



POPELETA

Eurovision
2023

CinemaLive

Hello, Liverpool!

It's time once again for Europe to unite under the banner of batshit pop and make a big, international spectacle of itself. As ever, we present our annual Popbitch guide to the wildest, weirdest and wankiest things that this year's contest has to offer...



//////////////////// **Semi Final 1.....5-21**

SS Village People! Pagan rave! Human Centipede choreo! The first semi final is this year's weird one, so make sure you don't miss the best of the bonkers stuff before it suffers at the hands of the public.

Semi Final 2.....22-39

Icelandic drum'n'bass! Keytar solos! The ghost of Edgar Allen Poe! The second semi final is a touch more trad for the most part, but there's still enough intrigue to keep things interesting in the run up to the grand final.

The Big Six.....40-46

Flamboyant glam metal! Revenge flamenco! French disco hell gardens! The automatic qualifiers haven't exactly saved the best for last, but there's plenty of good stuff in here.

The Stats.....47-55

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

Are You Ready?

Eurovision can be an overwhelming experience at the best of times, and we don't want to add to the confusion. So here's a brief overview of the artist profile pages you'll find in this guide – and an explanation as to what a lot of the nonsense we've written actually means...



Artist Info The name of the artist and the title of their song – which will also handily double as a link to their official music video, should you want to see it. *(Coloured text is clickable.)*

Language Most of the songs are in English, but a few big winners in recent years have been in their mother tongue – so this is more of an open field than it used to be.

Theory Stuff This bit's mostly for dweebs – but, basically: minor keys win more regularly than major; key changes are far less popular than you'd think; and 128bpm is a tempo death trap to be avoided at all costs.

The Nielsen Gracenote Mood Once again, the lovely people at [Nielsen Gracenote](#) have shared their findings on the moods of each tune – determined by doing some deeply impressive sounding stuff with machine learning and metadata.

Other Notes If there's anything else interesting about the act in question, we'll be sure to tell you.

EUROVISION

SONG CONTEST
UNITED KINGDOM
LIVERPOOL 2023



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Semi Final One

Tuesday 9th May



SF 1: At A Glance

Generally considered to be the tougher of the two semis this year, there's going to be some big disappointments here whichever way the voting falls. So make sure you tune in to catch Nazi Pee-Wee Herman, Moldova's trippy flutes and the Finnish Human Centipede...



#	Country	Which One Is That?
1	Norway	Electro Game Of Thrones cosplay
2	Malta	Introvert party pop from sweater wearing pretty boys
3	Serbia	A bout of spooky Serbian insomnia with a 16-bit MegaDrive soundtrack
4	Latvia	A little bit of indie math-rock for the 6Music heads
5	Portugal	Mad lady cabaret
6	Ireland	Generic airwave filler; music for an advert about the stuff that the National Lottery helps to fund
7	Croatia	SS officers satirical punk singalong
8	Switzerland	Another slice of sad lad balladry – their third year on the trot
9	Israel	Overengineered but extremely slick pop from someone trying hard to spark a dance craze
10	Moldova	Full-on ethno-folk rave
11	Sweden	The bookies' hot favourite – again
12	Azerbaijan	Songs From Dawson's Creek, Vol.2
13	Czechia	Bad Sisters: The Musical
14	Netherlands	They've been struggling to hit the high notes, so be warned if you have any pets in the room
15	Finland	Metal meets J-Pop meets acid ballroom – unmissable

Norway

Eurovision loves a self-assured queen with a bold message of female empowerment. It loves a young Nordic woman dressed in Game Of Thrones fantasy attire. It loves a **falsetto disco vampire** and a **dubstep rapping astronaut** and... what was our point here? We forget.



Artist **Alessandra**

Song **Queen Of Kings**

Language **English**

Key **E minor**

Key Change **No**

Tempo **126bpm** (*Perilously close to the killer tempo*)

Songwriters **Four** (*inc. Alessandra herself*)

Sounds Like **Latter-Day Muse**

Looks Like **A Disney kid gone dark**

Gracenote Mood **Urgent -> Dark Pop Intensity**

Talent Show **The Voice Norway** (*Series 7, made the live shows*)

Other Notes **The high note Alessandra hits near the end (an **E6**) is in Whistle Register – a favourite trick of Mariah's. (Mariah supposedly once opened somebody's garage door with it, but that's almost certainly horseshit...)**

Whistle register has previous in the contest. Most recently, **Eden Alene** in 2021.

Malta

Shamelessly pilfering the **three-piece Epic Sax Guy motif** from Moldova, The Busker bring some fresh, weedy indie introvert energy to the party. A party they immediately want to leave in favour of making you play a complicated boardless board game they bought on import.



Artist The Busker

Song **Dance (Our Own Party)**

Language English

Key F minor

Key Change No

Tempo 103bpm

Songwriters Five (*inc. the band themselves*)

Sounds Like DNCE

Looks Like Wes Anderson styled the Jonas Brothers

Gracenote Mood Energizing -> Arousing Groove

Weird Lyrics *"If you're keen / I got some indoor shoes
I can offer you / Get you in the groove"*

Other Notes The previous singer of The Busker was called Dario G. Sadly not **the Dario G.**

Serbia

Having finished in the Top 5 last year with a performance art piece about [Serbian healthcare provision and Meghan Markle's lustrous hair](#), Serbia have clearly decided that art-kook pop is their thing. And you know what? Good for them...



Artist Luke Black

Song [Samo Mi Se Spava](#) (*Translation: I Just Want To Sleep*)

Language Serbian; English

Key E Freygish (*Oooh...*)

Key Change No

Tempo 103bpm

Songwriters One (*Luke himself*)

Sounds Like Hatari

Looks Like Tamsin Greig

Gracenote Mood Aggressive -> Dark Hard Beat

Thirst Trap? [Sure, why not?](#)

Other Notes This song is modal – neither major nor minor, but one of the other, less common scale permutations. The Freygish scale is very popular in klezmer and flamenco music. Luckily for Luke, Israel votes in this semi but, sadly, he'll miss out on all those sweet Spanish Freygish votes.

Latvia

A little something for the 6Music lovers here. Sudden Lights chuck in just enough frantic beats and angular guitars to appeal to the indie contingent – and also play their verses in 5/8 to capture the vanishingly small prog-rock/Eurovision overlap vote.



Artist **Sudden Lights**

Song **Aijā** (*Translation: Hushaby*)

Language **English; Latvian**

Key **A minor**

Key Change **No**

Time Sig **Verses 5/8; Chorus 6/8** (*It's never won before...*)

Tempo **160bpm**

Songwriters **Four** (*The band themselves*)

Sounds Like **15 Step** by Radiohead

Looks Like **Your brother-in-law's band**

Gracenote Mood **Brooding -> Alienated**

Other Notes **Other Eurovision songs that make use of unusual time signatures include:**

7/8 **Utopian Land, Argo** (2016)

7/8 **Mojot Svet, Karolina** (2007)

7/8 **Sti Fotia, Alexandros Panayi** (1995)

5/4 **Mou Les, Christie Stassinopoulo** (1983)

Portugal

You have to admire them. Whenever the competitions zigs, Portugal zags. What have they pulled from their grab-bag this year? A rousing cabaret handclapper, sung by a turn who looks like she could drink every last contestant under the table – then do it all again the next night...



Artist Mimicat

Song [Ai Coração](#) (*Translation: Oh, Heart*)

Language Portuguese

Key F# minor

Key Change No

Tempo 145bpm

Songwriters TWO (*inc. Mimicat*)

Sounds Like Portuguese Paloma Faith

Looks Like Young Bet Lynch

Gracenote Mood Excited -> Upbeat Pop Groove

Other Notes Mimicat wrote this song while working as a real estate agent, waiting in a property for the potential buyers to show up.

Ireland

We're told Wild Youth were ones to watch in rehearsals. Not because the song is particularly good, but because the singer's bulge was featuring very prominently in his jumpsuit. Will be interesting to see what camera angles they've decided on...



Artist Wild Youth

Song [We Are One](#)

Language English

Key Db Major *(Down a key from their recorded version...)*

Key Change No

Tempo 112bpm

Songwriters Three *(inc. one Swede – Jörgen Elofsson)*

Sounds Like Baby U2

Looks Like Harry Kane dressed as Harry Styles

Gracenote Mood Excited -> Upbeat Pop Groove

Other Notes Co-writer Jörgen Elofsson was part of the legendary Swedish hit factory Cheiron, alongside Denniz PoP and Max Martin.

Other classic Jörgen cuts inc. [Sometimes](#) for Britney Spears, [Fool Again](#) for Westlife, [That's My Goal](#) for Shayne Ward and – perhaps his crowning glory – [Heaven And Hell \(To Be Geri Halliwell\)](#) for Geri Halliwell.

Croatia

Famed for their provocative live shows, Let 3 were once fined for indecent exposure in 2016 after they performed naked at an open-air concert in Varaždin. Sadly, the judge didn't buy the band's defence that they weren't naked because they were wearing corks. In their anuses.



Artist Let 3

Song [Mama ŠČ!](#)

Language Croatian

Key C Major *(Dreadful; about the worst key going)*

Key Change No

Tempo 135bpm

Songwriters Two

Sounds Like An absolute cacophony *(in the best possible way)*

Looks Like SS Village People

Gracenote Mood Rowdy -> Driving Dark Groove

Other Notes The band once caused a Sunday afternoon talkshow in Croatia to be taken off air early. Partly because of their continual swearing ("fuck", "dick", "piss" plus a phrase that translates to English as "river cunt"). But mostly because during the interview, one band member [summoned a live dove from his underpants](#), then two of them had their pants pulled down and they tried to [pop corks out of their arseholes](#).

Switzerland

Following [Gjon's Tears](#) (2021) and [Marius Bear](#) (2022), Remo Forrer completes the sad Swiss boy bedroom ballad trinity. They haven't set him up on a great trajectory though. From finishing third in 2021, to seventeenth in 2022, diminishing returns hint at the lower reaches of the table this year.



Artist **Remo Forrer**
 Song **[Watergun](#)**

Language **English**

Key **G# minor**
 Key Change **No**
 Tempo **69bpm (Nice)**
 Songwriters **Three**

Sounds Like **Duncan Laurence**
 Looks Like **Will Byers from Stranger Things**

Gracenote Mood **Yearning -> Energetic**

Talent Show **[The Voice Of Switzerland \(Series 3; winner\)](#)**
[I Can See Your Voice Germany](#)

Israel

Noa Kirel first came to public attention appearing in the Israeli reality documentary series *Pushers*, a show about overbearing stage parents who spend their lives managing their children's careers. Not that you could tell. No, not a bit of it...



Artist Noa Kirel

Song [Unicorn](#)

Language English; Hebrew

Key F# minor

Key Change No

Tempo 130bpm

Songwriters Four (*inc. Noa herself*)

Sounds Like Little Mix

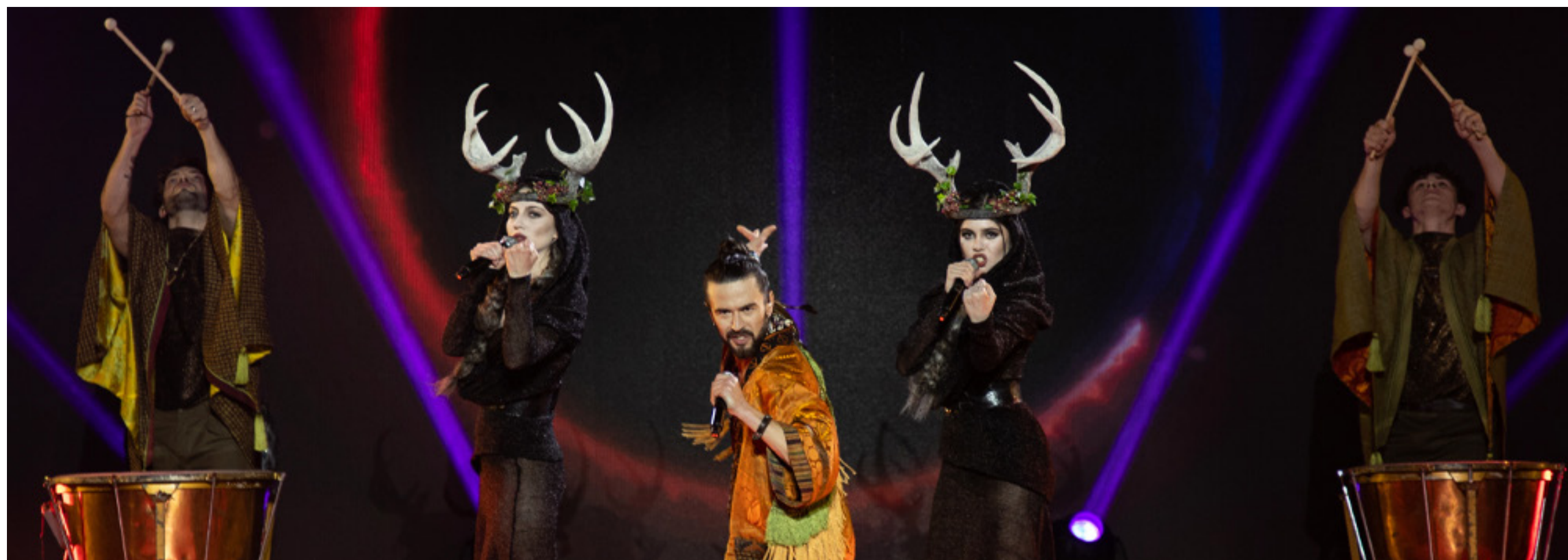
Looks Like Charli XCX

Gracenote Mood Energizing -> Arousing Groove

Other Notes The big press angle on Noa Kirel is that she's Israel's answer to Britney Spears – a teen star who scandalised the nation by dressing sexy in a video when she was 14. However between the theatre kid energy and the fact [she also sampled Mr Sandman in a recent single](#), there's a case to be made that's she really the Israeli Meghan Trainor – but we can appreciate why you'd want to keep that quiet...

Moldova

Pagan Rave is fast becoming a staple subgenre at Eurovision. In 2021, Ukraine's Go_A finished Top 5 with [Shum](#). In 2022, France's Alvan & Ahez finished, erm... Top 24 with [Fulenn](#). Obviously this won't win, but sometimes it's more important to keep a tradition alive.



Artist Pasha Parfeni

Song [Soarele Și Luna](#) (*Translation: The Sun And The Moon*)

Language Romanian

Key C minor

Key Change No

Tempo 125bpm (*flirting with the deadly tempo*)

Songwriters Three (*inc. Pasha*)

Sounds Like Glastonbury Dance Tent at 1am

Looks Like Ed Norton dressed as Russell Brand

Gracernote Mood Energizing -> Arousing Groove

Other Notes This is Pasha's third bite at the Eurovision cherry, having previously sung [Lăutar](#) in Baku 2012 and played piano for Aliona Moon's [O Mie](#) in Malmö 2013.

He was also briefly the singer of SunStroke Project – who you might remember as the Moldovan entry in 2010 ([Run Away](#)) and 2017 ([Hey Mamma](#)) – but he left before they properly took off.

Sweden

Returning to the contest as a past winner is a risky move. Johnny Logan is the only act to have claimed a second win back in the 80s. More recent attempts ([Lena](#), 2011; [Rybak](#), 2018) have dropped like shit-caked stones. That said, this is the bookies' favourite this year...



Artist Loreen

Song [Tattoo](#)

Language English

Key F# Major *(Historically not a great choice)*

Key Change No

Tempo 150bpm

Songwriters [Six](#) *(inc. Euphoria co-writers Thomas G:Son & Peter Boström)*

Sounds Like [The B-Side to Euphoria](#)

Looks Like Loreen

Gracenote Mood Energizing -> Arousing Groove

Other Notes Speaking of tattoos: Finland's entrant Käärijä has a [visible chest tattoo of Rammstein's logo](#). Less visible, but 100% verified, UK entrant Mae Muller has a tattoo of a [Tunnock's Teacake](#) on her left calf.

Not speaking of tattoos: Loreen's stage-show has been nicknamed the "Travel Toastie Maker".

Azerbaijan

There was a point in the late 90s where every radio friendly one-hit wonder started with someone leaving their bandmate an answerphone message over a breezy beat. [Drinking In LA](#) by Bran Van 3000. [Steal My Sunshine](#) by Len. 25 years later, Azerbaijan is bringing it back.



Artist TuralTuranX

Song [Tell Me More](#)

Language English

Key D Major *(Major key is bad; Eurovision loves D though...)*

Key Change No

Tempo 96bpm

Songwriters Four *(inc. Tural and Turan)*

Sounds Like The soundtrack to an American teen drama

Looks Like If Simon Amstell and Skrillex had twins

Gracenote Mood Empowering -> Powerful/Heroic

Other Notes Azerbaijan have often been accused of throwing massive amounts of money at the competition in an attempt to tip the scales in their favour, often by hiring teams of Swedes to come in and punch up their songs. This is the first time since Azerbaijan's debut entry ([in 2008](#)) that they've used a full Azeri writing team.

Czechia

Most years, there's some sort of Slavic women's anthem about solidarity and sisterhood. Sometimes it's a **nudge-nudge, wink-wink, buxom butter-churning bop**. Sometimes it's a **bonkers bouncing babushka rap**. And sometimes it's... **this**.



Artist Vesna

Song **My Sister's Crown**

Language English, Ukrainian, Czech, Bulgarian

Key E minor

Key Change No

Tempo 150bpm

Songwriters Six

Sounds Like Blackpink

Looks Like Helena Bonham Carter's greatest hits

Gracenote Mood Aggressive -> Dark Hard Beat

Other Notes The **promo video for this song** promised lots of weird, spooky, stately home horror potential for a crazy stage show, but the design they've plumped for is relatively tame, revolving mostly around them all having huge plaited ponytails. Which only serve to remind us of Slavko Kalezić – and his **Montenegrin space disco stomper** that was cruelly underappreciated in Kyiv 2017.

The Netherlands

There's been a fair bit of nerves around Mia and Dion performing this love song. Not only have they had consistent difficulty hitting the notes, they apparently have the chemistry of "two people who said goodbye to each other, then started walking in the same direction."



Artist Mia Nicolai and Dion Cooper
Song [Burning Daylight](#)

Language English

Key Db Major *(A significant shift in pitch from the original)*
Key Change No
Tempo 75bpm
Songwriters Five *(inc. former winner Duncan Laurence)*

Sounds Like [Say Something](#) *(Great Big World/Christina Aguilera)*
Looks Like Surie and a yassified Matt Berry

Gracenote Mood Empowering -> Dramatic Emotion

Other Notes Mia and Dion's performances at the Eurovision pre-party live events have been going so badly that it's become a bit of a running joke in the Netherlands. Someone was even suggesting the Dutch PM ought to intervene and jail them to spare the nation any ignominy – which is terribly cruel. But maybe worth considering.

Finland

Fuckin YES.



Artist Käärijä

Song [Cha Cha Cha](#)

Language Finnish

Key E minor

Key Change No

Tempo 155bpm

Songwriters Four (*inc. Käärijä*)

Sounds Like Electric Callboy

Looks Like The Sheriff Of Nottingham in a queerpunk adaptation of Robin Hood

Gracenote Mood Excited

Weird Lyrics *"A couple piña coladas I have devoured / Yet the expression I have on my face is sour"*

Other Notes There was a rumour going around that former Finnish prime minister Alexander Stubb was one of Käärijä's dancers. Sadly, it appears he's [just a lookalike...](#)

Semi Final Two

Thursday 11th May



SF2: At A Glance

The more standard of the two semis, there's fewer peaks and troughs here, but still plenty to enjoy. An Austrian banger about being possessed by the ghost of Edgar Allen Poe, for instance. Icelandic drum'n'bass, for another. A 90s Belgian house stomper, for yet another...

#	Country	Which One Is That?
1	Denmark	Gen-Z heartbreak pop with a killer little hook
2	Armenia	Little Simz orchestral rap with Alesha Dixon delivery
3	Romania	Somewhere between Sam Brown's Stop and Muse's cover of Feeling Good
4	Estonia	Standard issue Euro piano ballad
5	Belgium	The kind of 90s house bop RuPaul would kill for
6	Cyprus	Eurovision's own Peter Andre
7	Iceland	Slightly restrained drum'n'bass
8	Greece	James Arthur does Ed Sheeran
9	Poland	One for the wine'o'clock crowd
10	Slovenia	Would make perfect bedding for an XFM/Radio X station ident
11	Georgia	Big lungs, big arms, generally big
12	San Marino	Sleazier than Matty Healy at a Freshers' Week ball
13	Austria	Poe Poe Poe Poe Poe Poe Poe Poe Poe
14	Albania	The 'Cultural Enrichment' segment
15	Lithuania	Almost certainly taking the 8:45 to Vilnius Friday morning
16	Australia	Saving the keytar solos for last

Denmark

Last decade, the big Eurovision trend was to send your X Factor/Got Talent winners. This decade is all about the social media influencers. Reiley isn't just a singer, he's giving Brooklyn Beckham a run for his money in the **absolutely fucking hopeless chef stakes** too...



Artist Reiley

Song **Breaking My Heart**

Language English

Key D Major

Key Change No

Tempo 97bpm

Songwriters Four (*inc. one Swede*)

Sounds Like Troye Sivan (*ft. Imogen Heap*)

Looks Like St Vincent

Gracenote Mood Excited -> Euphoric Energy

Other Notes The song was almost disqualified after it emerged Reiley had performed it at a festival in Seoul outside of the eligibility window. The Danes have been pretty devil-may-care with the rules this year though, because one of the other shortlisted songs in their national final was called **Beautiful Bullshit** – which we're pretty sure would have hit a few snags eligibility-wise too...

Armenia

If the singing thing doesn't work out for Brunette, she could always trademark her lyric *"I just wanna make art, read books and just find someone who likes me enough to kiss my face"* whack it on a tote and spend her summer selling them to twats at festivals. She'd clean up...



Artist Brunette

Song [Future Lover](#)

Language English; Armenian

Key D minor (*Solid; wins disproportionately regularly*)

Key Change No

Tempo 103bpm

Songwriters One (*Brunette herself*)

Sounds Like Touches of orchestral Little Simz ([Introvert](#))

Looks Like A heretofore undiscovered Jenner sibling

Gracenote Mood Melancholy -> Sad Soulful

Other Notes Brunette is also a part of Project 12, which they describe as a "Yerevan-based musical collective" – but we'd more accurately describe as a "local covers band".

Here she is performing [50 Cent's P.I.M.P.](#), [Silk Sonic's Fly As Me](#) and previous Eurovision winners [Måneskin's I Wanna Be Your Slave](#).

Romania

Theodor did a Bucks Fizz at his national finals; getting a pair of topless lads to rip his shirt off to reveal a "Make Love Not War" slogan. Will he get semi-naked again? Unlikely, he's worn a different coloured shorts suit to each of his rehearsals and kept each one on.



Artist Theodor Andrei

Song [D.G.T. \(Off And On\)](#)

Language Romanian; English

Key A minor

Key Change No

Time Sig 6/8

Tempo 73bpm

Songwriters Four (*inc. Theodor*)

Sounds Like A heavier Stop by Sam Brown

Looks Like A hobbyist magician

Gracenote Mood Melancholy -> Light Melancholy

Reality TV [Vocea României Junior](#) (*The Voice Kids semi-finals*)
[X Factor Romania](#) (*singing an Alexander Rybak song*)

Weird Lyrics *"I'm beggin' you / I'm on my knees /
 Take your clothes off / Step on me"*

Other Notes There's a possible Spongebob Squarepants cameo in this – so keep your eyes peeled...

Estonia

There's not a huge amount to tell you about this standard issue piano ballad, so we'll tell you this instead. One of Alika's backing vocalists – kept offstage on harmony duties – has potentially the most metal name in the history of the contest: **Grettel Killing**



Artist **Alika**
Song **Bridges**

Language **English**

Key **C minor**
Key Change **No**
Tempo **70bpm**
Songwriters **Three (inc. Alika)**

Sounds Like **An Adele off-cut**
Looks Like **Jennifer Lawrence**

Gracenote Mood **Yearning -> Energetic Yearning**

Talent Show **Eesti Otsib Superstaari (Winner, series 8, 2021)**

Other Notes **The two other co-writers on this wrote [Tout l'Univers](#) for Gjon's Tears in 2021, and one also co-wrote Duncan Laurence's [Arcade](#).**

Alika's sister is a pro dancer and won the very first series of Ireland's *Dancing With The Stars*.

Belgium

From [Beyoncé](#) to [Calvin Harris](#), [David Guetta](#) to [Drake](#), [Kim Petras](#) to [Bebe Rexha](#) – the sound of 90s house is alive again. Belgium are going all in on the retro and have drafted in one of the singers of nu-disco legends [Hercules And Love Affair](#) to bring it to you.



Artist [Gustaph](#)

Song [Because Of You](#)

Language [English](#)

Key [C minor](#)

Key Change [No](#)

Tempo [127bpm](#) (*Teetering on the verge of catastrophe*)

Songwriters [TWO](#) (*inc. Gustaph*)

Sounds Like [Will Young doing the Drag Race credits](#)

Looks Like [Elon Musk dressed as Boy George](#)

Gracenote Mood [Fiery -> Fiery Groove](#)

Other Notes [Gustaph](#) is another of this year's entries who has put in a good chunk of time at the Eurovision coal face, acting as a backing vocalist for other acts before graduating to the spotlight himself.

He was on BVs for [Sennek](#) in 2018 and for [Hooverphonic](#) in 2022.

Cyprus

First it was "Oh, let us join for the 60th anniversary." Then it was "Oh, let us stick around for the 61st." Now the Aussie takeover is in full effect, sending both their own entry and Sydney's own Andrew Lambrou under Cyprus's flag too. (We unleashed a monster with [Gina G...](#))



Artist Andrew Lambrou

Song [Break A Broken Heart](#)

Language English

Key Eb minor

Key Change No

Tempo 130bpm

Songwriters Four (*Two Swedes, one Dane – zero Lambrous*)

Sounds Like Tom Odell? Tom Grennan? A mid-chart Tom

Looks Like Cypriot Rylan

Gracenote Mood Empowering -> Idealistic/Stirring

Talent Show [The X Factor Australia](#) (*Series 7*)

Other Notes Australian Andrew's Cypriot heritage basically makes him Eurovision Peter Andre. So don't be surprised if he tries to open a café while he's in town.

One of the writers of this has also co-written Tattoo for Loreen.

Iceland

Iceland are always at their best when they bring something that showcases their national weirdness. While a bit of drum'n'bass acts as a useful shot in the arm midway through this semi, there's something a little too restrained about it. Glad to have it though.



Artist **Diljá**

Song **Power**

Language **English**

Key **G# minor**

Key Change **No**

Tempo **158bpm** (*Audiences do like a fast tempo*)

Songwriters **TWO** (*inc. Diljá*)

Sounds Like **N-Trance**

Looks Like **Daenerys Targaryen in a David Byrne suit**

Gracenote Mood **Energizing -> Arousing Groove**

Reality TV **Ísland Got Talent** (2015)
Vælið (2018)

Other Notes **Dilja's co-writer – Pálmi Ragnar Ásgeirsson – is part of the Icelandic production team StopWaitGo. They were previously behind Iceland's 2015 entry ([María Ólafs' Unbroken](#)). Elsewhere, StopWaitGo also did [Disco Love](#) for The Saturdays.**

Greece

One thing missing this year is a proper heritage act: no **Engelbert**, no **Bonnie**, no **Darude**, no **Rasmus**. There's a couple of more mature entrants, but nothing in the **babushka granny** leagues. Greece is putting all its eggs firmly in the TikTok basket. Victor is just 16 years old.



Artist Victor Vernicos

Song **What They Say**

Language English

Key C Major (*Generally bad news*)

Key Change No

Tempo 155bpm

Songwriters One (*Victor himself*)

Sounds Like James Arthur

Looks Like Young Cillian Murphy

Gracenote Mood Empowering -> Idealistic/Stirring

Other Notes Victor actually wrote this song a couple of years ago, when he was just 14. So a year older than Kate Bush was when she wrote *The Man With The Child In His Eyes*, or Taylor Hanson when he wrote the verses of *MmmBop*. But a year younger than Lorde when she wrote *Royals* or Stevie Wonder when he wrote *Uptight*.

Poland

For the first time in decades – maybe even ever – this Eurovision contest has no key changes in it. Luckily for the old-timers, this one does contain a nod to that old Eurovision tradition: the tearway costume. This one looks a bit like opening a new fangled Quality Street.



Artist **Blanka**

Song **Solo**

Language **English**

Key **B minor**

Key Change **No**

Tempo **99bpm**

Songwriters **Seven (inc. Blanka)**

Sounds Like **El Presidente**

Looks Like **Jessica Alba**

Gracenote Mood **Energizing -> Arousing Groove**

Reality TV **Top Model (2021)**

Other Notes Solo has drawn accusations of plagiarism, with viewers of the Polish national finals noting that it sounds an awful lot like a hit song on Polish radio last year: **Up by INNA**. Blanka's ingenious twist? Instead of singing "Up, up-up-up, up-up-up", she sings "down, didi-down-down-down"

Slovenia

Now that everyone's all eco-conscious and into zero-waste, the branded merch game in the Eurovision press centre isn't what it once was. Joker Out have put in a decent showing this year though, handing out [Carpe Diem-branded condoms](#).



Artist Joker Out
Song [Carpe Diem](#)

Language Slovene

Key F# minor
Key Change No
Tempo 132bpm
Songwriters Six

Sounds Like Hard-Fi
Looks Like League 1 Footballers

Gracenote Mood Urgent -> Dark Pop Intensity

Other Notes Since Måneskin parlayed their Eurovision success into a mainstream career, they've got to collaborate with some genuinely massive names like Max Martin and Tom Morello from Rage Against The Machine.

Joker Out haven't done too badly either. They've got a new single out with [Elvis Costello](#).

Georgia

Everyone's making a big fuss that Loreen is a returning winner at this year's contest, but very little has been made of Iru's previous Eurovision success. (Probably because admitting you recognise her from the [2011 Junior Eurovision](#) is grounds to get your laptop seized...)



Artist **Iru**

Song **Echo**

Language **English**

Key **G minor**

Key Change **No**

Tempo **145bpm**

Songwriters **Three (*inc. Iru*)**

Sounds Like **Florence And The Machine**

Looks Like **Another Targaryen**

Gracenote Mood **Cool -> Wary/Defiant**

Reality TV **Georgian Idol (*2019*)**

[The Voice Georgia](#) (*2022*)

Other Notes **Making the entire Iru/Loreen/previous winners narrative even more curious, Iru won [The Voice Georgia](#) – and therefore her place as Georgia's 2023 Eurovision entry – by singing... [Euphoria](#) by Loreen.**

San Marino

Did #MeToo ever make it to San Marino? Not from the sounds of it...



Artist Piqued Jacks

Song [Like An Animal](#)

Language English

Key D minor

Key Change No

Tempo 128bpm (*The killer tempo; bad luck, boys*)

Songwriters Four

Sounds Like Reef

Looks Like At The Drive In

Gracenote Mood Brooding -> Dreamy Brooding

Weird Lyrics *"Come on baby, come and find me / I can smell you like an animal"*

Other Notes San Marino was once famous in Eurovision circles for offering their spot to whichever rich vanity act stumped up the most cash. This year, they tried a five month selection process, sifting through 1,000 entries. It produced these Italian landfill rockers – who will sink without trace in the semis.

Austria

People always ask "What is the appeal of Eurovision? Why do you do this to yourselves every year?" To which we say, where else would you find an Austrian duo singing a hi-NRG club stomper about being possessed by the ghost of Edgar Allen Poe that absolutely fucking slaps?



Artist Teya and Salena

Song [Who The Hell is Edgar?](#)

Language English

Key B minor

Key Change No

Tempo 146bpm

Songwriters Four (inc. Teya and Salena)

Sounds Like A literary 2Unlimited

Looks Like A BBC Three comedy sketch troupe

Gracenote Mood Energizing -> Arousing Groove

Weird Lyrics *"There's a ghost in my body and he is a lyricist / It is Edgar Allan Poe and I think he can't resist"*

Other Notes It contains a little dig at Spotify for their \$0.003 per stream rate too. *"Zero dot zero zero three / Give me two years and your dinner will be free / Gas station champagne is on me..."*

Albania

2023 has been the Year Of The Nepo Baby, but Albania has given things a neat little twist. Instead, of getting to Eurovision on the strength of her family connections, Albina the daughter has got to Eurovision and then brought the rest of her family up on stage with her.



Artist Albina and Familja Kelmendi
Song [Duje](#)

Language Albanian

Key D minor

Key Change No

Tempo 110bpm

Songwriters Two

Sounds Like Albania's entry most years

Looks Like The breakout stars of Gogglebox Albania

Gracenote Mood Urgent -> Dark Pop Intensity

Reality TV [The Voice Of Albania](#) (Series 4; 2014)
[Top Fest](#) (2015)

Other Notes One of the writers of this song has a very sparsely updated YouTube channel where he posts remixes he's done. In one, he's somehow unintentionally managed to make Eminem – widely regarded as a pretty decent rapper – [flow like Lou Bega](#).

Lithuania

Look, we could try to write you an intro for this but, really, what's the point? You have things to do, we have things to do. Let's just let the music talk for itself, shall we? (That sounds generous enough, right...?)



Artist **Monika Linkyte**

Song **Stay**

Language **English**

Key **B Major** (*Usually the UK's preferred key of choice; dire*)

Key Change **No**

Tempo **98bpm**

Songwriters **Three** (*inc. Monika*)

Sounds Like **A Eurovision entry from the mid-2000s**

Looks Like **Sheridan Smith**

Gracenote Mood **Yearning -> Energetic Yearning**

Reality TV **Lietuvos Balsas** (*The Voice Lithuania runner-up, 2013*)

Other Notes **Monika is also one of the returning stars of this year's Eurovision. She performed [This Time](#) with Vaidas Baumila in 2015. Apparently in rehearsal for that, they botched their mid-song stage-snog so badly that Monika got a nose bleed.**

Australia

Earlier this year, someone appeared to leak the costs of all the [various special stage effects in a Eurovision stage show](#). The pyro, the dry ice, the wind machines, etc... If you're interested, we figure this prog-metal band might be a fun one to keep a running tally on.



Artist **Voyager**

Song **Promise**

Language **English**

Key **G minor**

Key Change **No**

Tempo **122bpm**

Songwriters **Five**

Sounds Like **It Bites** (*The band; we're not saying it sucks*)

Looks Like **Terry Thomas**

Gracenote Mood **Defiant -> Heavy Brooding**

Other Notes **Keytars are a weirdly underused instrument in Eurovision, given how inherently goofy they are. They've had a bit of a moment in the sun recently thanks to the Icelandic entries [Think About Things](#) (from the nixed 2020 competition) and [10 Years](#) (from 2021) by Daði & Gagnamagnið.**

The Big Six

Saturday 13th May



France

Generally speaking, Canadians have tended to fare pretty well at Eurovision. Obviously [Celine Dion won it 1988](#) – shortly before [losing her virginity](#). [Annie Cotton came 3rd](#) in 1993. [Natasha St-Pier came 4th](#) in 2001. (We'll just brush over [Rykka in 2016...](#))



Artist [La Zarra](#)
Song [Évidemment](#)

Language [French](#)

Key [G# minor](#)
Key Change [No](#)
Tempo [120bpm](#)
Songwriters [Four \(inc. La Zarra\)](#)

Sounds Like [Deux Et Lipa](#)
Looks Like [Raye](#)

Gracenote Mood [Empowering -> Idealistic/Stirring](#)

Weird Lyrics *"In my hell garden, the plants are watered with the dreams and tears"*

Other Notes [La Zarra sent the Eurovision fandom into a bit of a tailspin with an ominous Instagram story, in which she told her followers that her mental and physical health was shot and that \[she was quitting\]\(#\).](#)

Turned out she was [talking about gluten](#).

Germany

Given their proud heritage of good metal, it seems mad that Germany haven't sent something along these lines before. They're making up for lost time with a glut of leather straps, topless men, pyro so high it'll scorch the ceiling and a growling parrot frontman.



Artist Lord Of The Lost
Song [Blood & Glitter](#)

Language English

Key A minor
Key Change No
Tempo 140bpm
Songwriters Four

Sounds Like A scrubbed-up Rammstein
Looks Like A scrubbed-up Rammstein

Gracenote Mood Rowdy -> Confident/Tough

Other Notes Chris, the frontman, might look like a gigantic parrot in his outfit – but there is a death metal band who have an actual real-life parrot as their singer.

Hatebeak features the vocal stylings of Waldo the Parrot and they have released five albums to date, including [Bird Seeds Of Vengeance](#) and [Number Of The Beak](#).

Italy

Hidden within the lyrics of this is Marco's cure for a hangover, which might be useful tomorrow morning if you're the type to play Eurovision drinking games. He recommends coffee with lemon. (2-3tbsps of lemon juice to a standard 8oz/225ml cup of coffee ought to do it.)



Artist **Marco Mengoni**
 Song **Due Vite**

Language **Italian**

Key **D Major**
 Key Change **No**
 Tempo **118bpm**
 Songwriters **Four** (*inc. Marco on lyrics*)

Sounds Like **Italy's 2013 entry**
 Looks Like **The lovechild of George Clooney and Roy Kent**

Gracenote Mood **Yearning -> Energetic Yearning**

Reality TV **X Factor** (*Series 3, winner – 2009*)

Other Notes **This song gave Marco his 69th platinum record.**

Spain

The last ten years have seen the UK, Germany and Spain taking it in turns to finish last. Germany very kindly took the wheel last year, while the UK and Spain took silver and bronze. This year, it seems Spain drew the short straw. Thanks, Spain. We'll repay it next year...



Artist Blanca Paloma
Song [Eaea](#)

Language Spanish

Key C Phrygian
Key Change No
Tempo 116bpm
Songwriters Three

Sounds Like Answers on a postcard, please
Looks Like Spanish Sophie Winkleman

Gracenote Mood Fiery -> Fiery Groove

Other Notes The second entry this year to be written in Phrygian mode (Serbia's Freygish mode is also known as Phrygian Dominant, should such things matter to you). It does tend to go over big with the flamenco crowd and the music nerds – so perhaps the jury will be swayed by it and we'll have to eat our words. (It's drawn in the first half though, so that won't help...)

Ukraine

It's never easy to follow-up after a win. When the Netherlands won in 2019, they came 23rd the next year. Israel won in 2018, came 23rd the next year. Portugal won in 2017, came 26th the next year. Ukraine won in 2016, came 24th the next year. You get the picture...



Artist Tvorchi

Song [Heart Of Steel](#)

Language English; Ukranian

Key C# minor

Key Change No

Tempo 78bpm

Songwriters TWO (*The two of them*)

Sounds Like Imagine Dragons

Looks Like Shanks & Bigfoot

Gracenote Mood Empowering -> Idealistic/Stirring

Other Notes After Kalush Orchestra won last year, lead singer Olef called from the stage "Please help Ukraine, Mariupol. Help Azovstal right now."

This song was written during the siege of Mariupol, drawing inspiration from watching the Ukrainian Army defend the Azovstal Iron And Steel Works. Hence the title.

United Kingdom

God, it's nice not having to spend ages scrabbling around for something vaguely positive to say about our entry after all these years...



Artist Mae Muller

Song [I Wrote A Song](#)

Language English

Key A minor (*very solid; very popular*)

Key Change No

Tempo 125bpm (*uncomfortably close to the 128bpm death trap*)

Songwriters Three (*inc. Karen Poole, of [Alisha's Attic](#)*)

Sounds Like Rita Ora

Looks Like Anne-Marie x a British Billie Eilish

Gracenote Mood Fiery -> Fiery Groove

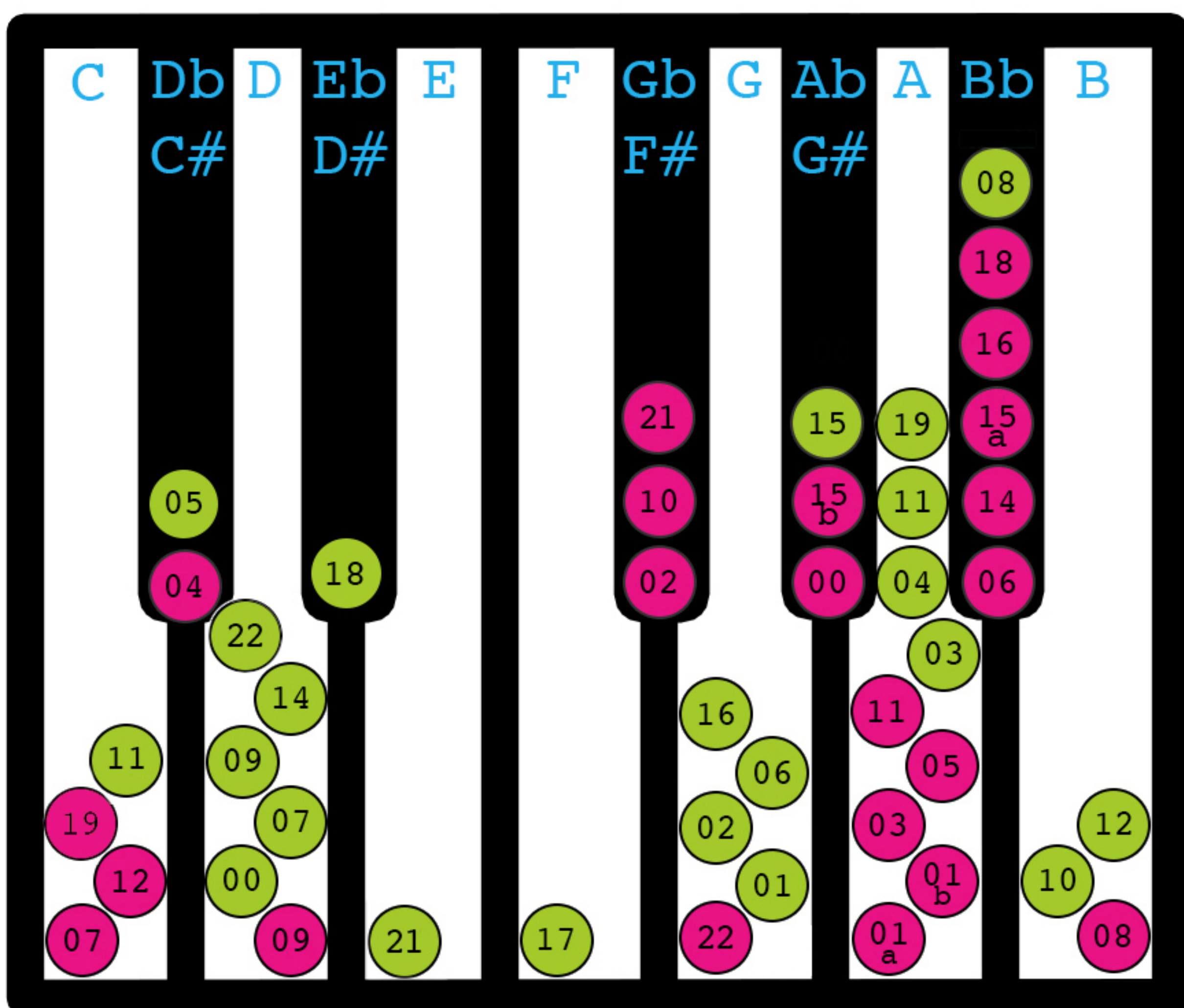
Other Notes As well as her work with Alisha's Attic, co-writer Karen Poole has worked on some big bona fide hits. She has credits on [Lola's Theme](#) by Shapeshifters, [Wow](#) by Kylie Minogue, [Caught In A Moment](#) by Sugababes, [Remember](#) by Becky Hill and David Guetta and dozens of others.

The Stats



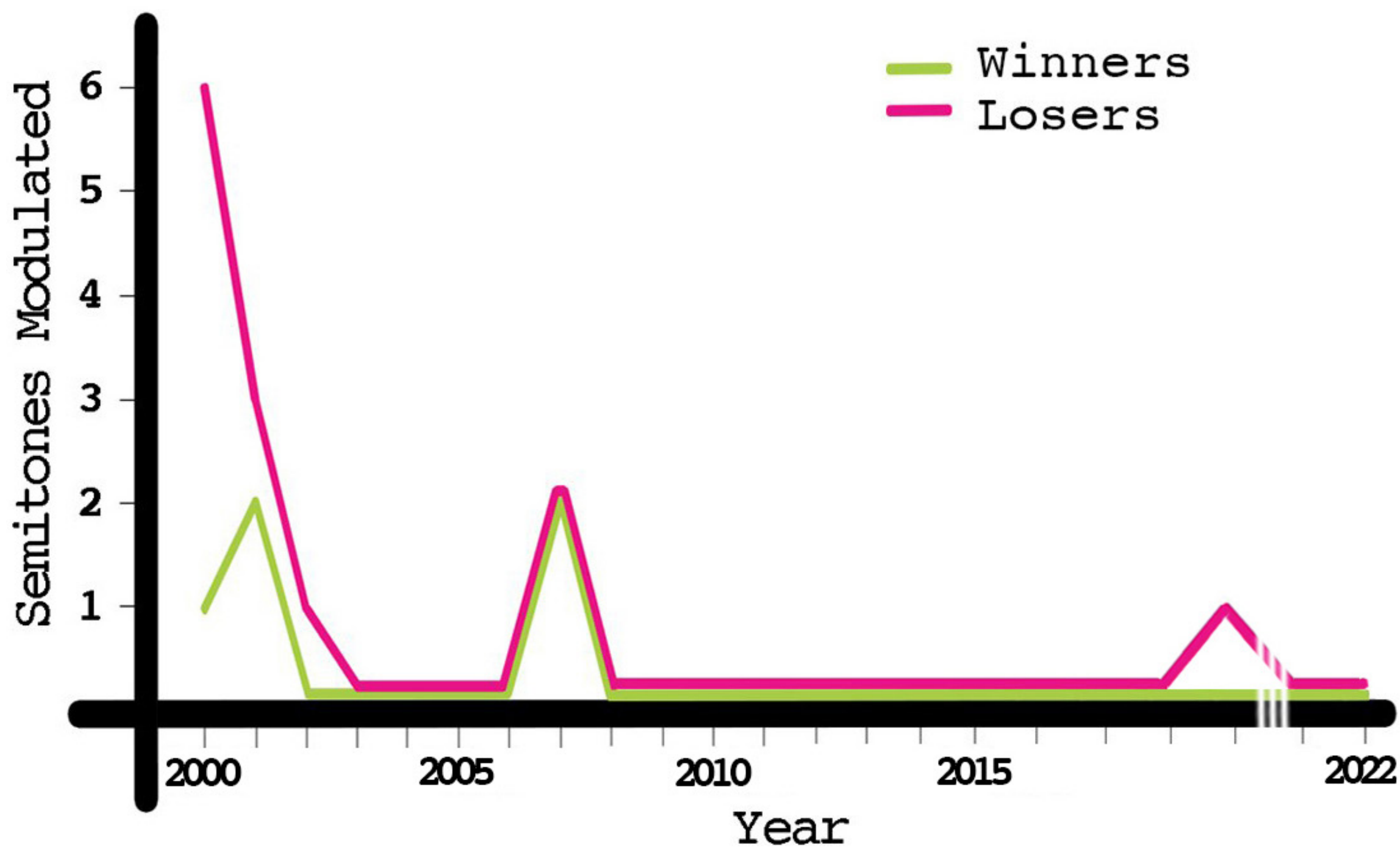
The Key To Success

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 on taking a shot whenever they hear one – but there isn't a single one in this year's contest. And no winner has attempted one in over 15 years now...

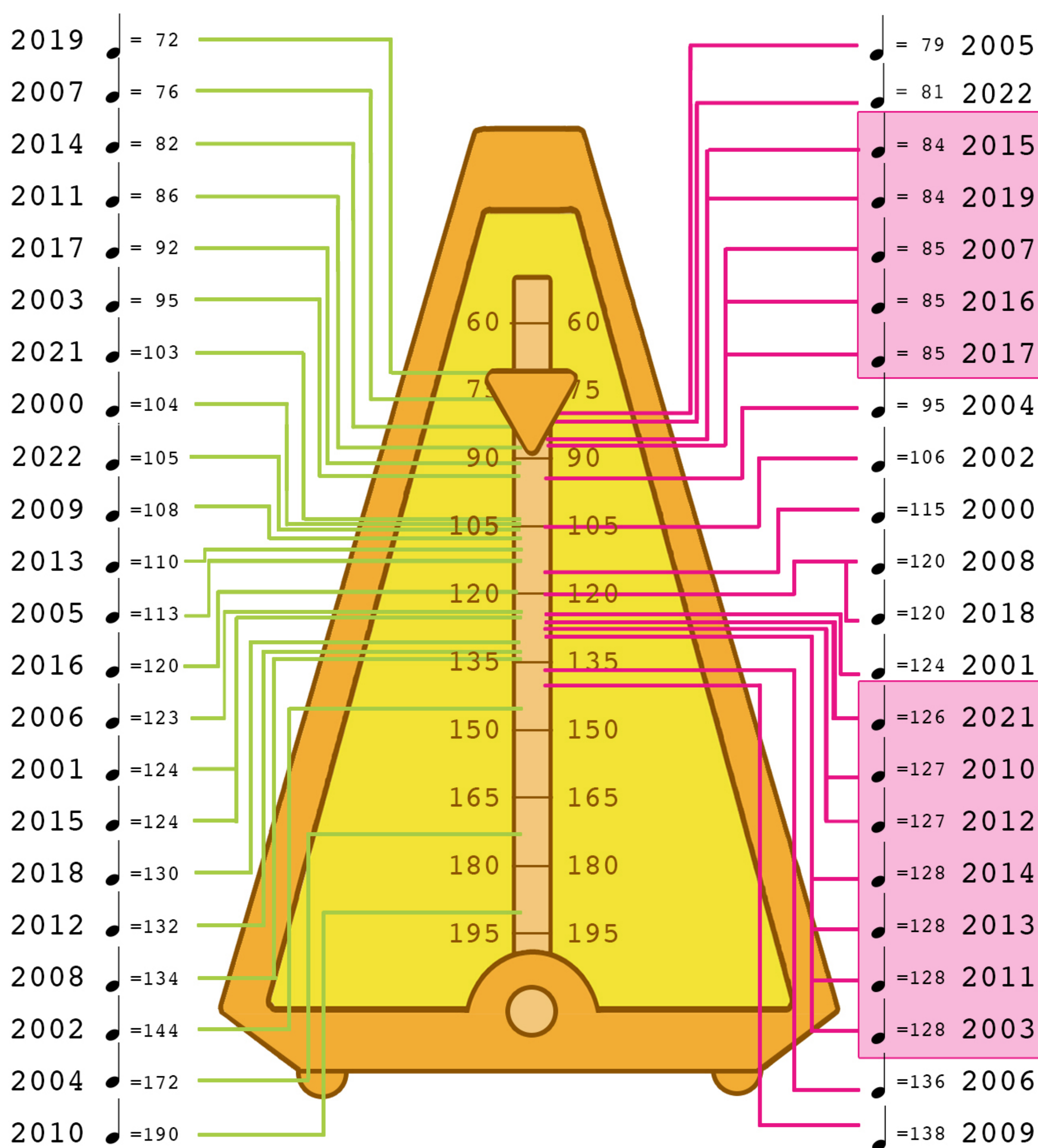


A Need For Speed

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. The two consistent killers you need to avoid? 128bpm and 85bpm.

Winners

Losers

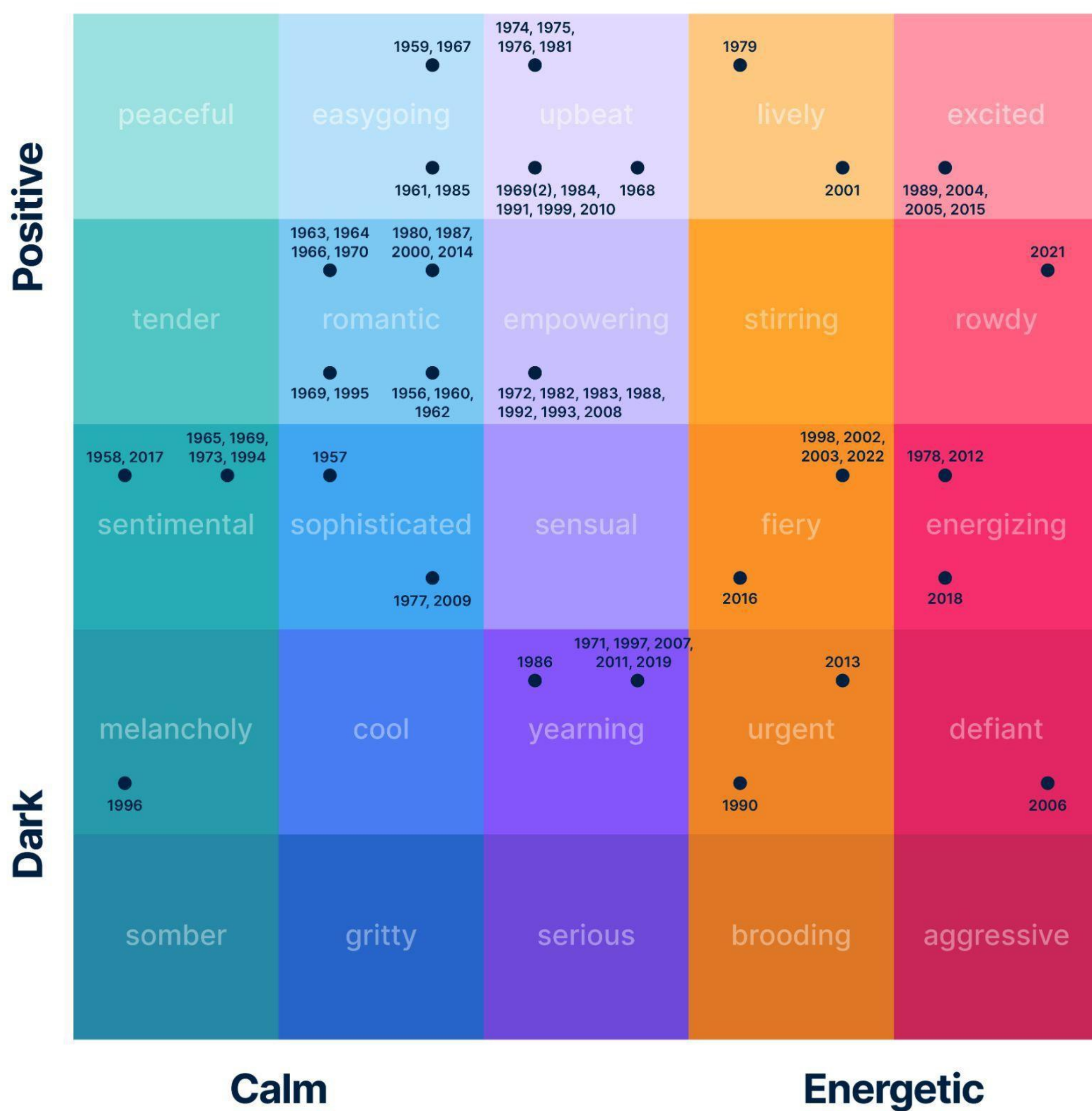


In The Moods

Nielsen's Gracenote has conducted some research that they kindly shared with us about what moods have been most successful at Eurovision over the years. Pre-2000, calm and positive was best, but now? "Fiery" is the one to aim for – having won five of the last 25 contests.

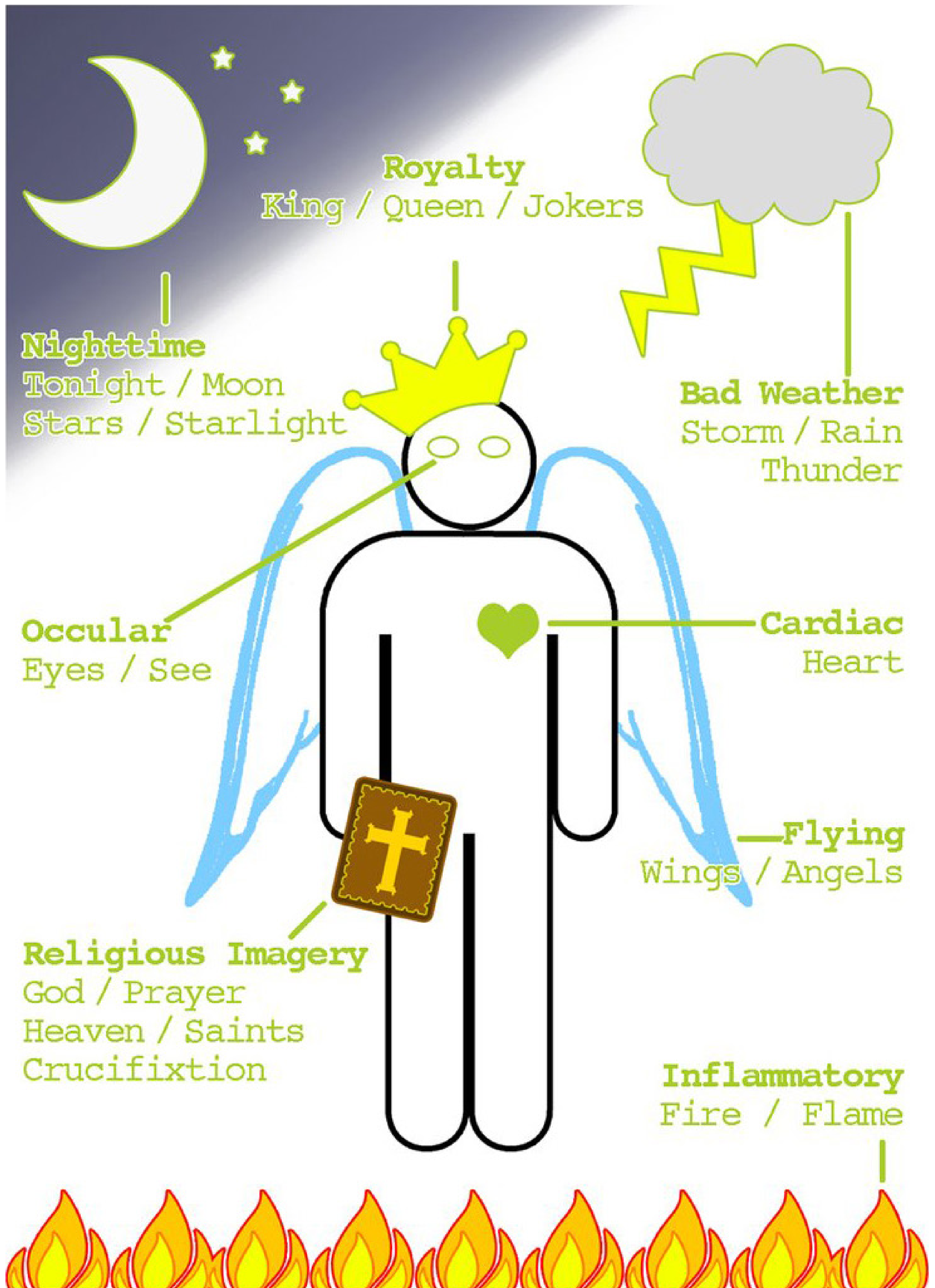
Gracenote sonic moods of Eurovision Song Contest winners

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a nielsen company



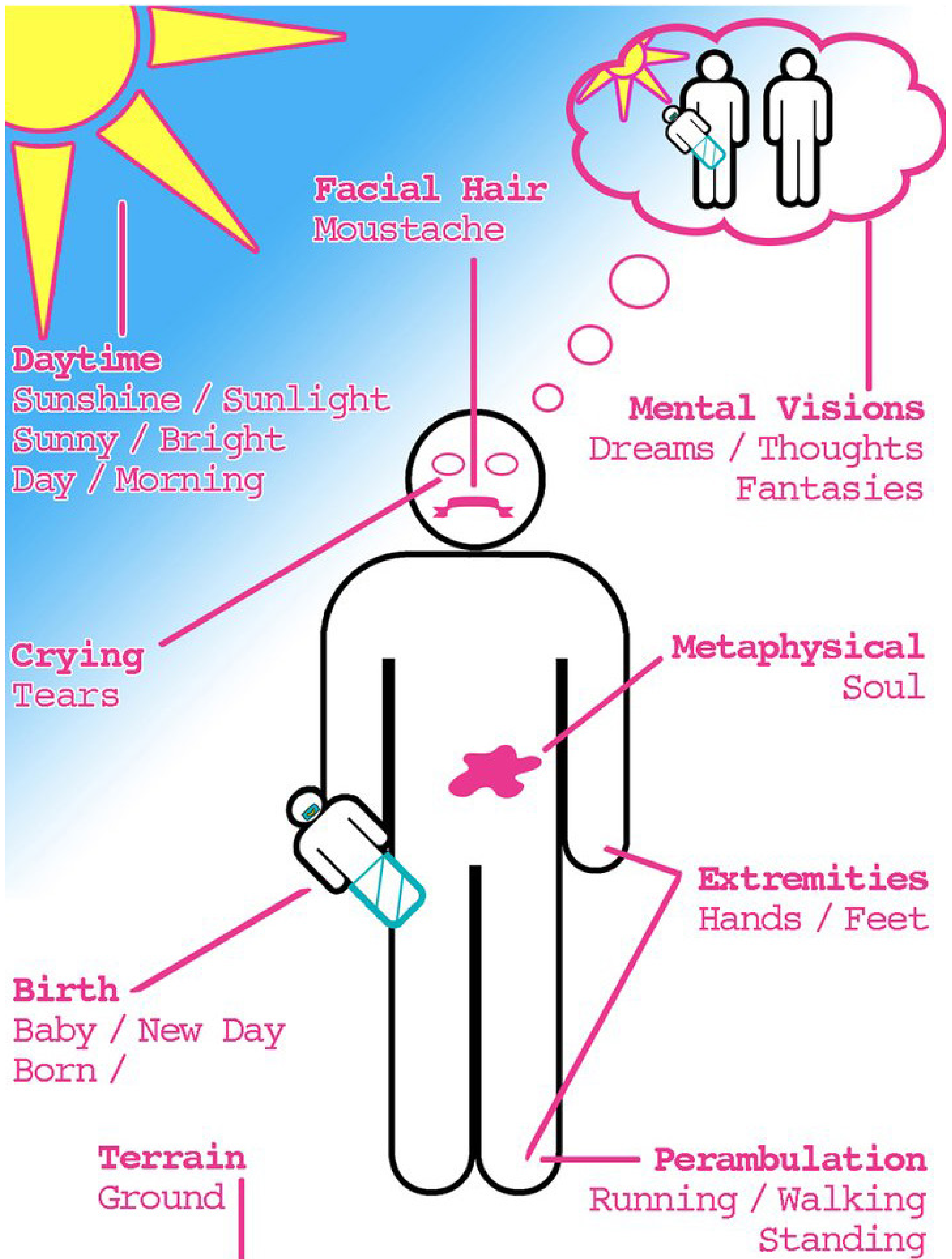
A Way With Words

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?



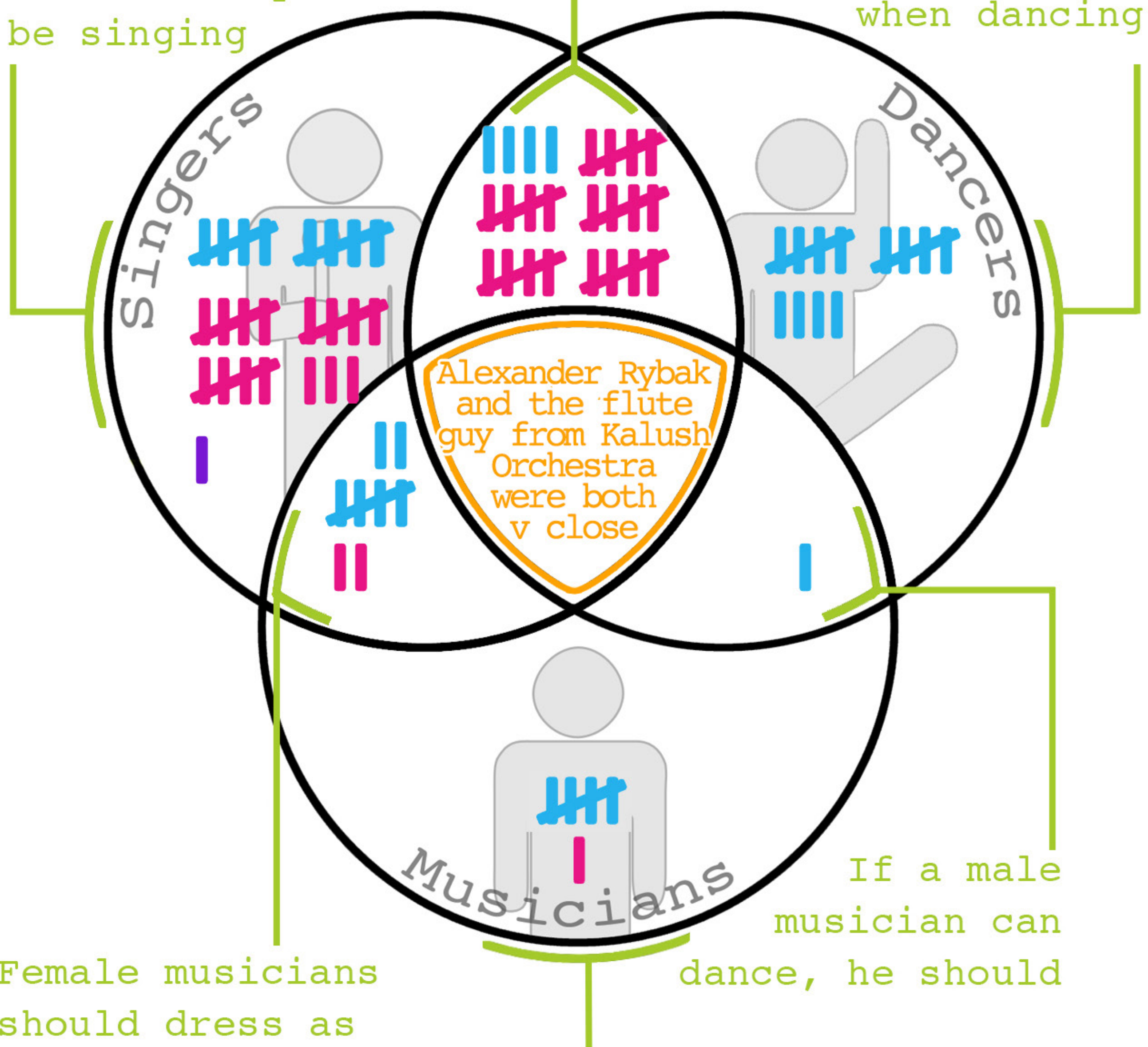
The Winning Combo

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?

Singing-dancing women are the key to winning

Women on stage should always be singing

Men do their most successful work when dancing



Female musicians should dress as monsters for best results

You don't want many instruments on stage

If a male musician can dance, he should

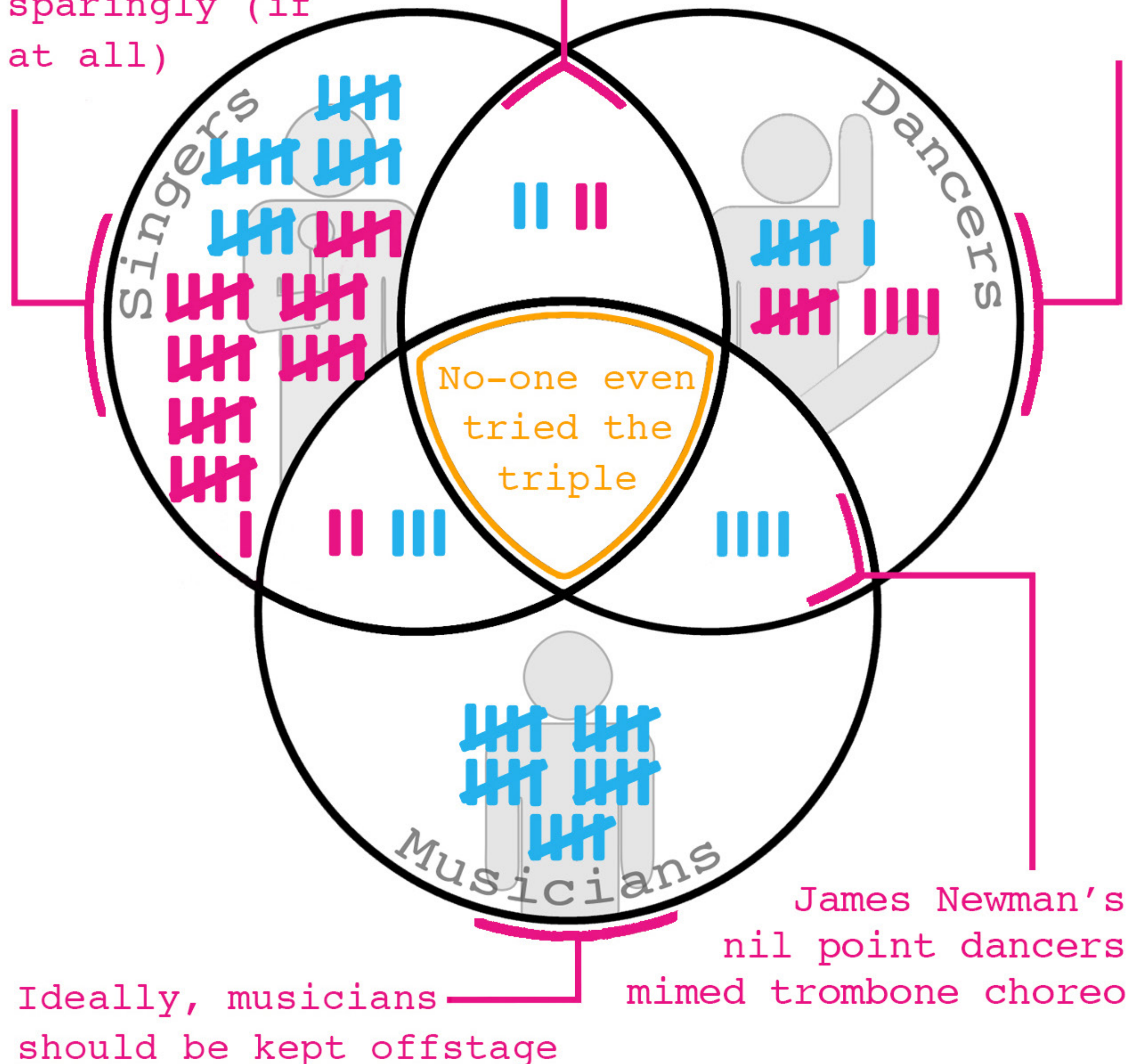
A Bunch Of Losers

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	✗ 2021
10	✗ 2000 ✗ 2016 ✓ 2004 ✓ 2015
11	✓ 2014 ✓ 2017
12	✗ 2012 ✗ 2010 ✓ 2019 ✓ 2022
13	✗ 2011 ✗ 2022
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 ✓ 2021
25	
26	✗ 2013

EUROVISION

SONG CONTEST
UNITED KINGDOM
LIVERPOOL 2023



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Poland: Magic Mars

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Romania: Teofora Ungureanu

San Marino: Aurora Cesari

Serbia: Vasso Vu

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Switzerland: SRF Lukas Maeder

Ukraine: AU:PBC / Michael Fedorak

UK: Harry Carr / Capitol Records UK / EMI

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Thanks to [Nielsen Gracenote](#) for the Sonic Moods.