

Artist: Sieneke

Song: Ik Ben Verliefd (Sha-la-

lie)



Reviewed by Mariella Herberstein

Hey....it's the chicken song, just played in reverse! Genius! I can already see a stadium full of Eurovisionites clapping along to this one!

For the rest of the world, a word of warning — if you listen to this song more than three times you will go insane. In fact, my friend Nadine, who happened to sit next to me while I was reviewing this song, begged me to turn it off after 13 seconds. Even though I listened to this ditty for only 13 seconds, I have strong reason to believe that the remaining 2'47" hold little surprises and more insanity!

But you have to forgive young Sieneke for her aggravated assault: she was born on April 1_{st} and she is clearly in love (that's as far as my Dutch goes).



Artist: Hera Björk

Song: Je Ne Sais Quoi



Reviewed by Mariella Herberstein

Look, if anyone can stop that pesky Icelandic volcano from interrupting European airspace, Hera Björk can! In fact, put her in charge of anything (gmail migration, the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, US health reform) and she'll sort it out in no time!

Hera will sing up a storm that will blow away the first few rows of the audience in Oslo (bring a SouWester). In fact, going head to head against the wind machines, I'd say, Hera comes out on top!

The song itself is less impressive....a bit 'je ne sais quoi' if you ask me! Still, top 10 in Oslo, is my prediction.



Artist: Thea Garrett

Song: My Dream



Reviewed by Mariella Herberstein

Malta, Malta, Malta...for so many years I was your most ardent supporter at Eurovision. I cried tears of joy when you came second with Chiara in 2005, and was aghast when Fabrizio Faniello only received a single point in 2006.

But now, I feel you have gone too far! Did you really have to import Thea from the UK to compete for Malta? Have you looked at the UK's track record at Eurovision? Not since Katrina and the Waves has the UK produced anything decent. Malta, you are putting your money on a dead horse!

I admit, the song is big... but not as big as Hera Bjork's tornado of a song for Iceland. Thea sounds like Celine Dion and looks like Liza Minnelli. She has seagulls flying around her, which morph into an angle with giant wings that engulf Thea on stage. To me, this is more of a nightmare than a dream!



Artist: Peter Nalitch and

Friends

Song: Lost and Forgotten



Reviewed by Scott Fabricant

Russia decided to gamble their hopes on a Youtube sensation, Peter Nalitch. That's about as wise as America's entry, were we to have one, being Jonathan Coulton or the Star Wars Kid. Actually, they'd make a great duet - look em up. Peter is joined by five other Russian musicians, but considering Russia doesn't seem to care about them (the act is called Peter Nalitch and Friends), I won't either.

The song breaks Eurovision standards by being sung in the native language... no, wait, that's just their muddy attempt to sing in English. Never mind. Peter's voice occasionally surprises, but not in a good way. The song itself comes off sounding like a lonely bar song, deeply influenced by country westerns and whiskey (or vodka). There's even a moment where he stops to look longingly at an aged photo in his hand, but what's Eurovision without cliches?

See, I've become cynical already. The song is aptly titled "Lost and Forgotten", and I'm already taking it advice. Until next year, you can find me watching more worthy Youtube clips, like that child who's tripping balls after a trip to the dentist's office. Quality family entertainment.



Artist: Sofia Nizharadze

Song: Shine



Reviewed by Matthew Bulbert

Georgia have re-incarnated Celine Dion....What? she's not dead....O! Sofia started her career at the age of 3 admired by a 'wide audience'. Jansugh Kakhidze, the world famous Georgian soundtrack conductor that made music for Georgian films only shown in Georgia for Georgian audiences, then mentored her at the age of 7 where she obviously honed her vocal skills. But obviously her real career highlight was being invited to star on TV5 by the journalist Bernard Pivout (who?). Oh and she has won numerous awards, what for, we are not sure but she has some. She has some real pull in the classical community having sung a duet with José Carreras in 2001, where? who knows? it could have been in the wardrobe for all we know. I predict she will be doing Celine Dion tribute shows at Vegas within a week of her Eurovision debut....

Look out for a key change to blow the ceiling off the venue, big hair, wind machines and a dress that will no doubt make Sofia Nizharadze look like a giant meringue.



Artist: Lena Song: Satellite



Reviewed by Matthew Bulbert

Germany may just have the right mix this year. An attractive singer with a catchy contemporary tune, in fact I put the challenge out to you all to listen to this without tapping a digit. Despite having had no vocal training or piano lessons (who would have thought) Lena has blasted her way onto the German dance scene destroying all records before her with Satellite already breaking the German download record (big deal I say). Its not quite clear who or what this song is directed to but Lena will go to extraordinary lengths to maintain her love including doing her hair, buying new underwear that's blue, painting her toenails and declaring physics is more powerful than gravity. I predict this will be the theme song at the next convention for alien abductees....

Look out for gawking teenage boys, astronomers and Lena's adorable habit of emphasising the wrong syllable.



Artist: Giorgos Alkaios

and Friends Song: OPA



Reviewed by Matthew Bulbert

You have to admire song writing when the first 30 seconds of a song is heavy breathing — such creativity should be rewarded. Greece this year provides an OPA! boy band who look like Metallica but sing like New Kids on the Block. Warning! These genre confusions can cause irreparable damage to your health if taken seriously so best watched with a smile on your face. They do have fans though, like the football fans of Galatasaray for instance who embraced Giorgos anthem Syrmatoplegma — it sounds like some horrible respiratory disease. Oh and the Swedes who apparently love Giorgos Alkaios's other ditty OPA—OPA (do you sense a theme?) namely as it was covered by some other band. But lets get serious for a moment, Giorgos is in fact an international phenomenon:

"(he is)..one of the few Greek artists who holds the record for consecutive concerts during the last decade in Cyprus, Germany, England, Canada, Australia and in the USA. Over the years more than 300,000 people have watched Giorgos performing live."

Now correct me if I am wrong but if you take a conservative estimate of say 200 concerts a year that would mean they have had an average of 150 people per concert over the last 10 years, I am not sure that that is so impressive. My favourite fact though is that because Giorgos is considered an ethnic act outside of Greece he has been invited to many festivals, its not because he sings good..obviously! The only hope this song has is the hope it does not make the final. I predict it will be forgotten before it is heard...

Look out for much hair, some wonderful unsynchronised dancing and impassioned OPA's.



Artist: Harel Skaat

Song: Milim



Reviewed by Nik Tatarnic

Well, first they stole our passports to assassinate a Hamas operative, now they're out to steal our hearts. And the secret agent chosen for the job? Doe-eyed pretty boy Harel Skaat. Harel's been in the music business for a while now - in kindergarten it was noted that he had a "unique vocal ability", and that he certainly has. Now 28 and a 2004 Kokhav Nolad runner-up (Israel's version of American Idol), Harel is poised to infiltrate the ranks of Eurovision and take out the competition. His singing is impressive - with sniper-like accuracy he delivers a poignant, soul-wrenching ballad, which I think might be about the break-up of Tommy Lee and Pamela Anderson (check out the reference to Tommy Lee at 2:05 - it's in Hebrew though so I can't be sure). The only possible hurdle to Harel's victory at Eurovision 2010 is the sheer weight and emotion of his song choice. There's an even chance that he will either be voted to the top, or else his listeners will be just so saddened by his heartfelt ballad that they'll be reduced to a sobbing mass of humanity, unable to SMS in their votes through their flood of tears. Harel Skaat is very dangerous.

Things to look for: Harel has beautiful teeth (perhaps too many); the key-change at 2:10 is nothing short of outstanding; bonus marks for having actual musicians on stage playing the music.



Artist: InCulto

Song: Eastern European

Funk



Reviewed by Kate Umbers

Get up and dance to their eastern European kind of FUNK!!

A KAZOO!! Can you believe it? Fantastic! In fact, it's surprising there aren't more kazoos in this contest. InCulto have the choreography of the wiggles (there's five guys, so we need to include the Wiggle's magician which, incidentally, is my second cousin) and the beat of a cat empire in this, their snappy little Eurovision entry for 2010. This reviewer thinks they may have it all sewn up, and I predict at least 3rd place if not better in Oslo. On the subject of snappy little numbers, watch out, because about two thirds of the way through there is one hell of a costume change.

My review could never match the genius that InCulto have provided, here is a sample of their lyrics:

Yes Sir we are legal we are, though we are not as legal as you No Sir we're not equal no, though we are both from the EU We build your homes and wash your dishes, Keep you your hands all soft and clean But one of these days you'll realize Eastern Europe is in your genes

I wish they would have put 'jeans' instead of 'genes', but I guess one can't have it all.



Artist: Paula Seling & Ovi Song: Playing with Fire



Reviewed by Scott Fabricant

First we have Romania's Playing With Fire, a duet between the apparently award-winning international(-ish) superstar(-ish) Paula Seling, and some dude named Ovi. He's not important. But Paula, she has opened for Ricky Martin and Michael Bolton, so you know she's got to be hot. If nothing else, she slightly resembles Fergie from the Black Eyed Peas with her long dark hair and skintight leather catsuit. Meanwhile, Ovi resembles... well, an ovum. An ovum without a fashion sense.

I'll admit the opening is catchy, and the fireballs bursting all over the stage are uncannily reminiscent of Burning Man, an American music festival as foreign to you as Eurovision is to me. Though, that's about where the similarities end. The song quickly degrades into typical pop dreck, with a chorus bizarrely and incongruously echoing Lady Gaga's Pokerface. Paula's got an impressive (and shrill) set of pipes, but they're not enough to save the song from being remarkably forgettable. With all the slick pyrotechnics, swirling geometric patterns, and Paula's outfit, I couldn't be bothered to really pay attention.



Artist: Aisha

Song: What For?



Reviewed by Kerinne Harvey

This years' entry from Latvia is a song titled What for? to which "Only Mr. God knows why but his phone today is out of range". Performed by a young Latvian beauty named Aisha this song is emotional, lyrical, catchy and bound to get stuck in your head. Aisha has so many questions such as, why are the skies so blue, and mountains high? What for do people live until they die? Can anyone help out Miss Aisha? I have questions myself. In her first rehearsal for Eurovision, towards the end I am curious as to whether she ran out of puff and let a back up singer take over with the exact same voice? How can someone still sing with their mouth shut?



Artist: Marcin Mroziński

Song: Legenda



Reviewed by Kerinne Harvey

Poland well done, upping Eurovision's stakes for all other countries with a self written and performed song by Marcin Mroziński. The song titled Legenda is about a one sided love story that has hidden meaning within. The choreography is beautiful and based on national folk dances in traditional dress. But does it fit the song? What is the point of these female dancers and why are they rolling apples about the stage and praising Marcin like a king? In typical Eurovision style the colours of the country are well represented within this song and according to one reviewer "Marcin will cherish everybody hearts". Maybe so, but perhaps after you get over the cheesiness factor which boarderlines creepy.



Artist: Niamh Kavanagh

Song: It's For You



Reviewed by Kate Umbers

Ireland is destined for Eurovision glory! This little ditty is emblazoned with Irish tradition. Niamh has, with auburn hair, an unpronounceable name and is a bit edgy with black fingernails - maybe she's been digging up potatoes? The pan flute thingy as a coda after the first verse conjures images of fields filled with leprechauns and really touches the soul of Eurovision. Finally, Niamh pulls off what is likely to be one of the biggest key changes in the whole competition, don't miss



Artist: Sunstroke Song: Run away



With all your might, give up you! (Why didn't they take their own advice?)

Reviewed by Nik Tatarnic

The video to Sunstroke's Run Away opens with a close up of the Moldovian fiddle player's hands, carving out a catchy scale on his hollow-frame, light-up electric fiddle. This is reminiscent, I think to myself, of last year's winner from Norway (I'm in Love With A Fairytale). This could actually be something different, a Eurovision song that doesn't suck. Alas, no sooner does this thought cross my mind that I'm brought back to reality, as the drum machine kicks in and the young and talentless Olia Tira begins to belt out her best version of every single dance hit from the 90's that you've learned to hate. Even the Kenny-G echo-effect sax can't save this song, as the blonde-haired starlet and her co-accused (a Justin Timberlake wannabe, but without the voice or the moves) assault us with their garbled version of English prose (go ahead, read their lyrics), with a synthesizer supplying the obligatory symphonic wall of crappy background noise.

Their biography notes that Sunstroke is "interestingly named." Unfortunately, it fails to mention that like their namesake, this Sunstroke is certain to cause headaches, cramps, nausea, and vomiting. Thankfully, their initial similarity to last year's winner is as close as they will ever get to the podium. Like Icarus, they've flown too close to the sun and will no doubt plummet to the bottom of the Eurovision standings in a smouldering pile of fingerless gloves, white pants and broken dreams.



Artist: maNga

Song: We could be the same



Reviewed by Rachael Gallagher

Well I think Turkey are in with a real chance. No…really. A mixture of rap, gas masks, and white hot power chords could see Turkey make a real mark on Eurovision this year. As usual the narrative of the film clip is impenetrable, a bunch of people in black and white fabric, brandishing an array of weapons in a series of still tableaus whilst the band rock out around them. Think Vogueing for terrorists!

This song delivers in all the essential categories for a winner: 1) slowly built verses that lead to an uplifting chorus...check, 2) slightly menacing band members...check, 3) guitarist playing instrument behind his head... check.

Go for it Turkey...



Artist: Josh

Song: That sounds good to me



Reviewed by Rachael Gallagher

What a cracker of a title! That sounds good to me is either a not-so-subtle ploy to subliminally infiltrate the minds of Eurovision voters or proof that Josh is tone deaf.

This is your usual UK fare... a poppy number with little credibility (remember the flight hostesses in 2008??) and a clean cut youngster on vocals. This entry has a bit of a *Britain's Got Talent* feel about it; Josh is clearly an amateur who has been encouraged in to a singing career by overzealous and similarly tone deaf relatives. The leggy dancers in black leather hot pants and skimpy t-shirts lend the song a feeling that this is impressionable, young Josh's first night in a 'mens club'.

If you believe that climate change is not happening, you should put a tenner on the UK to win Eurovision this year!



Artist: Alyosha

Song: Sweet people



Reviewed by Rachael Gallagher

Warning!! Warning!! Privileged-chick sings about the ills of humankind. This apocalyptic themed number is (I think) meant to reflect the destruction of the world through a combination of dolphin footage, empty swimming pools and black and white photos. Watch out for what appears to be an Obama family cameo who are seen running along the beach (reason, unknown). This is not a bad attempt by the Ukraine and it may really strike a chord with voters this year. I have my money on a lady taking out the crown this year, so keep an eye out for Alyosha... just don't try and pronounce her name ©



Artist: Michael von der Heide

Song: Il Pleut de L'Or



Reviewed by Felipe Gawryszewski

Michael sings in French, German, Swiss German, English and Italian. Michael mixes pop, jazz, folk, rock and *chanson*. Michael wears astonishing gold shinning jackets. Michael is capable of rainbow-coloured matrix-like movements. Michael has a Jedi master light sabre. Be careful. Michael is watching you.



Artist: Kristina Pelakova

Song: Horehronie



Reviewed by Felipe Gawryszewski

Slovakia comes this year with the average pop/melodramatic/boring music. In a hope of gathering some votes, Kristina Pelakova dresses like an Avatar character and sings about nature in her home country. She performs the same non-imaginative choreographies of others and hopes to follow the steps of Eurovision winner Celine Dion. She has 278 friends in facebook, not very impressive. I am one of them.



Artist: Ansambel Žlindra &

Kalamari

Song: Narodnozabavni Rock



Reviewed by Felipe Gawryszewski

Google asked me if I meant Ansambel Žlindra & CALAMARI. No, they are not a traditional Slovenian dish. However if they were, they would be a mixture of durian and cheeseburger. Apparently their concept of mixing rock and folk is to sing 30 seconds of rock followed by 30 seconds of folk. A truly amazing example of human creativity. Do not miss it.



Artist: Safura Song: Drip Drop





Reviewed by Greg Holwell

Want to see a fairly pedestrian ballad morph into an awesome tribute to the High school dance scene from "Teen Wolf"? Watch the clip to Safura's "Drip Drop" (and then look up the Teen Wolf sequence on youtube, cinematic genius!).

Favourite line from Drip Drop: "You smell like lipstick again"



Artist: Eva Rivas Song: Apricot Stone



Reviewed by Greg Holwell

Traditional Armenian chord-structures underpin this testament to the healing powers of apricots from the Golden Voice of Rostov, Eva Rivas. Apricots are at the heart of the Armenian identity, and their soft, furry skins were useful in wiping away Eva's childhood tears. However, those of you who possess even a rudimentary knowledge of fruit will notice she has changed her fruit-allegiance to pomegranate in the photo above. Is she telling us that she is "not just about apricots"? Or is she asking for acceptance from the fruit salad that is the Eurovision institution?



Artist: Juliana Pasha Song: It's all about you



Reviewed by Greg Holwell

Albanians refer to themselves as the Shqipetar, or "the ones who have the gift of the eagle". Why am I telling you this? Is this relevant to Juliana Pasha's "It's all about you"? Not really, it is simply much more interesting, because truth be told, this song bored the guts out of me. I wish I had more hands so I could give it four thumbs down.

Cyprus

Artist: Jon Lilygreen &
The Islanders
Song: Life Looks Better In
Spring



Reviewed by Anne Gaskett

Eurovision is no stranger to tenuous connections between performer nationality and the country being represented, but Cyprus pushes this to the extreme with a multi-national Scottish-English-Norwegian-Cypriot conglomerate with a Welsh lead singer. Luckily these are all in the Northern Hemisphere so when Jon Lilygreen sings "life looks better in spring" there is at least some seasonal concordance.

The film clip emphasises international connections by showing the young and dour Jon Lilygreen meeting a polite and serious young lady at an airport. Together they visit airport lounges, ride escalators, wait in queues, wheel their wheelie suitcases, send texts and wait at bus stops. They escape briefly to visit a beach and lie in a field, then it's back to the grey vinyl glamour of the airport departure gate, where they (not surprisingly) go their separate ways. How did young people in love get so boring? Is sex no longer in fashion?

Fashion highlight -none. Apparently dour, young welsh men just wear grey.

Dance highlight - none. Apparently dour, young, grey-apparelled welsh men don't dance.

Croatia

Artist: Feminnem

Song: Lako Je Sve



Reviewed by Anne Gaskett

Feminnem are Eurovision regulars, but founding members Pamela Ramljak and Neda Parmać have been through at least three other colleagues until Nika Antolos joined the fray. Despite this injection of new blood, Feminnem are still a one trick pony, albeit a beautifully groomed pony with a gleaming chestnut mane.

Feminnem trot perkily enough through this fairly forgettable ballad number but do they have the form and stamina to compete in Eurovision's long-distance races? Past appearances suggest probably not. A pessimist might predict lameness, broken limbs, euthanasia, and glue, but I hope they'll just be agisted out to a nice country farm for a long rest and some oats.

Fashion highlight - new-romantic corsetry, multi-tiered can-can skirts and discrete tattoos

Dance highlight - Although the film clip provides only minimal props, never have three girls done so much with big hair, a park bench and some stairs.



Artist: Jessy Matador

Song: Allez Olla Olé





Reviewed by Anne Wignall

After last years' stellar performance by Patricia Kaas, the French entry this year seems very bland indeed by comparison. A former dancer, Jessy Matador's Ricky Martin inspired song Allez Olla Olé just hasn't the same emotional depth. Perhaps some big bright costumes and some zouk dance moves will help maintain audience interest on the night. Perhaps not.



ESTONIA

Artists: Malcolm Lincoln

Song: Siren



Reviewed by Anne Wignall

The name 'Malcolm Lincoln' was apparently inspired from "Who wants to be a Millionaire" (as all good band names are). But who can blame a nervous contestant for thinking the first name of US President Lincoln was Malcolm? Each Eurovision Song Contest requires at least one quirky alternative band, and Estonia is going for the title this year. The leader singer is adequately unusual, if perhaps a little too reminiscent of last years' winner Norway. However, the real stars are the four back-up singers that show moments of brilliance. Their commitment and carefully choreographed support movements (best described as subtle postmodern exuberance) show a class rarely observed at Eurovision.



F.Y.R. Macedonia Artist: Gjoko Taneski Song: Jas Ja Imam Silata



Reviewed by Anne Wignall

This years' entry from F.Y.R. Macedonia is on the fast-track to becoming a modern-day classic midday telemovie theme song. He looks a little like Daniel Stern, the tall bumbling burglar in Home Alone. He sings with throaty catch-in-the-voice sincerity. Add the required big key change, a guest rapper mysteriously appearing from nowhere halfway through the song and a guitarist straight from the pages of Twilight, this is definitely one contestant to watch.



Artist: Anna Bergendahl Sona: This Is My Life



Reviewed by Aaron Harmer

After last year's slightly disturbing disco-opera entry, Sweden has gone for a less nauseating approach this year with a heart-warming ballad from their newest pop princess, Anna Bergendahl. Anna has one of the best voices in this year's competition and her mildly inoffensive lyrics won't hurt her chances either. She even plays her own acoustic guitar (for part of the song anyway), which seems to becoming more popular in the Eurovision contest. Look out for Sweden in the top 10.



Artists: Kuunkuiskaajat Song: Työlki Ellää



Reviewed by Aaron Harmer

What is the opposite of Lordi? The answer is this year's entry from Finland, Kuunkuiskaajat (Moon Whispers). Featuring that most haunting and subtle of musical instruments, the piano accordion, Työlki Ellää struck a soft spot in this reviewer's heart (as does any song with piano accordion). Inspired by both old Finnish runo songs and gypsy melody, the fiddle gets a good work out too during this number, and why not, it worked for Norway's Alexander Ryback last year. This is also one of the few entries this year to be sung in the participant's native language, which is refreshing after so many songs where the lyrics are quite obviously transcribed directly from old hallmark greeting cards. While this song is unlikely to place well in the final, its worth watching with its nice use of jaunty back-up dancers and saucy eyes from the anti-Lordi accordion player, Susan Aho.



Artists: Chanée & N'evergreen
Song: In a Moment Like This



Reviewed by Aaron Harmer

Look out Europe, it would seem that Sting has had a face lift, turned back the clock 30 years, and taken up residency in Denmark. This song starts out sounding remarkably like 1983's classic stalker song 'Every Breath You Take' by The Police. But never fear, by the chorus it shifts into traditional Eurovision banality, and by the end the wind machines are in full swing, signalling a dramatic final key change that'll knock your socks off.

Will three times two be the charm for Denmark? I'm sure you all remember the last two times Denmark sent a duet to the Eurovision finals, it was when they won in 2000 and the following year when the contest was held on home soil, in Copenhagen, where they placed second. With a solid duet base again and a little help from some strategic block voting, look out for Denmark near the top.

Belarus 3+2 Butterflies



Reviewed by James O'Hanlon

This is quite obviously a song about maths. Listen carefully as I explain the complexities behind the 3+2 = Butterflies conundrum. This Belarusian band consisting of 3 chicks and 2 dudes (Ah, now I get it!) soothes your sorrows with their lovely Lepidopteran lyrics. Subtract excitement and add cheesiness to the power of infinity. Factor an androgynous midget pianist into the equation and you have a gag-reflex inducing ballad entitled 'Butterflies'. Make sense?

Bosnia & Herzegovina Vukašin Brajić Thunder and Lightning



Reviewed by James O'Hanlon

Without a powerful military force or a large gross national product Bosnia and Herzegovina has to take alternative approaches to ensure world peace. And what better way to achieve this than pop-music. Traditionally a tool for evil, this Eurovision song entry calls for peace and co-existence in our struggling modern world. Robbie Williams' skinny little brother (AKA Vukašin Brajić) uses his endearingly ugly accent to remind us that now is the time to do things like hold hands, melt ice and bring down rain. All of which apparently have something do with world peace. God bless the little bugger.

Bulgaria Miro Angel Si-Ti



Reviewed by James O'Hanlon

Certain musical styles never die, they discreetly linger around European nightclubs only to resurface every so often in the guise of a Eurovision song. This year Bulgaria takes us all the way back to about 1998 with a teeth-pullingly annoying dance number. The catchy chorus line "Oooooooooooh Oh Oh Oh Oh Ooooooooooh" is repeated ad nauseum. Combined with trance beats and relentless farty synthesiser noises Belugium make us question why we bothered tuning into the event in the first place. For those with more discerning eardrums check out Germany's entry instead, they probably have the classiest song this year.