



POPBITCH

**Eurovision
2021**

Hello, Rotterdam!

After a year in storage, it's time to dust off Europe's most peculiar pop tradition and watch as singers from every corner of the continent come to do battle. As ever, we've compiled a full guide to the most bizarre, brilliant and boring things the contest has to offer...



Semi Final 1.....3–21

Tuesday's semi is the stronger of the two, with Cypriot-censured Satanism, bloopy Lithuanian club-pop and a wailing Ukrainian rave that will leave your head spinning. Expect upsets galore as the favourites all fight for a place.

Semi Final 2.....22–34

A slightly more standard affair, there's less of the outright bonkers stuff on Thursday – but there's still a couple of acts that you won't want to miss, including Polish TV hosts, Danish 80s throwbacks and a possible cameo from Flo Rida.

The Big Six.....41–47

When acts have a guaranteed place in the final, that's usually an excuse to phone stuff in – but France and Italy are hot favourites this year (and Germany is a hot mess) so the Big Six are well worth a preview.

The Stats.....48–56

Diagrams, facts, information, theory. You want to impress your mates with absolutely useless knowledge about which sorts of things win? We've got everything you need...

Semi Final One

Tuesday 18th May



SF 1: At A Glance

Of the two semi-finals, this is the one that has the potential to cause the greatest upset. With a much higher concentration of songs that had been expected to qualify, disappointment is practically guaranteed here. (What better way to start a contest in 2021...?)



#	Country	Which One Is That?
1	Lithuania	Moody, bloopy rave-pop with madcap dance moves; a great opener
2	Slovenia	Earnest gospel from a lady in flowing white; a contest staple
3	Russia	A veritable junkyard of ideas; certainly fills its three minutes
4	Sweden	Surprisingly thin stuff from the contest's behemoths: a wet Weeknd
5	Australia	An obvious candidate for the chop
6	N. Macedonia	Slightly too serious slice of jury bait
7	Ireland	Katy Perry does Couch To 5K
8	Cyprus	A servicable Gaga-esque floor-filler about copping off with the Devil...
9	Norway	...followed by an angel w/ Tourette's
10	Croatia	Great bassline; decent effort
11	Belgium	This year's heritage act; some late 90s nostalgia for the oldies
12	Israel	One of a few songs that owes a huge debt to the latest Dua Lipa album
13	Romania	Interesting teenage electro-angst; performance might suffer from nerves
14	Azerbaijan	Standard issue Euroclub fare; unadventurous but dependable
15	Ukraine	Wailing ethno-folk-rave that may induce a passive acid trip
16	Malta	One of the big favourites; a confident, Lizzo-esque bop

Lithuania

As the global pop scene gets ever slicker, with a parade of international artists churning out cookie-cutter hits from the same Swedish-led songwriting camps, it’s nice to see Eurovision kicking things off with what it does best: bloopy Eastern European rave-pop with batshit dancing.



Artist

Song

The Roop

Discoteque

Language

English

Key

Key Change

Tempo

Songwriters

F minor

No

115bpm

Six

Sounds Like

Looks Like

Pet Shop Boys

Louis Spence

2020 Entry

Loads of this year’s acts had songs ready for 2020 before coronavirus went and borked everything. The Roop had previously been hoping to perform [On Fire](#).

Other Notes

Lithuania hasn’t had the greatest track record at Eurovision, but they haven’t let it dampen their spirit. Their national selection show is called *Pabandom iš Naujo!* – which, rather sweetly, means *Let’s Try Again!*

Slovenia

To succeed at Eurovision, you don't just need to win over 200 million semi-pissed Saturday night viewers. There's also the jury to consider. Wary of gimmicks and keen to look serious, the chin-scratching musos among them tend to go heavy on big vocal showcases like this.



Artist	Ana Soklič
Song	Amen
Language	English
Key	G# minor
Key Change	Yes <i>(two semitones)</i>
Tempo	79bpm
Songwriters	Four <i>(inc. a co-writer of Rise Like A Phoenix)</i>
Sounds Like	Tracy Chapman x Sam Smith
Looks Like	Anna Chlumsky
2020 Entry?	Voda
Other Notes	This year, to help limit the number of people required on stage, organisers have temporarily relaxed a rule insisting that all backing vocals be performed live.

Ana is one of the acts to have taken full advantage of this seemingly minor rule-bend – by bringing a massive gospel choir on tape with her.

Russia

Like Geri Halliwell, Craig David and Dustin The Turkey, Manizha also juggles her responsibilities as a pop star with a role as a UN Goodwill Ambassador – though quite what António Guterres and the General Assembly are going to make of this twangy Russo-rap is anyone’s guess.



Artist	Manizha
Song	Russian Woman
Language	Russian (<i>with a little English</i>)
Key	E minor
Key Change	No
Tempo	102 bpm
Songwriters	Three (<i>lyrics by Manizha</i>)
Sounds Like	Missy Elliott
Looks Like	A mad Maya Rudolph character
Weird Lyrics	The first two lines translate into English as: <i>"Fields, fields, fields / I'm so small Fields, fields, fields / I'm too small"</i>
Other Notes	Russia is one of the countries that elected to send a fresh act to the 2021 contest, which sadly means that the Saturday night audience won't get to see the absolutely bananas Russian rave group they had lined up for 2020: Little Big – who are still very much worth three minutes of your time.

Sweden

The undisputed masters of the modern contest – with two wins and five other Top 5 finishes in the last decade – the Swedish sound has dominated the competition in recent years. However, this thinly veiled Starboy copy does feel a bit like they’re starting to coast on their reputation...



Artist

Tusse

Song

Voices

Language

English

Key

A minor

Key Change

Yes *(one semitone)*

Tempo

90bpm

Songwriters

Four

Sounds Like

The Weeknd

Looks Like

Baby David McAlmont

Reality TV

Talang *(2018; semi-finalist)*

Swedish Idol *(2019; winner)*

Other Notes

Tusse recently underwent some surgery on his vocal cords, which caused no small bit of nervousness. There was talk of bringing the song down from its original key so as to ease the strain – which led to some serious whispers going around that this year might see Sweden knocked out in the semis. Tusse seems to be coping though.

Australia

Thanks to Covid travel restrictions, Montaigne won't be present in the arena on the night – so is entering a live-on-tape performance instead. Which is kind of lucky. It would have been a real shame to travel all that way just to get knocked out in the semis...



Artist

Song

Montaigne

Technicolour

Language

English

Key

Key Change

Tempo

Songwriters

A minor

Yes (3 semitones; a relatively big leap)

119bpm

Two

Sounds Like

Looks Like

Dolores O’Riordan

The sort of person that would circulate a pub with a clipboard, trying to get people to sign up for their theatre company’s mailing list.

2020 Entry

Don’t Break Me

Weird Lyrics

There’s a line about “nasty dudes” in there that definitely sounds like she’s trying to smuggle the words “nasty dicks” into the broadcast for a dare.

North Macedonia

Since rebranding as North Macedonia, the former Former Yugoslav Republic Of Macedonia appear to have ditched their usual cheap pop sound in favour of more serious, theatrical fare. [It worked well last time](#); they ended up being the juries' favourite. This year? We'll see...



Artist

Song

Vasil

[Here I Stand](#)

Language

English

Key

Key Change

Tempo

Songwriters

A Major

Yes *(3 semitones; another relatively big leap)*

68bpm

Three

Sounds Like

Looks Like

A Jason Robert Brown ballad

A friend of the [Four Lads In Jeans](#)

2020 Entry

[You](#)

Other Notes

Vasil says he wrote this song immediately after learning that the 2020 contest had been cancelled. Which possibly explains why it's quite so mawkish.

Ireland

Although they just have the edge on Sweden as Eurovision all-time champions (seven wins to Sweden’s six) Ireland has had a rough few decades – continually failing to qualify for the final. Obviously Jedward would have been their safest choice, but Lesley Roy’s a decent fallback.



Artist

Song

Lesley Roy

Maps

Language

English

Key

Key Change

Tempo

Songwriters

G Major

No

142bpm

Four

Sounds Like

Looks Like

Katy Perry

Sheridan Smith

2020 Entry

Was going to sing the even more Katy Perry-ish [Story Of My Life](#).

Other Notes

It’s no coincidence that this sounds so much like KP. In 2008, Lesley co-wrote an album with Max Martin – the Swedish superproducer behind Britney, Kelly Clarkson, The Weeknd and, you guessed it... Katy Perry!

In fact, Katy helped her write [one of the songs on it too](#).

Cyprus

Elena is in big trouble with the Church of Cyprus for this one. Obviously, it's not Eurovision unless someone gets embroiled in some minor scandal, but it's been a while since there's been any serious accusation of Satan worship in the contest...



Artist	Elena Tsagrinou
Song	El Diablo
Language	English <i>(and a tiny bit of Spanish)</i>
Key	A minor
Key Change	No
Tempo	114bpm
Songwriters	Four
Sounds Like	Lady Gaga
Looks Like	Iggy Azalea
Reality TV	Ellada Eheis Talento <i>(2009; Greece's Got Talent)</i> The Voice Of Greece <i>(Backstage host; 2016-7)</i>
Weird Lyrics	"Hotter than sriracha on our bodies / Ta-taco, tamale, yeah, that's my mood / All this spicy melts my icy"
Other Notes	Elena also appeared on the Greek duet show Just The 2 Of Us in 2014 where she sang a weirdly chirpy version of <i>Common People</i> by Pulp

Norway

Tix is the stagename of Andreas Haukeland: a Norwegian songwriter who, up until the moment he stuck on seven foot angel wings and was announced as Norway’s Eurovision entrant, was perhaps best known for having co-written Ava Max’s international hit *Sweet But Psycho*.



Artist

Tix

Song

Fallen Angel

Language

English

Key

Db Major

Key Change

Yes *(two semitones)*

Tempo

93bpm

Songwriters

Three

Sounds Like

Early Bieber

Looks Like

A European Kid Rock

Other Notes

Andreas has Tourette’s Syndrome, which is what inspired his stage name, Tix.

He is also one of two acts this year with a peculiar connection to rapper Flo Rida. While San Marino have him guest starring, Andreas co-produced the song *Save The Game*.

Croatia

It’s always tricky when a country enters a song that is perfectly servicable Spotify playlist fodder. Nothing weird enough to make fun of. Nothing amazing enough to fully champion. In fact, the only thing that sticks out is the occasional [Right Said Fred I’m Too Sexy](#) drum fill.



Artist	Albina
Song	Tick-Tock
Language	English <i>(with a bit of Croatian)</i>
Key	E minor
Key Change	No
Tempo	126bpm <i>(perilously close to the 128bpm death-trap)</i>
Songwriters	Three
Sounds Like	The bass line from Bad Guy
Looks Like	Faye <i>and</i> Claire from Steps
Reality TV	X Factor Adria <i>(2015)</i> The Voice Hrvatska <i>(2019-20; finished third)</i>
Weird Lyrics	“I’m losing track of time / Lost in your play zone / Don’t overcomplicate now we’re in a war zone”
Other Notes	One of the lyricists of this song is the impeccably named Max Cinnamon.

Belgium

Remember Hooverphonic? The Belgian symphonic trip-hop group that had a sizable international hit with the song *Mad About You*? If so, congratulations! You’re old as fuck. This Eurovision performance marks the 21st anniversary of it.



Artist	Hooverphonic
Song	The Wrong Place
Language	English
Key	G minor <i>(solid key choice; a proven winner)</i>
Key Change	No
Tempo	80bpm
Songwriters	Two
Sounds Like	Lana Del Rey in 10 years
Looks Like	Michelle Collins
2020 Entry	They originally had the song Release Me but have since switched singers
Weird Lyrics	“I took you to my messy place / But it felt as if we were in a different space”
Other Notes	There’s never been much job security for the singers in Hooverphonic. The boys have had six female vocalists over the years – but Geike (the original vocalist on <i>Mad About You</i>) has returned for this line-up.

Israel

There’s a famous showbiz story about Mariah Carey once hitting a note so high she opened an automatic garage door with it. Carey is famous for warbling about in what’s called the ‘whistle register’ and Eden plays about with it too, so be careful with any glassware.



Artist

Song

Eden Alene

Set Me Free

Language

English/Hebrew

Key

Key Change

Tempo

Songwriters

Db minor

No

105bpm

Four

Sounds Like

Looks Like

Levitating by Dua Lipa

Janelle Monae

2020 Entry

The much more ambitious Afrobeat/90s House/Jesus Christ Superstar mash-up Feker Libi

Reality TV

The X Factor Israel (2017/18; winner) Rising Star (2019/20; winner)

Other Notes

The B6 that Eden hits towards the end of this is the highest note in Eurovision history (a semitone higher than previous record holder Maja Blagdan, for Croatia in 1996).

Romania

In 2017, Belgium entered a great song, [City Lights](#), which looked like it might be scuppered by the singer’s evident stagefright. Word around the venue is that poor Roxen is suffering much the same, which is a real shame – as this is one of the more interesting productions.



Artist	Roxen
Song	Amnesia
Language	English
Key	Ab minor
Key Change	No
Tempo	120bpm
Songwriters	Two
Sounds Like	Girl In Red
Looks Like	Billie Eilish
2020 Entry	The slightly more meandering Alcohol You ; probably got a better shot of cutting through with <i>Amnesia</i>
Other Notes	Having had two number ones in the Romanian chart, Roxen is getting a lot of favourable attention nationally. She’s also collaborated with Norwegian Eurovision winner Alexander Rybak (2009’s Fairytale) on a Sia-esque tropical house track Wonderland .

Azerbaijan

A little pandering to other nations can often pay dividends when the time comes to vote, so we’re keen to see how Azerbaijan’s ploy of writing a song about Mata Hari – the Dutch exotic dancer who was executed by the French on suspicion of being a German spy – plays out.



Artist	Efendi
Song	Mata Hari
Language	English
Key	B minor
Key Change	No
Tempo	100bpm
Songwriters	Four
Sounds Like	Turkish beach resort disco
Looks Like	Cheryl Cole styled as Ariana Grande
Reality TV	Yeni Ulduz (2009) Böyük Səhnə (2014) Voice Of Azerbaijan (2016) Silk Way Star (2017)
Weird Lyrics	“I am a dangerous lover / Drinking my poisonous water”
Other Notes	Efendi first tried to represent Azerbaijan in 2014, but lost out to this delightful fruitcake .

Ukraine

Sure, other countries might have funny dance moves, outrageous costumes and extravagant pyrotechnics, but if you want something genuinely bonkers – the sort of thing that will leave you wondering if Europe’s entire water supply has been spiked – get settled in for this one...



Artist

Go_A

Song

Shum

Language

Ukrainian

Key

E minor

Key Change

No

Tempo

115-150bpm

Songwriters

Two

Sounds Like

Clannad x Chemical Brothers

Looks Like

An Amazon Prime Matrix spin-off

2020 Entry

Soloya

Other Notes

The music video is like a gritty Mad Max-influenced reboot of the kids show Brum.



Malta

The hot favourite for months, it was generally thought to be Destiny’s contest to lose. But while Je Me Casse has more hooks than a bait and tackle shop, the last week has seen it locked in a game of leapfrog with France and Italy to be the bookies’ top choice.



Artist	Destiny
Song	Je Me Casse
Language	English <i>(with a little French)</i>
Key	Ab minor
Key Change	No
Tempo	112bpm
Songwriters	Four
Sounds Like	Lizzo
Looks Like	Lizzo
2020 Entry?	All My Love
Reality TV	Britain’s Got Talent <i>(2017)</i> X Factor Malta <i>(2020)</i>
Other Notes	Destiny already has some Eurovision hardware in her trophy cabinet, as she cut her teeth winning the Junior Eurovision Song Contest in 2015.

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Semi Final Two

Thursday 20th May



SF2: At A Glance

Although there’s not quite so many stand-out tracks in Thursday’s semi, there is at least some pleasing diversity. Finnish nu-metal. Icelandic indie-disco. And a three-way fight to see who has the most polished 80s pastiche: Greece, Poland or Denmark...

#	Country	Which One Is That?
1	San Marino	Flo Rida’s on the record; but have they got him for the stage show?
2	Estonia	Fine, if you like Estonian hunks...
3	Czech Rep.	Fun, slick pop bounce; fast becoming the signature Czech sound
4	Greece	Sounds like an 80s movie montage
5	Austria	Plodding, pleading ballad you’ll probably listen to from the kitchen
6	Poland	Another Dua Lipa/Physical knock-off; this time by a Polish game show host
7	Moldova	Sultry pop with boom and brass; equal parts Kylie / Sam + The Womp
8	Iceland	Last year’s darlings, back with more cute gimmicky indie-disco
9	Serbia	Eastern Europe’s Pussycat Dolls
10	Georgia	Meandering ballad from a guy who normally does hard rock Britney
11	Albania	More Balkan rock opera from Albania; for whom too much is never enough
12	Portugal	Anastacia? Macy Gray? Simply Red? A smorgasboard of Radio 2 sounds.
13	Bulgaria	A Katie Melua style lament about getting old – by a 23 year old
14	Finland	A blast of early 00s nu-metal; a nice bit of fun for the rock kids
15	Latvia	Very stern pop, belted at full whack by a Latvian Jessie J
16	Switzerland	Suspiciously similar to the current champion, Duncan Laurence
17	Denmark	An honest-to-god 1987 timewarp

San Marino

As they only have a population of 33,000, San Marino tend to send the same familiar faces to Eurovision year after year. This is Senhit’s second shot at trying to win the trophy – but they’ve gone and got themselves a special secret weapon this year too... Flo Rida.



Artist	Senhit (ft. Flo Rida)
Song	Adrenalina
Language	English
Key	Bb minor
Key Change	No
Tempo	104bpm
Songwriters	Ten
Sounds Like	Early Rita Ora
Looks Like	Fleur East
2020 Entry?	Freaky!
Other Notes	It’s not often that bona fide celebrities drop in for supporting cameos at Eurovision. The last time anyone this unexpected came in to assist with a foreign country’s entry was when Dita Von Teese appeared alongside the terribly-named German band Alex Swings Oscar Sings! in 2009.

Estonia

It’s possible something’s been lost in translation, but apparently Uku’s inspiration for The Lucky One was a memory he had of once helping his grandfather out on the farm, accidentally reversing his tractor into a pond and then having to escape the watery depths. Huh.



Artist

Song

Uku Suviste

The Lucky One

Language

English

Key

Key Change

Tempo

Songwriters

G# minor

No

88bpm

Two (inc. Uku himself)

Sounds Like

Looks Like

Joe Jonas

Lee Ryan

2020 Entry?

The chugging rock ballad [What Love Is](#)

Reality TV

[The Voice Of Russia](#) (2018; semi-finals)

Other Notes

Uku Suviste was once voted Sexiest Man 2010 by the readers Of Kroonika Magazine. So it’s nice to know his trophy cabinet won’t be completely barren.

Czech Republic

With Montenegro bowing out of the contest for the moment (as no-one appreciated their **dubstep rapping astronauts** and **ponytail-whipping disco bangers**) we need a new cause to rally behind. The Czechs have been reliably fun these last few years, so let's see how this one fares...



Artist	Benny Cristo
Song	Omaga
Language	English <i>(plus a tiny bit of Czech)</i>
Key	Eb minor
Key Change	No
Tempo	122bpm
Songwriters	TWO <i>(lyrics by Benny)</i>
Sounds Like	DNCE
Looks Like	A cool youth outreach worker
2020 Entry?	Kemama
Reality TV	Česko Slovenská SuperStar <i>(2009)</i>
Weird Lyrics	"You said you gained a few pounds, you blame the apocalypse / There ain't no apocalypse long as you're here on my lips"

Greece

As countries can't vote for themselves in Eurovision, a common tactic is to send an act who has dual citizenship so they can soak up some of the national pride points. Greece lucked out managing to lure Stefania over, as she was previously in [Dutch teen band, Kisses](#).



Artist

Song

Stefania

Last Dance

Language

English

Key

Key Change

Tempo

Songwriters

D minor

No

147bpm

Eight

(a very popular winning key)

(almost as fast as Ukraine at its fastest...)

Sounds Like

Looks Like

An Irene Cara/80s movie montage

Teen Margot Robbie

2020 Entry?

Supergirl

Reality TV

The Voice Kids

(2013)

Other Notes

Stefania is one of the stars of [Brukglas](#) – a semi-reality series about life in and around a Dutch secondary school.

In real life, Stefania attends the same school that Martin Garrix went to.

Austria

It’s easier to score nul points than you maybe realise. As points are only dished out to each country’s Top Ten, if you’re everybody’s 11th favourite song you end up scoring a stone cold zero. So imagine how tough it’ll be when you’re everyone’s 24th favourite song...



Artist	Vincent Bueno
Song	Amen <i>(same title as Slovenia)</i>
Language	English
Key	Db Major
Key Change	No
Tempo	80bpm
Songwriters	Three
Sounds Like	Gary Barlow
Looks Like	Jason from The Good Place
2020 Entry?	Alive
Reality TV	Musical! Die Show <i>(2007)</i>
Other Notes	<p>This isn’t the first time that two countries have entered songs with the same title in the same year. Georgia and Malta both entered songs called Warrior in 2015.</p> <p>Not desperately interesting, no. But neither is this song – and we have space to fill.</p>

Poland

Rafał Brzozowski was previously the host of *Koło Fortuny* — Polish Wheel Of Fortune — with a house band that let him sing terrible karaoke versions of [Blue \(Da Ba De\)](#), [Gangnam Style](#) and [Out Of Touch](#). At best, that makes him a Polish Bradley Walsh. At worst? Polish John Leslie.



Artist	Rafał
Song	The Ride
Language	English
Key	B minor
Key Change	No
Tempo	132bpm
Songwriters	Four
Sounds Like	Physical by Dua Lipa
Looks Like	Max Headroom
Reality TV	The Voice Of Poland (2019)
Other Notes	We weren't kidding about the Bradley Walsh thing. Rafał released a classic big-band-and-black-tie album of Polish jazz standards, just in time for Christmas 2016, entitled <i>My Heart Is A Musician</i> . (And just in case his lawyers are reading: the John Leslie thing was definitely a joke.)

Moldova

One of the contest’s dark horses, Moldova have been quietly putting in some impressive showings over the last few years with their own brand of mad, bouncy pop. A Top 3 finish with [Hey Mamma](#) in 2017; a Top 10 with [My Lucky Day](#) in 2018. This will need a good placing though.



Artist

Song

Natalie Gordienko

[Sugar](#)

Language

English

Key

Key Change

Tempo

Songwriters

F# minor

No

120bpm

Four *(inc. Phillip Kirkorov)*

Sounds Like

Looks Like

Kylie x Sam And The Womp

A young Helen Mirren

2020 Entry?

[Prison](#)

Other Notes

If you don’t know Eurovision’s premier eccentric, Phillip Kirkorov, this is him...



Iceland

The big favourites to win last year, Iceland might be victims of their own success this time around. There’s still plenty of funky keytar, goofy dancing and uniquely Icelandic weirdness, but it does suffer ever so slightly from Difficult Second Album syndrome. (And a kids choir.)



Artist

Song

Daði og Gagnamagnið

10 Years

Language

English

Key

Key Change

Tempo

Songwriters

D minor

No

123bpm

One

(One of the strongest keys)

(Daði himself)

Sounds Like

Looks Like

Breakbot

A student garage band

2020 Entry

The still-excellent [Think About Things](#)

Other Notes

There’s a lot of goodwill in the bank for Daði and the band, as coronavirus so obviously robbed them of a win last year.

If you like this sort of stuff, Gagnamagnið previously had an unsuccessful entry in Iceland’s national heats a few years back. It’s all a little more stripped back, but just as cute. It’s called [Is This Love?](#)

Serbia

Hurricane is a Eurovision supergroup of sorts, featuring previous entrants Sanja Vučić (Serbia’s [Kate Bush-a-like in 2016](#)), Ksenija Knežević (who sang backing vocals for her dad – [the Montenegrin Wagner, Knez](#) – in 2015) and Ivana Nikolić (some new, fresh blood: Sugababes-style).



Artist	Hurricane
Song	Loco Loco
Language	Serbian
Key	D minor <i>(a Eurovision classic)</i>
Key Change	Yes <i>(one semitone)</i>
Tempo	105bpm
Songwriters	Three <i>(inc. lyrics by Sanja)</i>
Sounds Like	Pussycat Dolls
Looks Like	Pussycat Dolls ft. Nancy Dell’Olio
2020 Entry	Hasta La Vista
Weird Lyrics	One charming refrain translates from Serbian as: “I am cute and nice / And you’re alone, alone, alone”

Georgia

For a man who cut his teeth on Georgian telly doing a heavy metal harmonica version of Can't Get You Out Of My Head by Kylie Minogue, it's a bit disappointing to hear Tornike turn in a soft ballad. If you can usually rely on Georgia for anything at Eurovision, it's madness.



Artist	Tornike Kipiani
Song	You
Language	English
Key	C Major <i>(The worst key)</i>
Key Change	No
Tempo	135bpm
Songwriters	One <i>(Tornike himself)</i>
Sounds Like	The slowest version of Unchained Melody
Looks Like	Teddy from Bob's Burgers
2020 Entry	Take Me As I Am
Reality TV	X Factor Georgia <i>(Winner; 2014)</i> Georgian Idol <i>(Winner; 2019)</i>
Other Notes	Tornike tried to enter the Eurovision once before in 2017 with a shouty techno track that the Chemical Brothers could have easily padded a set with.

Albania

Reliable purveyors of the big-lunged, dramatic wailer, Albania always sound like they’re trying to summon a god of war to come and bring about the final reckoning. Might want to knock your TV volume down a notch if you don’t want the neighbours banging on your wall.



Artist	Anxhela Peristeri
Song	Karma
Language	Albanian
Key	D minor
Key Change	No
Tempo	75bpm
Songwriters	Two
Sounds Like	A Balkan rock opera
Looks Like	Jade Thirlwell
Reality TV	X Factor Greece Your Face Sounds Familiar Kënga Magjike
Weird Lyrics	“God doesn’t forgive, I yelled, voiceless / Bundle tears in my hand, they are rusty”
Other Notes	It’s pronounced ‘Angela’, in case you were wondering.

Portugal

Say what you like about Portugal, they’re nothing if not eclectic. Sometimes it works (the year they sent a [man-bunned teenager with a Chaplin-esque jazz standard](#)). Sometimes it doesn’t ([every other year](#)). But win or lose, this is classic Jools Holland Hootenanny fodder...



Artist	The Black Mamba
Song	Love Is On My Side
Language	English <i>(their first fully English entry since 1964)</i>
Key	B Major
Key Change	No
Tempo	69bpm <i>(Nice...)</i>
Songwriters	One <i>(The lead singer)</i>
Sounds Like	Simply Red
Looks Like	Winona Ryder as a drag king
Weird Lyrics	“I can feel it still runnin’ through my veins / Ran so fast I couldn’t even grow / Forgot where I belong / Sold my body on a dirty cold floor”

Bulgaria

If Hooverphonic didn't already make you feel like a museum exhibit, along comes 23 year old Victoria with a wistful lament about getting old – immediately losing the support and sympathy of anyone over 30. Get back to us when your hangovers last a week, pet...



Artist	Victoria
Song	Growing Up Is Getting Old
Language	English
Key	G Major <i>(Major keys are bad business)</i>
Key Change	No
Tempo	95bpm
Songwriters	Four <i>(inc. Victoria herself)</i>
Sounds Like	Katie Melua
Looks Like	Cher Lloyd
Reality TV	X Factor Bulgaria <i>(2015)</i>
2020 Entry	Tears Getting Sober
Weird Lyrics	“Playing Tetris with my feelings / Tryna keep them all inside”
Other Notes	Victoria made Forbes Bulgaria’s annual ‘30 Under 30’ list last year – alongside Maria Bakalova, the actor who nearly got an eyeful from Rudi Guliani in <i>Borat 2</i> .

Finland

Hey, Finland. The early-00s called and asked for its nu-metal turntable scratching back. And if you’ve got any angsty calls to do a shot, throw up and stick your middle finger in the air lying around, can you pop them in too? Yeah, it’s trying to stage a comeback. Cheers!



Artist	Blind Channel
Song	Dark Side
Language	English
Key	B minor
Key Change	No
Tempo	98bpm
Songwriters	Five
Sounds Like	A Linkin Park/Limp Bizkit collaboration (although the chorus is weirdly similar to Coldplay’s Hymn For The Weekend)
Looks Like	Korn
Weird Lyrics	“Living that life on the dark side / Like the 27 Club / Headshot / We don’t wanna grow up”
Other Notes	The 00s rock sound has done pretty well at Eurovision more often than not. And don’t forget, everyone laughed when Finland sent a top-hatted monster-metal band to the contest in 2006 – and it won.

Latvia

There’s a repeated bit of choreography Samanta does that’s clearly been designed as part of a wider social media campaign, encouraging fans to mime putting on their crowns – but it just looks like a really, really slow version of the classic Steps “Tragedy!” move.



Artist	Samanta Tina
Song	The Moon Is Rising
Language	English
Key	Eb minor
Key Change	No
Tempo	75bpm
Songwriters	Three <i>(inc. Aminata)</i>
Sounds Like	Jessie J
Looks Like	One of the Real Housewives
Reality TV	The Voice Lithuania
2020 Entry	Still Breathing
Other Notes	One of the writers that Latvia is consistently (and cleverly) making use of these days is Aminata – who performed one of Latvia’s best entries Love Injected .

Switzerland

A bearded lady Bond theme. Stalist war-crime trip-hop. Portuguese fado. Girl power beatboxing. There’s no consistency in winning style from year to year, yet someone always tries to replicate the previous winner. This time: Switzerland try the sad-boy bedroom ballad.



Artist	Gjon’s Tears
Song	Tout l’Univers
Language	French
Key	A minor <i>(a solidly successful key)</i>
Key Change	No
Tempo	123bpm
Songwriters	Four
Sounds Like	Duncan Laurence
Looks Like	An up-and-coming Irish novelist
2020 Entry	Répondez-moi
Reality TV	Albania’s Got Talent <i>(finished 3rd)</i> Switzerland’s Got Talent <i>(semi-finalist)</i> Le Plus Belle Voix <i>(semi-finalist)</i>
Other Notes	Perhaps the year off means that the Eurovision audience is up for hearing two sad boys wailing back-to-back (rather than, say, Italian hard rock or Icelandic indie-disco) but we can’t see it ourselves...

Denmark

For years, we've been trying to convince people that the modern Eurovision is practically unrecognisable from the show they remember from the UK's heyday. Fingers crossed they don't tune in during Denmark's 80s extravaganza then, else that's our argument fucked...



Artist

Song

Fyr og Flamme

Øve Os På Hinanden

Language

Danish

Key

Key Change

Tempo

Songwriters

C Major

No

124bpm

One

(one of the least successful keys)

Sounds Like

Looks Like

Something from Eurovision 1987

Something from Eurovision 1987

Other Notes

We aren't really in the business of dashing dreams, but anyone who's looking forward to seeing a grungy Danish Tom Hardy rock out on the guitar should know that the guy on the right of that promo photo has undergone a bit of a makeover since that shoot. Sorry.

The Big Six

Saturday 22nd May



France

Every few years, France likes to dust off a little bit of chanson to remind us that – however much fun we might momentarily be having with this silly pop contest – life is essentially pain and you really ought to be crying, smoking and necking red wine by the glass.



Artist

Song

Barbara Pravi

Voilà

Language

French

Key

Key Change

Tempo

Songwriters

D minor (A consistently winning key)

No

68-108bpm

Two (inc. Barbara herself)

Sounds Like

Looks Like

Edith Piaf

St Vincent

Other Notes

Weirdly, there’s two songs this year that use an *accelerando* (the poncy musical term for speeding up). It’s not been a particularly common gimmick in recent memory.

Ukraine just pips France to the post with an increase of 45 beats per minute over the duration of their song – but France is hardly sluggish. Barbara’s band whips that final refrain up by a pretty dramatic 40bpm.

Germany

However badly the United Kingdom has been doing recently at Eurovision, it's a comfort to know Germany are always trying their level best to snatch the bottom slot from us. With ukeleles, whistling and cutesy, quirky lyrics, they're really doing us a solid this year. Danke schön!



Artist

Song

Jendrik

I Don't Feel Hate

Language

English *(with a little German)*

Key

Key Change

Tempo

Songwriters

Bb Major *(an absolute travesty of a key)*

No

114bpm

Two

Sounds Like

Looks Like

The jingle for a millennial dating app

Mark Speight

Other Notes

It's possible that Jendrik appears on another of this year's entries too. When Iceland's singer Daði asked fans on social media to exploit the Covid-era loophole that allows entrants to use pre-recorded backing vocals and join his virtual choir, Jendrik was among the group who recorded themselves singing and sent them on for inclusion. A top secret operation he broadcast on TikTok.

Italy

Though the band’s name looks to English eyes like ‘Manskin’ (implying either a scrotum or foreskin) it’s actually the Danish word for ‘Moonlight’, which they picked in honour of their Danish bass player, Victoria. Bet she’s thrilled...



Artist	Måneskin
Song	Zitti e Buoni
Language	Italian
Key	E minor
Key Change	No
Tempo	103bpm
Songwriters	Four <i>(the band themselves)</i>
Sounds Like	Arctic Monkeys, by way of Terrorvision
Looks Like	Placebo
Weird Lyrics	The official translation of the first verse is: <i>"They don't know what I am talkin' about / Dirty clothes, bro, muddy clothes / Yellow cig stains on my finger / I am walkin' with my cig"</i>
Other Notes	As of the Monday at the start of competition week, Italy were riding high in the betting odds at 9/5.

Spain

It’s rare to find any aspiring young pop star who hasn’t tried their hand on a TV talent show to help kickstart their singing career. Most try The Voice, The X Factor, or Got Talent – but Blas? He won the Spanish version of Your Face Sounds Familiar **with a pretty decent Cher.**



Artist	Blas Cantó
Song	Voy A Quedarme
Language	Spanish
Key	C minor
Key Change	No
Tempo	76bpm
Songwriters	Four
Sounds Like	Luis Fonsi (pre-Bieber)
Looks Like	Ricky Martin’s husband
Reality TV	Veo Veo Your Face Sounds Familiar
2020 Entry	Universo

Other Notes Every Eurovision entrant says it’s been a lifelong ambition to represent their country, but in Blas’s case it’s genuinely true. He’s been trying since he was a child. First, at Junior Eurovision in 2004. Then with a band, Auryn, in 2011. Then solo in 2020.

United Kingdom

James Newman must have been hugely relieved the 2020 contest got cancelled. Getting up to sing a song called *My Last Breath* while a respiratory disease ravaged the globe would have been dreadfully gauche. Let's just hope the arena doesn't fall victim to arson this year...



Artist

James Newman

Song

Embers

Language

English

Key

F# Major *(not a great key)*

Key Change

No

Tempo

126bpm *(dangerously close to the killer tempo)*

Songwriters

Five *(inc. James himself)*

Sounds Like

A daytime TV advert for an online bingo site, offering daily cash prizes – guaranteed

Looks Like

Zack Galifiankis

2020 Entry

My Last Breath

Other Notes

A lot of focus has been placed on James Newman's pop credentials – noting that he's previously co-written two UK Number Ones (one for Rudimental; one for Calvin Harris). But he's not a newbie to Eurovision. He previously co-wrote the abysmal Irish non-qualifier *Dying To Try* in 2017. Not been so keen to mention that, strangely...

The Netherlands

It’s not uncommon for countries who win Eurovision one year to follow up with a bit of a floater the next. For example, Austria won the contest in 2014, then got nul points in 2015. Portugal came first in 2017, but ended dead last in 2018. Why mention it now? Oh, no reason...



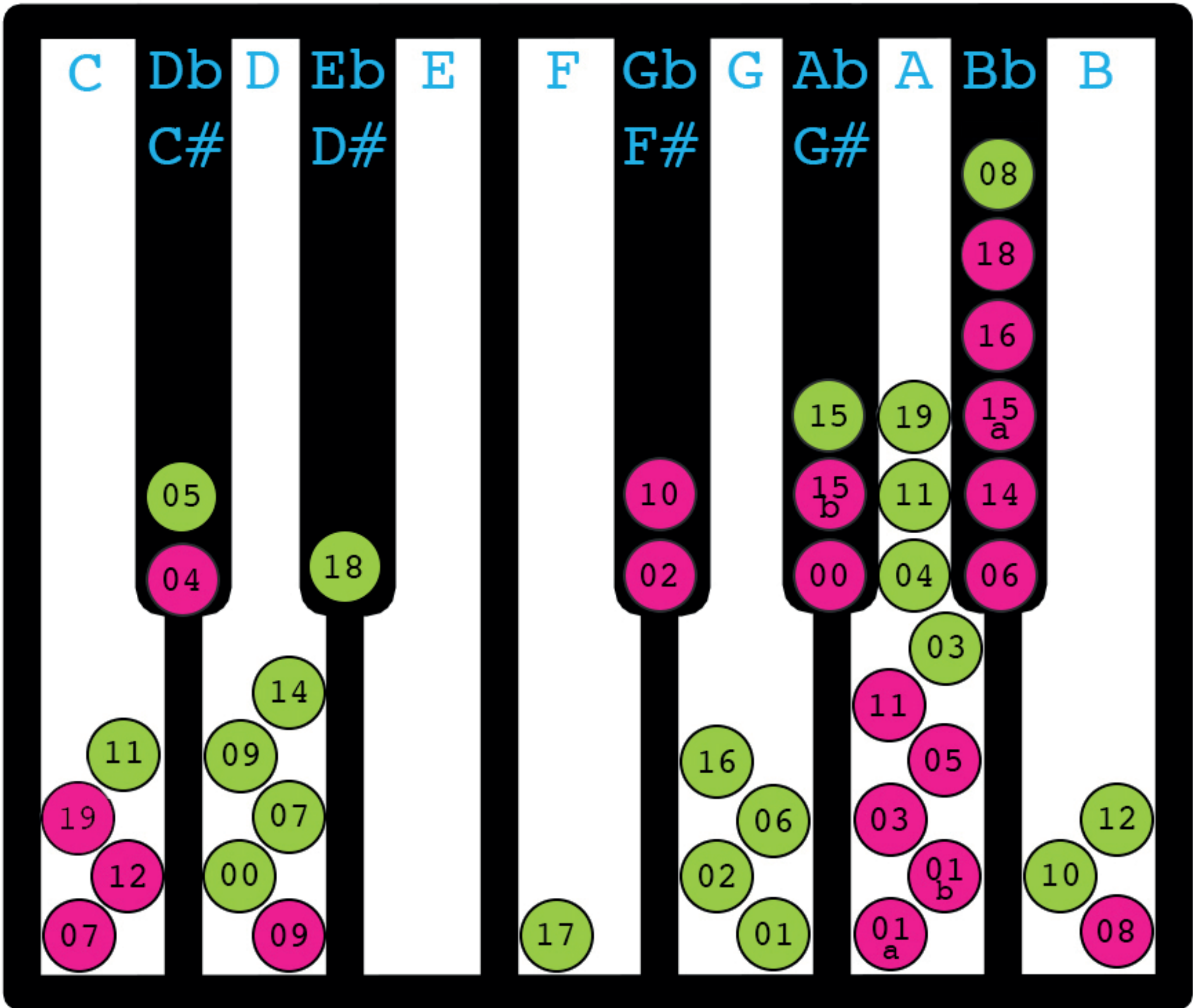
Artist	Jeangu Macrooy
Song	Birth of a New Age
Language	English / Sranan Tongo
Key	Bb Major <i>(A disaster key)</i>
Key Change	No
Tempo	95bpm
Songwriters	TWO <i>(inc. Jeangu himself)</i>
Sounds Like	A song for the 2010 World Cup
Looks Like	The Netherlands won’t be hosting again
2020 Entry	Grow
Other Notes	<p>The call and response style of this is apparently a hallmark of kawina – a musical genre from Suriname, where Jeangu was born.</p> <p>Also making use of the pre-recorded backing vocal loophole, Jeangu has of a sixty-strong choir in this – which is actually just him, his brother and a singer called Milaisa recorded over and over.</p>

The Stats



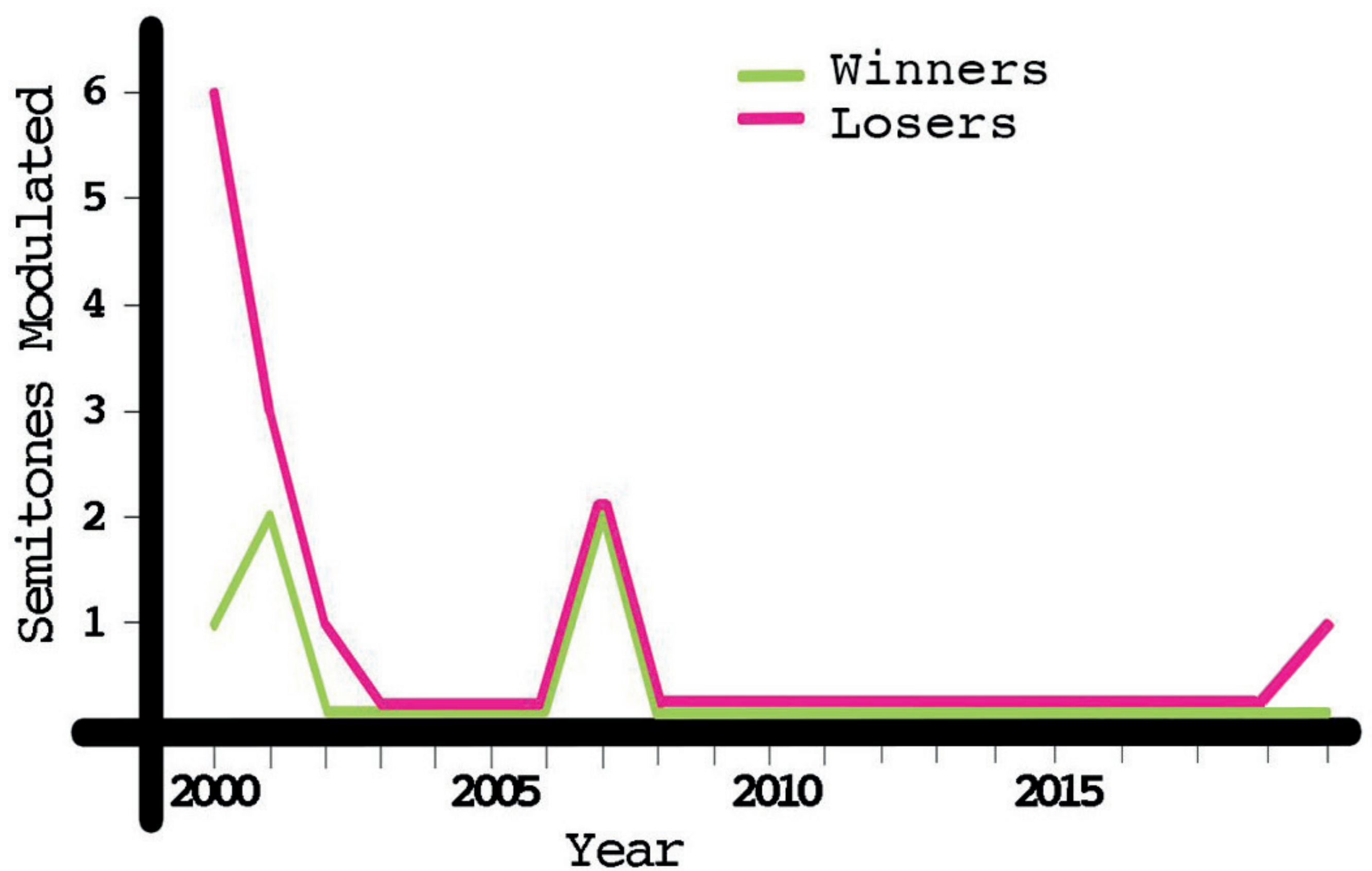
The Key To Success

There's a common misconception about Eurovision songs all being happy, smiley, glitz and glitter. A look back at the last few decades shows that you're actually much better served entering a song in a moody minor key – and steering well clear of major ones.



Change Reaction

Everyone claims to love a key change. Everyone sticks “KEY CHANGE!!!” on their office Eurovision bingo cards and insists everyone take a drink when they hear one — but they’re actually quite rare, and there hasn’t been a single winner to attempt one in well over a decade...

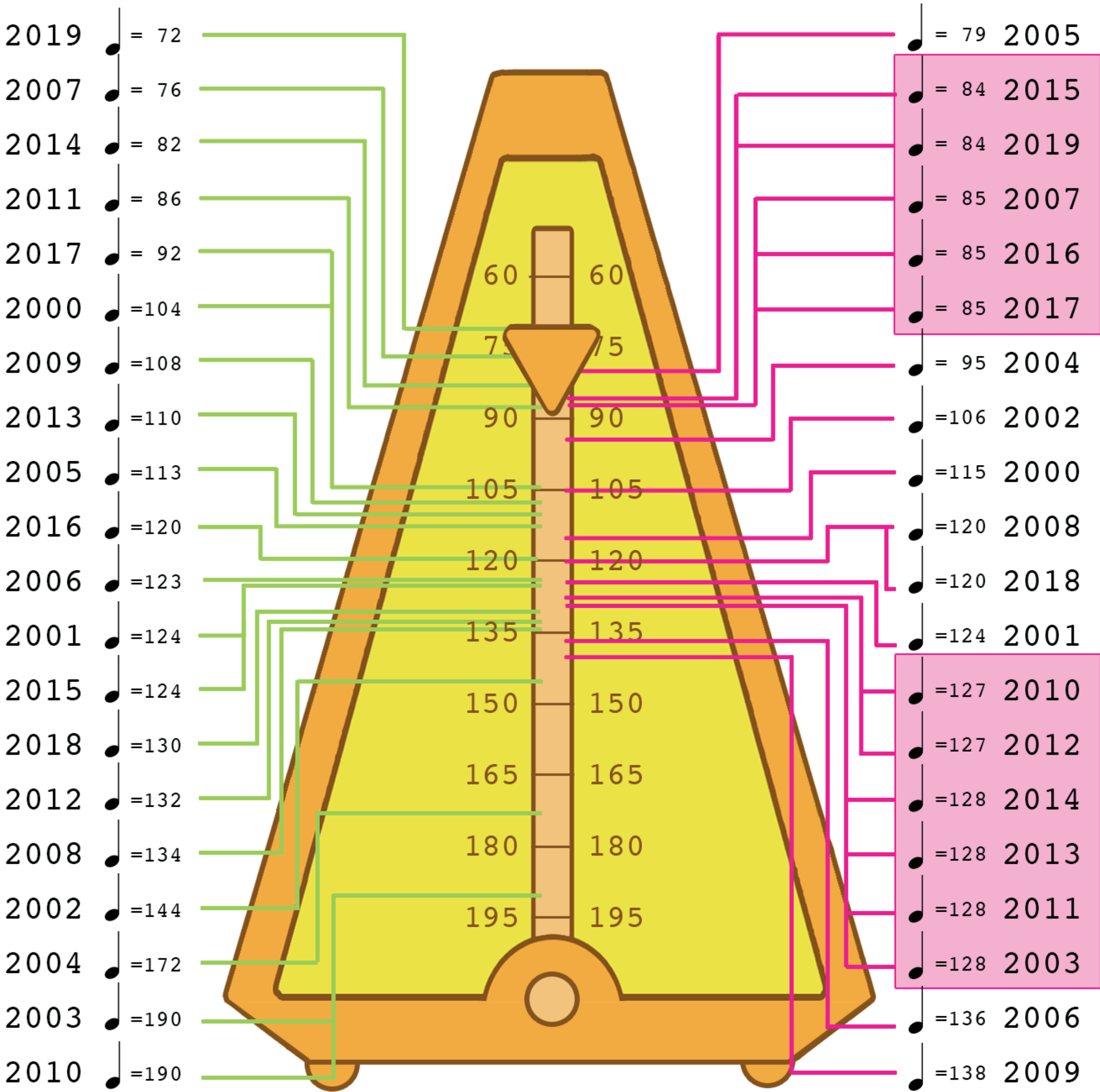


A Need For Speed

The tempo is the heartbeat of a song; the rhythm to which it works. In a competition where you have a strict three-minute upper limit to adhere to, choosing your tempo is therefore a critical decision. And there are a couple you need to avoid: 128bpm and 85bpm.

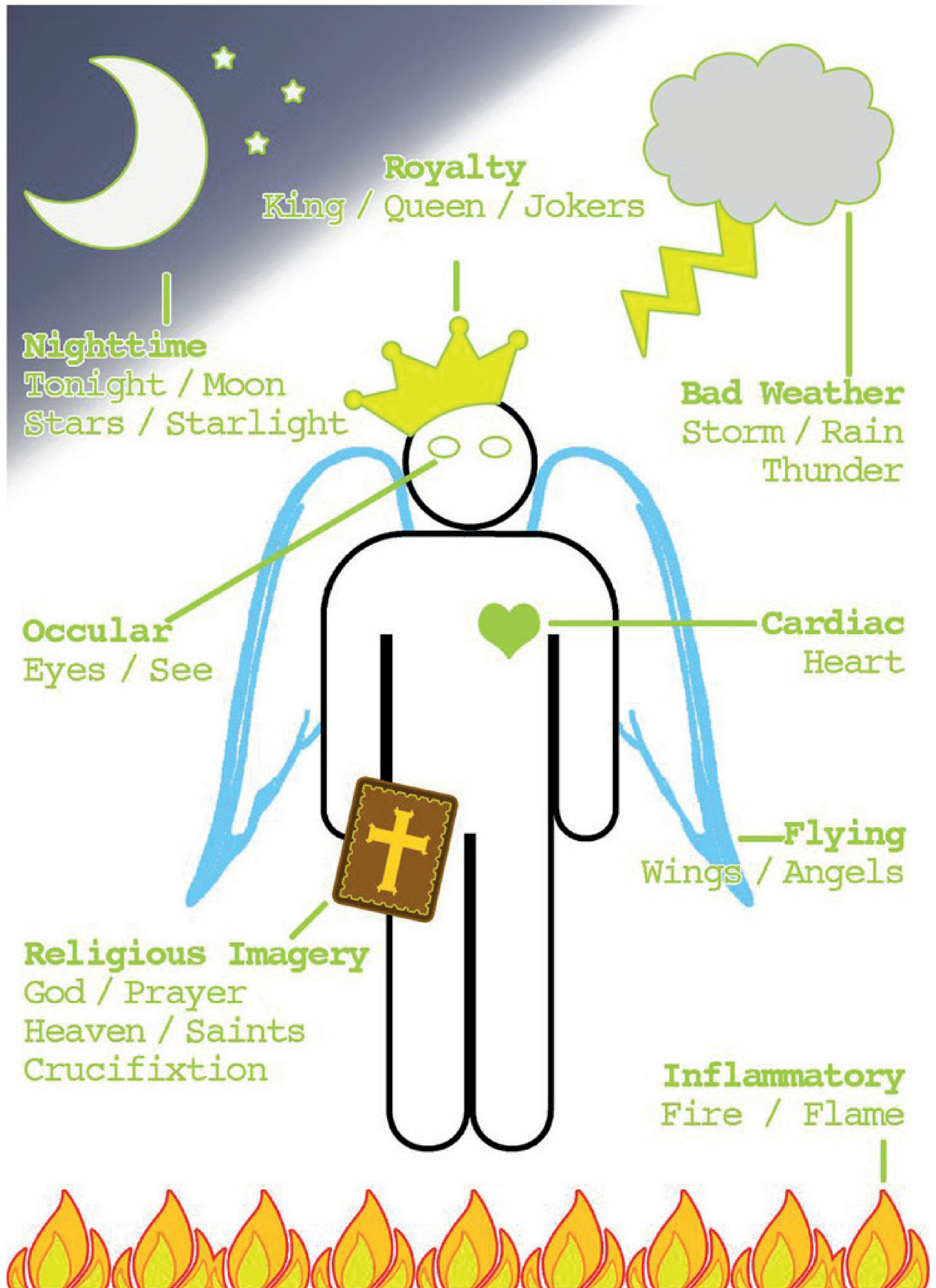
Winners

Losers



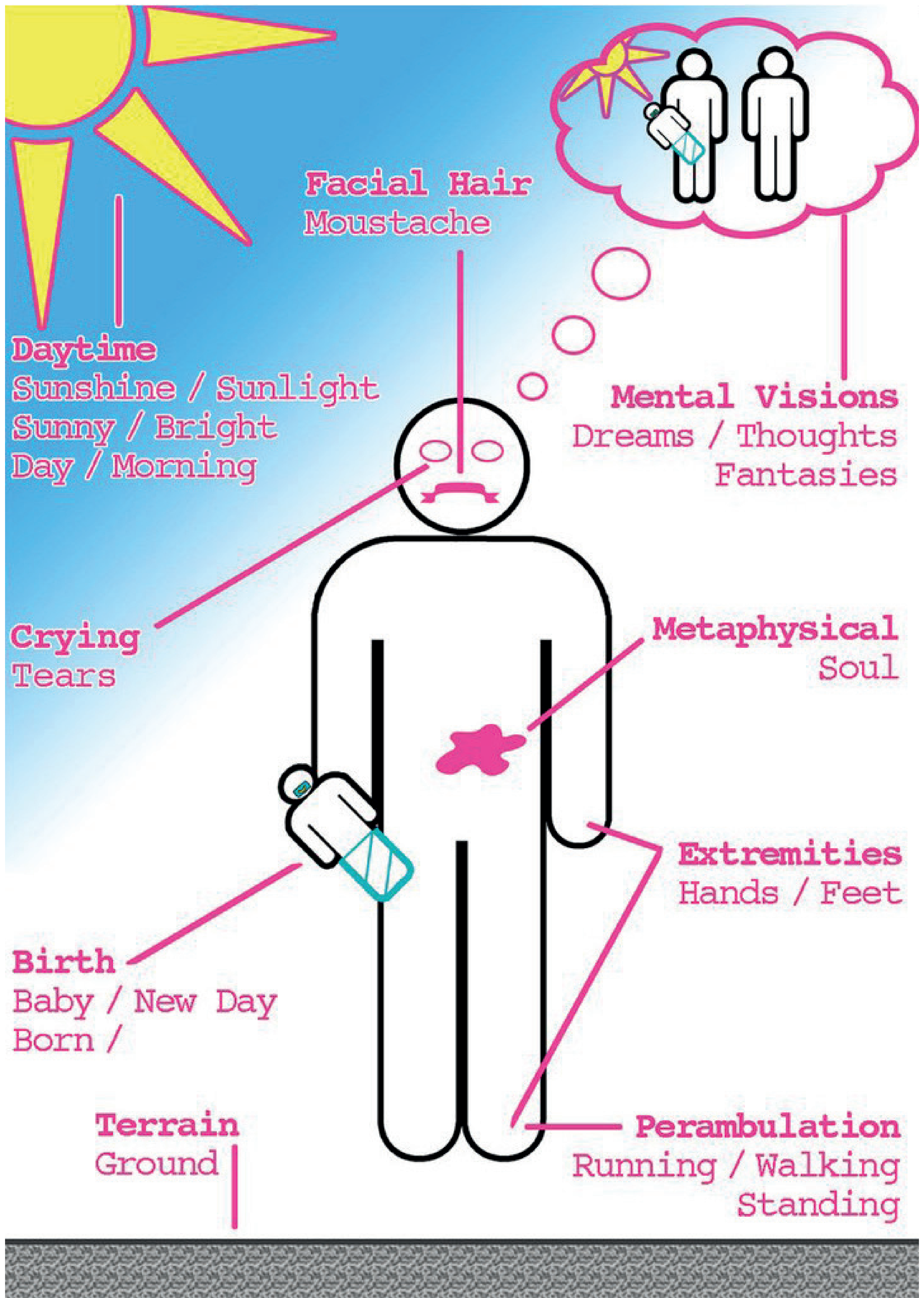
A Way With Words

You might think that Eurovision lyrics are just a bunch of nonsense platitudes strung together in somebody's second language without much thought. Often, you'd be right. But there are a few patterns that have emerged with the winners...



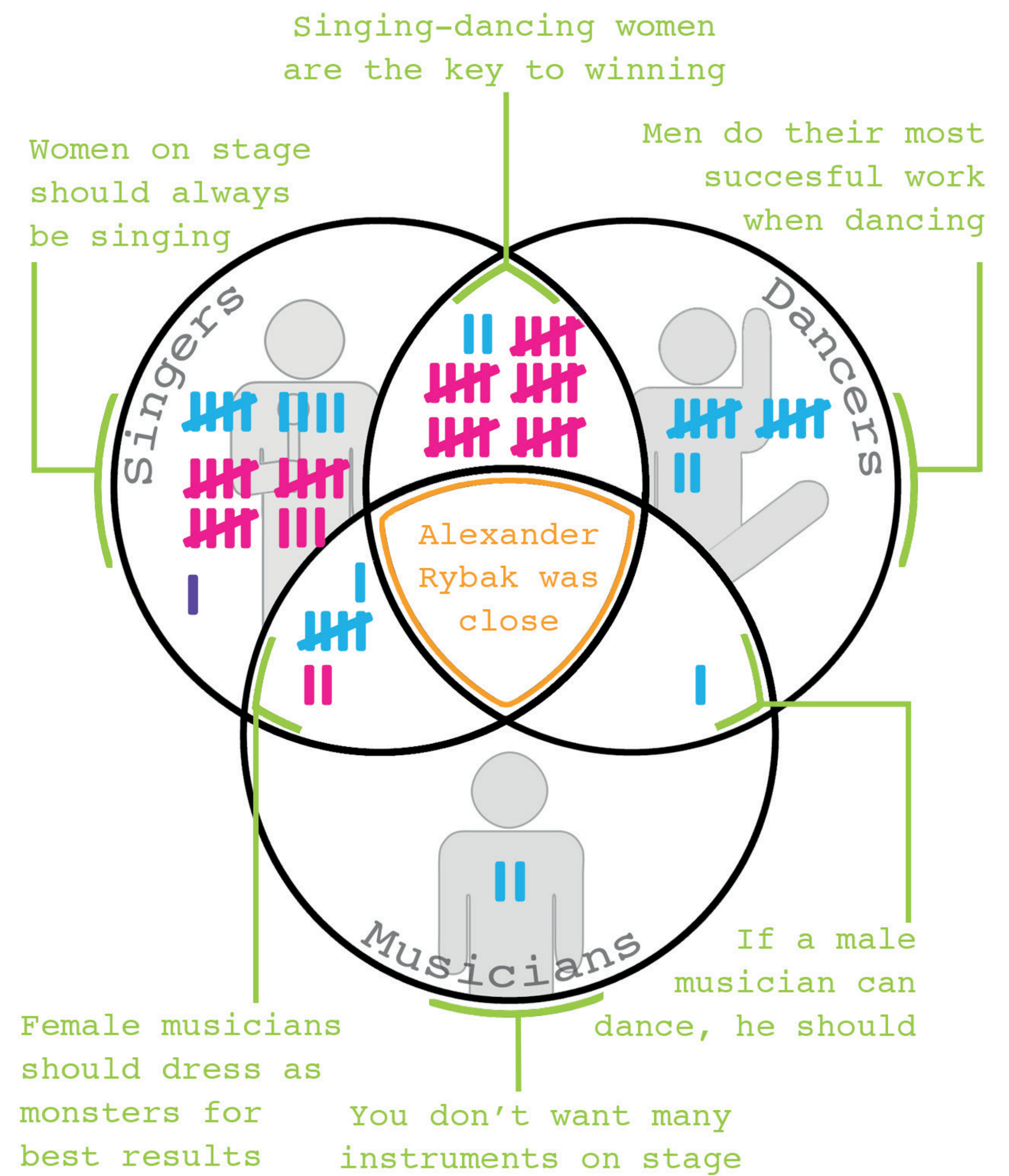
Bad Language

It's all very well knowing what to sing, but what should be left unsaid? There's a number of classic keyword traps that the novice Eurovision songwriter can fall into. So what words should you be avoiding if you don't want to come dead last?



The Winning Combo

Up to six people can take to the stage per entry – either as singers, dancers, musicians or a combination of all three. How do winners use those bodies best?



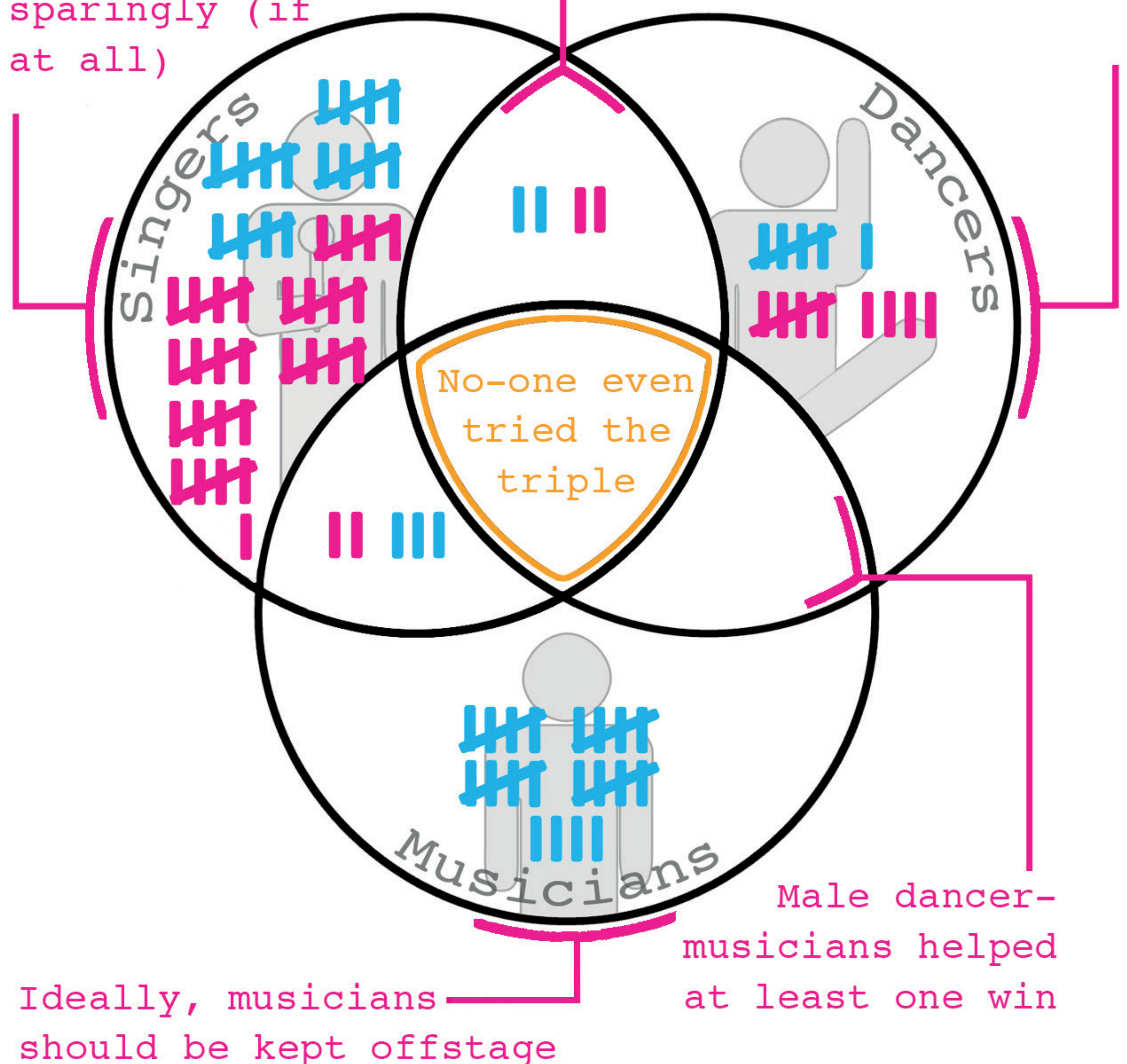
A Bunch Of Losers

The more people you have on your stage, the more likely it is that someone will cock something up and kill your chances. So as well as making sure your backing performers are doing all the *right* things, you need to also make sure they aren't doing anything terrible...

Multitasking is helpful;
losers don't even try

Backing singers
should be used
sparingly (if
at all)

Female dancers
need to sing



Luck Of The Draw

Most crucial of all though is where you get placed in the running order. What should you be aiming for?

1	✖ 2008 ✖ 2001 _(a)
2	✖ 2004
3	
4	✖ 2007 ✖ 2001 _(b) ✔ 2003
5	
6	
7	✖ 2006
8	✖ 2018
9	
10	✖ 2000 ✖ 2016 ✔ 2004 ✔ 2015
11	✔ 2014 ✔ 2017
12	✖ 2012 ✖ 2010 ✔ 2019
13	✖ 2011
14	✖ 2002 ✖ 2014 ✖ 2015 ✔ 2000
15	✖ 2003
16	✖ 2017 ✖ 2019
17	✔ 2012 ✔ 2007 ✔ 2006 ✖ 2005
18	✔ 2013
19	✔ 2011 ✔ 2005
20	✔ 2009 ✔ 2001
21	✔ 2016
22	✔ 2010
23	✔ 2002 ✔ 2018
24	✖ 2009 ✔ 2008
25	
26	✖ 2013

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