# Austria’s JJ wins Eurovision 2025 amid hosting backlash and political protests



Broadcasting live from St Jakobshalle in Basel, Switzerland, the 2025 Eurovision Song Contest unfolded on 17 May, showcasing a vibrant clash of musical talents from across Europe. This year's spectacle, aired through a variety of platforms including BBC iPlayer, BBC One, Radio 2, and BBC Sounds, featured 26 acts competing for the celebrated trophy.

The event was navigated by presenters Hazel Brugger, Michelle Hunziker, and Sandra Studer, yet their pre-recorded opening segment failed to resonate with viewers, sparking widespread disappointment. Social media platforms buzzed with criticisms, as many took to X, formerly known as Twitter, to express their disdain. One viewer lamented the consistently "cringe" hosting, while another declared their enjoyment of the "randomness" of the hosts' costumes, underscoring a divide in viewer reception. A particularly poignant commentary noted the awkwardness inherent in the show's intros, with expressions of amusement and exasperation alike.

Despite these criticisms, the event was infused with excitement, particularly through the commentary provided by Graham Norton. Known for his witty insights, Norton remained a highlight of the evening, which also encompassed a storied cameo appearance in Doctor Who, where he informed the character played by Ncuti Gatwa of an impending global catastrophe. His dual presence that night has become something of a legend in entertainment circles.

Musically, the contest crowned Austria's JJ, a 24-year-old countertenor, as the champion with his operatic techno-pop fusion piece "Wasted Love." This victory marked Austria's first win since Conchita Wurst's acclaimed triumph in 2014. JJ's performance was celebrated for its emotional depth and lyrical resonance, earning commendations from political figures, including Austrian Chancellor Christian Stocker. The event captured a massive global audience of over 160 million, highlighting Eurovision's unifying power amidst a backdrop of escalating political tensions.

This year's contest was not without its controversies, particularly surrounding Israel's participation. The inclusion of Yuval Raphael, an artist who survived the harrowing events of the Hamas attack in 2023, led to significant protests reminiscent of previous Eurovision years. Calls for her exclusion from the competition arose from pro-Palestinian groups, coinciding with prominent demonstrations during her performance. Although Eurovision prides itself on a stance of political neutrality, the event’s tapestry was undeniably affected by the ongoing turmoil in Gaza. In response to these tensions, organisers have endeavoured to emphasise values of unity and inclusivity, allowing diverse flags in the audience while restricting performers to national representations.

Furthermore, the contest featured a diverse array of musical acts. Notable mentions included Estonia's Tommy Cash, whose playful track "Espresso Macchiato," steeped in Italian parody, sparked discussions around cultural representation. Despite some backlash from Italian media, many locals embraced the novelty and fun of the song, focusing instead on supporting their own contestant, glam rock artist Lucio Corsi. Meanwhile, Malta offered a lyrical twist with "Serving," a performance that faced scrutiny and modification due to its suggestive language, exemplifying Eurovision's fine line between artistic expression and public sentiment.

As the competition drew to a close, it became evident that Eurovision continues to serve not merely as a musical contest, but also as a reflection of social and political currents intertwining with the arts. Whether through the joy of unexpected performances or the discourse surrounding representation and controversy, the event remains a complex tapestry of culture, identity, and community.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4
2. Paragraphs 5
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4. Paragraphs 5
5. Paragraphs 6
6. Paragraphs 6
7. Paragraph 7

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/25171563.bbc-viewers-slam-cringe-eurovision-song-contest-2025/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.reuters.com/lifestyle/swedens-sauna-song-is-hot-favourite-swiss-eurovision-2025-05-17/> - Austria's JJ wins Eurovision crown with 'Wasted Love' – Austria triumphed at the Eurovision Song Contest 2025, held in Basel, Switzerland, marking the nation's first win since Conchita Wurst’s victory in 2014 and its third overall. The winning performance came from 24-year-old Viennese singer JJ (Johannes Pietsch), who captivated juries and audiences with his operatic-techno fusion song 'Wasted Love.' The piece, blending powerful vocals and emotional depth, connected deeply with viewers and earned widespread acclaim. Austrian Chancellor Christian Stocker and Foreign Minister Beate Meinl-Reisinger praised JJ for bringing Austria into the spotlight. This year’s event drew a massive global audience of over 160 million and attracted 100,000 attendees to Basel. While Eurovision maintains a stance of political neutrality, controversy arose due to the ongoing war in Gaza. Israel's participant, Yuval Raphael, a survivor of the 2023 Hamas attack, participated amid calls from pro-Palestinian groups to exclude Israel. Protests occurred during his performance, though security quickly intervened without injuries. Additionally, Spanish broadcaster RTVE aired a solidarity message for Palestine before the show. Switzerland hosted the contest following Nemo’s 2024 victory.
3. <https://apnews.com/article/38de9d9fc86f75180036a6834edae2c2> - Austria's JJ wins Eurovision Song Contest with pop-opera song 'Wasted Love' – Austrian countertenor JJ, whose full name is Johannes Pietsch, won the 69th Eurovision Song Contest in Basel, Switzerland, with his operatic techno-pop song 'Wasted Love.' This marks Austria's third Eurovision victory and its first since Conchita Wurst's win in 2014, who is considered a mentor to JJ. Israel's Yuval Raphael finished second with 'New Day Will Rise,' despite significant public support and amid protests over Israel's participation due to the ongoing Gaza conflict. Estonia's Tommy Cash and Sweden's KAJ followed in third and fourth places, respectively. The competition showcased diverse and eclectic musical entries from 26 countries, narrowed down from 37 through semifinals, and attracted around 160 million viewers worldwide. Acts featured a wide array of styles and languages, reflecting Eurovision's increasing diversity. The event, however, was overshadowed by controversy surrounding the war in Gaza, leading to protests in Basel and calls to exclude Israel from the contest. In response, organizers emphasized values of unity, neutrality, and inclusivity, allowing legal flags, including Palestinian ones, in the audience while restricting performers to national flags. Despite the tensions, organizers praised the professionalism of all delegations under difficult global circumstances.
4. <https://www.whattowatch.com/watching-guides/eurovision-2025-release-date-host-country-uk-entry-hosts-and-everything-we-know> - Eurovision 2025: release date, host country, finalists, Remember Monday interview and everything we know – Eurovision 2025 is set to take place on Saturday, May 17, broadcasting from Basel, Switzerland—its first time hosting the iconic music contest—following Swiss singer Nemo’s 2024 victory with 'The Code.' The final will be aired on BBC One and BBC iPlayer in the UK and on Peacock in the US. With 26 nations competing in the grand final, the UK is represented by country-pop girl band Remember Monday with their catchy song 'What the Hell Just Happened?' The trio, who previously appeared on The Voice UK, are eager to dazzle with theatrical flair and tight harmonies. Hosted by Hazel Brugger, Michelle Hunziker, and Sandra Studer, with Graham Norton providing his traditional witty commentary, Eurovision 2025 promises an eclectic mixture of ballads and anthems. Notable finalists include Italy’s Lucio Corsi with a rock ballad, Malta’s Miriana Conte, and Ireland’s Emmy with her quirky 'Laika Party.' Due to unforeseen circumstances, Sophie Ellis-Bextor will replace Ncuti Gatwa as the UK’s Grand Final spokesperson. Fans can expect powerful performances, a spirit of unity, and possibly some Swiss chocolate in this much-anticipated 69th edition of the contest.
5. <https://apnews.com/article/44d4fcbc150351c85ee517490c8969b1> - Estonia's Tommy Cash says Italians aren't in a froth over his Eurovision song 'Espresso Macchiato' – Estonian artist Tommy Cash is making waves at the 2025 Eurovision Song Contest in Basel, Switzerland with his entry 'Espresso Macchiato,' a playful dance-pop song filled with Italian clichés. The track has intrigued many Eurovision fans and sparked debate in Italy due to its tongue-in-cheek references such as 'sweating like a mafioso' and nods to spaghetti. An Italian consumers' group filed a complaint to the European Broadcasting Union, deeming the song offensive. However, Cash dismisses the criticism, stating most reactions from Italians have been positive and appreciative, with many calling him a 'legend.' He defends his song by pointing to similar U.S. pop hits, arguing that coffee is a universal theme and cultural connector. Despite some stereotyping, many Italians are taking the song in stride, noting their tolerance for such portrayals and focusing on supporting their own competitor, glam rocker Lucio Corsi. The fun and controversial spirit of 'Espresso Macchiato' has contributed to its memorability in this year's contest.
6. <https://apnews.com/article/e484340e9d33ba5fb3926e10a668c86a> - Israel's presence still roils Eurovision a year after major protests over the war in Gaza – Israel’s participation in the 2025 Eurovision Song Contest in Basel, Switzerland, has sparked ongoing controversy and protests, primarily due to its military actions in Gaza following Hamas' October 7, 2023, attack. Israeli singer Yuval Raphael, a survivor of that Hamas attack, has maintained a low profile during the competition but successfully qualified for the final with her song 'New Day Will Rise.' Despite her personal connection to the violence, anti-Israel demonstrations have been held, with protesters questioning why Israel is allowed to compete when Russia was banned after invading Ukraine. Security measures were enforced after activists attempted to disrupt Raphael’s rehearsal, and there are continued calls from former contestants and some national broadcasters for Israel’s exclusion. The European Broadcasting Union defends Israel’s participation, emphasizing the contest’s apolitical stance and that Israel is represented by its national broadcaster, not its government. Supportive demonstrations for Israel and against antisemitism have also taken place. The controversy highlights growing tensions over political issues within ostensibly non-political cultural events like Eurovision.
7. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Serving_%28song%29> - Serving (song) – 'Serving' was written and composed by Miriana Conte, Matthew 'Muxu' Mercieca, Sarah Evelyn Fullerton and Benjamin 'Bnji' Schmid, the latter of whom also handled production. The original title of the song, 'Kant' which in Maltese means 'singing', is repeated in the chorus through a pun that recalls the expression serving cunt, used to describe a bold and self-confident person in queer and drag cultures. Scott Mills, host for BBC Radio 2, said that BBC Radio 'definitely can't play' the song. In an interview with TVM, Conte initially said that the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) had accepted the song as it was and that its lyrics would not be changed, but that the song would be revamped. On 4 March 2025, Maltese broadcaster PBS stated that the EBU forbade the term 'Kant' from being used on stage and demanded changes to the song's lyrics, after the British broadcaster BBC reportedly levied a complaint in accordance with Ofcom regulations. On 13 March, the song's title was changed to 'Serving' for the contest. The new version of the song omits the word kant and replaces it with the sound 'aahh'.