 Jerusalem	 Sweden	"Take Me to Your Heaven"	Charlotte Nilsson	163	17	 Iceland

Source: Eurovision Song Contest's official website, eurovision.tv

Nineteens Eurovision was very complicated in terms of music genre, there was no constant trend like in 80s dance-pop or 70s disco-pop. First half of the decade, it was more based on slow romantic songs, whereas the other half started with 'new age' music which was mystic and Celtic-based. It is a genre of music intended to create artistic inspiration, relaxation, and optimism. The music includes both acoustic forms, featuring instruments such as flutes, piano, acoustic guitar and a wide variety of non-Western acoustic instruments, and electronic forms, frequently relying on sustained synth pads or long sequencer-based runs. Vocal arrangements were initially rare in the genre, but as it has evolved vocals have become more common, especially those featuring Native American, Sanskrit, or Tibetan-influenced chants, or lyrics based on mythology such as Celtic legends. In Eurovision entries, we see those Celtic-based performances in Norway's *Nocturne* by Secret Garden in 1995 and in Ireland's *The Voice* by Eimear Quinn (Table 2.4). They were both Celtic and also ethnic in a way, because Celtic culture was already existing in Nordic countries' myths. This ethnicity created an authenticity among the other performances.

Norway was the first one who started this, they implied ethnicity to the contest and influenced the future entries the following years. The entry didn't even have too many lyrics, it was noted for its almost complete absence of lyrics - with only 24 words being sung in the original Norwegian version and much of the rest of the song being given over to a violin intermezzo performed by Irish musician Fionnuala Sherry. The melody was so mystic, so relaxing and so differing. In my opinion, the best entry of that decade (or even

in the whole Eurovision history) was definitely *Nocturne*. In the future it would be covered and used for the first Shrek movie in 2001.¹⁶ (As a young audience born in 1992 and a big-fan of Shrek, I didn't know that this song was actually a Eurovision song released in 1995, I've always thought that the soundtracks of the movie were so original and creative). Mystic and Celtic style continued with Ireland's entry in 1996; the sound of the song, the voice, the costume and image of the blonde young beautiful female singer, they were all looking and sounding like a magic or a dream. Eimear Quinn (the performer) looked like an elf from a magical wood with her style. In 1997, UK's winner Katrina was also looking like she is from some woods – but not as an elf, more as a leprechaun with her green blouse and short messy brown hair (kind of reminding beards of a leprechaun), although the song had nothing to do with new age music, it was all pop.

Besides mystic looks and Celtic sounds, there was one more important entry and style among this decade's performances. Dana International from Israel won the contest in 1998 and has been credited with being one of the world's best known trans women after her fame in Eurovision. She came out as transgender at the age of 13. Orthodox Jews and others with conservative views were opposed to the choice and attempted to void her participation in the contest. However, in May 1998, Dana performed *Diva* at the Eurovision final and won the contest with 172 points. She became known internationally, and was interviewed by CNN, BBC, Sky News, and MTV among others mostly focusing on her life as a transsexual person before winning the contest. The song was an ode to the powerful women of history - with Cleopatra in fact being the only real figure named. Victoria, the Roman goddess of victory and Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of beauty were also mentioned in the lyrics.

The camera angles and movements in this decade were more developed. Still no special effects like pyrotechnics or smokes on the stage, but better stage decors and many varieties of colorful or patterned lightings and projectors were making the stage look better and more eye-catching. Also some new camera transitions were added to the broadcast. Focus-pulling became more professional. All the developments in broadcast technology tried to be used effectively to impress the audience in those years.

¹⁶ The melody of it was uncredited covered and re-worked for the song "Fairytale" in Shrek (2001) claimed to be written and composed by Harry Gregson-Williams and John Powell.

2.2.5. Choreographic 2000s

Table 2.5. Winners in 2000s of Eurovision Song Contest

2000	13 May	Stockholm	Denmark	"Fly on the Wings of Love"	Olsen Brothers	195	40	Russia
2001	12 May	Copenhagen	Estonia	"Everybody"	Tanel Padar, Dave Benton and 2XL	198	21	Denmark
2002	25 May	Tallinn	Latvia	"I Wanna"	Marie N	176	12	Malta
2003	24 May	Riga	Turkey	"Everyway That I Can"	Sertab Erener	167	2	Belgium
2004 ^[N 1]	15 May	Istanbul	Ukraine	"Wild Dances"	Ruslana	280	17	Serbia and Montenegro
2005	21 May	Kiev	Greece	"My Number One"	Helena Paparizou	230	38	Malta
2006	20 May	Athens	Finland	"Hard Rock Hallelujah"	Lordi	292	44	Russia
2007	12 May	Helsinki	Serbia	"Molitva" (Молитва)	Marija Šerifović	268	33	Ukraine
2008 ^[N 2]	24 May	Belgrade	Russia	"Believe"	Dima Bilan	272	42	Ukraine
2009	16 May	Moscow	Norway	"Fairytale"	Alexander Rybak	387	169	Iceland
2010	29 May	Bærum	Germany	"Satellite"	Lena	246	76	Turkey
2011	14 May	Düsseldorf	Azerbaijan	"Running Scared"	Eli & Nikki	221	32	Italy
2012	26 May	Baku	Sweden	"Euphoria"	Loreen	372	113	Russia
2013	18 May	Malmö	Denmark	"Only Teardrops"	Emmelie de Forest	281	47	Azerbaijan
2014	10 May	Copenhagen	Austria	"Rise Like a Phoenix"	Conchita Wurst	290	52	Netherlands
2015	23 May	Vienna	Sweden	"Heroes"	Måns Zelmerlöw	365	62	Russia
2016	14 May	Stockholm	Ukraine	"1944"	Jamala	534	23	Australia

Source: Eurovision Song Contest's official website, eurovision.tv

2000s... The Millenium and the beginning of a new century... Not only the century was changed, but also the people, their ideas and the technology that they create was renewed. TV-productions, especially broadcasting became more visual and high-tecnological all around the world. What was impossible to do (or even imagine) back in 60s or 70s productions, was now much more possible in 2000s. This renovated century effected Eurovision Song Contest, too. Flying cameras, special effects, special lightings, led floor, led backscreens... All of them were pushing the boundaries of classic and consuetudinary stage designs before.

Television image quality has continuously evolved over the last 50 years. Improvements in displays, video compression efficiency, chip gate density, and more will continue to shape the future of television. To keep up with public demand for even better and more immersive experiences, broadcasters need to look beyond today's HDTV and ask "what's next?"¹⁷ (EBU)¹⁸

EBU was always in search of a better broadcast, they are still working for it and they are in a collaboration with many known future technology groups. EBU's Broadcast Technology Futures Group collaborates with some members to share knowledge and experience to develop future broadcast technologies. Current members are;¹⁹ Japan Broadcasting Corporation Science and Technology Research Laboratory (NHK STRL),

¹⁷ <https://tech.ebu.ch/groups/bhd>

¹⁸ European Broadcasting Union, operating Eurovision and Euroradio.

¹⁹ <https://tech.ebu.ch/groups/btf>

The Media and Innovation Centre of RAI²⁰, the national broadcaster of Italy (RAI CRIT), The institute for broadcasting research of the national broadcasters of Germany, Switzerland, and Austria (IRT), British Broadcasting Corporation, UK (BBC Research and Innovation), Communications Research Centre, Canada (CRC).

First half decade of 2000s Eurovision was more dance choreography based. Starting from 2000s, we would see some very well-thought and well-studied dance choreographies on the stage, combined with some ethnic elements of the nations and of course supported by some improved camera movements and angles. No more trying to be elegant and just standing on the stage and singing a song with a professional tune like in 60s. No more disco-popping or dancing some improvised moves right on the stage like in 70s or 80s. No more mixing all of 60s, 70s and 80s together like in 90s. Millenium was a time for a new start, a time for a radical change where new styles were being appreciated more. With Latvia's victory in 2002 (Marie N's interesting stage and dance show – changing her costume on the stage), audience started to appreciate interesting stage shows and good dancing choreographies more. Many singers were trying to be like a popstar; both singing and meanwhile dancing a choreography parallel to the professional back-dancers on the stage. As one would appreciate, it was hard to accomplish such a thing – especially on a live contest; everything must happen in an order, you better not forget your lyrics while dancing your steps, or forget your steps while singing. Also you have to sing properly, without being out-of-tune while you are dancing especially a fast choreography. Countries who put an effort into this new movement and tried that kind of hard stage performances, were very-well appreciated by the televoters at the end. It all started after Latvia's victory with a good stage and dance show. Following years' winners Turkey, Ukraine and Greece (Table 2.5), they were also all about good dance choreographies, but moreover with an ethnicity flavor added in the performances.

Ethnic sounds, ethnic dances, ethnic costumes, ethnic visuals, they were also very significant in this era. This ethnicity caused authenticity, and the authenticity caused the emulation. Because ethnicity was related to nationality. For some countries Eurovision became a national affair in this era, they tried to do their best on the stage just in order to taste the victory for once and honour their country by showing that their nation and

²⁰ Radiotelevisione Italiana

ethnicity is more authentic or more interesting and deserving to be the best. Some of them showed this with their ethnic music, some of them did it with ethnic dances, some of them with costumes, some of them with all of the above.

In the second half of the decade participants started to use some special effects such as pyrotechnics and smokes on the stage. Especially Russia in 2008 with it's smokes, Norway in 2009 with it's pyrotechnics, and Finland in 2007 with both smokes and pyrotechnics on the stage, blowed up audiences' minds.

The 2010s, Eurovision became super-visual in terms of camera movements, transitions, angles, lightings and special effects. Wire-cams, spider-cams, steady-cams, slow-motions, illusions, etc., we witnessed very high-tec stage choreographies in this period of time (especially Sweden's *Euphoria* and *Heroes*, Russia's *You Are The Only One*, were one of those good high-tec-supported winners in the past five years). Zachariassen, the Director of Eurovision Song Contest 2014 says that: "I have never experienced such a professional and hardworking team as the Skywalker team during the ESC 2014. The wire-cam system was very reliable, precise and stable, which gave us great shots and raised the bar for future high-end television shows."²¹

To sum up, 2000s were literally the start of a showbiz era. In order to effect the televoters and collect their votes, each country had to sell their nation and ethnicity - so is the authenticity - with a good stage show considering many things such as dance choreography, camera choreography, costumes and image, music and lyrics... All of them had to be in a harmony and an out-standing stream. This era created a combination of classic winning elements for an ideal Eurovision song in 2000s. They were also combined with some signs of body and hand gestures during the performances. What sort of message could be possibly inserted in a three-minutes story-telling for the audience, it was inserted very-well by those winners in this era. At the end the wanna-given message through the stage and cameras was succesfully sent to the televoters watching the contest from their homes.

²¹ <http://www.live-production.tv/news/products/skywalker-systems-eurovision-song-contest-2014.html>

3. WHAT DO YOU NEED TO BE A WINNER IN 2000S? THE IDEAL FORMAT AND THE CLASSIC WINNING ELEMENTS

As I've already explained it in chapter 2.3.5, especially in 2000s - with the new century and the developing new technologies, TV-productions and especially broadcasting gained a new level. They became more visual, more eye-catching, more out-standing and more interesting to watch. Eurovision Song Contest was also one those changed and renovated productions. Both participants with their supervisors and the Eurovision officials responsible for the stage design, came up with different and interesting ideas. Every entry was a unique story, that's why each of them needed a unique story-telling on the stage. How would they manage to do this, how would they transmit the wanna-given message to the viewers? Standing still on the stage and singing the song was not enough. They should send some signs obviously, signs that would signify something and create a meaning at the end of the day in the viewers' minds. From participants battlefield, they should focus and work on the music, lyrics, dances, costumes and gestures. On the other hand, if they have a specific idea or a suggestion in terms of stage design, lighting, special effects, camera movements, angles, they should mention about this to the technical staff of the Eurovision officials. Larman (2016) made an interview with the technical staff of ESC 2016.²² Technical Director of the contest in 2016 - Ola Melzig says:

"Things like the Holo-Gauze used for Australia and Belarus came from San Marino, who originally wanted to have a hologram of a symphonic orchestra on stage... Musion screen was not feasible for us, since we still needed something to front project on. From our first camera test everyone was blown away. It was meant to be used on four songs but that dropped to two. In a way it's a good thing. Just because you have a cool new technology you don't want to shove it down people's throats."

Lighting designer Fredrik Jönsson also commented on this issue:

"Each act has to hand in a document called 'Look and Feel'. It explains what kind of production they like, what kind of atmosphere they want to create and even if there are some colours they don't want to use. Most of the acts also give you mood boards. That could be a piece of paper with a photo on it or it could be 36 pages of detailed information on the lighting, video playback and camera angles that they want."

²² Larman, R. 2016. Production Profiles / Eurovision Song Contest 2016 / Interview with Technical Director of the Eurovision Song Contest 2016 Ola Melzig & Lighting designer Fredrik Jönsson: <http://www.tpimagazine.com/eurovision-song-contest-2016/>

From the technical staff's battlefield, they were responsible to make those ideas, suggestions, demands of the participants come true. If participants don't have a specific request about their song, still technical staff and stage designers of Eurovision should do their best and think of some creative, interesting, eye-catching streams. Melzig states: "In 2013 we had four HDQ40's as backlights doing aerials and one of my colleagues said 'wouldn't it be cool to put mirrors on them?' We basically figured out how to make the world's most expensive moving light!'. Jönsson also states:

"We try to take in all that information and see what we can do with it – and of course make them as happy as we can. We also have to bear in mind the need for variation. Not all countries can have blue lights or confetti or something like that. We have trends every year. It's quite difficult to keep the acts different and stretch the look each time. When you have 42 songs to take care of and you have three opening acts and three interval acts, you need a 'candy bag' of fixtures big enough to give you plenty of different options."

At the end of the day ratings must be good because nearly 200 million viewers are going to watch the show, it shouldn't be boring, it should be amazing - both Europeans and Europe must be proud of such a big production. As Melzig notes:

"It takes us months and months but if it makes good TV then it's all worth it. This place boils when we get all the fans in, and the atmosphere is electric. At the end of the day, none of us are in it for the music, we are in it for the production, and my God do we spoil them!"

So what is so special about this big production, what is the content of it? What were the trends that the audience was looking for in 2000s? What sort of new ideas they were expecting from the participating countries and their entries? What was amazing them in general? What were the best ingredients for a good story-telling on the stage? What was that formula to win the Eurovision Song Contest in this showbiz century? Based on the winners starting from 2002 and ending in 2016, I have gathered in this chapter the mostly seen ingredients/elements/features of the winning songs in 2000s Eurovision.

3.1. SPECIAL EFFECTS

First and the most effective ingredient in 2000s winning performances is obviously the invention of the special effects like pyrotechnics, flames and smokes. You will read the detailed usage of them in Finland, Ukraine, Norway, Azerbaijan, Denmark, Russia, Austria and Italy's televoting victories in the following chapter.

Pyrotechnics Designer Markku Aalto has been on board since their introduction in Athens 2005, where he operated for costumed Finnish rockers, Lordi. He said:

"Not everyone is using pyro, around 13 or 14 acts using a combination of flames, waterfalls, mines, and CO2 jets. We have 16 permanent CO2 jets and 26 permanent pyro positions all around the stage to shoot whatever we want. We have two boxes into which we can load the effects for the next act. Most of the effects we use are manufactured by Le Maitre, though our waterfalls are Ultratec, and some of the flames and comets are made by Next FX. There's not much on the stage at the same time and we don't use propane or gas. These alcohol-based pyro effects aren't that strong, they are more of an illusion."

Having been at the venue for five weeks prior to the show, Aalto and his crew were not immune to the rigorous rehearsal schedule. He chuckled:

*"My God we rehearse! Israel has rehearsed pyro 10 times for example – that means 30 waterfalls 10 times! Azerbaijan are using just as many, as well as 50 mines for the fast chase sequence – that's 500 mines and 300 waterfall units! The fact that we have everything permanently hidden under the stage definitely makes life easier because we don't have to run anything in and out. It all makes for clean stage and a smooth performance."*²³

Besides pyrotechnics, some technological backscreens in terms of special effects were also very significant in the winning performances of 2000s. We will see them especially in Sweden, Denmark, Austria, Italy and Russia's winning stages with a detailed explanation in the following chapter. Not only the winners but also some other top 5 performances in 2010's, they usually had those kind of technological special-effects. For example, Australian Head of Delegation Paul Clarke had some very specific ideas about what he wanted out of his entry in 2016. Refsing (one of the main visual designers of Eurovision stage) helped him to realise them, visualise them, and explained how they would work on stage. The idea of isolation in the city and the world of social media was represented using the Holo-Gauze as a central feature, making the artist Dami Im seem as if she was suspended in the air. Refsing says, "With the addition of Holo-Gauze to the

²³ <http://www.digico.biz/docs/articles/TPIJUN16%20Eurovision%20SD7.pdf>

already different screen depths, as well as the lighting and PixMob technology, there was certainly a lot going on. SVT has been fantastic to work with and they made sure we delivered it. They took everything we wanted on board and gave as much as they could..”. Another technical designer Melzig also commented on this issue:

*“The use of the Holo-Gauze is my biggest delight, as it’s the first time it’s done in Eurovision. The Belarusian delegation came up to me and said that they’d been waiting until the competition returned to Sweden before they dared to do this. It can be difficult to integrate with the lighting levels, but it’s a case of making the director, LD, and video realise that they need to sit back at certain parts of a song. When you find those compromises and the stars align, it’s wonderful.”*²⁴

3.2. WARM LIGHTING / COLD LIGHTING

Another classic winning element seen in the winners of 2000s was the specific stage lightings. Two types of lighting were significant among the winners; 1) warm lighting consisting of warm colors like orange, yellow, red and pink will be seen in winners like Turkey, Ukraine (2004), Azerbaijan, Denmark, Austria, Italy and Serbia. 2) Cold lighting consisting of cold colors like blue, grey or black, will be seen in winners like Russia, Germany, Italy, Sweden and Ukraine’s (2016) performances and victories.

Danish lighting designer Kasper Lange, was responsible from the lighting system in Eurovision 2014, held in Vienna, Austria. Lange worked with Eurovision’s creative director Per Zachariassen to create a huge, structural lighting design that complemented the show’s titanic ‘diamond’ stage. Lange crafted a clean, architectural lighting look that allowed the angular stage to ‘open and close’ creating a dynamic mix of open and intimate lighting looks. “The brief for the show can be summed up in two words – big and simple,” explains Lange. “The contest was open to almost 40 different nations and each nation’s set needed a different lighting look. The challenge for us was to make each song look unique but also to introduce an organic flow throughout the show and not create a ‘mash’ of 37 songs.”²⁵

²⁴ <http://www.digico.biz/docs/articles/TPIJUN16%20Eurovision%20SD7.pdf>

²⁵ “Eurovision Song Contest reaches 195 Million Worldwide” by Reinhard Penzel (2014).
<http://www.live-production.tv/news/shows/eurovision-song-contest-reaches-195-million-worldwide.html>

3.3. CAMERA ANGLES, MOVEMENTS & TRANSITIONS

Another classic winning element among the winners in 2000s is the out-standing camera angles, movements and transitions in the live stream. Especially in Sweden, Denmark and Russia's winning performances, in the following chapter you will read the detailed examination of these elements.

In Eurovision 2015, more than 25 cameras were responsible for recording everything that happens in the Wiener Stadthalle. Apart from the steady cams, which opened the mouth thanks to many performance in 2009, for the first time in the history of Eurovision one camera that hangs from the ceiling of the enclosure was used in the contest, we witnessed stunning aerial shots out of it. Of course, spider cams - famous system used for example in tennis matches - were another out-standing equipments. They are very flexible cameras and provide a 360°, with the advantage that can zoom in, zoom or scroll to either side in a cable on which to 'climb' Spider installed. With this function angles and movements of the shots would be more amazing. Especially the amazing and touching close-up angles which usually inspire:

“..fascination, love, horror, empathy, pain, unease; it has been seen as the vehicle of the star, the privileged receptacle of affect, of passion, the guarantee of the cinema's status as a universal language. For Walter Benjamin, the close-up was one of the significant entrance points to the optical unconscious, making visible what in daily life went unseen. Benjamin delineates the defining desire of the masses in a capitalist society as a desire for a closeness that is also a leveling of difference, a desire, in effect, for the close-up. He refers to the desire of contemporary masses to bring things closer spatially and humanly, which is just as ardent as their bent toward overcoming the uniqueness of every reality by accepting its reproduction. Every day the urge grows stronger to get hold of an object at very close range by way of its likeness, its reproduction. (Work of Art, 223) The close-up is an object of vision, not touch, but it nevertheless provokes a sense of the tangible, the intimate. This is Benjamin's desire of the masses to bring things closer, to sacrifice uniqueness for reproduction. Epstein writes, The close-up modifies the drama by the impact of proximity. Pain is within reach. If I stretch out my arm I touch you, and that is intimacy. I can count the eyelashes of this suffering. I would be able to taste the tears. (Magnification 13).”
(Doane, 2012)

3.4. SYMBOLIC LYRICS & GESTURES

Another important and classic winning element seen among the winners in 2000s is the symbolic lyrics of the songs and some hand gestures of the performers. Especially the lyrics and hand gestures signifying the victory by using the words like ‘you are the one, you are number one, you are my only one, frame number one, you are the winner, we are the heroes’ will be seen in Latvia, Turkey, Greece, Sweden, and Russia’s performances. They will both have those words in their lyrics and in their hand gestures; in the meantime having the signs and the messages for the victory. All of them will give a message to the televoters by signifying to vote for that song and by that way get the ‘first’ place in the competition.

Besides them, there will be another type of signifying lyrics and messages in the winning performances like Ukraine, Finland, Serbia, Austria. They won’t have the messages of ‘being number one’ but they will have some political, religious or LGBT-based messages in their lyrics that you will read in detailed in the related chapters.

3.5. ETHNIC MUSIC & DANCE CHOREOGRAPHY

Ethnic music, instruments and dance choreographies will be another classic elements seen in the winners of 2000s performers and winners. For example one will see some Ottoman-based traditional and ethnic music and belly-dance figures in Turkey’s performance, or some Greek traditional dances and music style consisting of traditional Greek instruments like bouzoukis in Greece’s performance. Or one will see some gothic figures as a traditional and ethnic music style in today’s Finland and their performance on the Eurovision stage. One will see and hear some classic music consisting of piano sounds or figures on Russia’s stage, which is also symbolizing their ethnic classical music background. One will hear some folky violin sounds in Norway’s ethnic and authentic stage. One will hear some ethnic flute sounds in Serbia’s and Denmark’s performance. One will hear some DJ-music and notes in the modern Swedish music which sort of became a traditional and ethnic sign in today’s Sweden.

3.6. IMAGE & STYLE OF THE PERFORMERS (COSTUMES, MAKE-UP)

Interesting images, different style of the performers, out-standing costumes and make-up would be the final classic winning element among the winners in 2000s Eurovision Song Contest. One will see some masculine style of costumes on female performers; the victories of the singers from Latvia and Serbia, for example. Or one will see some amazon-looking warriors dressed like that in Ukraine's *Wild Dances*. One will see some monsters figures and scary make-ups on Finland's performers. Some woman with beard on Austria's stage, some fairy or Goddess looking girl on Denmark's stage... A lesbian looking woman on Serbia's stage... They will all symbolize something, differ among the other participants in their years and became the winners of the Eurovision Song Contest.

I'm sure many experienced Eurovision audience have already noticed all these ingredients for an ideal and winning song in the contest of 2000s. It became very clear in the past 15 years. Finally last year in 2016, when the contest was hold in Sweden, they decided to make a parody about this notable issue.²⁶ The Swedish hosts Petra Mede and Mans Zelmerlöv (Figure 3.1) prepared a 4-minutes-performance on the Eurovision stage, containing all those classic elements for an ideal Eurovision song that I've already mentioned above. They even invited to the stage some winners of the previous years like Alexander Rybak (representing with his violin an ethnic folky style as a classic winning element) and Lordi (representing a scary gothic image as a different, weird but still interesting style - also a classic winning element) to contribute within this parody. Sweden even did their own parody by using a Loreen look-a-like girl scuttling on the stage like a crab (real Loreen's winning dance moves were exactly as weird) with her messy hairs and shabby clothes. Also they used people looking like Ruslana, Dima Bilan, the famous Russian ice-skater Evgeny Pluschenko during that 4-minutes-long parody. They actually did step by step all the visuals of my thesis argument:

Mans: "Step.1 - A powerful majestic start, maybe a battle-horn or somekind."

Petra: "Step.2 - Drums, there has to be drums. Played by good-looking topless men or the opposite - a cute grandma."

Mans: "Step.3 - Show your country's ethnic background by using some traditional folklore instrument that no one has heard about before. Again by a model-looking

²⁶ (Further watching; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=no1v1-2HZ6g>)

handsome guy or an old man with some white beard.” Beard really helps, says Petra.

Mans: “Step.4 - Violin!” (Alexander Rybak appears on the stage)

Petra: “Step.5 - If violin and drums may seem a little bit old-fashioned, bring a dj on the stage, he will mix those sounds and give a contemporary feeling to you in 2010s!”

Mans: “Step.6 - Costumes! You need to look memorable. Something that the viewers will notice.” (Ruslana’s leather-dressed-hot girl dancers come to the stage and tear Mans’ black suit. Under it, there occurs a white comfy costume. Also some topless guys tear Petra’s costume too, under it there occurs also another costume. This is referring to the classic costume changing element in Eurovision history’s performances)

Petra: “Step.7 - The song! Song must be essential! Let it be something that everyone can connect to. Love works.. Peace is also a popular way to go..”

Step.8 - Start singing your song and don’t look back. Look right into the camera so the audience can see (to feel more intimate), smile and they will vote for it.

Step.9 - Fill the stage with light (warm lights flash suddenly).

Step.10 - And the dancers will join you also (because choreography is important).

Now it’s time for the chorus.. Ready? Here we go..”

(They sing together these lyrics):

Love-love-peace-peaceee..

Peace-peace-love-loveeee..

Love-peace-peace-loveeee..

You will be the beeest..

And win the Eurovision Song Conteeest!

Figure 3.1: Swedish hosts Petra Mede (on the left) and Mans Zelmerlöv (on the right) giving the formula to win the Eurovision Song Contest.



Source: youtube.com, further watching; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=no1v1-2HZ6g>

4. DETAILED EXAMINATION OF THE WINNERS IN 2000'S OVER THE IDEAL FORMAT & THE CLASSIC WINNING ELEMENTS

In the previous chapter, all the classic winning elements which create an ideal format for a winning Eurovision song in 2000s are mentioned. In this chapter they will be examined in details within the winners of the contest starting from 2002's winner Latvia (Marie N- *I Wanna*) and ending in 2016's winner Ukraine (Jamala-*1944*).

One important note in this chapter is that; there are some changing rules in the voting system through the passing years. For example, till 2009 the voting system was based only on the televoting; but starting from 2009 until 2015 the voting system was based on a jury–televote 50/50 voting. All countries used televoting and/or SMS-voting (50%) and five-member juries (50%), apart from San Marino which uses a 100% jury voting due to the country's size. This is therefore called jury–televote 50/50. In 2016, another voting system started; from that year both jury and the televoting votes would be accepted as %100 and will be summed up all together. This changing voting system and especially the jury involving fact, wandered off from the real Eurovision spirit based on only the televoting – meaning only the televoters' choices. Some audience couldn't understand at all why there was a special jury, moreover who was this special jury, could the audience count on their decisions? Many controversies were going on about this issue. These special jury could easily change the televoting results and therefore the winner. This is exactly what happened in 2016 and 2015 Eurovision Song Contest.

This circumstance also effects my argument in which I support that the winning Eurovision songs in 2000s are consisted mainly of showbiz factors. The ideal format and some classic winning elements in a winning Eurovision song in 2000s won't be totally seen in these kind of exceptional cases like Ukraine's last year's victory for example. Denying the jury votes and considering only the televoting, one will see that my argument is still valid. Detailed explanation for this issue will be given in the concerned parts.

4.1. 2002 – LATVIA (MARIE N-I WANNA)

Figure 4.1: Marie N on the stage celebrating her victory after the results in 2001, Tallinn-Estonia.



Source: Eurovision Song Contest's official website - Eurovision.tv

In 2001 Estonia won the contest (*Everybody*- Tanel Padar and Dave Benton) with a song which was simply an invitation to a party, with the duo singing that "every night's a Friday night". It was a dynamic song but no show business was available in the performance. In 2002, Marie N (Figure. 4.1) came out with her song *I Wanna* and changed the whole spirit of classic Eurovision Song Contest with her stage show. Before her, some participants have already tried this kind of stage shows starting from 2000s. But she became the first one who won the contest with a stage show. She definitely started a new trend in this decade, because after her victory many countries were inspired by this idea of creating a 'stage show' in the following years, and the one who had the best stage show won indeed. I claim that her performance and victory was definitely a milestone for the Eurovision Song Contest, especially in 2000s.

Marie N – (Maria Naumova) was first discovered in 1997 by Raimonds Pauls - a famous Latvian musician who is also very well-known in Russia, other post-Soviet countries and world-wide. In 1995, she started to perform on several TV-shows and festivals in search

for talent. She never won, but was noticed by the audience that time. Five years later, in 2000 Latvia participated in the Eurovision Song Contest for the first time. Naumova was in the national finals but came second. In 2001, she again participated in the Latvian preselection, singing *Hey Boy Follow Me*, which was voted public favourite but wasn't chosen by the expert jury. Naumova had to wait another year before she was finally chosen to represent Latvia with "I Wanna", for which she also wrote the music and co-wrote the lyrics.²⁷ Latvian audience have already appreciated her ambition through those years and liked her so much; very soon the rest of the Europe was going to notice her.

In 2002's Eurovision, with her song *I Wanna*, although she didn't have a very touching song or an amazing voice, Marie decided to try something new and draw audience's attention not to the song but to the dance choreography and the tricky show instead. She flourished her performance with some gleeful dance moves and a costume change right on the stage (Figure 4.2). At the beginning of her performance, she was sort of in a man's image, dancing between some other male dancers and wearing a white suit with a trilby hat where her hair is hidden under. That gave her a masculine appearance at first. Later on, the hat was removed by one of her dancers, and her blonde hairs were seen. As the song continues, dancers remove her suit jacket and her dark shirt inside, revealing the top of a red dress. The suit trousers were then removed, revealing the bottom half of the short dress. On the final beat of the song, the hem is being pulled, revealing the dress to be much longer. All these pulling acts may sound like a striptease show, but at the end she was not naked - she just changed her costume while dancing and singing on the stage in front of a big amount of audience, that was the tricky part of her show, no big deal. All these strippy acts were new, different and interesting for the European audience, such exciting dance choreographies and shows were not used until that time. This visual performance was supported by a salsa-style song, which made full use of the more up-beat tempos increasingly finding success in the contest. Camera-angles were also not bad for that year, wide-shots and medium close-ups were mainly used in the performance. But better angles would be seen in the following years.

²⁷ Based on the biography of Marie N's official website. Translated from Latvian to English.
<http://www.marijanaumova.lv/bio>

Figure 4.2: Marie N's interesting dance choreography and changing clothes and image on the stage.



Source: Screenshots from youtube.com

The song was a love song obviously, and the lyrics were not hard to understand; she was telling her lover that she wants to be various things to him. But she was not only telling this to her lover, but also to the European audience. Lyrics (Figure 4.3) had some messages for the European televoter; they were mentioning the ‘future’ Eurovision Song Contest where all the tricks and gimmicks would be popular soon. They were all kind of pointing out to choose Marie N as the winner: “..know all the tricks (check my tricky stage show).. I’m ready to support (are you ready to vote and support me?).. this artful game.. (music, dance, camera, stage, they are all pieces of art, and Eurovision Song Contest is an art-game) you are the winner.. (I am the winner) you are the king.. (I am both the king and the queen with my show of changing gender clothes and appearance) I wanna be the love spark in your (Europe’s) eyes..”. Also the part where she sings ‘this artful game you always play, you don’t know the fee which you will later pay..’ in a way refers to Eurovision and it’s voting system where you vote not for free but for a fee of course; via sms votes that you will later pay with your phone bills. These are all the

Figure 4.3: Lyrics of *I Wanna*

I like to go away
But it's easier to say
That you **know all the tricks** that make
That make me stay

I'm ready to support

This **artful game** you always play
'cause you don't know **the fee**
Which **you will later, later pay**

Today you think **you are the winner**
Today you think **you are the king**
You make me sweat in my emotions
Under your fly-away, fly-away wing

*I wanna be the sunshine in your arms
I wanna be the light from shooting stars
I wanna be the queen in your sweet lies
I wanna be the love spark in your eyes*

Source: eurovision.tv

wanna-given messages under those written and sang lyrics. Televoters seem to like the whole idea of the performance and of course the effort of Marie N on the stage; it was worth to be appreciated and supported somehow. As a result, many televoters voted in favor of her and she became the winner. Although, according to author and historian John Kennedy O'Connor in his book 'The Eurovision Song Contest – The Official History', despite its success at the contest, *I Wanna* gained the dubious distinction of being the first Eurovision winner that was not released outside of its own territory. Even in Latvia the single never reached the top 30 (O'Connor, 2010). She may be not popular that time in her own country but she was in Europe; at the end she has written her name to the list of 'Eurovision Winners', it was already a big achievement and pride for any singer or musician.

4.2. 2003 – TURKEY (SERTAB ERENER-EVERYWAY THAT I CAN)

As I've already mentioned, Marie N's performance was a milestone for Eurovision Song Contest, because after her show, other countries realized that they also have power to perform such creative and interesting shows and tricks on Eurovision stage. Many countries immediately started to perform those kind of exciting stage shows in the following years. Everybody was sort of trying to prove how better they can be in this show business. The Song Contest turned into a bazaar where everybody was trying to get the audience's attention, pointing out they have the best dances or tricks, trying to buy the televoters' votes by selling them their show. Turkey was going to be the next one who would manage to do the best marketing and selling for the European televoter in 2003.

Sertab Erener won the contest in Riga 2003 with her song *Everyway That I Can* and brought the one and only victory to Turkey since the country's first participation in 1975. It was also a milestone for Turkish audience because no one was sincerely caring or watching Eurovision in the recent years until that day. Almost 25 years had passed by,

but Turkey had no single victory, even not a good result such as being in the top five (once, in 1997 they managed to get the third place with *Dinle* sang by Şebnem Paker and Grup Etnik). One morning everybody woke up and saw the breaking news in the newspapers. After 27 years, Turkey finally won the contest and was noticed all around the Europe. The song was not considered a favourite to win - in fact Russian duet t.A.T.u. were the hottest favourites²⁸ (their fame around Europe those years had an impact on being the favorite, otherwise they didn't prepare or had any special stage show in the contest). The voting on the night saw Russia, Turkey and Belgium switch places at the top a number of times before Slovenia eventually gave Turkey the victory by just two points.²⁹ The track *Everyway That I Can* was released all over Europe after the win, shooting to the top of the charts at that time.

It was absolutely the most authentic song of that year's contest. Ottoman-Turkish mixed traditional rhythms and high notes (can be called also as belly dancing routines) are so significant in the song. Erener sang counter to the rhythm in places and the backing vocals were synthesised with Turkish stringed instruments. The track was all fine and unique by itself, representing Turkey and its ethnic culture very well indeed, but Sertab and her team wanted to do more than just singing it, they wanted Europe to feel the song, too. The only way to make them feel the song, was going through creating a good stage show, so they put an amazing show on the stage that night. (Figure 4.4).

Figure 4.4: Sertab Erener performing *Everyway That I Can* in Eurovision 2002, Riga-Latvia.



Source: Gelyt Images on Google.

²⁸ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/entertainment/2932760.stm>

²⁹ BBC - Eurovision 2003 final - full voting & winning Turkey <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T6NU2WznS0I>

Sertab had four pretty and modern but barefoot belly-dancers beside her; I use the word 'modern' because they were not wearing traditional or stereotypical ornamented and too much colorful belly-dance costumes, on the contrary the costumes were pure and simple; some white slitty pants with a little bit shiny belts and hanging some ropes out of them under some sportive soft pink bustiers... Also no shoes, barefoot girls (this barefoot staging would be seen in the future victories, too) dancing both modern lyric dance and some Ottoman belly-dance moves. Sertab's costume was a bit more exaggerated and interesting since she was the lead performer on the stage. She had a grey corset above a silk white long skirt and four long fuchsia-colored strings (about 3 or 4 meters long) were attached to her. Four dancers and four strings... Apparently those four strings were going to be used by those four dancers somewhere in the performance, any audience would notice that at the beginning of the show (otherwise why would anybody use four long strings, why not three or five or just one string?). The audience was already aware of a coming trick and excited to learn what was going to happen.

When the music started playing, the audience in the arena straightaway liked the tune of it and started to clap their hands ryhtmically to the melody. It must sounded so authentic for the European audience since they have never heard or seen any belly-dance routines on the Eurovision stage before. With the rhythm of the music, the pretty female dancers were doing some authentic Ottoman-Turkish mixed belly-dance moves and the temperature was already getting higher in the arena with those authentic moves. After Sertab's first chorus, early applauses and whistles came sort of signifying the early victory; the joy of the audience rebounded in the arena which also passed to the audience who was watching the show from their homes. Not only the shaky dance moves and the rhythm of the song was encouraging the audience, but also Sertab was warming up everybody with her hand gestures, giving signals to accompany her with the moves. There is an idiom in Turkish describing those kind of hand gestures, it translates like 'Come on, did we come *here* (referring to a wedding or a party mostly) to sit or what? Get up and dance!'... Scott (2013, pp. 125-135) says that:

"When Turkey won the contest in 2003, it was re-garded by many Turks as a symbol of finally being accepted as a 'European' country rather than a 'Middle Eastern' one" and that it fuelled Turkey's aspirations to join the European Union. However, Turkey won with a performance that Matthew Gumpert has described as "auto-Orientalism", a song in English (Everyway That I Can) accompanied by a certain amount of ethnic stereotyping in both music and dance (belly-dancing being the most obvious where the latter was concerned)."

Figure 4.5: Lyrics of *Everyway That I Can*

I feel you moving on a different course
Making the way for a distant coast
You say you love me and you roll your eyes
Turn to stare at the empty skies
I thought it was over and we'd pass all that
All we've done is to pass back to frame **number one**
Come on, now, now
I wanna show you all again what it would be like
If you just let go and let me love you

*Everyway that I can
I'll try to make you love me again
Everyway that I can
I'll give you all my love and then
Everyway that I can
I'll cry, I'll die
Make you mine again*

Source: eurovision.tv

Even BBC host at the end of the votes said that; ‘‘I told you, a belly button always win, I’m going to Istanbul next year!’’³⁰

Towards the peak point of the performance where Sertab instigates her imaginary lover by her lyrics and saying ‘I’m in love with you, I’ll do all you want me to, Make me wanna huh-huh, Make me wanna huh-huh-huh! Nothing in the world that could stop me no sir.. No no no!’’, the long strings are finally being used. While she sings those lyrics, each dancer grabs one edge of the

string and wraps it around herself, coming closer to Sertab’s body - where the roots for that strings are attached to. These acts were actually referring to the lyrics (Figure 4.5), because the whole song was about Sertab’s tries to make her lover love her again; she was trying to bond him again back to her. ‘‘Everyway that I can, I’ll try to make you love me again, I’ll cry, I’ll die, but I will make you mine again’’, meaning ‘you belong to me (you are attached to me like those strings) and you will come back to me anyway at the end, I will do whatever I have to do to manage that, don’t worry...’. Some part of the lyrics were also giving some signs and messages to the European audience; when she says ‘‘All we’ve done is to pass back to frame number one’’ she lay high notes on the words ‘number one’ and in the meantime doing literally the number one sign with her finger and then the arm symbol in style of ‘we can do it’ move. This is the message of ‘we are the number one country this year and we will win because we can do it! (with our performance)’.

In terms of camera angles and movements, there was nothing new or special this year. Still, in Sertab’s performance extreme wide-shots with fast focus-pullings were very significant. Also the stage in Riga where the contest was hold that year was huge comparing with previous year’s stage in Tallinn. With good design and lighting system it looked more spectacular. In Sertab’s performance lighting was consisting of warm colors

³⁰ BBC - Eurovision 2003 final - full voting & winning Turkey <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T6NU2WznS0I>

such as gold, yellow, and orange tones. This warm colors would later become one of the classic winning elements in Eurovision history, because those tones evoke the idea of gold or treasure, which is something precious, valuable, distinguished, worthy and deserving. So the song and it's value could be perceived by it's lighting, too. There are no limits for semiotics.

Sertab and her dancers impressed many audience both with their bellies, dances, signs, lyrics, voice and stage lighting that night. Their stage show was stunning, interesting, symbolic, authentic, and differing. At the end they managed to win both Europe's heart and also the Eurovision trophy after 27 years bust of Turkey's participation in Eurovision Song Contest. After Marie N's choreographic performance and what she has started in terms of showbiz, Sertab's both choreographic and ethnic performance would be another inspiration source for the participating and the *winning* countries for the following years.

4.3. 2004 – UKRAINE (RUSLANA-WILD DANCES)

After Turkey's victory with *Everyway That I Can* which was an authentic and ethnic performance carrying traditional symbols like Ottoman music and some Turkish delight dance moves - Eurovision Song Contest went literally mad. Authenticity of ethnicity and interesting choreographies became so popular and important among the participating countries that the whole spirit of the contest has changed radically. From that moment each country would try to put its own traditional element into its performance, whether it was an ethnic music or a traditional dance, costume. After Sertab Erener's victory, the contest was hold in Istanbul and there was an ethnic fight on the stage that year. The top three performances were all representing their own ethnicities and both were all authentic and interesting in terms of that. For example Greece who got the third place, presented a singer called Sakis Rouvas doing some sirtaki dance with some Greek music at the background of his song *Shake It*, also he was wearing blue jeans and white jacket, sort of representing Greece's flag colors. Serbia who got the second place with their ballad *Lane Moje* had some Serbian ethnic instruments and melody at the background with some ethnic Serbian costumes. But the winner Ukraine and their performer Ruslana – had the most authentic and ethnic style that year. Her costumes and image was signifying sort of

a sexy warrior – like Xena the Princess Warrior. Not only the costumes but the, lyrics (half in English, half in Ukrainian) were also so authentic. The stage effects were also well-thought considering the theme of the song; she was the first one who brought the ‘flames’ effect onto the stage. It would become another classic-winning-element in Eurovision for the following years.

Ukraine made its debut in 2003, their first performer Oleksandr Ponomaryov finished 14th that year, but Europe was already happy to see a new country joining the contest. Next year with Ruslana and her energetic performance in *Wild Dances*, they noticed the authenticity of Ukraine and couldn’t resist to vote. Pavlyshyn (2014) believes that:

“...it sought to; persuade those viewers of Eurovision who were less than familiar with Ukraine to recognize the country as a vibrant, energetic, untrammelled place at the frontier of Europe, yet within it. Moreover, it sought to postulate Ukraine, not as a grateful recipient of European high culture, but as a generous giver to a flagging Old Europe, of new stimuli and energies. As far as the Ukrainian audience was concerned, on the other hand, the Ruslana phenomenon was a challenge to regard as natural the participation of Ukraine in Europe; to re-imagine the national self not as a victim or passive object of the processes driving the continent, but as a positive contributor to an open and multifarious contemporary European culture; and to recognize that there is no contradiction between participation in the modern global world and emphatic national self-identification.” (Pavlyshyn, 2014)

The song had an energetic performance, which Ruslana gave in a leather outfit (Figure.4.6), inspired by the ethnic tradition of Ukraine. The costumes contributed to the song’s arguments about emancipation and power. Pavlyshyn, (2014):

“The invocation of the contemporary popular-culture figure of the ‘tough girl’ (Inness 4-5) reinforced the image of the lyrical ‘I’ as forceful and dominant, and asserted distance from the stereotypes of woman as victim, mother or protectress familiar in Ukrainian culture. ‘In these clothes’ Ruslana confided, ‘we felt ourselves to be true Amazons – at once sexual and warlike’.”

Figure 4.6: Ruslana dancing on the stage and singing her song *Wild Dances*, 2004 Istanbul-Turkey.



Source: Eurovision Song Contest's official website - Eurovision.tv

Ruslana's father is from the West-Ukrainian area of the Hutsuls, the dwellers of the Ukrainian Carpathian Mountains. They have a unique culture with an ancient and rich history which inspired Ruslana³¹ to create first of all her Eurovision performance and then -with the coming victory and fame- her concept album *Wild Dances*. It combines powerful and permeating ethnic drums, trumpet sounds of the trembita, an ancient Hutsul music instrument, with modern dance beats. Pavlyshyn (2014) describes this as:

“In Ruslana’s invocation of the culture of the Hutsuls, the role of words is surpassed by that of music, dance and costume. The choreography of Wild Dances used dance steps derived from Hutsul dance. The trembita, a Hutsul folk wind instrument, featured prominently at the opening of the routine. Kuhykannia, a Hutsul method of throwing the voice to carry long distances in the mountains, played a role in the musical structure. Without diminishing the contemporary quality of Wild Dances as a musical and popular culture event, these motifs invoked old folkloric traditions associated with the Carpathian Mountains and argued for the archaic and therefore authentic quality of the sources from which Ruslana’s performance was said to derive its inspiration.”

Not only Ruslana’s song, image or performance was stunning but also the camera angles for that performance were too much expressive and distinguished among the other countries’ performances that year. The show starts with a wide-shot of dancers who are blowing into an ethnic Ukrainian instrument called trembita. They blow their ethnic instruments towards the ceiling where the focus-puller also moves parallelly with them and after all showing the whole stage where Ruslana enters and walks in the middle of it. While she walks she also shouts out the words ‘hey, hey, hey’ and waves a belly instrument in her hand rhythmically to the sound. Camera zooms into her with every ‘hey’ word of her and some spotlights blink parallelly to the stream, too. By the way, audience in the arena can’t resist the interesting charm of the music and Ruslana’s ‘hey’ings, they start to clap their hands parallel to Ruslana’s ‘hey’ words. The opening stream until here is very impressive in terms of the harmony between the music, the camera angles and the participation of the audience in the arena.

Ruslana later on starts to pull off her fur-coat and on a sudden the music speeds-up. When the music speed up, her moves also speeds up and suddenly she starts to do some literally crazy wild dances and hair-tossing acts in the air. She literally pays away and makes the best of the name of her song *Wild Dances*. Audience in the arena go crazy too with those

³¹ <http://www.wumag.kiev.ua/index2.php?param=pgs20043/4>

Figure 4.7: Lyrics of *Wild Dances*

Just maybe I'm crazy,
The world spins round and round and round
shi-di-ri-di-duy, shi-di-ri-di-da-na
Forever and ever go, go, go wild dancers!!

Day-na-day-na Wanna be loved
Day-na Gonna take my wild chances
Day-na-day-na Freedom above
Day-na-da-na-da I'm wild 'n' dancing

Napevno.. Daremno..
Bula ya nadto chemna
Hey, shi-ki-duy, shi-ri-ki-da-nay
Shi-ri-ki-duy, shi-ki-ri-a-da-na

Dlya tebe.. Dlya sebe
Zastelyu tsile nebo.. Hey!
Shi-ri-ki-duy, shi-ki-ri-a-da-na
Bez zhalyu zapalyu,
Go, go, go wild dancers!!

Source: eurovision.tv

wild moves and started to applaud more loudly. After this dancing intro, she finally starts to sing her lyrics; “Just maybe, I’m crazy” which fits perfectly to her dance. At the second part of her song she sings not in English but in Ukrainian this time. With a mixture of English and Ukrainian lyrics (Figure 4.7), *Wild Dances* had the distinction of becoming the first Eurovision winner to be sang at least partly in a language other than English since the rule-change of 1999, when countries were allowed to sing in a language of their choosing, rather than one of their official languages.³²

“Participation in the Eurovision contest was an itself the exercise of a right figure in the European context. Repeatedly, Ruslana claimed that she saw herself as deliberately asserting that right, pushing her way into Europe while maintaining intact and authentic the culture with which she associated herself. ‘We tried to carry our idea into Europe while protecting as much as possible the color of the Ukrainian text,’ she told an interviewer. Yet the incursion into Europe was not to be imagined of her songs as supplying an old and exhausted Europe with new energyi originality, recovered archaic authenticity, vitality and even eros.” (Pavlyshyn, 2014)

This Hutsul-Ukrainian girl’s powerful performance was found too much authentic, unique and interesting among European televoters that year. Ukraine won the contest in 2004, defeating second-placed Serbia and Montenegro by 17 points, 280 to 263. With this win, they became the third ex-USSR member to win the contest after Estonia and Latvia having previously done so. After this victory, they were going to become an inspiration source - like Sertab Erener or Marie N - for the future Eurovision contestants and winners.

³² <http://www.eurovision.tv/page/history/by-year/contest?event=314>

4.4. 2005 – GREECE (HELENA PAPARIZZOU-MY NUMBER ONE)

The previous year in Istanbul, Ruslana may have won with her authentic performance but Greece was also very successful with Sakis Rouvas and his song *Shake It*. He also had an authentic ‘Greek style’ performance and show which led him to get the 3rd place in the 2004 contest. It was not a bad result at all but Greece was too stubborn and determined to win the contest and taste the victory for once. They became a regular in the contest participating since 1974, but still no trophy was brought to their lands. After the changing spirit of the competition, especially Turkey’s and Ukraine’s showbizzy victory, they have understood the method for winning already; if they use those methods conveniently nothing would stop them for winning this time. So they tried harder and came up with a more sophisticated show the following year after Sakis’ performance. Helena Paparizou with her song *Number One* was the first song who got the record for most 12 points given out to one country. It received 12 points from ten European countries. This record was later broken by Fairytale, the winning song in 2009, which scored sixteen 12 points, and is currently held by the 2012 winner, Euphoria, which received eighteen sets of 12 points. Actually it was not Helena Paparizou’s first participation in Eurovision Song Contest. Greece has participated in the Eurovision Song Contest 37 times since its debut in 1974. Until 2001, Greece was seen as one of the least successful countries in the contest, and therefore the interest of Greek people in the contest was relatively low. Since Antique's third place in 2001, the contest has grown into one of the most popular events in Greece. According to figures by the Nielsen company and Nerit TV (Greek public broadcaster) these are the Tv ratings since Antique’s performance in 2001 (Table 4.1):

Table 4.1: Greek TV-ratings in 2001-2008

2001	24,3% (8,1%) Antique got the 3rd place
2002	50,0% (16,8%) Audience doubled, since they got interested after being in top 3 previous year. Although they got the 17.place that year.
2003	58,9% (21,5%) Audience was still interested, though got the 17.place again.
2004	75,5% (34,2%) They had very big expectations with the participating song that year. Everything went better than expected - Sakis Rouvas got the 3rd place but it was still not a victory after all.
2005	82,3% (34,6%) They were absolutely sure to win this time. Finally Greece won the contest with Helena Paparizou.
2006	82,6% (35,2%) Greece hosted the contest
2007	74,4% (30,2%) Greece got the 10.place
2008	78,8% (34,5%) Greece got the 3rd place

Source: <https://www.eurovisionary.com/ratings-drop-greece-remains-strong/>

So who was this Antique that got a good result in 2001 and drew all the attentions of Greek audience to the contest back again? Antique was a Swedish-Greek singing duo consisting of Helena Paparizou and Nikos Panagiotidis. Their song *I'll Die For You* combined with Greek popular music and lyrics with a Nordic dance pop beat, got the 3rd place in Eurovision 2001. In my opinion it was the best song of that year (although it reminded a Turkish song of Hande Yener – *Bunun Adı Ayrılık* - which was released a year before Antique's song). Although it was a duo that year, Helena was more eye-catching with her beauty and charm, she was only 19 years old back then. Four years later when she was a more grown-up sexy lady at her 23, she decided to participate alone this time – which actually worked to make her win.

Figure 4.8. Helena Paparizou dressed in gold, playing an imaginary lyra on Eurovision stage in Kiev/Ukraine, 2005.



Source: eurovision.tv

She was charming, her voice was fine, the song was catchy, the stage show was authentic, interesting and creative, the camera angles were all well-thought for the performance. As a result of the new wave and trend in Eurovision, European audience who was used to look for the features like that (especially after Sertab Erener and Ruslana's performances), they couldn't resist Helena's stage show and authenticity that year after all she had done on the stage. She had all the features and methods for winning. Even she herself confesses that Sertab and Ruslana's performances were an inspiration for her country and entry: "Very big thanks to Sertab in 2003, she made all the countries to feel more traditional, more proud for the nationalities. Ruslana in 2004 also gave a lot of inspiration for the

participating countries to do more traditional stuff. My songwriters did a very typical Greek traditional song this year, in a very very modern way.’’³³

The song is notable for casting elements of traditional Greek music in a contemporary dance music setting: its arrangement includes bouzoukis and a solo featuring a Cretan lyra (Raykoff, 2007), (Figure 4.8). The lyrics describe the singer's appreciation for her lover who is lauded as "my number one" and "the only treasure I'll ever have". But actually if you a good TV-reader, you'll notice that those lyrics also had some signs and messages for the televoters. Again we see some semiological tricks like in Sertab Erener's and Marie N's lyrics. 'Number one' in this song, refers to not only the lover but also the song itself. She keeps repeating this words "you are the one.. you're my number one.." at the chorus part, giving a message to the audience, trying to convince them as this is the 'number one song'. Not only by lyrics, but also by her choreography she gives those signs and messages. During the performance, Paparizou and her partners are dancing a traditional Greek Pontian dance, where towards the end the 4 dancers making the shape of the number 1 on the floor, showed from aerial camera (Figure 4.9). She also played an imaginary lyra while her dancers pick her up, she pulled some strings out of one of her dancers and created a lyra image with those strings (Figure 4.8). This was a creative idea but also kind of reminds Turkey's and Sertab Erener's performance with strings coming out of her costume. Speaking about the costume, Paparizzou's costume was also signifying the victory because she was dressed all in gold (Figure 4.8) and what gold signifies is usually crown, trophy, golden medallion – to sum up the 1st place and success.

Figure 4.9. Helena's dancers making the shape of number 1 on the floor.



Source: Screenshot from youtube.com

³³ Helena Paparizou - Press interview after winning Eurovision (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dDLrqfFMA>)

Besides the competition on the stage, there was also a competition out of the stage, crossing the borders. After the song was picked at Greek National Selection, Paparizou went on a European promotional tour to promote her Eurovision entry. She visited over 20 countries on her tour, and sang on various TV shows, as well as gave many interviews. Dimitris Avramopoulos, the Minister of Tourism, spent €500,000 in her campaign to promote Greece through merchandise and advertisements that aired throughout Europe.³⁴ This method actually started with Ukraine and Ruslana the previous year. After Ruslana and Helena Paparizou had obvious success after the promotion trips, it proved popular, and was used by many countries the following years.³⁵

4.5. 2006 – FINLAND (LORDI-HARD ROCK HALLELUJAH)

One of the most discussed winning performances of the Eurovision history must be 2006's performance with Lordi and their song *Hard Rock Hallelujah* (Figure 4.10). Actually their stage show perfectly proves my argument in terms of having the ideal format to win the contest; including authentic costumes, some real flames on the stage (not just an image of flames like Ruslana had previously), good camera angles and movements. In terms of that Finland's stage was stunning this year. But their song and vocals were not very suitable for the usual Eurovision song format. Usually catchy pop songs or ballads were used to win until that time, not a hard-rock or heavy-metal song. For the ears which are not used to listen to hard rock or heavy-metal, no matter how the stage show is well-prepared, it would be a torture to watch and listen to such a performance on Eurovision stage. Eurovision is mostly known for its pop culture songs sang by charming people on the stage, not any yelling or screaming rock monsters. Audience who hate that kind of music will also question Finland's victory at Eurovision's platform as if it's a joke. But since there is no accounting for tastes, we can't question the votes of the people who are into this music style. Eurovision offers any kind of different strokes for different folks. And no matter what music style it is; if the stage show and authenticity is out-standing enough, it brings the victory in 2000s. Besides how better could Finland and their ethnicity be represented when the gothic/metal and rock music

³⁴ Ktenas, Spiros (29 May 2005). "Η "πρέσβειρα", ο τουρισμός και τα 500.000 ευρώ". *To Vima Online*. Retrieved 6 September 2010.

³⁵ Bakker, **Sietse** (April 9, 2006) Promotion tours on full speed http://esctoday.com/5899/promotion_tours_on_full_speed

became like a traditional and the leading genre in their country? Lordi is actually the best representation of that ethnic and traditional authenticity. Tragaki (2013, p.242) says:

“Consternation that their performance caused was to be attributed to ‘the surreal world of Eurovision, where an air of Benetton-bright positivity seems mandatory. Indeed, the ‘extraordinary’ success of the horror rock band gave the impetus for interpretations of what was thus far thought to be the ‘ordinary’ character of the Eurovision song ‘cheesy’, ‘ultra-safe’, ‘catchy’ pop, ‘the world’s biggest celebration of kitsch’. Lordi themselves enthusiastically declared that it was ‘a victory for rock music, not only for Finland and not only for Lordi’, as well as ‘a victory for open-mindedness’. This, ‘open-mindedness’ was connected to the growing diversity of genres, ‘beyond pop and ballad’ as Mr.Lordi put it, increasingly recognized on the ESC stage. Thanks to the Finnish monsters, heavy metal had managed to make it.”

Figure 4.10: Lordi on the stage in Greece, 2006.



Source: Eurovision Song Contest's official website - Eurovision.tv

Lordi was originally formed in 1992, when Mr Lordi started doing demos under this name, but the project was still more or less a one-man-band, with few extra members playing guitar solos and bass here and there. The now infamous monster masks and costumes iced the cake in 1994. The release of their first single *Would You Love A Monsterman* and the debut album *Get Heavy* both saw daylight that year. Lordi's bold and shameless combination of 1980s influenced melodic heavy metal with the outrageous horror image immediately caught the attention of the rock media and genre fans around the world. The band's live shows became known for their horror film-like theatrics and

bombastic pyros.³⁶ The band made history in 2006 by becoming the first, and still today the only, hard rock act and Finnish artist to win the Eurovision Song Contest, with the song *Hard Rock Hallelujah*. Finland has participated in the Eurovision Song Contest 45 times since its debut in 1961 and winning finally in 2006. They finished last in the contest ten times, receiving "nul points" in 1963, 1965 and 1982. But *Hard Rock Hallelujah* managed to be voted as the most popular Finnish Eurovision entry in the fortyfive years the country had participated. It held the record for most points until it was beaten by *Fairytale* by Alexander Rybak of Norway with 387 points three years later.

The song had frequent use of pyrotechnics, starting with flames bursting from the stage during the song's introduction, and bursts of sparks, particularly during the chorus. The final chorus of the song had an extended pyrotechnic display, with the whole stage covered in sparks, including jets shooting from the ends of guitarist's guitar and bass-player's bass as they were being played, and from the two-headed axe that Mr Lordi held up above his head.³⁷ Although first flames images were seen in Ukraine's performance where Ruslana sang her *Wild Dances*, the flames were not real that time, there were only fire and flames images on the backscreen of the stage. Since then stage designs and technologies developed more and more, which gave the ability to Lordi to use some real flames (Figure 4.11) and pyrotechnics (Figure 4.12) on the stage. This idea would be liked so much and become a method for winning the contest in the future. We will see them again in Norway, Azerbaijan, Denmark and Austria's performances the following years. Tragaki (2013, p.250):

‘Hell becomes the site of a fervent escalation of intensity that leads to the triumph pf the ‘rock’n’roll angels’ glorified in the dazzling lights of a cataclysm of pyrotechnics. The stage is flouded by jets of fire. It’s the Arockalypse, after all, a moment of Eurovision spectacle which, faithful to its neomedieval aesthetics, could hardly be more plethoric: a spectacle of horror vacui that is intended to suppress anything else heard and seen before or after them. All that is left for the spectators is to enjoy having been captivated by its powert o overflow their bodies, to own them.’

³⁶ History of the band, Offical site of Lordi <http://www.lordi.fi/band/>

³⁷ <http://escsocial.com/esc-dbase/songs-in-finals/item/hard-rock-hallelujah>

Figure 4.11: Some real flames on the stage at the beginning of the performance of *Hard Rock Hallelujah* by Lordi.



Source: Screenshot from Youtube.com

Figure 4.12: Pyrotechnics used on the stage for Finland's performance for the first time in Eurovision history.



Source: Screenshot from Youtube.com

Mr. Lordi used two of the official stage props from Lordi's live concerts, two-headed battle axe and bat-like wings on the Eurovision stage that night. It was the second unique part of the show in terms of visuality and stage show. The costumes were so authentic and interesting; differing Finland from the other countries. In the beginning of the show Lordi was wearing a hat with the Finnish flag (an ethnic sign) and in the middle of the song his cape was opening (so authentic). The lyrics were also interesting, it was not a classic love song which Eurovision audience used to like and listen to. They were

Figure 4.13: Lyrics of *Hard Rock Hallelujah*

**The saints are crippled
On this sinners' night**
Lost are the lambs with no guiding light
The walls come down like thunder
The rocks about to roll
It's **The Arockalypse**
Now **bare your soul**
All we need is lightning
With power and might
**Striking down the prophets of false
As the moon is rising
Give us the sign**
Now let us rise up in awe
*Rock 'n roll angels
bring thyn hard rock hallelujah*
Demons and angels all in one have arrived
*Rock 'n roll angels
bring thyn hard rock hallelujah*
**In God's creation supernatural high
The true believers
Thou shall be saved
Brothers and sisters keep strong
in the faith
On the day of Rockoning**
It's who dares, wins
You will see **the jokers soon will be
the new kings...**

Source: eurovision.tv

signifying religion, apocalypse, the end of the world. That could possibly make the religious or unreligious televoters vote for them, or even get their sympathy. There is a prejudice of heavy-metalists; they are known to be atheists or even satanists, believing in hell mostly. When Finland won with this song, rumours said that all the satanists around Europe united and voted for their song. Actually the song was really a call for someone, whether it is a satanist or just a rock lover. It was saying 'It's the A'rock'alypse, now bare your soul, (rock lovers, unite!) all we need is lightning, with power and might, striking down the prophets of false (pop music is the leading genre in Eurovision, so is the creators and obeyers of it), as the moon is rising, give us the sign (when the voting starts at night, vote for us), now let us rise up in awe.. (let the real music 'rock' be the one who rules, give us your votes and let us rise)'. (Figure 4.13)

Also like a prophecy coming true, there were other signifying lyrics saying 'The true believers, thou shall be saved, brothers and sisters keep strong in the faith (of rock music?), on the day of Rockoning, it's who dares, wins, you will see the jokers soon'll be the new kings'. They were really like the jokers of the Eurovision Song Contest of that year, Turkish news and forums for example were discussing about their entry that year³⁸, many people were laughing at them and making fun of them when they first saw them on the semi-finals. Nobody was expecting them to pass the semi-finals and get a chance to perform at the grand final. The same rumours were going on also around other countries³⁹, so who would guess they would actually win the contest with such an act? The jokers soon became the new kings in real.

³⁸ <https://eksisozluk.com/lordi-kazandiktan-sonra-olasi-gazete-mansetleri--1539485>

³⁹ http://dangerousminds.net/comments/monsterman_the_rise_and_fall_and_rise_of_lordi

‘Lordi’s performance invites us to think of the monsters as a metaphor for Europe, the monstrous, enlarged Europe greedy for power, yet troubled, if not frightened, by its own monstrosity. It is a metaphor that one may primarily sense in the grain of the monster’s voice, the sense of ‘the body in the voice as it sings’ (Barthes 1977, 182). The scream coming from the depth of the creature’s innards, passing through its lungs, carrying its breath into a burst of wrathful ‘Hallelujah’ blasting in the cavity of its voracious mouth, sonifies its monstrous ontology. The overwhelming materiality of this monstrous voice makes a new world by its very presence. The grain gathers its bearer’s life and world within itself (see Frith 1981, 165). From a psychoanalytic perspective, the voice becomes the interface between the body and language, the monster and the spectator, the internal beast and the external of human realities.’ (Tragaki, 2013)

The lyrics were well-adapted to their song. Actually they were all pointing out Lordi’s monstrous appearance in a holy way, they were not monsters or some demons at all, they were just fallen angels of rock’n roll. Also there is a myth that demons are also Angels of God. In the study of Angelology they cover the origin, nature, ministry and destiny of angels, both good and evil. As you learn about Angels you learn that not only are angels real, but so are demons, which are fallen angels. The Bible refers to angels and demons over two hundred seventy times.⁴⁰ Their Leader’s Name is Satan (Revelation 12:9) And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world— he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.⁴¹

If Lordi wouldn’t exist that year, again a pop-song with a romantic stage show would be the winner. Russia who came second that year had also a creative stage show representing Russia’s traditional signs very well (such as ballerinas dancing on the stage, piano standing and referring to classical piano-based music of Russians). The song and singer were also catchy and charming enough, Dima Bilan was participating with his song *Never Let You Go*, wearing a white tank top with a number representing his place in the contest’s running order - 13 and 10 in the semi-final and final respectively. Bilan had two ballerinas dancing in the background and a white piano covered in red rose petals, from which a ghost-like female figure emerged halfway through the song. He couldn’t get the first place with this show because of Lordi’s unbearable attractiveness; but he came second which was also a good position for Russia’s history in Eurovision Song Contest. But Bilan was stubborn and determined like Helena Paparizou, he would be back again and participate in 2009’s contest - becoming a winner this time.

⁴⁰ <https://bible.org/article/angelology-doctrine-angels>

⁴¹ <http://biblehub.com/revelation/12-9.htm>

4.6. 2007 – SERBIA (MARIJA SERIFOVIC-MOLITVA)

Figure 4.14: Marija Serifovic and her back-vocals performing on the Eurovision stage in Helsinki, 2007.



Source: Eurovision Song Contest's official website - eurovision.tv

Serbia's winning with this performance is one of the exceptional and rare victories during the stage-show based period in 2000s Eurovision Song Contest. The song is notable for its lack of stage presentation like dance routines, showy costumes, pyrotechnics and other tricks (Figure 4.14). Since my argument is based on the contest/participants/televoters concentrating on such elements in 2000s, Serbia's victory is actually disproving my argument. But I may have a good explanation for the reason why televoters decided to vote only for the music this year, instead of a fancy stage show.

Serbia has participated in the Eurovision Song Contest nine times since making its debut in 2007. They previously participated as part of Yugoslavia (both the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia from 1961 to 1991 and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1992) and as Serbia and Montenegro (2004–2006). What a nice surprise, the country won the contest on its debut as an independent country in 2007. In general most of the neighbors of Serbia such as Montenegro, Macedonia, Slovenia, Bosnia, Croatia, Hungary, they all gave 12 points to Serbia, whereas Albania gave them only 1 point. Albania's attitude may be related to the Kosovo conflict between the two countries that time. However, Croatia and Bosnia who also had political problems with Serbia that time, still they gave 12 points to Serbia that year. Not every time audience remembers or involves

politics to the contest. Considering politics and wars, if those neighbors don't like Serbia or Serbians at all, they would protest them and give low points, not high. The so-called Balkan Brotherhood (giving high points to each other every year) shouldn't include Serbia, after all. But still, was Serbia's independence in 2007 and their first debut in the Eurovision 2007 resulting with victory, a coincidence? Probably it was not. By giving high points, European audience both celebrated their independence and welcomed their participation to the contest.

Figure 4.15: Lyrics of *Molitva*

Molitva, kao žar na mojim usnama je,
(Prayer, like a fire on my lips)
 Molitva, mesto reči samo ime tvoje. prayer,
 (instead of words, your name only)
 Nebo zna, kao ja, **(Heaven knows, like I do)**
 Koliko puta sam ponovila,
 (how many times I've repeated)
 To nebo zna, baš kao ja,
 (heaven knows, just like I do)
 Da je ime tvoje moja jedina
 (that your name is my only..)
 Molitva.. **(Prayer..)**

Source: eurovision.tv

Another fact is that the song's quality was actually pretty good in terms of musical esthetics. It was the first time a Balkan ballad came to prominence since the late 1990s (Ireland was the last one winning with a ballad in 1996). Also it was the first non-English winner song in 2000s – as well as the last non-English song that has won the ESC (Figure 4.15). In the recent years, again we witness only English language wins (although 2016's

winner Ukraine had some Tatarian chorus in their song *1944*). For the former Yugoslavian and Soviet countries who gave high points to the Serbian song *Molitva* (Prayer) that year, the lyrics were meaningful obviously, since those countries could understand each other's language, there were many common words in their lingual heritage. Those meaningful lyrics seemed to refer to religion at first; molitva means prayer in all Soviet countries, but of course the song was not at all about a prayer to the God. So what was Marija Serfovic's prayer in the song? She was referring to her lover, saying 'Prayer, like a fire on my lips, prayer, instead of words your name only, heaven knows how many times I have repeated your name like a prayer'. Religious words were used just to make the message of this love song more powerful. Indeed, there was another powerful message under that message. Yes, love was the theme of the song, but love to whom, a man or a woman? Considering Marija's image, these love-based religious lyrics were referring to some other things under the name of love and religion.

With her short-cut black hair, black randomly tied cravat, black suit, white sloppy blouse, no high-heels but some white sneakers under it, and especially entering the stage and walking one hand in her pocket the other hand holding the microphone; she looked more like a male, not a female. Actually Marija was a lesbian. She and her back-singers were all signifying the union of that kind of woman and their sexual choices. Her song *Molitva* and the choreography were described as "a daringly lesbian chic-tinged act"⁴² that time. Marija didn't make an explanation that time but finally in 2013, she came out as lesbian.⁴³

"It was wonderful enough that a solid plain girl in glasses won Eurovision for Serbia with an old fashioned torch-song; that she should have sung it in passionate earnest as a lover of her own sex is what made this viewer switch off the iron and start praying that the gods might let her win. (Greer, 2007: 28)" (Ashton, 2013)

"From political and aesthetic sense Marija Šerifović and "Molitva" were more ordinary than extraordinary, especially within the context of Eurovision tolerance for the extraordinary and distaste for the ordinary. "Molitva" itself navigated an aesthetic of hybridity, borrowing sounds and images from Balkan sevdalinka and the more international ballad and chanson styles of an earlier era of the Eurovision. The text of "Molitva," too, tends toward the ordinary, and its trope of a young lover's passion-cum-worship is remarkable only because of its almost quotidian simplicity. The evocation, indeed the naming, of God does not have extensive currency in the Eurovision Song Contest, but in "Molitva" that reverence is remarkable primarily because of its simplicity. Secular and sacred love intersect, each intensifying the other." (Bolman, 2007)

As I mentioned above, *Molitva* (Prayer) is a love song using religious words to make the message more holy, dramatic and powerful: Love and religion. Both words represent a choice. Whether you believe in Islam or Christianity, or some other religion, or even nothing; or whether you love a man or a woman, or both, or neither. All of them depend on you and your personal choices. You may believe in heterosexuality, but there are also people who believe in homosexuality. What Marija Šerifović is trying to tell us with her lyrics, is actually this controversial issue. It both symbolizes Marija herself (as someone choosing to love a woman and believing in homosexuality) and her country Serbia as a free country having those kind of people and believing in LGBT rights. Serbia's entry was as an "attempt to present [Serbia's] liberal, tolerant and modern face to Europe at a time when the country's EU application was in jeopardy" (Baker, 2015). Well, if the song had a purpose for managing that, it didn't seem to work because Serbia is still not a part of EU today. I believe, Marija was just trying to raise the awareness of homosexuality

⁴² Eurovision glitter brings hope to gay Serbs, (May 20, 2008) <http://www.theage.com.au/news/general/eurovision-glitter-brings-hope-to-gay-serbs/2008/05/20/1211182773178.html>

⁴³ I am a lesbian! – Marija Šerifović opens up in her film "Confession", In Serbia with agencies, (Nov 28, 2013) <https://inserbia.info/today/2013/11/i-am-a-lesbian-marija-serifovic-opens-herself-completely-in-her-film-confession/>

around Europe. Eurovision was a good platform for that kind of messages and support. Speaking about religion, love and choices; the previous years winners Lordi also did the same with their *Hard Rock Hallelujah*, their religion and passion was the rock music; loving and believing in rock music was a choice, their choice - but they were also looking for other rock lovers and supporters to unite. Both Lordi and Marija Serifovic were successful at the end of their purpose in terms of uniting, since they got the support they needed from the televoters.

By the way the staging was consisting of three colors which were red, black and white; signifying Serbia's flag colors (an ethnic sign is detected here). Also the stage decoration in the image of 'a sky full of stars' was matching with the meaning of "prayer" in a way. Her performance was also complemented by the notable presence of the five backing female singers who hold each other's hands during the performance; as well as the trick with those holding hands at the end creating a heart image.

On the other hand if we ignore and forget about Serbia and their performance for a second, and look just at the country who got the second place that year, again we see how European audience voted for the 'stage show'. There were only 33 points of difference between Serbia and Ukraine that year. Verka Serdutchka with his funny song and show blew up both the Eurovision stage and European audience.

Serdutchka was accompanied by five back up singers and dancers, dressed in silver and gold clothing. She was wearing the number '69' on her back, with reference to a sexual position; the two main companion dancers either side of this wore the number '18', referring to the entry's position on the final, 18th to sing. The song was more notable with its funny melody and Serdutchka's dance moves. Also the lyrics were a mix of English, German, Russian and Ukrainian words that made the song funnier to listen. At the beginning of her song she says 'Hello everybody, my name is Verka Serdutchka, me English nicht verstehen, let's speak dance!' and starts dancing with his company. Meanwhile the audience in the arena can't control themselves and start to clap and accompany Serdutchka. 'Sieben, sieben (seven seven), ay lu-lu, sieben sieben eins zwei (seven seven one two).. tanzen (dance)! Gde nogi, gde nogi? (Where are the legs?) Ich lieben.. (I love).. I want you see a-ha, dancing lasha tumbai, Russia good-bye.. To dance

or not to dance, it's not a question, don't live to dance, dance to live.. Nu nu nu ruchki ruchki (come on hands, hands!) tantsevat horosho (dancing is good), tantsevat kruto (dancing is cool), Ukraina tse kruto, Ukraine tse klovo? (Ukraine is cool? Ukraine is fancy?) Dancing Europe, molodzi (good boys) davay davay (come on come on) dance!.. Ok happy end..' these were all the silly but funny lyrics of the song. The camera angles, focus-pullers, spider-cams were also too impressive in this performance. The best camera movements could be seen only in Ukraine's performance that year.

There were many conflicts before and after the song was performed. Serduchka was a drag queen and the choice of a drag performer as Ukraine's representative at Eurovision was fiercely criticized by several media and politicians of different parties in his home country.⁴⁴ Taras Chornovil of Party of Regions commented on this issue as:

*"I guess some of our esteemed experts saw those "hot Finnish guys" dressed as monsters but didn't quite understand that there is subculture and there is pseudoculture. Those monsters are part of their subculture, which has the right to exist. But all these hermaphrodites have never been accepted anywhere. Therefore I think that this will be a serious embarrassment factor and the world will see us as complete idiots."*⁴⁵

Real name Andriy Mykhailovych Danylko, better known for his drag stage persona Verka Serduchka is a Ukrainian comedian and pop and dance singer. As a character actor, Danylko has also appeared in over a dozen television films. He is only a worker in this show business, trying to entertain people, nothing more at all. But politicians in his home country thought he was gone really too far with his wish to participate in Eurovision and would represent Ukraine in an inconvenient way in the contest. Another subject of controversy was song's title and lyrics. Kuipers (2007) states in his article:

*"According to Danilko, the phrase "Lasha Tumbai" is a Mongolian phrase for "whipped cream", "milkshake", or "churned butter". It was later proven, though, that there are no such words in Mongolian and the catchphrase bears no meaning at all. There have been allegations that the words were chosen due to their phonetic resemblance to "Russia Goodbye", allegedly a reference to the 2004-2005 Orange Revolution in Ukraine."*⁴⁶

⁴⁴ <https://gazeta.ua/ru/articles/culture/verka-serdyuchke-ob-yavili-protest-na-radio/753365>

⁴⁵ https://faza.ua/news/13.03.07/34863/chornovil_serdyuchka_opozorit_ukrainu.html

⁴⁶ Kuipers, Michael. (March 18, 2007) Ukrainian song title change, <http://esctoday.com/?p=8001>

The inappropriate act at the end of the performance was also a kind of a message to Russia, apparently. That act was also probably the first and last inappropriate act in the whole Eurovision history. How Eurovision officials let those kind of acts being performed on the stage is another question to discuss (Figure 4.16). But Ukraine was definitely the winner of that year's contest in terms of the stage show, which is why they came second after Serbia in the televoting. Nobody would easily forget this kind of unique, funny, interesting performance in Eurovision history.

Figure 4.16: Serduchka doing some inappropriate but funny moves on the Eurovision stage.



Source: youtube.com

4.7. 2008 – RUSSIA (DIMA BILAN-BELIEVE)

This year it was time for Russia and their stage show. Actually the following two countries who were in top 3 that year were both good in terms of the stage presentation. Whether the winner would be Russia, or Ukraine or Greece. Greece who got the 3rd place, had Kalomira with her song *Secret Combination* which was a similar performance of Helena Paparizou's back in 2005, again a sexy Greek woman with male dancers behind her, some Greek rhythms and dances, catchy song and performance... Greeks may thought it would work again but seems like European audience was bored to see Greece with similar acts every year since Sakis and Helena's well-positions in the contest. Besides, there were more interesting acts than their traditional Greek presentation. For example, Ukraine with Ani Lorak and her song *Shady Lady*, who got the second place, had a very

stunning stage show that year. Actually, Ani Lorak's costume style and dance moves were reminding Helena Paparizou's, but Lorak's stage show was more different. She had a big mirror-plated box, which was divided into four columns, and in each column there was a male dancer. She did some tricks with this box and at the end of the show there were sparkling flames. She could easily get the first place with these classic methods for winning, but Dima Bilan's return to the contest after a two-year break and preparation would be an obstacle for her. Dima was already a recognized singer among Eurovision audience since the previous years. He was the second favorite after Lordi back in 2006 with his song *Never Let You Go* and now he was back with a new song *Believe*; which was carrying many symbolic lyrics and messages for European audience. He would really manage this time and win the contest if he would really 'believe'.

The song had strong lyrics; sentences are all about 'being courageous, believing in yourself, trying harder, keep going, keep climbing, making your dream come true, there's no limit, nothing is impossible...'. Dima sang all those lyrics very deeply and that emotion perfectly passed to the European audience. But of course singing deeply wouldn't be enough for the European audience if the stage show wouldn't be impressive enough. Bilan also thought about that part of the performance perfectly. He invited to his performance the well-known Russian figure skater, Olympic gold medalist and three-time world champion - Evgeni Plushenko - and made him skate on artificial ice, while another well-known person; the Ukrainian-Hungarian composer and violinist - Edvin Marton - played his Stradivarius on the stage. Both of them were known faces around Europe. Also Bilan himself was already a well-known and awarded pop-star in Soviet countries⁴⁷. His participation two years ago in 2006 Eurovision Song Contest made his fame grow bigger around Europe, too. Most of the audience was really amazed of these three important persons union on the stage that night. It was supported with dramatic and lyrical body and hand gestures. Miazhevich (2010, pp. 248-264) in her article also points out this issue:

'Bilan frequently appropriates vast amounts of stage space by almost crossing the invisible line between him and the audience. Also noteworthy is his confidence in manipulating proximity and distance; his act commences with him kneeling barefoot close to the edge of the stage displaying an overzealous attention to the camera and finishes with him abruptly walking to backstage.'

⁴⁷ Dima Bilan's official site, Biography - <http://bilandima.ru/eng/biography/16/>

Figure 4.17: Lyrics of Believe

Even when the thunder and storm begins
I'll be **standing strong**
like a tree in the wind
Nothing is gonna move this mountain
or change my direction
I'm falling off the sky and I'm all alone
The courage that's inside
is gonna break my fall
Nothing is gonna dim my light within
But if I keep going on
it will never be impossible
Not today..
Cause I got something to believe in
As long as I'm breathing
There is not a limit
to what I can dream
Cause I got something to believe in
Mission to keep climbing
Nothing else can stop me
if I just believe
And I believe in me

Source: eurovision.tv

Strong lyrics (Figure 4.17), strong figures and strong gestures were also strengthened with strong camera angles and movements that night. Especially the opening stream, where a focus-puller starts from the top capturing Dima in an extreme-wide-shot and then diving and zooming-in fast towards him, is an impressive angle for the start. Then there is a fading transition to the close-up camera and some smokes enter the stage, which creates a mystic atmosphere around. Those smokes are the second classic winning trick after the flames and sparks on Eurovision stage. Usually when the stage has warm lightings (orange, yellow, red), flames are being used to make the show look warmer and more impressive; when the stage has cold lightings (blue, grey, white) smokes are being used to make the audience shiver. Since Russia is a literally cold country that has also cold colors on their flag, and since the song this year was a slow, deep and strong song, the lighting of the stage was based on cold-colors, representing all these factors.

With right angles, right lightings, right special effects, right choices of dancers and musicians, right manners and gestures, symbolic and encouraging lyrics; again we see how European televoters voted for the general message and the show. Also Bilan's final lyrics were too much signifying a message for the European televoter; until the end he was using only the words 'believe in **me**' in the all chorus parts, but at the end he and his partners on the stage, they all reached their hands towards the camera like some beggars (Figure 4.18) and sang 'I believe in..**You!**', meaning we believe in Europe, in Eurovision and it's televoter – that they will give us high points and make us -Russians- the winners this year. While especially Dima was doing this demanding act, he was barefoot on ice, creating a more dramatic situation on the stage (Sertab Erener was also once barefoot). This barefoot act would become another method to win the contest in the following years (further reading: 4.11 Sweden's and 4.12 Denmark's victories).

Figure 4.18: Russia on the stage with their song *Believe* in Belgrade, Serbia 2008.



Source: youtube.com

“The gesture and the song suggested the self-assurance of the singer and the country that he represented, as well as their openness to the new audiences and the new markets of the West.” (Hilder, 2016). The conclusion is; Dima Bilan really believed in victory and European televoter couldn’t resist his ambitious performance and demanding gestures. Russia became the winner in televoting with 272 points and became also the fourth ex-Soviet country that won the ESC.

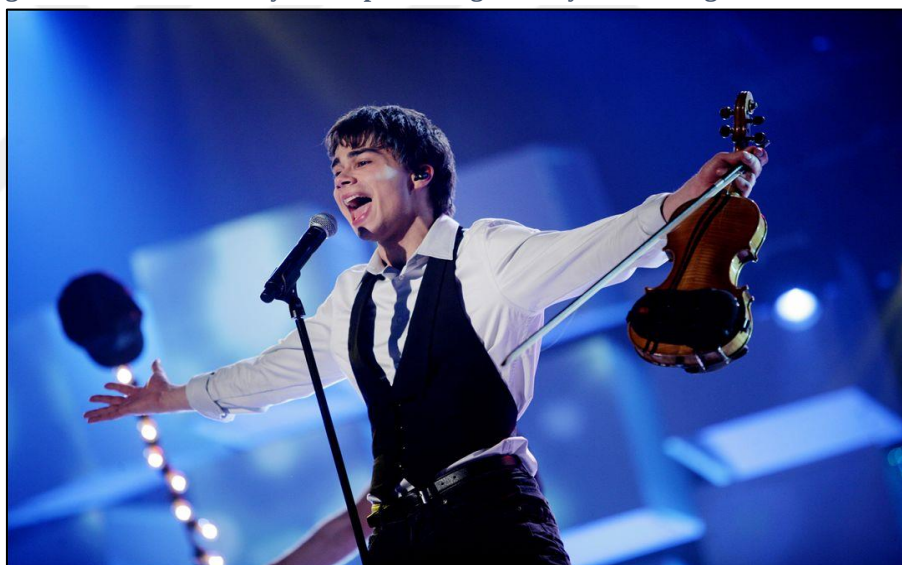
4.8. 2009 – NORWAY (ALEXANDER RYBAK-FAIRYTALE)

Time for some fairies and tales and one of the most memorable performance in the Eurovision history: it was notable for many facts, not only including the classic winning elements in 2000s but also gaining a high sympathy from the Eurovision audience by receiving votes from all of the participating countries. Alexander Rybak with his song Fairytale won the Eurovision final in 2009 with a landslide victory, a total of 387 points, breaking the previous record of 292 points scored by Lordi in 2006 and scoring 169 points more than the runner-up, Iceland. The song had an amazing violin melody, played on the stage by a cute performer who himself is a violinist and a musician. His show with the

violin and the story he was trying to tell to the audience was so sweet and impressive that it was impossible to not adore him and his charming performance (Figure 4.19).

Rybak was born in 1986 in Minsk, the capital of Belarus, which at that time was the Belarusian SSR in the Soviet Union. At the age of five, Alexander and his family of three moved to Norway and settled at Nesodden near Oslo. Alexander's parents are both professional musicians and they taught their son to play the violin and piano from an early age. Soon, he had to choose between these two instruments; he decided to go with the violin, although he still plays the piano as a hobby, along with the guitar.⁴⁸ To be grown up in a musicians' family and environment, it was impossible not to gain musical talents. Alexander practiced with fierce discipline for many hours every day and played concerts with his family and their musician friends. In his 23, he would compose music and wrote all the lyrics of his hit *Fairytale* by himself and became a legend in Eurovision history.

Figure 4.19: Alexander Rybak, representing Norway, on the stage in Moscow, 2009.



Source: Eurovision Song Contest's official website - Eurovision.tv

The performance starts with a wide-shot of the stage where three male dancers are dancing some Norwegian folk dance moves. Actually they are a known dance company in Norway called 'Frikar'. We hear the sound of violin while they are dancing, in the meantime the focus-puller slowly pans left where we see our cute violinist and performer who is about to sing his song. Rybak's face expressions here are very interesting, because they seem so natural and funny. Before he notices that the camera is shooting him, he

⁴⁸ <https://www.alexanderrybak.com/bio/>

seems kind of nervous, but when the camera makes a close-up of him and he finally notices it, he quickly smiles like a fool. Whether it was a thought-act or improvisation, it was an interesting opening expression, which made him look unique that year. The lyrics of the song start as a tale uses to start. They go like: 'years ago, when I was younger, I kinda liked, a girl I knew...'. This girl he knew was actually a real person, not an imaginary character. In February 2009, Norwegian media reported that *Fairytale* is about Rybak's ex-girlfriend Ingrid Berg Mehus whom he got to know through the Barratt Due Institute of Music in Oslo.⁴⁹ Rybak has since confirmed this at first, but Ingrid didn't respond to this situation anyhow that time. Three months later, at a press conference in May 2009, Rybak suddenly revealed that the song's inspiration actually came from the Huldra, a beautiful female creature from a Scandinavian folklore tale, who lures young men to her, and then may curse them for all time.⁵⁰ Why did he change his attitude, it's unknown, but it was melodramatic and a nice material for a gossip for the Eurovision fans; it had been a hot topic at that time - many fans pressed Rybak to their chests.

At the second part of the performance, the backing singers with blonde hairs wearing long pink dresses and no shoes (a barefoot sign is detected again) join the stage; they were looking just like fairies with their voices and clothes. Norway created sort of a utopia on the stage, with all those lyrics, and fairy looking back singers. The stage design of the performance was also utopic. There were images of small houses, windows, moon and stars. Starting from the first chorus and that second part where girls enter the stage, the camera movements get more sophisticated. We see some fast focus-pullings, speedy spider-cam zooming-in zooming-out and close-ups, all of them changing perfectly with the melody and the stream. In the meantime, the acrobatic dance figures of the folk dancers are so authentic and eye-catching. Also kind of a 'lambada' move of Rybak where he bends over his backwards while playing his violin, is remarkable, what a talented guy one may think, he can do acrobatics meanwhile playing his violin. By the way he plays the violin so hard at some point that the strings couldn't tolerate for more and got ripped out of the stick at the end. Maybe it was also a planned act – or just bad luck – though it didn't look unprofessional or bad at all, on the contrary it looked so cool, exciting and interesting. It showed Rybak's passion and effort for his music, song and performance.

⁴⁹ <http://www.vg.no/rampelys/musikk/melodi-grand-prix-eurovision/dette-er-alexanders-eventyrdame/a/547280/>

⁵⁰ <http://www.tv2.no/a/2749857>

Actually this kind of energetic and perfectionist passion would later become sort of a sickness for him. In 2010, several incidents of uncontrolled anger caused commentators to question whether Rybak has an anger control problem. During the trials for the ESC 2010 finals, Rybak became so infuriated when a sound technician was not doing what he wanted that he smashed his own hand, breaking his fingers. Also, during trials for the Swedish television in June 2010, he smashed his violin on the floor. His appearance was then cancelled.⁵¹ Enough is as good as a feast; too much of a good thing is bad after all. But if this perfectionism of Rybak wouldn't exist, maybe he wouldn't win the contest, it led him come to these days and made him taste the victory after 14 years break of Norway's last win in the contest.

On the other hand, another method that helped him win the contest that year was obviously the pyrotechnics. Again some sparkling flames and gimmicks were burst out of the stage towards the ending of the performance, which were also pointing out that the show was finishing - but it was finishing in a stylish way; lighting and firing up the whole stage, blowing audience's minds literally.

4.9. 2010 – GERMANY (LENA MEYER LANDRUT-SATELLITE)

A winner with no flames, no special dance choreography, no elaborated stage show or special effects or design on the stage this year; just a cute singer with a simple black dress with four backing singers, and some blue lightings. This presentation reflected a trend that has had success at recent Eurovisions before 2000s, where everything was more simple and more stable. So how is this thesis' argument working in this case, one would ask. The explanation is simple: Germany's and Lena Meyer's winning with her song *Satellite* was all about pre-made commercial that year. The song started to be heard on radio charts on March 2010 – it was three months before the Eurovision Song Contest. In a three months period, European televoters' ears would get used to that song and as a result they would vote for a familiar song at the final night of the contest.

⁵¹ <http://www.dagbladet.no/kjendis/knuste-fiolinen-i-raseri-foran-hundrevis-av-tilskuere/66855861>

Lena Meyer-Landrut's *Satellite* was first chosen via televoting during the national Eurovision pre-selection show Unser Star für Oslo (Our Star for Oslo) on 12 March 2010. It was made available for digital download the following day, becoming Germany's fastest selling digital release ever. It debuted at number one in the German singles chart.⁵² What becomes popular in Germany, automatically becomes popular all around Europe; because Germany is the largest music market in Europe, and third largest in the world.⁵³ In Germany, English-language pop music becomes more and more important nowadays, and today most of the songs on the radio are English. Anyone in Germany who switches on the radio has a very good chance of hearing some music sang in English. This presence of English songs on the radio is now “considered normal by the vast majority of the population in virtually all the European countries” (Ammon 1994, p.8). Therefore, it is no great surprise to find that:

“84 per cent of FUB Freie Universität Berlin students listen to English song lyrics everyday. Many students at the FUB note their preference for music in English, and some even report that it was their love for music which motivated them to learn English. For example, one student reflects on the use of English in the music she enjoys: ‘I love music and listen almost only to songs with English texts. And it’s important for me to know English because I want to understand what the artist sings and how he/she feels’.” (Erling 2007, pp.111-130)

Lena Meyer-Landrut's *Satellite* was also an English song, which was appealing to those English-music listeners in Germany. So why wouldn't German radios play her song, especially when it became a song that would represent their country in Eurovision Song Contest? (Would they play it that often if it was sung in German language? Considering the supply-and-demand policy, the young English-music-listeners in Germany wouldn't listen to a song like that at all.) As I mentioned above, what becomes popular in German radios, automatically becomes popular all around European radios, too. Europe even Asia is following their charts and looking for some fresh and catchy songs. Lena's song was like a virus that time, spreading from German radios to other European radios, even to Asian ones. When it was first aired on German charts and became popular, after a while other European countries – even Turkey - started to play it on their radios. In Turkey we

⁵² http://www.huffingtonpost.com/will-adams/germanys-eurovision-2010_b_560260.html

⁵³ Translated from German to English.

https://web.archive.org/web/20111231025331/http://www.musikindustrie.de:80/politik_einzelansicht0/ba ck/110/news/jahrespressekonferenz-des-bvmi/

heard that song a month before the start of the contest.⁵⁴ The Turkish listeners had already liked the song in Turkey at that time, and would probably vote highly for Germany at the contest (which really happened - the 12 points went to Germany from Turkey that year). There was a month till the contest, but the song was already popular in Turkey. What was popular in Turkey, it was probably popular in Europe, too.

Not surprisingly, on 29 May 2010, *Satellite* won the Eurovision Song Contest. By representing a "big five" country, Germany was automatically qualified for the final according to the rules based on that. Actually this positive discrimination rule of Eurovision is very disadvantaged because the other countries participating in semi-finals and passing to the finals, they get the chance to perform twice; whereas the founders of the Eurovision the 'big five' – Germany, France, Italy, Spain and U.K – perform only once on the final day. The audience who already watched the semi-finals, hears the successful songs again on the final night for the second time, they get used to these songs and start to like them more because they sound familiar already. On the other hand, the big-five perform only once on the stage during the final night and televoters can't get used to them in such a short time. After all, every performer has only 3 minutes, but the semi-finalists who make it to the finals, they spend in total 6 minutes on the stage. That's why if you look at the history of Eurovision - since the new rule coming out in 1998 and considering the 'big five's performing directly on the final night', none of them could win so far in the contest, they even couldn't get in the top 10 recently. But Germany didn't need to perform twice to be the winner that year; they have already performed on European radio lists tens of times, Europe and its audience was already familiar with it. It became the first winning song from a 'big-five' country since Katrina and the Waves' victory for the United Kingdom in 1997.

⁵⁴ (As a good radio-listener, I remember those days and I witnessed the announcements related to this issue on the radio stations. One of the most popular radio stations in Turkey and its host introduced the song as; '...now you will hear a popular song from Germany's top playlists. Lena Meyer with her song *Satellite* is getting ready to represent Germany in Eurovision Song Contest this year. We found the song very catchy, let's see what you will think about it. No doubt that she will get a high score with a catchy and cheerful song like this. We wish good luck for Lena, and here comes the song, enjoy...'. One or two days later, another radio station was playing the same song and this time towards the end of the song, the radio host reduced the sound a little bit and made his announcement; "you've just listened to *Satellite* by Lena Meyer - the most requested song nowadays...".)

Figure 4.20: Lena Meyer on the Eurovision stage in Oslo, Norway, 2010.



Source: eurovision.tv

The song is about "unconditional love". The lyrics describe the thoughts of a woman in love ("I got it bad for you"), who is frustrated at being ignored ("I went everywhere for you/ I even did my hair for you/ I bought new underwear they're blue/ And I wore it just the other day.") and compares herself to a lonely traveller ("Like a satellite I'm in orbit all the way around you/ And I would fall out into the night/ Can't go a minute without your love."), but on the other hand seems to draw a kind of masochistic pleasure from her pain.⁵⁵ One of the songwriters of the song - John Gordon has said it is a "bubbly" song, "pretty easy and sweet with cheerful lyrics" and "three chords". Satellite's other songwriter Julie Frost explained, "It deals with all the crazy hidden things a girl does and feels when she is in love. A man can make her feel everything at once, joyful but also tormented and helpless."⁵⁶

On the final night, Lena seemed to be a little bit excited with her trembling voice at some parts; actually she was a little bit out of tune, but Europe didn't even notice that, they were used to the melody already (from the radio charts) and really liked Lena's cute and moves on the stage during her performance (Figure 4.20). By her cute image and manners, she collected all the sympathy of the European audience. Hirmer (2010) says that:

"Lena is just a cutie without too much of anything. She is handsome and pretty, but also a little bit boyish. In her own sweet and crazy way, she has been taken into her fan's hearts immediately. And her fans are not just young girls and teenagers – as it is usual, when somebody moves up the pop music ladder as fast as she did. Her fans are people in all ages, ranging from kids, over shrieking teenagers and men and women in their prime to grandparents. With her cheerfulness, charm and naturalness, the nevertheless authentic young lady has infected many hearts. Compared to the last year's winners, especially the Hard rock band Lordi in 2006, Lena had a very simple show. She just had three female background singers and she was wearing a little black dress. There were neither special effects She just sang her song with no frills and stole the show. The simplicity of her show together with her nice personality and cute appearance laid the perfect foundations for her victory."

⁵⁵ http://www.huffingtonpost.com/will-adams/germanys-eurovision-2010_b_560260.html

⁵⁶ <http://www.dr.dk/event/melodigrandprix/dansker-bag-tysk-grand-prix-vinder>

But those cute manners were also combined with a strange, weird but in the meantime a funny accent. Her accent brought controversy among some critics. Ivkovic (2013) in his online article says that:

“Some YouTube commenters are unfavourably disposed towards her accent “because she sounds like an English villager” and “because she is faking [the accent].” Some, on the other hand, approve of the accent “because it makes the song funny” and “adds something special to the song.” One commenter argues that “[Lena’s song] is popular only because of her funny accent.” According to another commenter, the accent is not only “the best thing about the song, but it makes the song tolerable.” The commenter goes on to say, “I love the accent. The song is so bad that it would not work without the mispronunciation,” possibly referring to the singer’s mixing of different phonological systems. Lena pronounces inconsistently ‘day’ as /dai/ but ‘way’ as /wei/ in two lines that otherwise rhyme, provoking one commenter to write: “I love you Lena but your accent’s awful. It’s not ‘die’, it’s ‘day’. I cannot understand the meaning of lyrics. It’s really confusing.”

No matter how her accent confusing or weird was, or who liked it or hated it, she won with it after all. Blue shiny sparkling lightings and changing camera angles also helped her stream looking good. Towards the end there was an incredible dazzling spider-camera movement, which looked so cool and was probably the coolest angle among that year’s performances. Turkey who got the second place that year with Manga and their song *We Could Be The Same*, also had some cool camera angles and movements, also their stage show was better than Germany’s in terms of special effects; there were all kinds of pyrotechnics, smokes, sparks, gimmicks, striking lights, speedy-cam-moves, fast transitions, zoom-ins, close-ups... Whatever comes to your mind in terms of special effects and show tricks, there were plenty of it in Turkey’s entry. The music was also very authentic; with some traditional belly-dancing rhythms added to a rock song, it was very unique and differing. The lyrics on the other hand were full of signs and messages; *‘Doesn’t matter who they will blame.. (Turkey’s faults and deficiencies for entering EU) We can beat them at their own game (Who cares about EU, Turkey can get over it).. For just one night, we could be the same.. (Eurovision stage is the only place where EU and Turkey can unite and be equal) No matter what they say.. (Some European thinks that Turkey doesn’t deserve to be in EU, it’s not even totally a part of EU, etc.)’*. Probably if there wasn’t a pre-made commercial of *Satellite* on European radios, Manga and Turkey with their song *We Could Be The Same*, were going to be the winners that year.

4.10. 2011 – AZERBAIJAN (ELL/NIKKI-RUNNING SCARED)

This year, we witnessed again how flames and sparks can bring the success in the contest. Azerbaijan in their song *Running Scared* had some firing effects that got televoters' attention. All the other entries were either not impressive in terms of special effects or kind of foolish in terms of lyrics. For example Sweden got the second highest votes with a Justin Bieber looking guy called Eric Saade and his song *Popular*. Although he had a good stage show, in the chorus part he was singing very foolish lyrics like 'I will be popular, I will be popular.. Tonight I will be po-pu-lar!'. Also there were no flames or firing effects which are mentioned so far as a winning element for a song in Eurovision Song Contest in 2000s. At the end Eric couldn't get popular with his song 'Popular' (although the bookmakers were also betting on him), but Ell/Nikki did get popular with their special staging, performance and the romantic song *Running Scared*.

This year was the fourth time for Azerbaijan's participation in Eurovision. They entered the contest in 2008 and luckily won it three years later after their first entry. Until that time, they managed to be in the top 10; the first year 8th place, the second year 3rd place and the third year 5th place. On the fourth year of their participation they finally won. They knocked out the countries that were participating for decades and still couldn't win a single time yet, for example;

- **Portugal**, participating since 1964 (**53 years no win!**), best result 6th place in 1996
- **Malta**, participating since 1971 (**46 years no win!**), best result 2nd place in 2002
- **Cyprus**, participating since 1981 (**36 years no win!**), best result 5th place three times – in 1982, 1997, 2004
- **Iceland**, participating since 1986 (**31 years no win!**), best result 2nd in 1999
- **Hungary**, participating since 1994 (**23 years no win!**), best result 4th in 1994
- **Romania**, participating since 1994 (**23 years no win!**), best result 3rd in 2005

Although Azerbaijan is not even part of Europe, they always had an interest in Eurovision Song Contest. They started to request to join the contest especially after Armenia's joining the ESC in 2006. Finally Eurovision officials accepted Azerbaijan's request too and gave them the right to participate. Countries like Armenia and Georgia who also have no borders with Europe were already in the contest since 2006 and 2007, so why shouldn't Azerbaijan also participate? There is always a warm welcome for the newcomers to the Eurovision family. The televoters express this warmth by their votes; they usually give high votes at the first years of the participations of the newcomers; we have already

experienced that when Ukraine joined Eurovision in 2003, and a year later they won the contest. Same goes for Armenia, they were always in top 10 since they joined the contest. But of course it's more up to performances, if the entry is too bad in terms of Eurovision's format, no warm gestures will help anyhow. Although this performance of Ell/Nikki was not a bright victory at all since it was not a catchy and an impressive lyrical song after all (and as no one remembers their song nowadays), still their camera angles, spotlights, warm lightings and firing effects were good and impressive enough to differ among the other entries that year and win the trophy at the end of the day.

Figure 4.21: A medium shot of Ell and Nikki getting closer on the stage under the pyrotechnics...



Source: youtube.com

Their song was a romantic song and they acted romantic enough on the stage that night. Eldar Gasimov and Nigar Jamal performed a good couple image on the stage together (Figure 4.21) under the duo name Ell&Nikki, although they are not a couple in real life. Prior to the release of *Running Scared*, neither singer had performed in a duo. According to Eldar Gasimov, at the initial stage, both singers were unsure of the success of such a project. But after the victory he stated that the song was a perfect common ground for the singers' varying styles, voices and spirits.⁵⁷

The audience seemed to have believed in their theatrical story going on the stage, the lyrics were convenient, the camera movements were matching perfectly the stream, there were warm lightings on the stage, and finally some pouring firelights from the ceiling that

⁵⁷ <http://www.eg.ru/daily/evrovidenie-2011/25561/>

gave the signals of victory (Figure 4.22). They were the first mixed-gender duo to win the contest since 1963. According to McElhatton:

“The staging of the song in the final of the contest certainly helped them secure this win. Dressed all in white surrounded by circles of white light we see four people dancing, perfectly choreographed in unison. As the vocal begins the dancers step out of the way to reveal Eldar back to back with Nikki. The chemistry between the two is hard to deny as they both serenade each other with their beautiful voices. We get some clichéd moves from Eldar as he grabs his chest and extends his arm in true boy band fashion, but this can be forgiven as he moves in towards Nikki in the final moments, gently strokes her hair as the two come nose to nose in an intense loving stare.”⁵⁸

Figure 4.22: Pouring pyrotechnics from the ceiling towards the ending of Azerbaijan’s entry.



Source: youtube.com

Although the lyrics seemed to be romantic, describing a couple’s feelings towards each other, they also had some signs and messages for Europe. These were not signifying any winning elements for Eurovision Song Contest, but signifying and referring to the position of Azerbaijan in EU, indeed. Xie (2015) says that:

“Running Scared seems to portray a brand of ‘national innocence’. Its lyrics suggest that Azerbaijan is ‘scared of life’ and ‘scared of breathing’ and must run away – there is a self-victimising lilt to the song, and there is an insinuation to the European audience that Azerbaijan is distancing itself from its former Soviet ‘master’, even though Azerbaijan ‘adore(s) you’. By distancing itself from ‘Mother Russia’, Azerbaijan creates an image of itself as willing to join Europe and become a more cosmopolitan and modern nation, moving away from the harsh dictatorship and unjust society imposed by the former regime. What is notable being that whilst this is not the ‘actual culture’ of Azerbaijan, the Azeri government is able to exploit Western ignorance in order to assert this performance as a cultural norm. The song goes on to assert Azerbaijan’s need for Europe, with lyrics stating ‘Oh God, I need you – there’s nothing left for me to say’. These lyrics affirm Azerbaijan’s commitment to improvement, in spite of its actual record for human rights and global justice, which is dire by international standards.”

⁵⁸ Blog of Nicky McElhatton, MA student in Arts Management at Queen’s University Belfast
<https://eurovisionni.wordpress.com/2015/08/08/best-azerbaijan-entry-performance/>

4.11. 2012 – SWEDEN (LOREEN-EUPHORIA)

Figure 4.23: Loreen on the Eurovision stage in Baku, Azerbaijan, 2012.



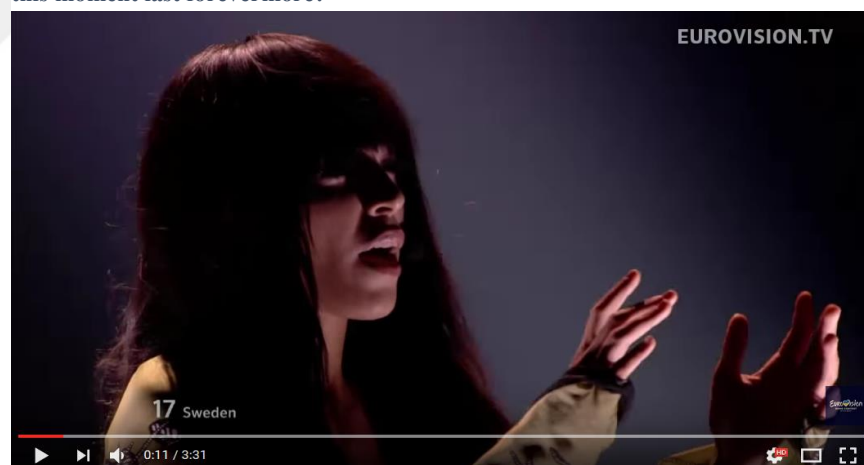
Source: eurovision.tv

Loreen brought the victory to Sweden after thirteen years of break since 1999's win with Charlotte Nilsson's *Take Me to Your Heaven*. Actually it was the fifth Swedish victory in Eurovision history (and the sixth one was going to happen only 3 years later in 2015 with Mans Zelmerlöv's *Heroes*). After the victory in ESC, Loreen's song *Euphoria* became a hit all around Europe and even in the world playlists. It was such an authentic song in it's own right (even the name of it is very interesting and intriguing), but of course with an amazing stage show on the Eurovision stage - especially with the lighting effects and the mystic dancing moves of Loreen - it became a legend (Figure 4.23).

The lighting effects at the beginning of the song were very outstanding and impressive; European audience probably had never seen such professional lighting effects before. Everywhere was dark in the arena, then suddenly some striking spotlights were all over the stage with a loud scary tune in the meantime at the background. Two seconds and then that scary loud tune calms down, leaving its place to a quiet but exciting melody, which reminds the sound of calming raindrops after the storm. Here Loreen starts singing her lyrics; 'Why? Why can't this moment last forevermore?' (Figure 4.24). With 'this moment' she is kind of referring to the voice of thunder and the lightning's striking. She

seems to love that unique moment of nature and wants it to last for more. For sure, it is a unique moment for humans, not everyday we see lightings or hear thunders, they don't last for so long, they symbolize sort of a supernatural power, even for some people they symbolize God, who is giving a message to humans by his supernatural forces (weather and climate events are known to be some of those forces), according to religious thoughts only God can control the weather. Well, what Loreen seems to talk about is metaphorically that moment - also by her standing position and opening hands towards the sky, she seems really talking to God. She is also referring to her song by these moves - the message is; 'my song is a unique song like this thunder, and I'm going to make you want to hear it forever, so focus and listen to it'. Her symbolic lyrics and messages become more powerful at the chorus part, where she sings 'Euphoria, an everlasting piece of art, a beating love within my heart, we're going up-up-up..', she tries to point out that her song *Euphoria* will be an everlasting piece of art in Eurovision history, televoters will love this beat and put Sweden onto the top of the voting list by giving high points to the entry.

Figure 4.24: Loreen opening up her hands to the sky and singing, 'Why? Why can't this moment last forevermore?'



Sources: youtube.com

The name of the song 'Euphoria' is all by itself a signifying word and 'state'. Euphoria means an affective state in which a person experiences pleasure or excitement and intense feelings of well-being and happiness.⁵⁹ Laughter, music and many religious rituals are strongly synchronized activities associated with physical effort and a similarly strong sense of euphoria. Euphoria can occur also as a result of dancing to music, music-making,

⁵⁹ Bearn J, O'Brien M (2015). ""Addicted to Euphoria": The History, Clinical Presentation, and Management of Party Drug Misuse". *Int. Rev. Neurobiol.* 120: 205–33.

and listening to emotionally arousing music.⁶⁰ Loreen's performance is all signifying this expression of 'euphoria'. She is both music-making (singing on the stage), dancing to the music, doing some religious or spiritual rituals like yoga or Zen dance moves (especially being 'barefoot' like Sertab Erener and Dima Bilan), also kind of talking to God by opening her hands towards the sky. All these activities gather and create literally a 'euphoria' on the stage.

Figure 4.25: Her finger, giving signals of getting the first place, signifying victory..



Source: youtube.com

Her shabby kimono-style clothes also fits well with the mystical lyrics, spiritual dance moves and the dark mysterious stream of the lightings. There is a moment where she does the '1' number with her finger during her choreography (Figure 4.25), it's another sign for the televoters – signifying 'to make Loreen put in the 'first' place'. Also especially towards the end there is a moment where she does some other interesting moves with her hands; there she seems like having an unseen Powerball in her hand (like in the arcade game Street Fighter, there was

'aduket' move looking just like this), and by those hand moves she controls her dance partner (who shows up towards the end of the performance); she doesn't touch him physically but seems to control him by those hand moves because he dances parallel to those moves like he is in control of some supernatural power (Figure 4.26). With her shabby and spiritual clothes and dark long hairs which cover most of the face of hers Loreen already looks like a wizard (or even a witch) – those control dance moves only add spice to her image and mystic song. (Actually on some Eurovision fan sites, some audience found this look depressive and scary, associating it with Sadako -Japanese version- or Samara -The Hollywood version- from *The Ring* movie⁶¹). By the way both two performers on the stage – Loreen and her dancing partner – they didn't look Swedish

⁶⁰ Cohen EE, Ejsmond-Frey R, Knight N, Dunbar RI (2010). "Rowers' high: behavioural synchrony is correlated with elevated pain thresholds" *Biol. Lett.* 6 (1): 106–8. doi:10.1098/rsbl.2009.0670

⁶¹ <http://www.europlop.co.uk/2012/05/loreen-euphoria/>

at all. “Loreen, who is Moroccan-Swedish, was sharing the stage with Texas-born dancer Ausben Jordan, who is of mixed African-American and Native-American descent. The song ‘Euphoria’ was actually fitting well within a brand of a modern, multi-ethnic Sweden, emphasizing modern dance and an edgy image” (Meijer, 2013).

Figure 4.26: Loreen doing some ‘aduket’ moves and it’s snowing on the stage.



Source: youtube.com

All the choreography of course became powerful with the close-up camera angles and steady-cams, and some spider-cam usage in the middle of the performance. The song was catchy by itself, but with those angles and staging effects it became more gorgeous. Especially after the second chorus, the calm part just before the final chorus, it starts to snow on the dark stage (it’s a fake snow for sure), and Loreen continues to sing under those snowing particles which makes her and the stage look cooler; here the audience in the arena who were already under the influence of such a mystic and powerful song, start to clap their hands and whistle very loudly. That snowing element of staging was really one of the most amazing stage show moments in Eurovision history. Those fascinating effects were too much for everybody – they were the final signs that guaranteed Loreen’s win. Also when Loreen heard the crazy applauses in the middle of her performance, she couldn’t help herself too and smiled in a humble way where she shouldn’t actually do that, because she was too much focused and was singing some serious lyrics in that moment. Even that smile was signifying her victory, she was like: ‘I didn’t even finish singing but they’re already applauding me, seems like I’m going to be the winner this year, hoo-raay!..’ and that’s what truly happened. *Euphoria* got the highest votes from televoters and became an ever-lasting piece of art in Eurovision history.

4.12. 2013 – DENMARK (EMILIE DE FOREST-ONLY TEARDROPS)

One year pause after Loreen's dark but cool staging and we are back again with flames, ashes and warm stage lightings. Denmark was the only country that used those warm and sparkling special effects at this year's contest. Ukraine (singer: Zlata Ognevitsh – song: *Gravity*) also used some pyrotechnics at the end of their performance and got the second place in televoting. But Denmark was more outstanding than Ukraine because they did not only use flames or fire effects, they also used too many close-up angles and on top of it also tried something new in Eurovision history that has never been used before: there were some sharp 'fade-in and out' transition effects at the opening of the song, which seemed impressive and new to the European audience. This idea of using those effects brought the victory to Denmark - no other country came up with this kind of brilliant idea until that year. Technology is developing every year, so does the stage productions, especially in Eurovision Song Contest. Goodman (Eurovision senior communications officer) says:

"Eurovision continually pushes the boundaries of what is possible on television, - as it has always done since it started 61 seasons ago, with seven member countries. On the subject of technology, one-third of the world's LED screens were reportedly put into service at the 2009 edition in Moscow. Two years later, the contest in Düsseldorf set even higher standards." (Fulker, 2016)

One could suppose while watching Denmark's entry that Eurovision's own stage choreographers were making a favor and helping Denmark to win this year by putting those differing cool transitions to the stream. But this is not something that is totally up to them, they don't %100 decide how the stream of the performance is going to look like, it's the decision of the participating country and their own stage choreographers. If you have an idea or a special request they are there to help you and make the ideal scene in your mind happen in real, on the Eurovision stage.

"National broadcaster of the hosting country provides the infrastructures, but individual countries may bring along their own props. These are rare, however, as most of the visuals are created by the light panels that give the stage seemingly ever-expanding or contracting dimensions. Although each song is very different in its video effects, individual wishes are coordinated with the local technical team." (Fulker, 2016)

Denmark's team this year, seems to be the first one who requested such transitions in the whole Eurovision history. Fade-in and outs at the beginning, helped their song look like an exciting Hollywood trailer; the intro was giving the message that 'you are just watching the teaser right now, the real movie and action is about to start, so get ready...'

The performance starts with a medium close-up shot of a guy playing his flute. He plays some Irish-sounding fairytalish melody. This sound is actually signifying all the Nordic countries and their Scandinavian ethnic sounds. Alexander Rybak's *Fairytale* also had a similar melody like that. The steady-cam slowly zooms out from that angle and shows the stage behind this guy where we see from an extreme-wide-shot our real performer - Emilie de Forest. Here comes the first fade-in effect; the screen goes dark for one second and when it's bright again, we see Emilie in a medium-shot. Suddenly comes the second fade-in, it's dark for a second, and then bright again where Emilie is in a wide-shot angle for this time. Finally the third fade-in comes and after that we see Emilie in an extreme-wide-shot but in the meantime the steady-cam is quickly coming closer to her. The fading effects end after that moment and never show up again until the closing part of the performance (the last fading was seen exactly at 03:00, signifying the closure and 'the end' of the story/performance). Until that final fading effect, too many close-ups and extreme wide shots take over the stream – which are always seem to be impressive and eye-catching for the televoters.

Figure 4.27: Emilie De Forest on the Eurovision stage in Malmö, Sweden, 2013.



Source: eurovision.tv

While camera angles change all the time and continue in a perfect stream, we see some ash images on the back screen which turn suddenly into flames at the chorus part where it's always getting more exciting to listen. Towards the end of the performance, the flames and ashes get more shinier – so does the stage (Figure 4.27). After a while, there is even an illusion created, an illusion of the ashes looking like some confetti, reminiscent of a

party, or a celebration. That confetti on the stage was already signifying a future party or a celebration -meaning also a victory at the end of the day- which exactly happened. Denmark got the highest score both from televoting and jury votes, they got what they wanted by putting those effects to the stage. As a result, the dreamy confetti during their performance turned into the real confetti blowing up above their heads after the voting results and the victory.

Actually Emilie won not just because of her stage effects. Those only helped her to win. On the other hand she had a good and catchy song with strong message-giving 'peaceful' lyrics such as 'How many times can we win and lose? How many times can we break the rules? Between us.. Only teardrops.. How many times do we have to fight? How many times till we get it right? Between us.. Only teardrops..'' It is a pop song with some folk nuances in the musical arrangement. The lyrics tell about "a couple that are having problems and who are on the verge of separating and the overall atmosphere of the song is sad and slightly hopeless" says Siitonen (2014). Although it sounds and seems like a hopeless love song written and singed for a lover at first (at the second part of the song she sings directly looking at the flute-player guy's eyes - like she is deeply in love with him); the lyrics are also signifying and referring to politics, wars, death, pain, misery and shame. The songwriters could write it for the Syrian Civil War starting in 2011, mentioning the role of EU in this situation. Pierini (2016) states that:

"The Syrian war has left the EU in a second-tier position among international actors. The violent policies of the Syrian regime, Russia's show of force, Turkey's ambivalent policy on the self-proclaimed Islamic State and the Syrian Kurds, and the EU's internal divisions have given the union little influence on the course of events in Syria. Yet the brunt of the war's humanitarian, economic, and security consequences falls on EU countries. The EU's future role in Syria will be a litmus test of a genuine common foreign and security policy. If the EU is unable to craft an effective, well-coordinated policy on Syria, it may see its role limited to humanitarian actions. Rehabilitating the traumatized Syrian people and piecing together communities that previously had a tradition of coexistence would take several generations. The EU has the potential to play a key role here. But because of the habits picked up during the first six years of implementation of the Lisbon Treaty, it is far from certain that in the diplomatic and rehabilitation phases the union would find the role it has lacked during the war. Violence exerted as a matter of power and survival is the opposite of what the EU stands for. As a peace project born out of Europe's successive and devastating wars in the twentieth century, the EU can hardly comprehend, much less anticipate, the unlimited violence that is customary to the Assad-Makhlouf clan. Consequently, the shocking repression of peaceful opponents by the regime during the first phase of the Syrian revolution resulted in a strong declaratory policy from EU leaders. The EU could not remain silent in the face of such levels of violence and therefore reacted rapidly with a straightforward position—that Assad must leave office—based on an early (and mistaken) assumption that the regime would fall in short order. Although this position never translated into swift action in the military or diplomatic field, for several years it remained the European Union's sole mantra."

Emilie may be referring to this conflict; the people dying in Syria, EU's stolid and selfish position in this case - taking no action for those people. 'How many times can we win and lose, break the rules' are the lyrics signifying EU's power and abilities to heal the situation, but by singing also 'between us only teardrops' Emilie means that nobody in EU is taking an action, we only feel sad, cry or pray for those suffering people there.

The lyrics being related to the Syrian War at that time or not, in general its clear that Emilie is giving a message of a peaceful world in her lyrics. Also she is giving these signifying messages with some interesting hand moves while singing, like she is casting some spell with her hands (Figure 4.28). Last year's winner Loreen may influenced her with those similar hand moves. Emilie's stage image was also very symbolic, authentic and convenient for such magical hand moves. A peace-bringer should look peaceful, too. Wearing a red or black dress would make her look scary or sexy instead of peaceful. With her blonde long messy hairs, long beige large cozy dress and some golden bracelets around her arms, she looked very peaceful and furthermore signifying sort of a Goddess of peace or a fairy or even an elf (like J.R.R.Tolkien's 'Galadriel'). Also she was barefoot like Sertab Erener, Dima Bilan and Loreen; there is definitely a success story when you get barefoot on stage. With right choice of costume and image, the theme and the message of the song became more powerful. Everything was well-thought; her authentic style, magical hand moves, gestures, lyrics, staging... As a result everything worked perfectly; televoters received this magical, peaceful and creating awareness message with pleasure; putting Emilie in the first place that year by televoting.

Figure 4.28: Emilie's interesting hand gestures...



Source: eurovision.tv

4.13. 2014 – AUSTRIA (CONCHITA WURST-RISE LIKE A PHOENIX)

This year, it was -again- one of the years that the winner could be easily guessed by its special effects, camera angles, image and style of the performer, and of course message-giving lyrics. From the opening, till the closing of the performance, anything that could be spent was spent mostly on Austria's stage that year. If one checks all the other performances, one will see that not only the best stage effects and camera angles were applied on Austria's performance, but also the performer's image was very interesting and authentic by itself. All the classic winning elements for a Eurovision format were available only in Austria's song this year. Televoters found all those elements strong, sophisticated, authentic and interesting enough to vote. At the end Austria won by a huge difference both in televoting and the jury votes. According to Leibetseder Austria's song was special because:

“The song, a typical ballad, comes across very camp, for all the reasons that Freya Jarman-Ivens describes in Notes on Musical Camp. It starts off with an orchestral opening, continues to escalate in levels of theatricality and extravagance, transported by a voice that steadily becomes more impassioned. It culminates in the rise of a semitone in the last refrain of the song. Conchita's diva-like performance is kitsch, and in line with many of the other legendary Eurovision performances. As gauged by public reactions, the camp character of this song (through Conchita's beard and the lyrics) was unveiled in tandem with a political message (acceptance of gender non-conforming and same-sex relationships) that led to much debate”. (Leibetseder 2017, pp.300-313)

First of all the intro of the song starts with an extreme wide-shot and some extremely eye-catching flashing red lights on a dark stage. In the meantime a sound tunes in, reminding a James Bond movie theme - which sounds mysterious, catchy and familiar if you have ever watched a James Bond movie before. The red flashlights flash about two seconds and then disappear. Instead of them some white spotlights from the ceiling fall onto the performer. In the meantime the James-Bondish tune continues and a spider-cam slowly starts flying closer to the performer from the following extreme wide shot angle. While the spider-cam flies towards the performer, everywhere is dark beside the spotlights. After a while we finally hear our mysterious performer's singing the lyrics “Peering from the mirror, No, that isn't me, Stranger getting nearer.. (here the spider-cam comes closer to the performer; the moving camera is actually that ‘stranger getting nearer’ - which also represents televoters' eyes through the camera's angle. Or, maybe the performer is just referring to itself by looking into the mirror and seeing a stranger; which is a reference to the performer's real persona and his drag-character ‘Conchita’). The lyrics continue as

follows: ‘Who can this person be? You wouldn’t know me at all today..’, after the last sentence spider-cam stops in a medium close-up shot and her figure in the dark suddenly enlightens where we finally see that mysterious singing stranger’s face. Surprisingly what we see is a face of a woman with a beard. How do we understand that she is a woman? Because she is wearing a shiny long narrow gold dress, she has long swinging earrings on her ears, she has good make-up on her face (especially those long black eyelashes), her hair is long and cared, and her voice actually sounds like a female voice after all.

Actually Conchita Wurst, is an Austrian pop recording artist and drag queen portrayed by Thomas Neuwirth⁶². Neuwirth has stated that he does not identify as a trans woman, but as a man. He is gay⁶³, and he also describes himself as a drag queen.⁶⁴ Neuwirth developed the persona of Conchita Wurst, a bearded woman. In the German language, *wurst* means sausage, although in an interview Neuwirth relates the choice of last name to the common German expression "Das ist mir doch alles Wurst", which translates as "it's all the same to me", and "I don't care", stating that the name emerged from the first meaning of that expression. The name "Conchita" meanwhile had been adopted from a Cuban friend of his. He also explained that *conchita* is Spanish slang for vagina and *Wurst* is German slang for penis.⁶⁵ Wurst's selection has highlighted Europe's geographical divide on attitudes to homosexuality. Unlikely to raise much controversy in the West, her appearance has prompted criticism by some in the East where anti-gay rhetoric remains more common.⁶⁶ No matter what she or he is, Conchita brought the first place to Austria with her authentic image and stage show (Figure 4.29). After the final results when she got on the stage to take her trophy she didn’t miss the chance to express herself and her thoughts about all those controversies and critics going on about her: "This night is dedicated to everyone who believes in a future of peace and freedom. You know who you are. We are unity and we are unstoppable." ⁶⁷

⁶² Royston, Benny (2017). Eurovision Song Contest icon Conchita Wurst to be ‘killed off’ by alter-ego Tom Neuwirth <http://metro.co.uk/2017/02/15/eurovision-song-contest-icon-conchita-wurst-to-be-killed-off-by-alter-ego-tom-neuwirth-6450438/>

⁶³ Bromwich, Kathryn (2014). Eurovision The Observer, Conchita Wurst: 'Most artists are sensitive and insecure people. I am too' <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2014/jul/06/conchita-interview-sensitive-insecure-eurovision-gay-pin-up-austrian>

⁶⁴ Interview with Conchita Wurst: ‘I’m only a Drag Queen With a Beard’ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iS2x4aZy2v0>

⁶⁵ Conchita Wurst explains her name, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R7gfV8QabMs>

⁶⁶ <http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-austria-eurovision-drag-idUKKBN0DE06O20140428>

⁶⁷ Gripper, Ann (2014). Conchita Wurst wins Eurovision 2014 for Austria with Rise Like A Phoenix <http://www.mirror.co.uk/tv/tv-news/conchita-wurst-wins-eurovision-2014-3524856>

Figure 4.29: Conchita Wurst on Eurovision stage in Kopenhagen, Denmark 2014.



Source: eurovision.tv

Her lyrics also fit very well to her appearance and sexual choices, “Once I’m transformed, once I’m reborn.. out of the ashes I’ll rise like a phoenix!”, all of them signify transformation, trans people, homosexuality.

The chorus refers to the myth of the phoenix that rises out of the ashes and is transformed and reborn, very much like Conchita herself. ‘You threw me down’ and ‘you’re my flame’ hints at the homo- and transphobic statements, or hate speech, that Conchita and many other LGBTIQ-people have encountered. The phoenix is symbolic of recovery and with the help of Hegel (Phenomenology of the Spirit), there is a comparison here of the legendary bird to the spirit, who is ‘constantly reconstituting itself from its wounds’ and ‘from its ashes is produced the new, renovated, fresh life. (Leibetseder, 2017).

When she sings those lyrics, the special effects behind her back, match perfectly with the stream; there are some moving images of ‘ashes’ which turn into ‘flames’ after a while and some images of ‘wings’ symbolizing a phoenix’s wings. Also there were warm lightings, especially orange and yellow which usually signify ‘gold’, also literally signify ‘gold medallion’, - which means victory and first place. There are some real flames at the end of the performance (Figure 4.30). Performers should make their burning ‘flame’ moves very wisely. If they put the flames at the opening part and never use them again till the ending, audience will forget that there were any flames; but if they put the flames towards the ending, which is usually the peak point of a song – it works (so far all the winners with flames used their flames towards their ending parts). Switzerland also had some flame effects this year but they got the 13th place although their song was cheerful

and also authentic. There was a handsome guy called Sebalter, who was only whistling at the chorus part of his song. He and his team didn't use wisely the flame effects, because they put it at the beginning of the song, which was not fitting well with the lyrics and the stream of their song at all. Also the guy was sort of a copy of 2009's winner Alexander Rybak, with his violin ad costume style. So nor a fake Alexander Rybak, neither some blowy ashes or flames at the beginning of his song would carry him to the first place when there are better flames used at the right time and the right place like in Conchita's stream.

Figure 4.30: Real flames and warm lightings used for Austria's stage.



Source: youtube.com

“The song, ‘Rise like a Phoenix’, a power ballad, was intended to emphasize the glamour and elegance of Conchita Wurst’s look and powerful countertenor voice. The typical Eurovision spectacle (lights and pyrotechnic effects) would make her appearance and the song even more exhilarating.” (Liebetseder, 2017)

The Austrian choreographer Marvin Dietmann was the one who made the successful and stunning staging of Conchita Wurst's winning performance. He was also the stage director of the entire 2015 ESC when it was hold in Vienna following year. Here is an interview of him with the Eurovision press: ⁶⁸

Press: What is the secret to staging a perfect Eurovision performance?

Dietmann: Do you want to make me unemployed?!

P: What has to be present then?

D: Honesty and authenticity.

⁶⁸ <https://www.eurovision.de/news/Marvin-Dietmann-inszeniert-Levinas-ESC-Auftritt,dietmann102.html>

P: You helped Conchita to victory with her stage show. What was so special about this production?

D: At the Eurovision, it is no longer “just” a stage show, but a whole package consisting of many small parts. With Conchita I was able to see how her personality gave the whole team – and, of course, myself – a clear direction. That’s what I meant about honesty and authenticity. It is not about satisfying my personal, creative ideas, but I see my task to pick up and position the artist correctly.

P: How do you find inspiration for your productions?

D: The artist and their individual story – that gives me the basis, the stage concept should work for them.

4.14. 2015 – SWEDEN (MANS ZELMERLÖW-HEROES)

This year was the last time that the jury votes were counted and added to the final points as 50%. Following from the next year, the jury votes would be added directly to the televoting. If we deny the jury points and look only at the televoting, we see that Italy was the winner of the year, they both won the contest and the hearts of European televoters. Although Sweden’s song had the best stage show and all other classic winning elements, the European televoter decided not to vote for a fancy stage production this time; they voted instead for Italy’s less fancy stage but strong song and pop-operatic performance.

Also maybe European televoter noticed that Sweden’s song was actually an overinspired song of another famous song that was released recently a year ago and became a hit around all the world’s music playlists - it was DJ David Guetta’s hit single *Lovers on the Sun*. The West side melodic intro, the stream of the music, the speed... It was all reminding Guetta’s song. If Mans Zelmerlöv and his team would participate with their song five or ten years later, maybe nobody would notice that, because probably Guetta’s *Lovers On the Sun* would be forgotten until that time; but since it’s release in the end of June 2014 it became a huge hit, it’s hard to forget such a hit song very quickly in a year, the European televoter was not that ignorant, especially when David Guetta is a very beloved DJ in Europe and known for his great concerts there.

Before the finals, every participating entry is released on Eurovision's official page, so the fans can listen to the songs, get used to them, choose their favorites, leave comments, discuss, etc. Some very active-social-media Eurovision fans noticed very quickly the similarity between Sweden's song and David Guetta's hit single. Many of them left some comments on social media about the issue. Even San Marino's entrance that year, Michele Perniola mentioned the resemblance on his own Twitter page after his defeat in the semifinal (Figure 4.31). Journalists also made some news about the issue.⁶⁹ Before the grand final, some fans also prepared a mixed videoclip of two songs⁷⁰, showing how similar they are in real.

Figure 4.31: Tweet of San Marino's entrance.



Source: twitter.com

After the victory, even Avicii, the superstar Swedish DJ and co-producer of Guetta's track, has weighed in on the debate, making it official that there is a problem with the Eurovision winning song that year. In his interview for the Associated Press, Avicii said: "I think it was a worse version of David Guetta's song. But it was fun that we won, at least, you know. I'm happy that we made some kind of impact at least, even if it's David's song."⁷¹ Most of the audience probably knew that there was something wrong with the song, although Zelmerlöv had never accepted the accusations. He really had a great high-tech stage show and a catchy song, but after all European audience put him to the 3rd place. Italy with their song Grande Amore instead, got the first place from televoters, but also very low points from the jury. At the end, in total, unluckily Italy settled on the third place. Before checking Italy's performance, let's see how impressive the winner Mans Zelmerlöv's stage show was.

⁶⁹ Some news around Europe about Sweden's criticised song: <http://www.expressen.se/noje/melodifestivalen/mans-svar-pa-kritiken-det-ar-inget-plagiat/>, <https://www.svd.se/plagiat-eller-inte-for-mans-zelmerlow-w4z>, <http://www.europapress.es/chance/cineymusica/noticia-mans-zelmerlow-heroes-copiando-david-guetta-20150318113801.html>, http://www.eska.pl/news/eurowizja_2015_szwecja_skopiowala_utwor_dawida_guetty_posluchaj_utworu_heroes_mansa_zelmerlowa_video/116939

⁷⁰ (Further watching: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v1v1TGlx1A>).

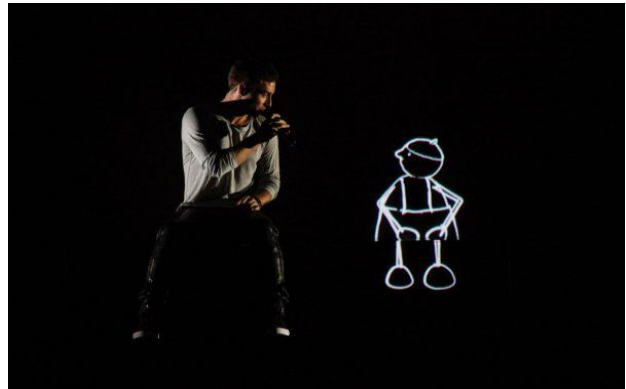
⁷¹ Avicii on Sweden's Pow.erhouse Moment, *Associated Press*' Official Youtube Channel <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dqykqcuqiZk>

Swedish choreographers must be the best in this stage and show business, we've already experienced that in Loreen's performance back in 2012. Also before and after Loreen there were many outstanding stage shows from Sweden in the contest, most of them getting good impressions and votes from the televoters, replacing

themselves in top 5 usually.⁷² Mans Zelmerlöv's stage show was one of them for the year 2015 and by landside it was the best stage show in that year. The performance starts with a medium-shot; Mans sitting on a unseen bench at a fully dark stage (Figure 4.32) and singing his opening lyrics. This opening seems so mysterious and out-standing among the other participating countries that year. The next shot is a wide-shot where he snaps his finger in that darkness and suddenly a light and a dust image appears like a magic on the backscreen. That dusty image slowly turns into an image of a moving stickman. Mans for a while sings his song to that little stickman - like a father talking to his son. The lyrics fit perfectly with that choreography, '...live your life like there is no tomorrow son.. and tell the others..'. After then Mans makes some moves which the little stickman copies; Mans decides to scooch over so does the stickman, Mans crosses his legs and sits like that – stickman does the same.

When the chorus tunes in, where Mans sings 'We are the heroes of our time, but we are dancing with the demons in our minds..', especially at the word 'demons' the camera focuses on that little stickman and suddenly the stickman disappears; it was a reference to the stickman being an imaginary friend of Mans and also being his little demon in his mind. The Swedish team, instead of using a demon image, used an image of a cute fat little stickboy, wearing a salopet and a hat (like a little child dresses up). The performance continues with some other special effects like images of raindrops behind Mans, and Mans' splashing those illusional raindrops with his foot onto the stickman, or some butterfly-wings appearing and moving behind Mans' back.

Figure 4.32: Sweden's technological stage in 2015.



Source: youtube.com

⁷² Swedish participants through the years. <http://www.eurovision.tv/page/history/by-country/country?country=16>

Figure 4.33: Special effects shot



Figure 4.34: Transition into real shot



Sources: Screenshots from youtube.com

By the way, from the beginning of the performance we see how Mans all the time rhythmically changes the position of the microphone in his hand. With one hand he holds the mic, with his other hand he does those crazy illusionary moves, everytime when he changes the position of the mic, the audience thinks that there is a new illusion coming up, it increases the expectations as well as the excitement and the interest of the stage show. Those special effects continue on the stage till the end of the performance. Especially where the camera shows an extreme-close-up image of Mans' dusted singing face, was very-well designed by the special effects team (Figure 4.33). Then this image of dusts becomes real and turns into Mans real face – by the help of camera slide effect transition (Figure 4.34).

Actually all those effects of Sweden's stage this year (Figure 4.36) remind us Beyonce's stage performance in 2011 Billboard Awards (Figure 4.35). She was the first one who came up with such a different stage show.⁷³

Figure 4.35: 2011 Billboard Awards



Figure 4.36: 2015 Eurovision Song Contest



Sources: Screenshots from youtube.com

⁷³ Beyonce Billboard Awards Performance 2011 (Run The World - Girls) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1zaWaUjMIQQ>

Most of the European televoters could easily vote for Sweden and their amazing stage show this year, but as I mentioned at the beginning, they preferred to vote for a more authentic song like Italy's *Grande Amore*. Italy participated with an operatic pop trio this year – three young boys - the baritone Gianluca Ginoble, and two tenors, Piero Barone and Ignazio Boschetto under the group name *Il Volo*.⁷⁴ The lyrics were all in Italian, so probably many audience who don't speak or know any Italian wouldn't understand them at all. But sometimes you don't have to signify every word and give a meaning to it; sometimes you just focus on the music, the melody, the voices and the body gestures in a performance, they can make some sense and give some symbolic messages too.

As Leppert explains (1993, p.155); “The semiotics of musical imagery develop not only from instruments employed as props but also from the representation of gestures and other expressive qualities of the human body as these relate to musical activity.” Italian may be a hard language to understand, but everybody knows or at least heard once in his life some basic Italian words like; *buon giorno* (good morning), *bellissimo* (beautiful), *grazie* (thanks), *amore* (love), *grande* (big).. So when you listen to the song *Grande Amore*, you can basically predict what about the song is going to be.

It's a romantic song; you understand that firstly from the name of it (*amore*=love). Secondly you understand it from the soft intro of the piano sonata playing at the background. Knight (2006) says:

“It is the piano that stands foremost amongst the instruments as the vehicle for the self-expression of the Romantic individual, since it alone is almost always played unaccompanied. The piano is also particularly suited to Romantic ideals because of its expressive potential: its capacity to sustain notes, and to produce immense variations in tone and volume, unlike its predecessors the harpsichord and clavichord.”

Thirdly, you understand that it's a romantic song from the chic, formally-dressed (more like a groom) good-looking Italian guys standing on the stage; giving you a feeling that they are ready to sing you a serenade or make a proposal. When the lyrics start, the camera zooms in from a medium-shot to a medium-close-up to each performer when they sing individually their own parts. The audience gets to know each singing face closer at this moment. The three men by the help of the intimate camera movements are trying to impress the audience with their pretty faces, emotional hands and face gestures. The

⁷⁴ Biography of Il Volo. <http://www.ilvolo.mus.br/il-volo/il-volo-en-us/>

lighting on the stage is all blue, gives you a cold feeling at the beginning for such a romantic song (it will change into a warm lighting after the first chorus), also there are some objects on the backscreen sort of signifying Italy and the Roman Empire, they don't perfectly fit with the lyrics of the song, but perfectly symbolize Italy and the Roman Empire's architecture and cultural heritage (Figure 4.37).

Figure 4.37: Cold, blue lighting with some Roman Empire figures at the backscreen reminding Italy.



Source: Screenshot from youtube.com

When the second guy starts singing the word 'amore' with his rising powerful voice (in the meantime a steady-cam zoom outs showing all of the stage), the audience in the arena chill both by the voice and the camera movement, and start to clap their hands. Then the third guy who is a tenor hits the high notes before the chorus part, the temperature gets really high, the audience gets more excited and clap their hands stronger (some of them even cheer up very much and start whistling); they understand that the chorus part is coming and it's coming very strong. Also that cold blue color lighting on the stage sort of symbolizes the silence before the storm and fits perfectly with the going on melody and the rising tones of the performers. On the other hand, some smoke and cloud images also start to appear on the screen, surrounding the sculpture images. It really looks like a storm is going on the backscreen. Smoke is the next very effective winning element on Eurovision stage after the flames, gimmicks or any kind of pyrotechnics (we have already experienced it in Russia's *Believe*, Finland's *Hard Rock Hallelujah* and Austria's *Rise Like a Phoenix*, although they used real smokes, not some images on the backscreen).

The last tenor sings next with his powerful voice and increases the expectations so high before the chorus that audience can't even imagine how higher they can sing at the chorus part. "Chorus is almost always of greater musical and emotional intensity than the verse. The chorus, which gets its name from a usual thickening of texture from the addition of backing vocals, is always a discrete section that nearly always prolongs the tonic and carries an unvaried poetic text." (Everett 1999, p.16). The trio sing the chorus part all together very successfully and professionally, making the audience shiver by this sort of impressive vocal performance. Also the pre-recorded orchestra sound in this part sounds very strong and impressive, it gives you the feeling that you are in an opera theater.

At the second part of their performance, when the chorus is just over – so is the imaginary feeling of a storm - the lightings change from cold blue into a warm orange color; and again we see the camera showing each singer singing individually their parts, but this time in a more closed-up shot comparing to the opening part's medium-shot. When the second chorus part tunes in, the smoky images and effects continue but this time with the warm lightings they seem more like an eruption, not a storm anymore. Italy seems to blow up and burn down the stage into pieces with their performance. To sum up, considering only the televoting, again we see how both warm lighting with firing effects and cold lighting with smoky effects or at least images of them on the stage, effect the European televoters and their votes.

4.15. 2016 – UKRAINE (JAMALA-1944)

This year was the first time both televoting and jury points were summed up all together; which brought Ukraine the victory with their performer Jamala and her song *1944* (Figure 4.38) although their stage show was not very fancy or out-standing in terms of an ideal Eurovision song in 2000s. But if we do not reckon the jury points and look just at the televoting, again we see how the European televoter voted for an out-standing stage show; which belongs to Russia and Sergey Lazarev's performance with his song *You're The Only One*. They got the highest score in televoting, but because of the low jury points they couldn't even get the second place in the total results. Talking about the jury votes, surprisingly the jury decided that Australia -the newcomers entering the contest in 2015-

was the best, and didn't even count Russia in the top four (look at the Table 4.2 below). Actually Australia also had a good stage show in terms of special effects and performance, they could easily deserve to win, but the song and performance was considered to be sort of boring by many audience - especially on social media comments it could be seen⁷⁵ – as a result Australia couldn't get enough attention from the televoters.

Table 4.2: Official results of Eurovision 2016.

Televoting:	1.Russia (361)	2.Ukraine (323)	3.Poland (222)	Australia (191)
Jury:	1.Australia (320)	2.Ukraine (211)	3.France (148)	Malta (137)
Total:	1.Ukraine (534)	2.Australia (511)	3.Russia (491)	Bulgaria (307)

Source: *eurovision.tv*

Although Ukraine's stage show was not as sophisticated as Russia's or Australia's staging, the song was very powerful in terms of vocals and it had some strong messages in it's lyrics. A little bit of audience vote, a little bit of jury vote, in total they took the first place and surprised everyone - especially the bookmakers, because the odds were all on Russia and Australia that year.⁷⁶

Figure 4.38: Jamala on the stage in Stockholm, Sweden - singing her winning song 1944.



Source: *eurovision.tv*

⁷⁵ https://www.reddit.com/r/eurovision/comments/49uwfi/dami_im_sound_of_silence_australia_music_video/http://wiwibloggs.com/2016/03/10/australia-the-full-version-of-dami-ims-sound-of-silence-is-out/131554/

⁷⁶ Eurovision 2016 odds: Russia remains favourite to win ahead of Saturday's final
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/tv/2016/04/21/eurovision-2016-odds-who-should-you-be-betting-on/>

“Is this a win for “political speculation” in the holy realm of pure art as, choking in hatred, endlessly repeat followers of “The Russian World”? Or is it a win for pure human empathy evoked by a beautifully sung quality song deep in moral and philosophical content? A triumph of empathy, finally agreed to by a European majority, thereby confirming its rootedness in the fundamental values of arts culture from antiquity to the present?” asks Morenets (2016).

Before talking about Ukraine’s performance and victory gained by the total amount of jury votes and the televotings, let’s first check only the televoting winner of this year. Russian singer Sergey Lazarev with his song *You are the Only One* had all the classic elements for winning in ESC. Lazarev and his team preferred to strengthen Russia’s entry with a convenient visual theme over the lyrics. In his lyrics, Lazarev sings about thunder, lightning, stars, skyline... All these signs can be seen on the backscreen through the special effects that he and his team decided to use on the stage. The signs change parallel according to his lyrics; when he say lightning – there is a lightning image striking behind his back, when he say stars – there are some stars shining behind him. Also when he makes his moves on the stage, his reflection is seen on the backscreen which also moves parallel to him. Actually this sort of stage show reminds us the previous year’s winner Sweden and their out-standing stage show (Mans Zelmerlöv with his song *Heroes* was the first one who tried those kind of special effects on Eurovision stage). Seems like Russia wanted to use the same idea - applying that kind of high-technology special effects to their own song in 2016. But what they added more was Lazarev’s ability to walk and climb on the vertical screen behind his back (Figure 4.39). There were some invisible steps that could enable him to do that, but for an audience who is unaware of that kind of special technologic effects, it should seem like a magic or a supernatural power. This sort of stage show deserves a vote they probably thought, which actually worked and served the purpose of Russia’s will for the victory.

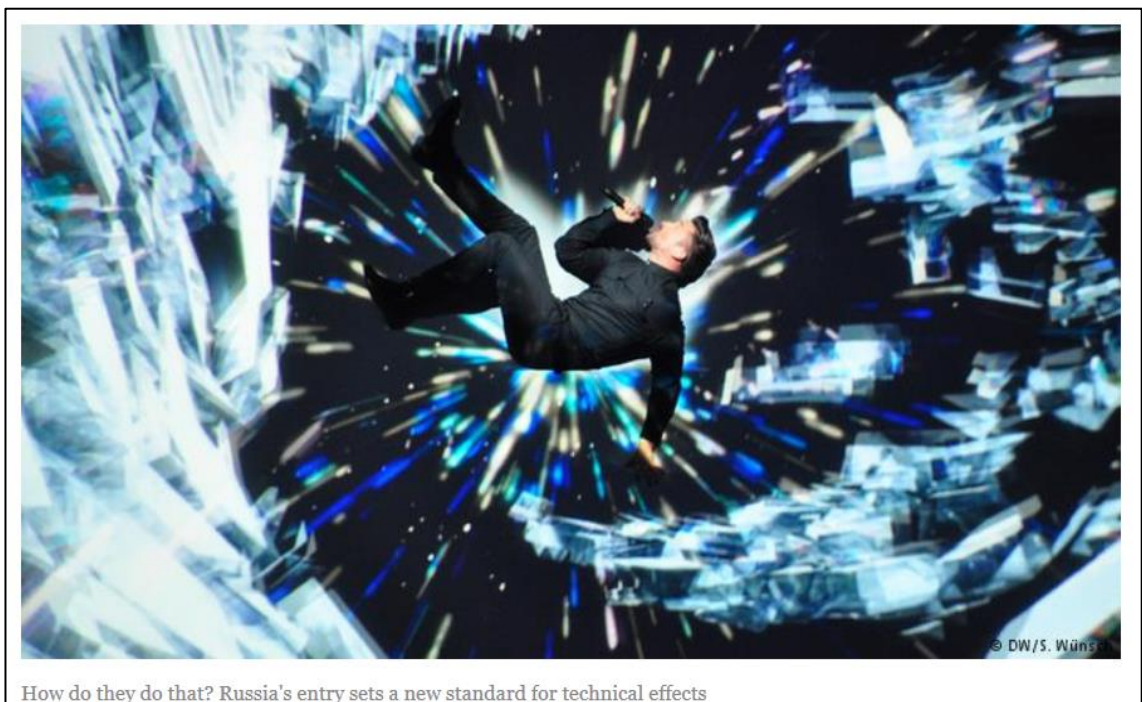
The performance begins with a wide-shot, spider-cam zooming-out from the stage towards the audience in the arena; here we hear only the music, everywhere is dark besides some spotlights on the performer, but we still can’t see this stranger in the dark, such a mysterious and exciting opening... When Lazarev starts to sing his lyrics, the shot changes into a close-up and finally we see his face. It was brightened with a stage light but other places were still dark, even that darkness differs this performance from the others. During the first twenty seconds, the music is slow and the lyrics are calm, here

some close-up angles give a great deepness and meaning to the performance, making Lazarev look more intimate with the watching audience from their TV-screens.

“The close-up is an object of vision, not touch, but it nevertheless provokes a sense of the tangible, the intimate. This is Benjamin’s desire of the masses to bring things closer, to sacrifice uniqueness for reproduction. Epstein (1977) on the other hand writes, ‘The close-up modifies the drama by the impact of proximity. Pain is within reach. If I stretch out my arm I touch you, and that is intimacy. I can count the eyelashes of this suffering. I would be able to taste the tears’. The close-up acts as a nodal point linking the ideologies of intimacy and interiority to public space and the authority of the monumental” (Doane 2003, pp.89-111).

Suddenly the song speeds up and we see a sharp zoom-out, which takes the audience from that calm, deep and intimate feeling and drops into a thrill and excitement instead. At the chorus part, again we see some zoom-ins and zoom-outs but this time with the help of a steady-cam all of them flow perfectly with the stream of the music and the lyrics. Just right before the second part of the song, there is a spider-cam usage, which also looks too exciting and convenient for the stream. Till the end of the performance, those camera movements continue smoothly, but especially towards the ending, the speed of the camera movements increase too much. No other contestant’s camera movements were that much breath-taking as Russia’s that year.

Figure 4.39: Russia with it’s crazy stage show.



Source: eurovision.tv

Although it sounds like a love-song and Lazarev seems to give a message to his lover in his lyrics as saying ‘You’re the only one, my only one’, he is pointing with his finger the symbol ‘1’; as not only giving a message to a lover but also to the European televoter. He is giving the message to the audience that this song is the only one to win, vote for this unique song and make me get the ‘first’ place. He does that number one sign in every ‘one’ word that he sings during his performance (Figure 4.40). What Russia added more to their signs was; although there were no words about wings or flying in the lyrics, they used ‘wings’ image behind Lazarev’s back; which kind of signifies him as an ‘angel’, also referring to something that is ‘holy’, he is ‘holy’.

Figure 4.40: Lazarev giving the message to the audience with his finger doing the number ‘1’ sign, referring to the 1st place.



Source: youtube.com

On the other hand, as I mentioned above, Ukraine and their winning song *1944* performed by Jamala, had not very sophisticated or fancy staged show this year, but still they got the second highest score from the televoters. Probably, the reason behind that was the touching vocal performance of Jamala, and the sad story with a political message behind.

*“With English lyrics and a chorus in Crimean Tatar, Jamala’s song tells the story of the Soviet Red Army’s deportation of nearly 250,000 Crimean Tatars in 1944. The Soviet government had accused Tatars of collaborating with the Nazis forces occupying the peninsula, resettling them in Central Asia and remote regions of Russia. Between 20 and 50% of the deportees died within the first two years of exile, a tragedy Ukraine’s supreme council recently declared a genocide. ‘This song really is about my family, my grandmother,’ Jamala said. ‘I had to write it. It is a memorial song and it is difficult for me to sing it’.”*⁷⁷

⁷⁷ Viktoria Veselova and Oleksandra Melnykova for RFE/RL (February 2016) “Crimean singer in line to represent Ukraine at Eurovision” <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/feb/11/crimean-singer-in-line-to-represent-ukraine-at-eurovision>

Jamala also said that she had entered Eurovision because she wanted people to hear a song written "in a state of helplessness" after Russia's seizure of her land.⁷⁸ But some Russian politicians, as well as authorities in Crimea, accused the Ukrainian authorities of using the song "to offend Russia" and "capitalising on the tragedy of the Tatars to impose on European viewers a false picture of alleged harassment of the Tatars in the Russian Crimea"⁷⁹. Although Eurovision rules prohibit songs with lyrics that could be interpreted as having "political content", on 9 March 2016, a tweet from the European Broadcasting Union confirmed that neither the title nor the lyrics of the song contained "political speech" and therefore it did not breach any Eurovision rule, thus allowing it to remain in the competition.⁸⁰ Whether it was a political message or not, the lyrics were touchy and the voice of Jamala was so strong and deeply effective. Also the music was authentic and different comparing to the other melodies of that year; they had some Ukrainian ethnic instrument sounds at the background.

The performance starts with a medium-shot; Jamala's walking slowly, taking a step by step, coming closer to the camera singing "When strangers are coming.. They come to your house..", the music at the background also sounds like some spirits are walking around and taking steps by steps. The backscreen is dark blue and there are sort of moving waves effects, signifying an ocean or further a sea (this can be also referring to Crimea which is an area by the sea). Until the chorus part of *1944* there are no other different effects or camera angles like Lazarev for example had in his performance. His performance includes nearly 9 different angles in the first thirty seconds of his song till the chorus part comes; on the other hand Jamala's opening also takes thirty seconds till the chorus, but has only one stable angle till that part. In terms of that, Ukrainian song's visual stream is not as outstanding as Russia's; where the first impression in the contest is very important, it's always better to catch audiences' attention at the beginning of the performance; special effects and camera movements play a big role in this case. When Jamala starts singing the chorus part, we finally see a new angle and some special effects on the backscreen – some plants or flowers and their roots coming under the point that she stands on the stage, which makes her look like she is the origin of these roots, which

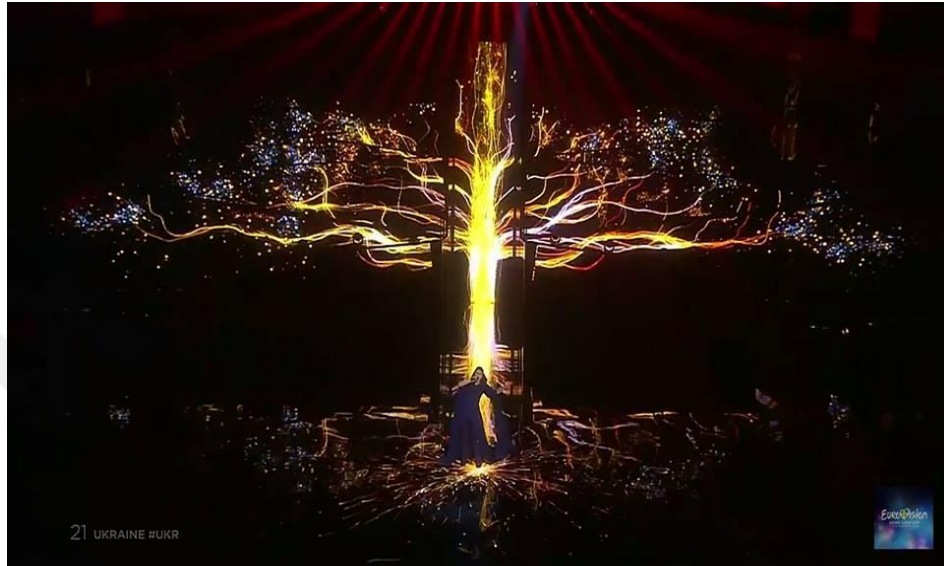
⁷⁸ Mark Savage, Music reporter (February 2016) Eurovision: Ukraine's entry aimed at Russia
<http://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-35630395>

⁷⁹ Crimea's deputy prime minister Russlan Balbek has said: <https://www.rt.com/op-edge/333580-ukraines-song-europe-jamala/>

⁸⁰ https://twitter.com/EBU_HQ/status/707568496079675393

also means that she is a *tree* (signified) but that signified tree image hasn't been showed yet on the stage, it will be shown towards the ending of the performance, in a more sophisticated way. The roots grow like topsies and spread all over the stage slowly during the performance.

Figure 4.41: 'The holy tree' image and special effect comes out suddenly behind Jamala's back.



Source: youtube.com

Towards the end of the song, which also can be considered as the peak point of that performance, because there Jamala uses a really high tone of her voice, and kind of screams; the special effects also burst with the voice of Jamala; all the images of roots burst out at the backscreen from the point that she stands; it looks like an eruption coming out of her body and soul. We witness a great harmony between her strong voice and the special effects. The roots that were getting outside of her at the beginning of the song, are coming back to her at the end very fast and when she screams they turn into a big beautiful shiny holy tree at the backscreen behind her (Figure 4.41). She may seem like a 'mother of nature' figure in this case, bringing all the nature back together - but there is another message under that mother nature figure; she is not the mother of nature but also the mother of nations, addressing all the European countries and their audience to hear her call and gather for Ukraine's and Crimea's situation (especially the final close-up angle and the demanding gestures of Jamala, make an intimate and emotinal connection between her and the televoters [Figure 4.42]) – as if she asks them to pay attention for today's Crimea's Crisis, not actually what happened in 1944.

Figure 4.42: Jamala's demanding gestures at the end of her performance.



Source: youtube.com

Far from what Europe thinks or votes in this situation, the funny thing is, Ukrainian televoters gave 12 points to Russia this year, and Russians gave them 10 points. On the other hand, Ukrainian jury gave zero points to Russia, whereas Russian jury also gave zero points to Ukraine.⁸¹ Seems like only the jury was trying to extend the Cold War between Russia and Ukraine, whereas the televoters focus just on the music and show part of the contest, not any messy politics. Jackson (2017) says:

‘‘In 2016 there seemed to be a thawing of previously held hostilities between countries that had played out through the attribution of points over many years (habitual bias). Some of the professional juries seemed to stick to the script in relation to hostilities regarding (political) non-song contest tensions (perhaps pre-empted by their nation state), and did not reward certain countries for those reasons. However, some of the televoting in 2016 revealed that the citizens of Europe are more enlightened and permissive in their consideration of the best song – which is based on individual choice (democracy at work), and not on long held and out-dated prejudices. This was probably most noticeable when there seemed to be Entente Cordiale between the television viewers in Ukraine and Russia: Ukraine gave Russia twelve points, and Russia gave Ukraine ten points. Power to the people, indeed, and signalling that popularity at the ESC doesn’t need to be political.

Clearly, the song connected with the viewing public on that level, as well as on the spectacle of the performance (great lighting, staging, and art direction, which aided the storytelling of the song). This victory particularly seemed to capture the fundamental principles of the Eurovision Song Contest: solidarity through song and awareness of our cross-cultural differences, histories, and music. Never before has a winning song felt quite so political. It’s not even a case of reading rather than intent, as the intent is clear, and the dialogue was, in reality, clearly political.’’⁸²

⁸¹ Detailed voting result of Eurovision 2016 Final <http://www.eurovision.tv/page/results?event=2113&voter=UA>

⁸² Jackson, Phil (2017) The Politics of Belonging at the Eurovision Song Contest. *EuropeNow*. <http://www.europenowjournal.org/2017/02/28/the-politics-of-belonging-at-the-eurovision-song-contest/>

5. CONCLUSION

My general topic was the winners of Eurovision Song Contest in 2000s. I was interested in the facts which made those winners manage to win the contest. My central question was; were there any common elements between those winners in 2000s Eurovision Song Contest, if there were any, what were they? From my research so far, I've concluded that there are some specific winning elements for an ideal Eurovision song in 2000s - considering televoters' interests and expectations. These elements are consisting of:

1) Putting some signs within the lyrics, gestures or staging. Especially number '1' sign is the most seen sign among the winners in 2000s. This sign refers to the 1st place and as a result give a strong message to the televoters to vote for those songs containing number 'one' sign.

- Turkey (2003): In *Everyway That I Can*'s lyrics it is mentioned as 'frame number one', and Sertab Erener does that '1' sign with her finger when those lyrics comes.
- Greece (2005): The name of the song *My Number One* is a sign by itself, but also within the lyrics it is mentioned as 'You are the one, you're my number one'. Also the dancers are doing a number '1' sign with their body parts on the stage.
- Sweden (2010): Loreen's *Euphoria* has no direct lyrics signifying the number '1' but she is doing a number '1' sign with her finger out of the blue during her dance choreography.
- Russia (2016): Sergey Lazarev's song's name *You're The Only One* is again a sign by itself, but he is also doing this sign with his finger all the time during his performance on the stage.

2) Putting ethnic elements and creating an authentic style on the stage. It can be with the help of instruments, costumes, dance moves, lyrics and stage lighting...

- Turkey (2003): Ottoman music, belly-dance moves, modern belly-dance costumes.
- Ukraine (2004): Hutsul/Carpatian instrument 'trembita', leather clothes, Ukrainian lyrics.
- Greece (2005): Greek instruments, sounds of bozouki and lyra, sirtaki dance moves.
- Finland (2006): Rock and gothic as a traditional music, Finnish flag and hat.
- Serbia (2007): Colors of Serbian flag were used for the stage lighting, Lyrics were in Serbian.
- Russia (2008): World's most famous ice-skater who is Russian origin was on the stage.
- Norway (2009): Traditional folk dance moves...
- Denmark (2013): Danish/Scandinavian ethnic sounds based on the flute.
- Austria (2014): Music was reminding Austrian operas.
- Ukraine (2016): Music in the beginning was an ethnic sound of Tatarian music, chorus was in Ukrainian.

3) Being barefoot on the stage is also bringing success and victory.

- Turkey (2003) – Sertab Erener and her dancers were all barefoot.
- Russia (2008) – Dima Bilan was barefoot.
- Sweden (2012) – Loreen was barefoot.
- Denmark (2013) – Emilie de Forest was barefoot.

4) Real flames or images of flames, pyrotechnics, smokes, winds and snowing on the stage; they are all seen among the winners in 2000s, as a result bringing victory.

- Ukraine (2003): *Wild Dances* had the first flames images at the backscreen.
- Finland (2006): Lordi had the first pyrotechnics and smokes on the Eurovision stage.
- Russia (2008): Dima Bilan in his song *Believe* had some smokes on the stage.
- Norway (2009): *Fairytale* had pyrotechnics at the end of his performance.
- Azerbaijan (2011): Ell/Nikki had some pouring pyrotechnics from the ceiling.
- Sweden (2012): Loreen was dancing under the fake snow particles.
- Denmark (2013): Emilie De Forest had some pyrotechnics, winds.
- Austria (2014): Conchita Wurst had some real flames during her performance.
- Italy (2015): The televoting winners trio Il Volo had some smoke images on the backscreen.

5) Special technological effects, transitions, camera movements are also very effective.

- Greece (2005) and Russia (2008) had very impressive aerial camera movements.
- Denmark (2013): Emilie De Forest had some impressive transitions such as ‘fading in and out’ at the beginning of her performance.
- Austria (2014): *Rise Like a Phoenix* had very impressive spider-cam moves.
- Sweden (2015): Mans Zelmerlöv had some really impressive technological special effects and transitions. The images were moving according to his moves.
- Russia (2016): The televoting winner Sergey Lazarev had also some really impressive technological special effects. He was able to walk on air by the help of a special constructed-backscreen. He had also very good steady and spider-cams.

6) Warm (orange, red, golden) or cold (blue, black), or both warm and cold lightings are bringing success in Eurovision. Never a green or pink lighting wins for example.

- Latvia (2002) and Serbia (2007) had more of red lighting on the stage.
- Turkey (2003), Ukraine (2004), Azerbaijan (2011), Denmark (2013), Austria (2014), Italy (2015- the televoting winners) had more of orange or golden lighting.
- Greece (2005), Finland (2006), Russia (2008), Norway (2009), Germany (2010), Italy (2015- the televoting winners), Russia (2016- the televoting winners), Ukraine had blue lightings.
- Sweden (2012), Sweden (2015), Russia (2016), Ukraine (2016) had black lighting.

7) Well-thought and hard-worked dance choreographies danced by both the back-dancers and the lead performer his/herself (like usually the superstars used to do).

- Latvia (2002): Marie N was both singing her song and dancing a salsa-style dance choreography. In the meantime also changing her clothes on the stage.
- Turkey (2003): Sertab Erener was both singing her song and dancing a well-prepared dance choreography with her back-dancers.
- Ukraine (2004): Ruslana singing and dancing with her team very fast dance moves.
- Greece (2005): Helena Papanicolaou singing and dancing a well-thought choreography.
- Sweden (2012): Loreen singing and dancing in the meantime to a prepared choreography.

8) Demanding or magical hand gestures...

- Russia (2008): Dima Bilan and his team doing some demanding hand gestures at the end of their performance.
- Sweden (2012): Loreen doing some magical hand gestures; like she has really a power in her hands - she is controlling her partner without touching him, doing some aduket moves or casting some spell on him.
- Denmark (2013): Emilie De Forest using her hands too much and seems like casting a spell.
- Austria (2014): Conchita Wurst using her hands too much in front of the camera.
- Ukraine (2016): Jamala doing a demanding hand gesture towards the end of her performance.

All of these elements are creating a message for the audience, and those messages create a story on the stage at the end of the performances; the best story-teller manage to win the contest. My idea and argument was supported in this thesis by many views that I've came upon on the academic researches, articles, news, some forums and comments on the social media platforms. Quotes, references and footnotes supporting my idea are given within the thesis.

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