



POPBITCH Eurovision  
2018

# Hello, Lisbon!

It's that time once again, when Europe gathers together to harness the unifying power of music – then uses it to make a gloriously batshit spectacle of itself: singing and dancing up a storm, while engaging in hilarious petty rivalries. Welcome one and all to Eurovision 2018!



**The First Half.....3–17**  
Pianos on fire! Rolf Harris oboe solos! Tattoos that offend and upset the Chinese! This year's first half is filled with some surprisingly good stuff – so you'll want to get yourself comfortable and watch this thing from the start.

**The Second Half.....18–32**  
This year's favourites all landed a pretty plum draw – so there's a very solid stretch of the contest's titans duking it out from the halfway point, delightfully seasoned with some face-melting metal, viking cosplay and end-of-the-pier farce.

**The Stats.....51–59**  
Diagrams, facts, information, theory. You want to impress your mates with absolutely useless knowledge about which words win the contest? We've got everything you need.

**The Fallen.....44–50**  
The semi-finals were tough and bloodily fought, and a lot of A-grade nonsense was sadly left behind. We haven't forgotten them though, so if you want to have a little chuckle at the stuff that fell at the first hurdle, please do...

# First Half

## Songs #1-13



# Pt. 1: At A Glance

Watching the Eurovision Song Contest is no trivial undertaking. Keeping your glass full, your bladder empty and your brain safe from permanent damage requires a fair bit of planning. So here's the first half mapped out so that you can arrange your evening accordingly...

#	Country	Which One Is That?
1	Ukraine	Goth Pete Campbell rises from a fiery piano coffin; a <i>great</i> start
2	Spain	Wet, drippy musical theatre kids
3	Slovenia	Watch her whip, watch her hvala nae nae
4	Lithuania	Weepy mush; like Joanna Newsom doing a dog rescue adoption ad
5	Austria	Sam Smith's choir, as arranged by James Blake
6	Estonia	Mad opera bird in a meringue
7	Norway	2009's winner, Alexander Rybak, attempting to be Johnny Logan II
8	Portugal	Blissed out Portuguese vibes from your lesbian uni mates
9	United Kingdom	Millennial Annie Lennox
10	Serbia	One minute wailing and Rolf Harris oboe; two minutes music
11	Germany	What do you get if you cross Mick Hucknall with Ed Sheeran?
12	Albania	Gruff Albanian radio rock
13	France	Inexplicably a favourite; the usual dispassionate French fare

# Ukraine

Melovin was the winner of the sixth series of *X Factor* in his home country – which sort of makes him the Ukrainian Joe McElderry. If only Joe McElderry had set fire to his piano and written a song that sounded like Goldfrapp’s *Rocket* maybe we’d have sent him?



Artist

Song

Melovin

[Under The Ladder](#)

Language

English

Key

Key Change

Tempo

Songwriters

Eb minor

No

141bpm

Two

Sounds Like

Looks Like

John Newman

Goth Pete Campbell off of *Mad Men*

Reality TV

[Ukraine’s Got Talent](#); [X Factor Ukraine](#)

Worst Lyric

“I’m laughing at the trial / Help me to unravel / Tangle of my innocence inside”

Other Notes

The staging was co-directed by the choreographer behind Ukraine’s winning entry in 2016 – a performance which consisted primarily of [Jamala waving her arms about while warbling about Stalin’s war crimes](#). This is *much* better.

# Spain

SPAIN, UPON SEEING PORTUGAL WIN FOR THE FIRST TIME ON THEIR 49TH ATTEMPT: Oh, you guys want soppy, foreign ballads in 3/4? You should have said! We’ve got loads!

EVERYONE ELSE: Why couldn’t you have written *Fuego*?



Artist Amaia y Alfred  
Song [Tu Canción](#)

Language Spanish

Key C Major  
Key Change No  
Tempo 120bpm  
Time Sig 3/4  
Songwriters Two

Sounds Like The midway ballad from an overdubbed foreign Disney movie

Looks Like Wholesome hosts of kids TV

Reality TV Respectively, the winner and runner-up of the most recent season of *Operación Triunfo* ([Amaia singing Florence and the Machine](#)) ([Alfred singing Harry Styles](#))

Other Notes There’s been a few whispers in the Euro-press about whether or not these two are a couple – all done about as subtly as the time Stephen Gately was ‘engaged’ to Kerri-Ann.

# Slovenia

If you aren't fluent in Slovene, imagine for a second that you are. What you'd hear when Lea Sirk starts singing are the words "True art cannot have a price tag / Every single answer is already in me / I find it during my sleep / When my body is relaxed and perceptive to everything".



Artist	Lea Sirk
Song	<a href="#">Hvala, ne!</a>
Language	Slovene
Key	Eb minor
Key Change	No
Tempo	140bpm
Songwriters	Two
Sounds Like	Watch Me (Whip/Nae Nae)
Looks Like	Blair St Clair
Reality TV	<a href="#">Znan Obraz Ima Svoj Glas</a> (aka Slovenia's <i>Your Face Sounds Familiar</i> )
Worst Lyric	Another bit of it translates out as: "My name is Lea / And I have a new character for you / A character of smiles and freedom as the most virtual trick of them all"
Other Notes	Has appeared as a backing singer twice for Slovenia – for <a href="#">ManuElla in 2016</a> and <a href="#">Tinkara Kovač in 2014</a>

# Lithuania

Like a bunch of mawkish old shit? Then you'll love Lithuania's entry! A song about falling in love and looking forward to growing old with someone, this couldn't be more perfectly tailored to ensure you won't miss a second of the action if you go and have a piss.



Artist	Ieva Zasimauskaitė
Song	<a href="#">When We're Old</a>
Language	English
Key	Bb Major
Key Change	No
Tempo	90bpm
Songwriters	One
Sounds Like	The sort of song that would play over a sad, end-of-season montage in <i>Dawson's Creek</i> or <i>The OC</i>
Looks Like	A <i>Corrie</i> star
Reality TV	<i>The Clash Of Choirs</i> (2009), <i>The Voice Lithuania</i> (2012)
Other Notes	This is a return to Eurovision for Ieva, as she was a <a href="#">backing singer for Lithuania's Junior Eurovision entry</a> when she was 14.
We're also assured that the quiet bits in this will drive any ASMR fans wild.	

# Austria

Cesár has been deep undercover in Eurovision these last few years, working quietly as a backing singer for Bulgaria – first for [Poli Genova in 2016](#), then [Kristian Kostov in 2017](#) – before returning home in order to restore some much-needed credibility to Austria.



Artist	Cesár Sampson
Song	<a href="#">Nobody But You</a>
Language	English
Key	B minor
Key Change	No
Tempo	85bpm
Songwriters	Five
Sounds Like	James Blake wrote a song for Sam Smith
Looks Like	Craig David’s accountant brother
Worst Lyric	“After your words have been my bible / How could I search for someone new?”
Other Notes	Indie pop spotters might remember him from the post-trip-hop band The Sofa Surfers.

This was originally shopped around to the UK for us to use, but somehow we lost it and ended up with *Storm* instead.

# Estonia

Opera.  
(Huh. Yeah.)  
What is it good for?  
A B S O L U T E L Y     N O T H I N G.



Artist	Elina Nechayeva
Song	<a href="#">La Forza</a>
Language	Italian
Key	D minor
Key Change	No
Tempo	96bpm
Songwriters	Four
Sounds Like	Sarah Brightman
Looks Like	Kirsty Gallacher
Reality TV	Eesti Otsib Superstaari (2009); <a href="#">Klassikatähed</a> (2014)
Other Notes	It’s tempting to think that if opera’s going to do well, it’ll be because the juries vote for it in an attempt to look smart, discerning and cultured. Yet when Italy entered <a href="#">Il Volo in 2015</a> , it actually won the televote but ended up in third place overall as it got nobbled by the juries, voting for Måns Zelmerlöw...

# Norway

A returning star to Eurovision, you'll maybe remember Alexander Rybak as [the winner in 2009](#). So far, Johnny Logan is the only person to have won the crown twice, back in the 80s. Could Rybak do it in 2018? Maybe. This objectively naff song is weirdly popular.



Artist	Alexander Rybak
Song	<a href="#">That's How You Write A Song</a>
Language	English
Key	F minor
Key Change	No
Tempo	104bpm
Songwriters	One
Sounds Like	The sort of song Jamie Oliver would write if he wanted to get kids into music, rather than salads
Looks Like	A Sylvanian Family toy
Reality TV	<i>Norwegian Idol</i> (2005)
Other Notes	Playing a violin on stage has traditionally been a pretty solid move: for <a href="#">Dima Bilan in 2008</a> , <a href="#">Rybak himself in 2009</a> – and last year's <a href="#">Hey Mamma by The Sunstroke Project</a> (which came Top Three).  Scatting, on the other hand? <a href="#">Terrible idea</a> .

# Portugal

For years, we took great pleasure in ragging on Portugal – accusing them of being obtuse, entering songs in impenetrable Portuguese that were miles out of step with the rest of the contest. We almost choked when eating our words last year, but we’re back in business now...



Artist

Song

Cláudia Pascoal

[O Jardim](#)

Language

Portuguese

Key

Key Change

Tempo

Songwriters

Bb Major

No

120bpm

One

Sounds Like

Looks Like

Portuguese Morcheeba (Porcheeba?)

Rachel Maddow

Worst Lyric

“Now that you’re gone /  
I’ll take care of your garden”

Other Notes

If you notice someone skulking about in the back, dressed in a black Nirvana T-shirt, being fairly unobtrusive but loitering around like your grumpy teenage cousin – that’s the songwriter.

# United Kingdom

Well, here we are again. Automatically qualified, thanks to the cash that the Beeb forks out each year, looking down the barrel of a low-twenties/high-teen finish with a song that is so MOR even Radio 2 has resorted to playing the club mix of it on air.



Artist	SuRie
Song	<a href="#">Storm</a>
Language	English
Key	Bb Major
Key Change	No
Tempo	116bpm
Songwriters	Three
Sounds Like	Katy Perry B-side
Looks Like	Annie Lennox
Worst Lyric	“Hey / Hey brother / Do you remember when we were kids with no fear?”
Other Notes	After the song was picked on the BBC show <i>You Decide</i> , the song had a bit of an overhaul. They dropped it down a semitone to better suit SuRie’s voice and they added some sort of percussion that sounds like the noise that the animated popcorn made when it got dropped in the bin in <a href="#">those old National Amusement cinema ads</a> .

# Serbia

Eurovision songs have to adhere to a strict upper limit of three minutes. That’s it. Three minutes to give it everything you’ve got. So quite what gives Sanja the confidence to piss away the first of those three minutes wailing on before the beat kicks in is a mystery to us.



Artist

Sanja Ilić & Balkanika

Song

[Nova Deca](#)

Language

Serbian

Key

B minor

Key Change

No

Tempo

125bpm

Songwriters

Three

Sounds Like

[Answers on a postcard, please](#)

Looks Like

Nigel Slater, Christopher Maloney, Michelle Heaton, Jennifer Ellison and Rolf Harris

Other Notes

This is not Sanja Ilić’s first rodeo. He appeared in the 1982 contest (in Harrogate, geography fans) when one of his songs – [Halo Halo](#) – was picked to be the Yugoslavian entry.

# Germany

Over the last three years Germany have gradually been climbing up the scoreboard, placing (in order) 27th, 26th and 25th. So this year they'll very much be hoping to land that coveted 24th spot. And, all jokes aside, it looks like they've got every chance of doing it.



Artist

Song

Michael Schulte

[You Let Me Walk Alone](#)

Language

English

Key

Key Change

Tempo

Songwriters

B Major

No

152bpm

Four

Sounds Like

Looks Like

Snow Patrol

A young German Mick Hucknall

Worst Lyric

“I was born from one love / Of two hearts / We were three kids and a loving mum”

Other Notes

This song was co-written by Thomas Stengaard, who was one of the writers of Denmark’s 2013 winner [Only Teardrops](#). However, getting one of the *Only Teardrops* gang in to help you write a song is by no means a cut and dried recipe for success.

Just ask us, [when we finished 15th last year](#).

# Albania

Big fans of the bombastic rock sound, Albania hasn't done brilliantly well in contests past. However, Eugent Bushpepa (2018's best-named entrant) has some serious rock chops, having supported Deep Purple and Duff McKagan on tour. Which won't really help, but worth a mention.



Artist	Eugent Bushpepa
Song	<a href="#">Mall</a>
Language	Albanian
Key	E Major
Key Change	No
Tempo	64bpm
Time Sig	6/8
Songwriters	One
Sounds Like	The Goo Goo Dolls
Looks Like	A pick-up artist; sidelining in street magic
Reality TV	<a href="#">Top Fest in 2007</a> (singing Michael Sembello's <i>Maniac</i> )
Other Notes	Ireland have grabbed all the headlines for getting China banned from broadcasting the final because they show a same-sex couple – but China also refused to broadcast Albania's entry too. Why?  Because Eugent has tattoos. (Seriously.)

# France

Like ‘Merci’, yeah?



Artist

Song

Madame Monsieur

[Mercy](#)

Language

French

Key

Key Change

Tempo

Songwriters

E minor

No

97bpm

Two

Sounds Like

Looks Like

The Frenchest thing imaginable

The Frenchest thing imaginable

Other Notes

Whatever else happens, Madame Monsieur definitely win this year’s award for most pretentious press release.

A brief sample: *“‘Madame’ and ‘Monsieur’, like two poles of the same celestial body, are each pulled to the centre of a song, where Emilie masterfully sculpts the French language around Jean-Karl’s pop leanings. It’s the one-way ticket of their dreams toward simplicity.”*

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25

WE'LL GIVE YOU

25



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# Second Half

## Songs #14-26



# Pt. 2: At A Glance

What’s gone before was merely an amuse bouche. The second half of the show is generally where the winners are, so you’re going to have to pay especially close attention from this point on. Luckily, we’ve got the headlines here for you so you don’t miss any of the primo stuff...

#	Country	Which One Is That?
14	Czechia	Exchange student white boy rap from Mr Ripley-era Matt Damon
15	Denmark	Viking LARPers storm the stage
16	Australia	Lukewarm arena dance pop from down under
17	Finland	Saaaaraaaaaa Aaaaaaltooooo
18	Bulgaria	Sci-fi future-pop supergroup ft. five extremely oversized egos
19	Moldova	Run For Your Wife meets Scooby Doo meets Yolanda Be Cool; cute
20	Sweden	Super slick Swedish pop on a malfunctioning bisexual sunbed
21	Hungary	A shot of face-melting metal right out of leftfield
22	Israel	Chicken noises and bleeping
23	Netherlands	Netherlands goes Nashville!
24	Ireland	Louis Walsh would love him
25	Cyprus	Finally! Something for the dads!
26	Italy	And, for its final trick, Eurovision tackles terrorism

# Czechia

There’s no greater joy at Eurovision than the curious English-as-a-second-language lyric. *Lie To Me* is full of them – and [the original, explicit mix](#) of it featured the line “plenty motherfuckers want to eat my spaghetti.” We’ll leave you to guess what he means by that...



Artist

Mikolas Josef

Song

[Lie To Me](#)

Language

English

Key

F# minor

Key Change

No

Tempo

106bpm

Songwriters

One

Sounds Like

[Talk Dirty](#) by Jason Derulo / [Have Fun Go Mad](#) by Blair

Looks Like

A nerdy Czech Matt Damon

Worst lyric

A three-way toss-up between “By the way she moved, got me making a puddle”; “I know you bop-whop-a-lu-bop on his wood bamboo”; and “When you lie, lie, lie / Set my camel in the mood”

Other Notes

He is fucking obsessed with his backpack. Suspiciously so. Expect to see him on stage with it.

# Denmark

Eurovision wouldn't be Eurovision without some mystical looking Nordic/Viking type singing a song that has touches of the historical battle anthem. Expect flag-waving, trenchcoats and a lot of men who look like they have stinky, stinky bedrooms.



Artist	Rasmussen
Song	<a href="#">Higher Ground</a>
Language	English
Key	F# minor
Key Change	Yes
Tempo	82bpm
Songwriters	Two
Sounds Like	<a href="#">Africa by Toto</a> – but dark and brooding
Looks Like	Tormund Giantsbane’s lanky kid brother
Other Notes	Rasmussen is also in an <a href="#">80s metal tribute band called Hair Metal Heröes</a> and we cannot begin to tell you how disappointed we are that he didn’t do this sort of thing instead. Next year, Ras, mate. Next year.  As for the staging, we’re told by our man on the ground: “Anyone who’s been to the Valhalla viking log flume ride in Blackpool will pretty much have seen and heard this whole show.”

# Australia

It's nice to see that Australia feels so at home at Eurovision that they're apparently completely happy to enter a lukewarm piece of pop pabulum like this, but we can't pretend we're thrilled about it. Hopefully they're just keeping their powder dry for Asiavision...



Artist	Jessica Mauboy
Song	<a href="#">We Got Love</a>
Language	English
Key	G Major
Key Change	No
Tempo	114bpm
Songwriters	Three
Sounds Like	A Coca Cola-sponsored World Cup anthem
Looks Like	Miquita Oliver with highlights
Reality TV	<a href="#">Australian Idol</a> (2006)
Other Notes	This is Jessica's second performance at a Eurovision. She was an interval act in semi-final two in 2014 (a year before Australia were formally invited to take part in the actual competition).

# Finland

Why, look! It's Saara Aalto – every subeditor and spellchecker's least favourite contestant! Known best to British viewers as the runner-up to Matt Terry in the 2016 series of *The X Factor*, she's now representing her home nation of Finland. Thanks, Saara. Thanks a bunch!



Artist	Saara Aalto
Song	<a href="#">Monsters</a>
Language	English
Key	C minor
Key Change	No
Tempo	122bpm
Songwriters	Four
Sounds Like	Kate Bush verses; tropical house choruses
Looks Like	Demi Lovato, if Demi Lovato was in Atomic Kitten
Reality TV	<a href="#">Finland's Got Talent</a> ; runner-up on <a href="#">The Voice of Finland</a> ; runner-up on <a href="#">X Factor UK</a>
Other Notes	Let's hope the rest of Europe enjoys creepy horror-show child vocals...

# Bulgaria

Regular Eurovision watchers will know that Bulgaria have been creeping towards the top spot over the last few years – coming close to a win but never quite clinching it. So they’ve roped in the same songwriters as their last two entries to see if third time’s the charm...



Artist	Equinox
Song	<a href="#">Bones</a>
Language	English
Key	F# minor
Key Change	No
Tempo	88bpm
Songwriters	Four
Sounds Like	Azerbaijan’s entry last year, <a href="#">Skeletons</a>
Looks Like	Gwen Stefani and The Black Eyed Peas
Reality TV	Zhana: <i>X Factors Denmark</i> and <a href="#">Bulgaria</a> Georgi: <a href="#">X Factor Romania</a> Johnny: <a href="#">America’s Got Talent</a>
Other Notes	The trouble with forming a supergroup like this for Eurovision is that you risk ending up presenting five stage-hogs, all desperate to be the one that everyone remembers, belting their fucking lungs out rather than working as part of a group. Sadly, Bulgaria do not avoid this trap.

# Moldova

Fun songs are few and far between in this year’s contest (inspired by Portugal’s landslide win for being sweet and serious last year) so thank the heavens for Moldova – and their trademark brand of silliness. It’s not quite *Hey Mamma*, but it’s a bright spot in the proceedings...



Artist

Song

DoReDos

[My Lucky Day](#)

Language

English

Key

Key Change

Tempo

Songwriters

D minor

No

122bpm

Two

Sounds Like

Looks Like

[Yolanda Be Cool](#)

Butlins, Pontins and whatever the fictional campsite from *Hi-De-Hi* was called merged to assemble a supergroup

Other Notes

This was written by Philipp Kirkorov and John Ballard who, between them, have been responsible for a bevy of high-ranking Eurovision hits, including *You’re The Only One, Shine, Hold Me* and *This Is Love*.

Also, the idea of Scooby Doo corridor chase choreography might sound horrible, but it’s absolutely charming.

# Sweden

The cousin of one of Swedish House Mafia, brother of a DJ who worked with Avicii, son of a Melodifestivalen stalwart, Benjamin is from serious Swedish celebrity stock, so the pressure will be on. Luckily for him, he happens to have one of the year’s slickest entries.



Artist	Benjamin Ingrosso
Song	<a href="#">Dance You Off</a>
Language	English
Key	F minor
Key Change	No
Tempo	110bpm
Songwriters	Four
Sounds Like	Justin Bieber/Nick Jonas
Looks Like	A Made In Chelsea type
Reality TV	He is a recurring guest on his sister and mother’s reality show <a href="#">Wahlgrens Värld</a> – sort of like a Swedish Rob Kardashian
Other Notes	Benjamin has got himself in a bit of trouble, mouthing off about the other contestants (largely in jest) on YouTube. He was so cruel to San Marino that he felt the need to publicly apologise.  Bless.

# Hungary

It’s not unheard of for heavy metal to make an appearance in this pop contest (Lordi won the whole thing in 2006 with [Hard Rock Hallelujah](#) after all) but it’s rarely ever played this straight. It’s a bold choice, and it’ll certainly stick in the mind.



Artist

Song

AWS

[Viszlát Nyár](#)

Language

Hungarian

Key

Key Change

Tempo

Songwriters

Eb minor

Yes

164bpm

Five

Sounds Like

Looks Like

Bullet For My Valentine

Imagine Dragons

Worst Lyric

The opening lines translate as “Let’s lay our cards on the table / My vessel’s headed outbound / And it will leave you behind”

Other Notes

More flames than the first thirty seconds of a Rammstein show. Absolute carnage.

# Israel

A hot favourite at the start, Netta was the bookies’ choice for months. It’s since slipped in the odds but it’s still within grasp. It’s really just a question now of whether or not her bleeping, clucking and Tourette’s-heavy intro plays well with the Saturday night crowd.



Artist

Song

Netta

[Toy](#)

Language

English

Key

Key Change

Tempo

Songwriters

Eb minor

No

130bpm

Two

Sounds Like

Looks Like

Starts like [Cell Block Tango from \*Chicago\*](#)

Kawaii Beth Ditto

Reality TV

Winner of *HaKokhav HaBa*

Worst lyric

“I’m taking my pikachu home /  
You’re stupid just like your smart phone”

Other Notes

Netta made her name on *HaKokhav HaBa* by doing unusual versions of well-known songs. It was something of a mixed bag. Want to hear her absolutely fucking butcher [Aqua’s \*Barbie Girl\*](#) or [Haddaway’s \*What Is Love?\*](#) Fill your boots.

# The Netherlands

What the fuck is it with the Netherlands sending country music to the contest? This is their most rootin', tootin' bit of Americana to date and it comes courtesy of one of the guys who kicked this habit off in the first place as part of [the Common Linnets in 2014](#) – Waylon.



Artist	Waylon
Song	<a href="#">Outlaw In 'Em</a>
Language	English
Key	E minor
Key Change	No
Tempo	87bpm
Songwriters	Three
Sounds Like	Aerosmith ft. Blake Shelton
Looks Like	Russell Crowe as Jack White
Worst lyric	“It’s a fine, fine line/ Between whiskey and water into wine”
Other Notes	The staging has drawn a bit of criticism for its racially dubious undertones, which the Dutch delegation is trying to wave away as no big deal – but you’ll probably spot it.  Even his hideous Bet Lynch stage outfit doesn’t distract from it.

# Ireland

Having broken their recent stretch of bad luck by qualifying, Ireland has also been making headlines this year after China refused to broadcast their staging, which features a same-sex couple. Can Ireland parlay this controversy into points? Quite possibly...



Artist

Song

Ryan O'Shaughnessy

[Together](#)

Language

English

Key

Key Change

Tempo

Songwriters

F Major

No

94bpm

Three

Sounds Like

Looks Like

The Dixie Chicks' brother

A student busker

Reality TV

Was on [Ireland's \*The Voice\*](#); was on [Britain's Got Talent](#)

Other Notes

Ryan starred as Mark Halpin on the Irish soap opera *Fair City* for ten years.

Not only has it upset China, the stage show will make Putin's piss boil doubly hot now that Russia failed to qualify – so keep an ear out for some statement decrying the show as a 'hotbed of sodomy' again.

# Cyprus

You may think Eleni Foureira’s contribution to the Eurovision canon is a fairly standard one, but you’d be wrong. It is extremely notable, if only for being the first song in ESC history to involve the word ‘pelican’ in its lyrics. Which has got to be worth something...?



Artist	Eleni Foureira
Song	<a href="#">Fuego</a>
Language	English/Spanish
Key	B minor
Key Change	No
Tempo	106bpm
Songwriters	Five
Sounds Like	Dua Lipa x Avicii
Looks Like	Leona Lewis trying some Beyoncé moves
Reality TV	Greek <a href="#">So You Think You Can Dance?</a>
Worst lyric	“I was looking for some high, high, highs, yeah / ‘Til I got a dose of you / You got my pelican fly, fly, flyin’”
Other Notes	This has been creeping up the betting slowly but surely. When we first published this guide for the semi-finals, we said it could perhaps be a surprise win? Now, it’s the hot favourite. (You’re welcome, Eleni.)

# Italy

Not that you'd know it from the plucky, jaunty banjo throughout, but this song is about the recent terrorist attacks in Paris, Nice, Cairo, Barcelona and London. The title translates as "You Haven't Done Anything To Me" – which seems a little unwise to brag about...



Artist

Song

Ermal Meta e Fabrizio Moro

[Non Mi Avete Fatto Niente](#)

Language

Italian

Key

Key Change

Tempo

Songwriters

Eb minor

No

90bpm

Three

Sounds Like

Looks Like

Manu Chao

One of the Wannadies – but old

Worst Lyric

The band hope to get their lyrics translated on screen so that their message is heard beyond Italy – but they're pretty hardcore.

First they invoke the Bataclan attack in Paris ("In France, there's a concert / People having fun / Someone sings powerfully / Someone screams at death") before following it up with "In Nice, the sea is red with fire and shame / With people on the asphalt and blood in the sewer". Cheery stuff, boys!

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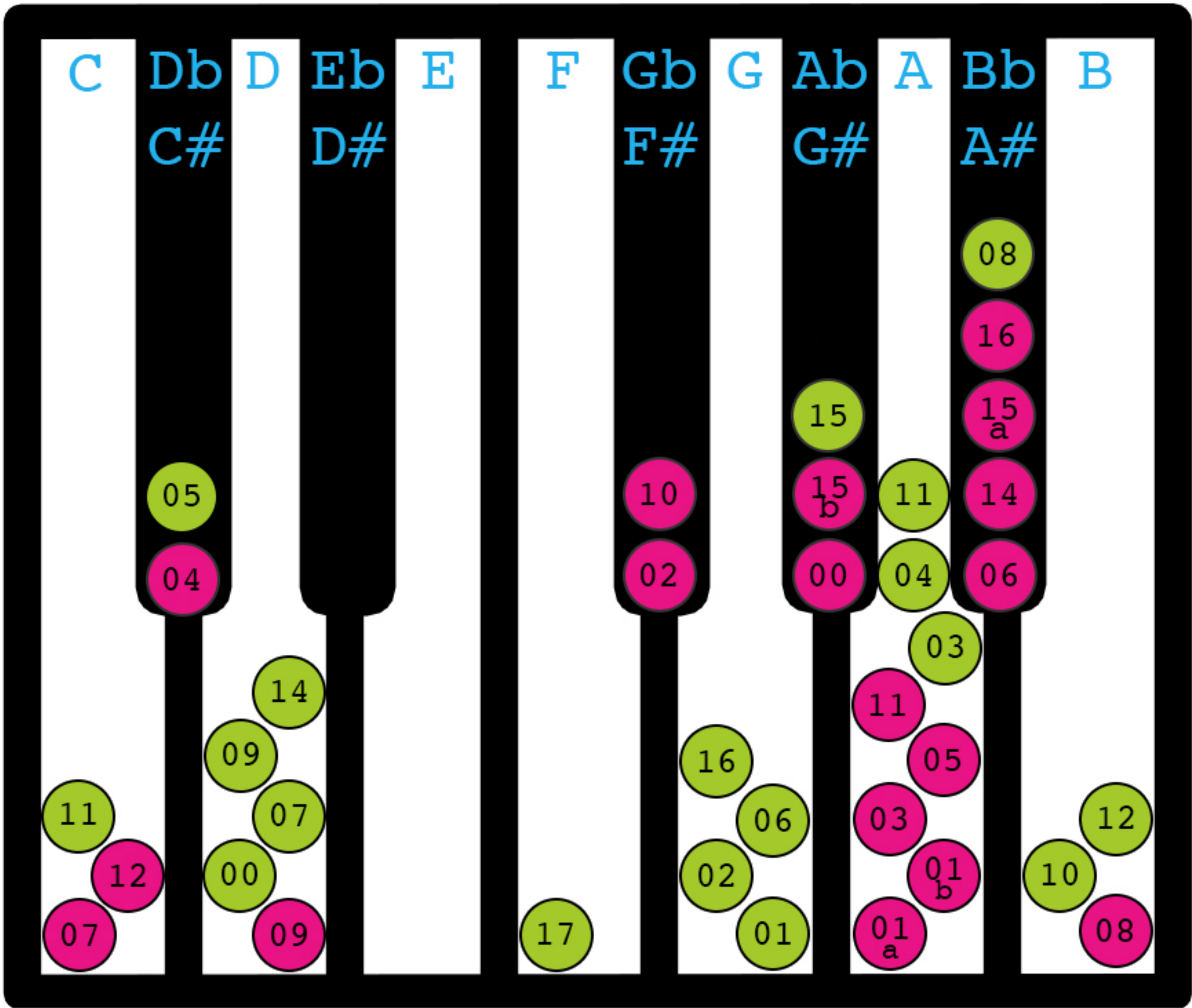
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# The Stats



# The Key To Success

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

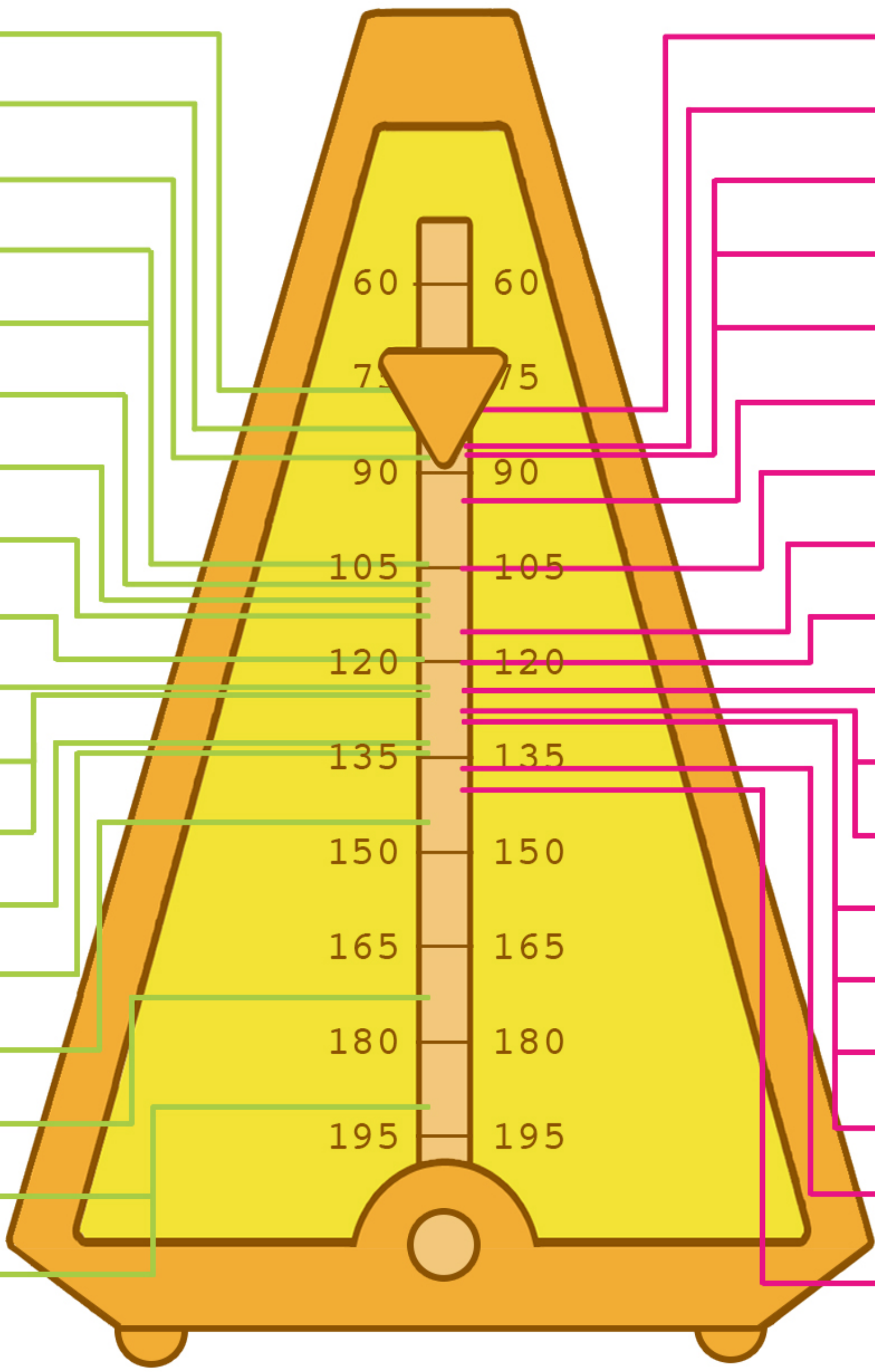


# A Need For Speed

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

- 2007 = 76
- 2014 = 82
- 2011 = 86
- 2017 = 92
- 2000 = 104
- 2009 = 108
- 2013 = 110
- 2005 = 113
- 2016 = 120
- 2006 = 123
- 2001 = 124
- 2015 = 124
- 2012 = 132
- 2008 = 134
- 2002 = 144
- 2004 = 172
- 2003 = 190
- 2010 = 190

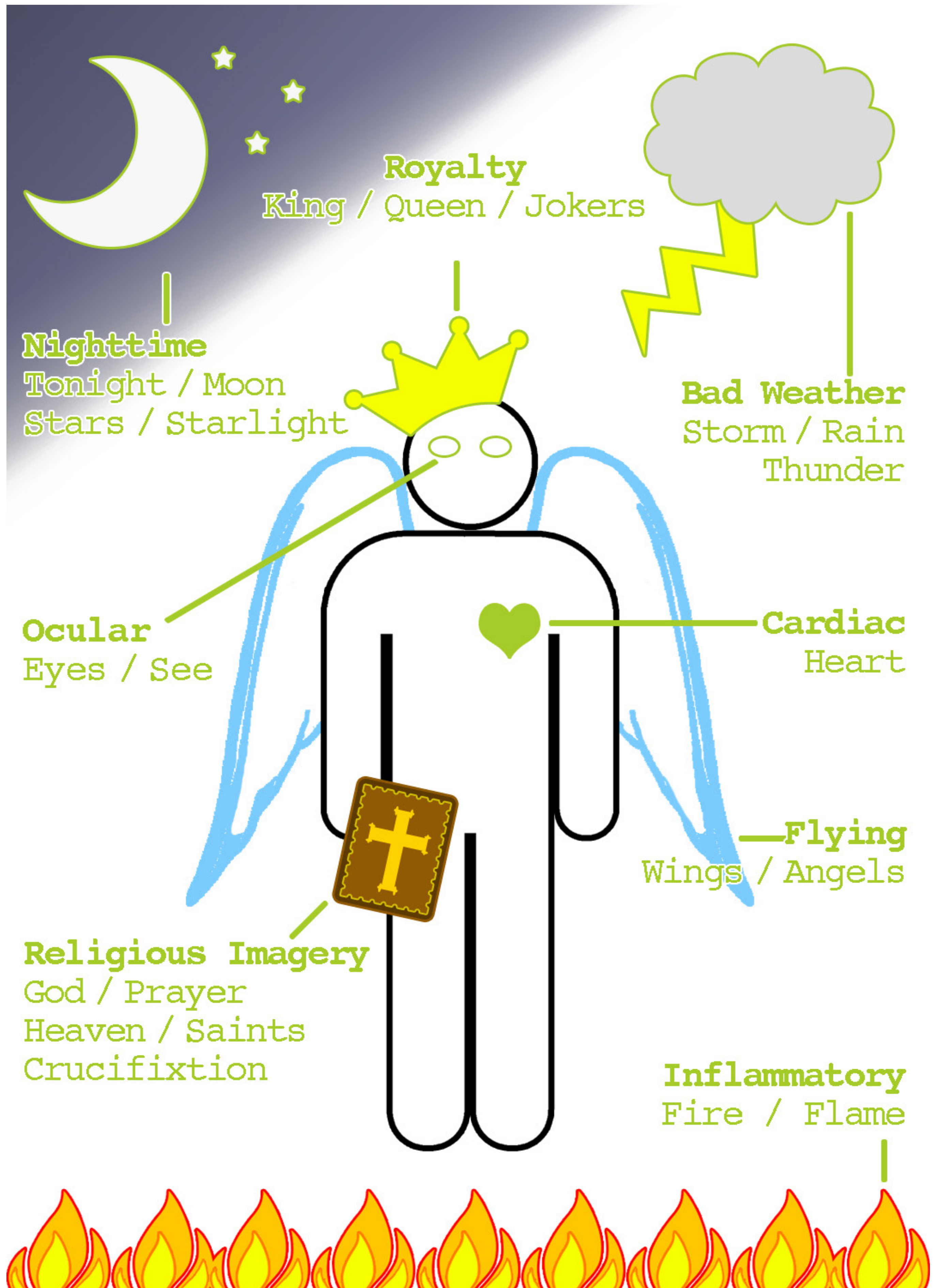


## Losers

- = 79 2005
- = 84 2015
- = 85 2007
- = 85 2016
- = 85 2017
- = 95 2004
- = 106 2002
- = 115 2000
- = 120 2008
- = 124 2001
- = 127 2010
- = 127 2012
- = 128 2014
- = 128 2013
- = 128 2011
- = 128 2003
- = 136 2006
- = 138 2009

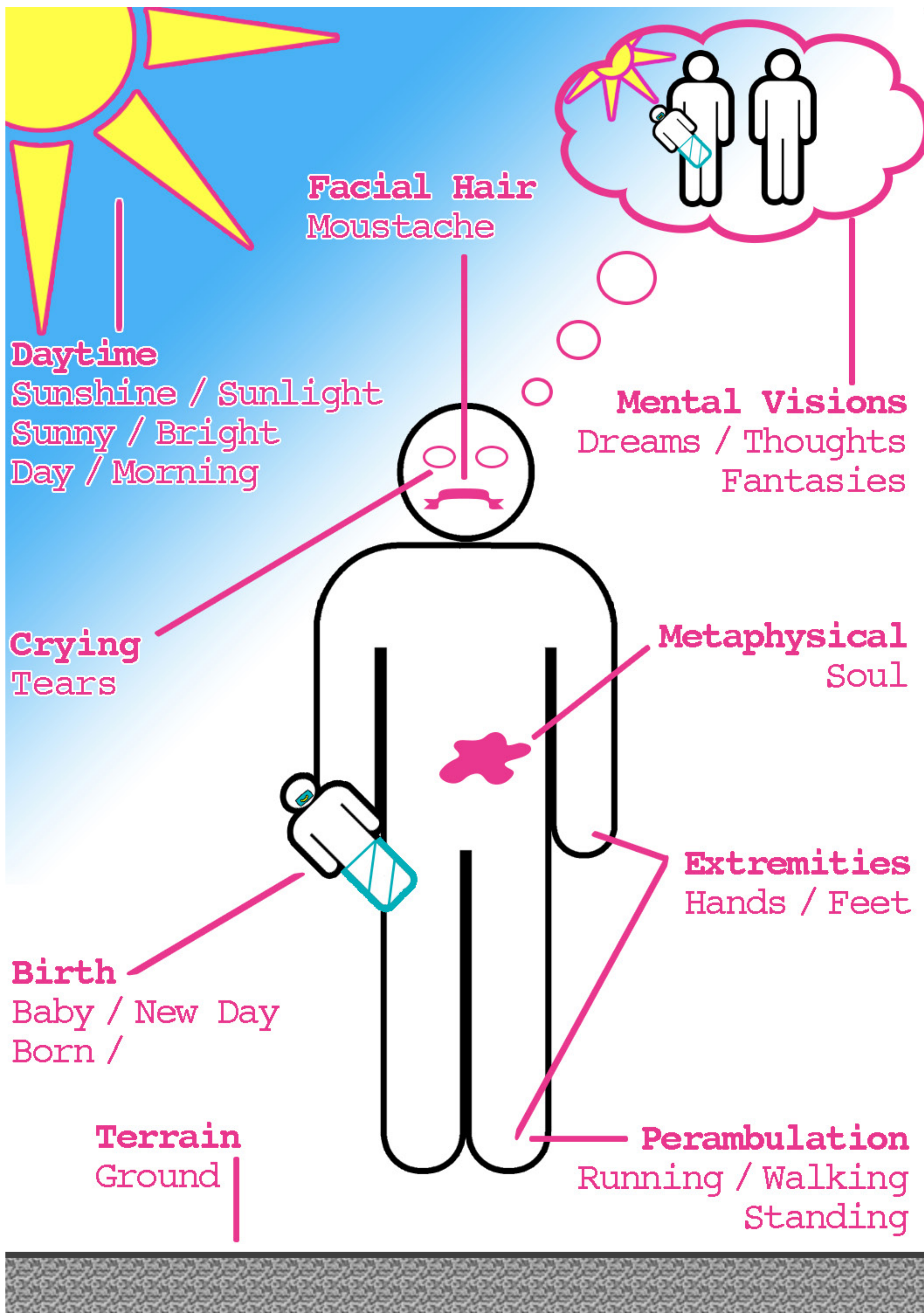
# A Way With Words

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...



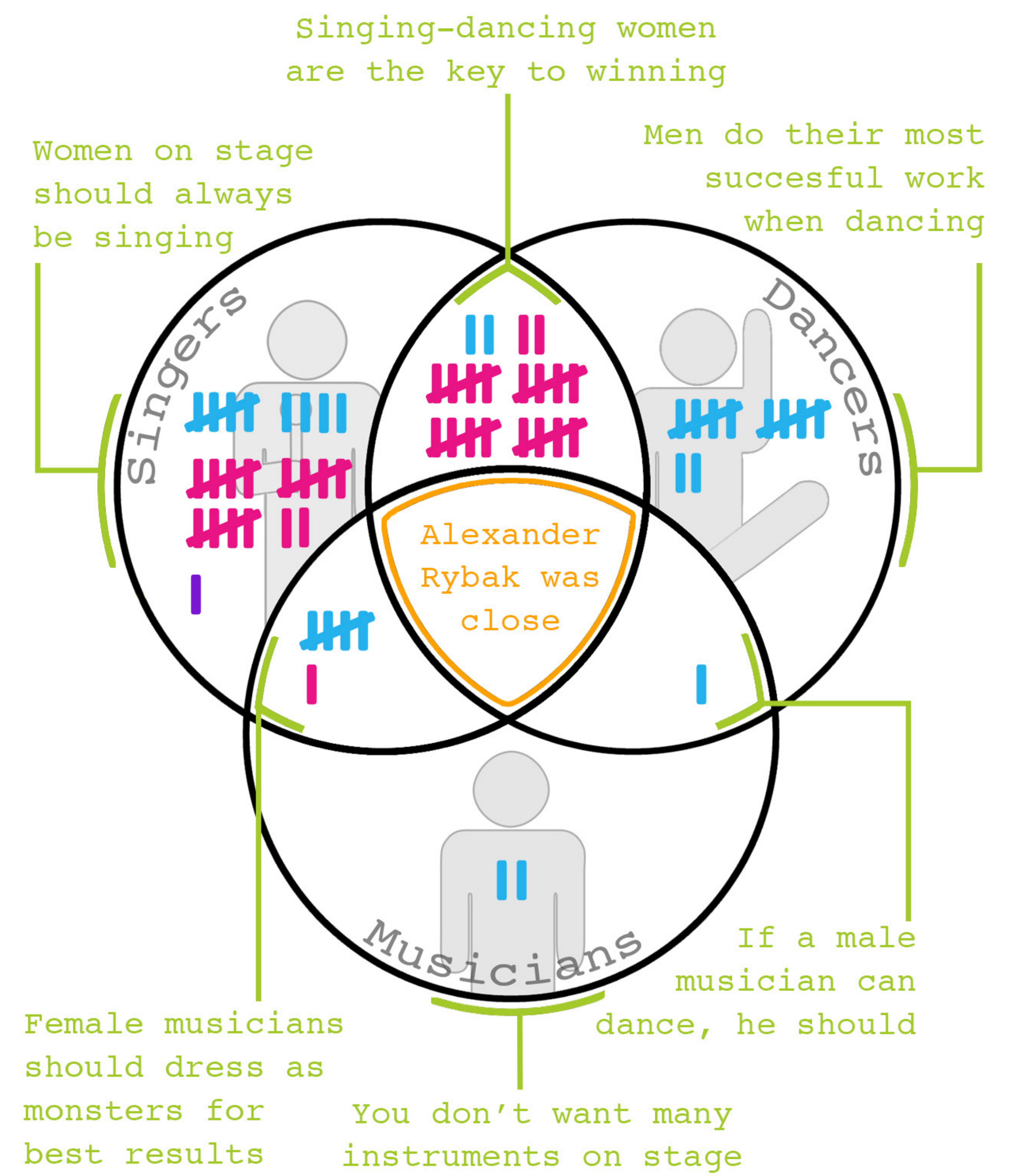
# Bad Language

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?



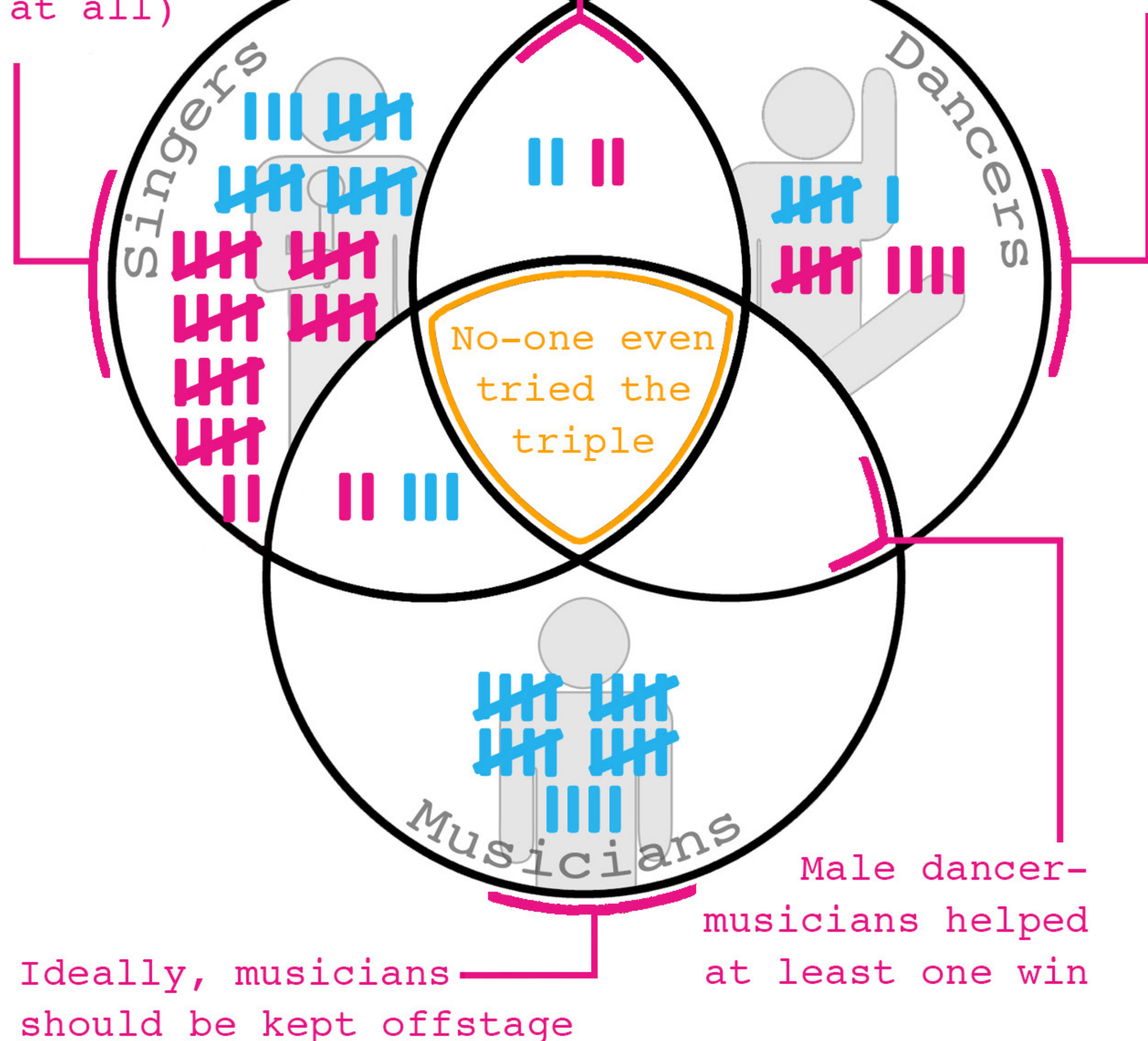
# A Bunch Of Losers

The more people you have on your stage, the more chance there is of someone cocking something up and killing 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 <sub>(a)</sub>
2	✖ 2004
3	
4	✖ 2007 ✖ 2001 <sub>(b)</sub> ✔ 2003
5	
6	
7	✖ 2006
8	
9	
10	✖ 2000 ✖ 2016 ✔ 2004 ✔ 2015
11	✔ 2014 ✔ 2017
12	✖ 2012 ✖ 2010
13	✖ 2011
14	✖ 2002 ✖ 2014 ✖ 2015 ✔ 2000
15	✖ 2003
16	✖ 2017
17	✔ 2012 ✔ 2007 ✔ 2006 ✖ 2005
18	✔ 2013
19	✔ 2011 ✔ 2005
20	✔ 2009 ✔ 2001
21	✔ 2016
22	✔ 2010
23	✔ 2002
24	✖ 2009 ✔ 2008
25	
26	✖ 2013

# The Fallen Semi-Finalists



# Azerbaijan

After putting forward a glorious Sia-esque banger last year, it sounds like Azerbaijan have retreated to the middle of the road with a fairly standard pop song that would have got them a central-ish spot on the scoreboard – had they qualified from their deadly opening position.



Artist	Aisel
Song	<a href="#">X My Heart</a>
Language	English
Key	Eb Major
Key Change	No
Tempo	120bpm
Songwriters	Two
Sounds Like	Katy Perry
Looks Like	Jameela Jamil
Worst Lyric	“Misty moon / I’m your loon / Let’s rock the nation”
Other Notes	They’ve done a pretty good job of the presentation – it’s all wooden hills and scampering about with wind machines – which makes for a nice, Eurovisiony opening to the show.  Weirdly, the song is co-written by Tim Bran from Dreadzone.

# Iceland

It’s roughly 2,000 miles between Reykjavik and Lisbon. Each person in Iceland’s delegation will add 0.98 tons to their carbon footprint for the return trip. Given that the planet is dying, you’d think they’d try to make it count. But, no. They’ve served up this shit instead.



Artist

Song

Ari Ólafsson

Our Choice

Language

English

Key

Key Change

Tempo

Songwriters

B Major

No

65bpm

One

Sounds Like

Looks Like

One of G4 going solo

A young Aled Jones

Reality TV

The Voice Iceland in 2015

Other Notes

Every year there’s some sort of ode to moral responsibility – some earnest song about the lost pureness of humanity with a message that boils down to “Let’s all *think* a bit more, yeah?”

And every year, with pleasing consistency, it gets absolutely ravaged in the scoring.

# Belgium

The last few years have seen Belgium take up the mantle of cool kid in the competition. And while this isn't quite as hipster-friendly as last year's City Lights, or 2015's Rhythm Inside, it was one of the year's more effortlessly 'alt' attempts.



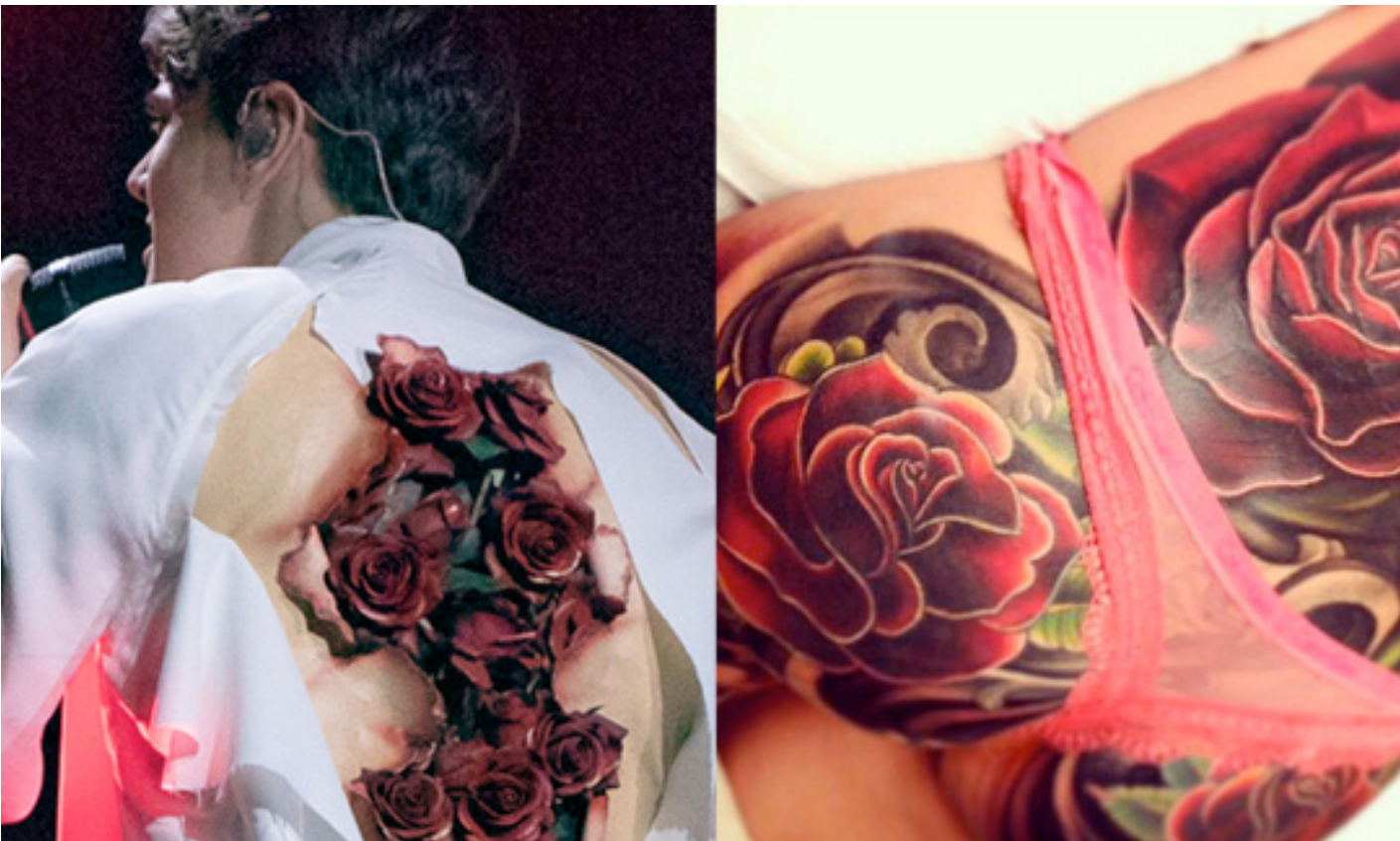
Artist	Sennek
Song	<u>Matter Of Time</u>
Language	English
Key	C minor
Key Change	No
Tempo	88bpm
Songwriters	Three
Sounds Like	Pierce Brosnan-era Bond theme
Looks Like	Beth Gibbons of Portishead
Worst Lyric	“Sometimes it seems we’re at the wrong station / Looking for a deadly combination”
Other Notes	It’s no coincidence that this sounds like a Bond theme as Sennek worked on the Bond 50th Anniversary concerts.  By day though, she works for IKEA as a visual merchandiser.

# Belarus

Staged as a little Gothic pop rock opera, this could have worked well if it had been staged with a sensitive, subtle eye – but it sure as hell hasn’t been. Expect dancing archers, cheap magic tricks, and a pay off that’ll have you hooting with derision.



Artist	Alekseev
Song	<u>Forever</u>
Language	English
Key	A minor
Key Change	No
Tempo	116bpm
Songwriters	Two
Sounds Like	Andreas Johnson
Looks Like	Professor Brian Cox
Reality TV	<u>Season 4 of <i>The Voice Ukraine</i></u>
Other Notes	Bold style influence: Cheryl Cole’s arse



# F.Y.R. Macedonia

Ever thought to yourself “Yeah, Eurovision is good – but it would be *great* if someone did some reggae”? The thought has clearly occured to Eye Cue too – but they appear to be plagued by a bit of indecision as they keep slipping in and out of it, without any real reason to...



Artist	Eye Cue
Song	<a href="#">Lost And Found</a>
Language	English
Key	Eb Major
Key Change	No
Tempo	120bpm
Songwriters	Two
Sounds Like	Aims at Shakira; lands on the QI theme
Looks Like	A cut-price <a href="#">Paula And Ovi</a>
Other Notes	<p>In their first rehearsal, Marija was wearing a horrible, pink-ish, backwards suit jacket/dress thing to perform. Then, in their second, she stripped it off halfway through to reveal a really, <i>really</i> horrible grey and pink wooly thing.</p> <p>It’s already been predicted that she’s taking first and second in the Barbara Dex Awards for ugly frocks – and it’s likely to be their sole acheivement.</p>

# Croatia

It’s a rare thing to hear a spoken word section in a Eurovision song, but Franka goes full Britney “I thought the old lady dropped them into the ocean at the end of the movie?” at the half-way mark. How will that play in an arena full of Europop fans? Pretty badly, evidently.



Artist	Franka
Song	<u>Crazy</u>
Language	English
Key	A minor
Key Change	No
Tempo	66bpm
Time Sig	6/8
Songwriters	Three
Sounds Like	<u>Stop</u> by Sam Brown
Looks Like	Billie Piper
Reality TV	<u>Showtime</u> ; Croatia’s <u>Dancing With The Stars</u>
Worst Lyric	“This love knows no reason / No games / Just like Bonnie and Clyde”
Other Notes	The bridge sounds a lot like <u>Never Tear Us Apart</u> by INXS. If Duffy had covered it.

# Armenia

When the language rules were relaxed in 1999, most countries chose to sing in English, so they could be understood by the widest possible audience. Following Portugal’s win last year though, a lot of entrants are now singing in their national tongue. Which is... brave.



Artist	Sevak Khanagyan
Song	<a href="#">Qami</a>
Language	Armenian
Key	D minor
Key Change	No
Tempo	75bpm
Songwriters	Three
Sounds Like	A big Brian May guitar line at the end
Looks Like	An Armenian bear
Reality TV	<a href="#">The Voice Russia</a> ; <a href="#">The Voice of Armenia</a> ; <a href="#">Ukraine’s X Factor</a>
Other Notes	The lyrics to <i>Qami</i> make frequent mention of wings towards the end. Wings and flying are very popular keywords to include in your song if you want a hope of winning. So Sevak had better hope viewers are hot on their Armenian translations.

# Switzerland

The wide-brim hat/man-bun combo may make Switzerland’s entrants look like a couple of prize cunts, but it’s worth remembering that looks can often be deceiving.

Not in this case, obviously. But in other cases.



Artist	ZiBBZ
Song	<u><a href="#">Stones</a></u>
Language	English
Key	A minor
Key Change	No
Tempo	84bpm
Songwriters	Three
Sounds Like	The music on a pre-roll YouTube ad for some new tech product
Looks Like	Coachella ticketholders
Reality TV	Five seasons of their own show on JoizTV
Worst lyric	“Think the boogiemán’ll get me / Think different is the enemy”
Other Notes	Zibbz is a word they made up that’s a shortening of ‘siblings’. Want to hear their brass band cover of Robbie Williams’ <i>Let Me Entertain You</i> ? <u><a href="#">Here you go</a></u> .

# Romania

According to The Humans’ press release, singer Cristina Caramarcu gave up “a promising career in telecommunications” in order to take singing lessons so that she could join the band. Cristina, Europe thanks you for your sacrifice. Here’s hoping it was worth it...



Artist	The Humans
Song	<u>Goodbye</u>
Language	English
Key	E Major
Key Change	No
Tempo	101bpm
Songwriters	Three
Sounds Like	Heart
Looks Like	The house band in a megachurch
Reality TV	The Humans provide live music for Romanian karaoke show <i>ZaZaSing</i> on Antena 1.
Other Notes	As well as having worked as a musician for <i>Dancing With The Stars</i> , <i>The Voice Romania</i> and <i>Strictly Come Dancing</i> , the band’s drummer has also played percussion for Romania’s two-time Eurovision entrant Paula Seling.

# San Marino

Regularly 1,000/1 to win; a national selection process that absolutely reeks of corruption; and only one song to ever reach the final in their history. For persistence alone San Marino surely deserves some sort of award? They need *something*, because this'll get them nowhere...



Artist	Jessika featuring Jenifer Brening
Song	<u>Who We Are</u>
Language	English
Key	G# minor
Key Change	No
Tempo	126bpm
Songwriters	Five
Sounds Like	A middle 8 stolen straight from <i>Wannabe</i>
Looks Like	The Pete Best of B*Witched
Worst Lyric	“If they dissin’ you on Twitter / Don’t get sad, don’t be bitter / Don’t give up and be a quitter”
Other Notes	It’s curious that they’re allowed to namecheck Twitter in their song because, back in 2012, San Marino tried to enter a song about Facebook – and were forced to change their lyrics and title to <u>The Social Network Song</u> to comply with the ESC rules about corporate advertising.

# Georgia

NO-ONE IS FORCING YOU TO TAKE PART IN THIS CONTEST, GEORGIA. IF YOU DON'T LIKE IT, DON'T FUCKING ENTER.



Artist

Ethno-Jazz Band Iriao

Song

For You

Language

Georgian

Key

Bb Major

Key Change

Yes

Tempo

61bpm

Songwriters

Three

Sounds Like

Eco-Vangelis

Looks Like

Members of a craft ale and artisanal sandwiches appreciation society

Other Notes

Apparently the ‘Iriao’ of the group’s name is taken from the famous yodeling singing style of Georgia’s traditional polyphonic music *Krimanchuli*.

Before you scoff, it’s worth remembering that Romania used traditional yodeling in *Yodel It!* last year and it came Top Ten.

(OK. Now you can scoff.)

# Poland

Presenting the sort of producer-and-live-vocalist duo that Norway used last year with [JOWST](#), Poland have this year’s big, bouncy club hit. Fun enough but they really needed a plan to fill all those long instrumentals with anything other than just wobbly hand dancing.



Artist	Gromee feat. Lukas Meijer
Song	<a href="#">Light Me Up</a>
Language	English
Key	D Major
Key Change	No
Tempo	122bpm
Songwriters	Four
Sounds Like	Kygo x JLS
Looks Like	Gunther von Hagens
Other Notes	It’s always a smart move to rope in a Swede to help you write your song, as Gromee has done here with Lukas Meijer.
Other Notes	Gromee has had a couple of number ones in Poland himself though, plus a fistful of top ten hits too – so it’s not as if he’s a slouch.

# Malta

This song was co-written by Thomas G:son, who was responsible for Loreen’s winning banger *Euphoria*. Before you get too excited though, he also wrote that song for Georgia a few years ago that sounded like a student pub band covering the Pigeon Detectives. So a very mixed bag.



Artist	Christabelle
Song	<i>Taboo</i>
Language	English
Key	E minor
Key Change	No
Tempo	122bpm
Songwriters	Three
Sounds Like	Little Boots Remedy
Looks Like	A darkside Holly Willoughby
Worst Lyric	“Let our guards down / It’s time to break the taboo / Before we all become animals, animals”
Other Notes	If you’re thinking that this is the same Christabelle who did an album with trendy Norwegian electro nu-disco producer Lindstrøm, sad to say, you’ve got the wrong one. (It happens more than you’d think.)

# Russia

Julia got herself blacklisted from the competition last year on account of the Ukrainian/Crimean cultural boycott, but Russia have stayed true to their word and sent her to Portugal as they promised. And was it worth the wait? Erm...



Artist	Julia Samoylova
Song	<a href="#">I Won't Break</a>
Language	English
Key	G# minor
Key Change	No
Tempo	91bpm
Songwriters	Three
Sounds Like	A ballad Miley Cyrus would have passed on
Looks Like	Ivanka Trump if Ivanka was Melania's kid
Reality TV	<a href="#">Russian X Factor</a>
Other Notes	<p>The staging of this sees Julia perched on top of what's presumably meant to be a mountain, but looks more like a solitary stalagmite – giving the whole thing more than a whiff of <a href="#">Spinal Tap's Stonehenge</a>.</p> <p>Which has led to a nickname going round the press centre: "Mount Russiamore"</p>

# Latvia

Chances are you'll be watching this one and thinking to yourself *"What do I recognise her from?"* Let us put you out of your misery. In 2015, Laura wrote a song called *Miracle*, which was featured as part of the second Global Conference on Road Safety sponsored by the UN.



Artist	Laura Rizzotto
Song	<a href="#">Funny Girl</a>
Language	English
Key	D minor
Key Change	No
Tempo	119bpm
Time Sig	6/8
Songwriters	One
Sounds Like	<a href="#">Woman</a> by Neneh Cherry
Looks Like	A Virgin Atlantic flight attendant
Worst lyric	"I locked my heart in hesitation / But somehow, you cracked the code"
Other Notes	Laura was born and raised in Brazil and her mother is of Portuguese descent, so Latvia have been smart in sending someone who knows the language to Lisbon. She'll no doubt know exactly how to woo her hosts.

# Greece

This became Greece’s national winner by default after two songs on their shortlist were disqualified for not sounding Greek enough, and the other two were passed over when their respective writers refused to pay ERT (Greece’s BBC) a €20,000 bung. Ah, showbusiness!



Artist	Yianna Terzi
Song	<a href="#">Oniro Mou</a>
Language	Greek
Key	C# minor
Key Change	No
Tempo	150bpm
Songwriters	Four
Sounds Like	Clannad
Looks Like	A frizzy Barbra Striesand
Worst Lyric	The official English translation for one of the lines is: “If you talk to my mountains / My loneliness will be listening”
Other Notes	Usually at least one traditional, ethno-folksy song makes it into the final. This was battling head to head with Armenia for that spot – but neither ended up with it.

# Montenegro

Not to put too fine a point on it but Montenegro have been fucking robbed in this competition over the years. They didn't qualify with their Montenegrin astronaut dubstep rap, they didn't qualify with their incredible gay disco banger, so who the hell knows?



Artist	Vanja Radovanović
Song	<u>Inje</u>
Language	Montenegrin
Key	F# minor
Key Change	No
Tempo	79bpm
Songwriters	One
Sounds Like	Montenegro: The Musical (end of Act One)
Looks Like	Owen Jones
Worst Lyric	“Me and life, like dog and cat / The heart the most treasured pet”
Other Notes	Vanja seems to be under the impression that he’s in with a shout of winning this whole thing. Given that a bold, Balkan ballad sung entirely in a South Slavic language has indeed won in recent memory ( <u>2007's Molitva</u> ) – who are we to tell him that he’s wrong?  (He’s wrong.)

YOU GIVE US

25

WE'LL GIVE YOU

25



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