# British Sign Language interpreter Clare Edwards steals the show at Eurovision 2025



Austria may have claimed victory at this year's Eurovision Song Contest, which took place in Basel, Switzerland, but it was a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter who truly captivated the audience, stealing the spotlight from the competing acts. Fans of the UK broadcast took to social media en masse, celebrating Clare Edwards and her spirited interpretation alongside Finland's Erika Vikman's lively performance of "ICH KOMME." Clad in a dazzling purple dress, Edwards infused energy into her signing, artfully conveying the songs' emotions and ensuring that the music was accessible to viewers with hearing difficulties.

This fervent response reflects a growing recognition of the importance of inclusivity at such high-profile events. While Vikman's performance was undeniably eye-catching and provocative, the sheer enthusiasm of Edwards resonated strongly with many viewers, suggesting that her presence was not merely an addition to the programme, but a pivotal aspect of the Eurovision experience. Comments flooded in, with viewers declaring her interpretation the highlight of the night, even suggesting she should represent the UK in future contests. One enthusiastic fan remarked on social media that “the BSL lady is having way too much fun,” while another praised her for "keeping captivated and not even listening to the songs."

The excitement over Edwards’s performance comes against the backdrop of a politically charged Eurovision, where Israel's participation was met with widespread protests amid ongoing tensions in the region. Despite these controversies, Eurovision aimed to uphold its core mission of showcasing unity through music. Austrian entrant JJ, whose full name is Johannes Pietsch, won the contest with his pop-opera song "Wasted Love," while Israeli singer Yuval Raphael, a survivor of the October 2023 Hamas attack, came in second with "New Day Will Rise." These contrasting narratives underline the contest's dual role as a celebration of artistic expression and a platform for political discourse.

The event saw not just the celebration of music, but also of civil rights as discussions around representation intensified. Critics have pointed out the discrepancy regarding Israel’s continued participation amidst calls for its exclusion, especially in light of political unrest in Gaza and the subsequent protests weighing heavily on the event’s atmosphere. The European Broadcasting Union, which oversees Eurovision, has been adamant about maintaining a neutral and celebratory tone, yet the palpable tensions led some viewers to question whether the spirit of Eurovision was being compromised.

Within this turbulent atmosphere, the joy generated by performances like those of Edwards speaks volumes. Viewers remarked on how her captivating expressions and vibrant movements added layers of emotional depth, stating that her rendition was “better than the actual song and performance” of some competitors. The accompanying commentary highlighted that the interpreters were "fabulous performers in their own right," bringing a unique blend of dance and storytelling to the Eurovision stage.

With Austria emerging victorious against a backdrop of international strife, the focus on Edwards serves as a powerful reminder of the potential for art to bridge gaps and foster understanding. Fans are advocating not only for her continued inclusion but for a broader appreciation of BSL interpreters at major events, which could enhance accessibility and enjoyment for everyone involved.

As the Eurovision Song Contest moves forward, the calls for greater representation and inclusivity in all facets of the event continue to grow louder. Whether future competitions will heed these calls remains to be seen, but the overwhelming support for Clare Edwards shines a light on the valuable role of interpreters in making cultural spectacles accessible to all. It appears that beyond the glittering performances and competitive entries, there is an opportunity to redefine the narrative of Eurovision to include broader voices, ensuring that every story is seen and heard.

### Reference Map

* Paragraph 1: [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-14724159/Eurovisions-BSL-interpreter-steals-iconic-brilliant-performance-fans-beg-represent-UK-year-didnt-realise-sign-language-graphic.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 2: [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-14724159/Eurovisions-BSL-interpreter-steals-iconic-brilliant-performance-fans-beg-represent-UK-year-didnt-realise-sign-language-graphic.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 3: [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-14724159/Eurovisions-BSL-interpreter-steals-iconic-brilliant-performance-fans-beg-represent-UK-year-didnt-realise-sign-language-graphic.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://apnews.com/article/38de9d9fc86f75180036a6834edae2c2), [[3]](https://apnews.com/article/e484340e9d33ba5fb3926e10a668c86a)
* Paragraph 4: [[4]](https://www.cyprus-mail.com/2025/05/07/israels-inclusion-at-eurovision-2025-sparks-backlash-in-switzerland-and-beyond), [[6]](https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/article/2024/may/09/israel-qualifies-eurovision-song-contest-final-protests)
* Paragraph 5: [[2]](https://apnews.com/article/38de9d9fc86f75180036a6834edae2c2), [[5]](https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-warns-travelers-to-eurovision-to-avoid-protests-not-show-jewish-israeli-symbols)
* Paragraph 6: [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-14724159/Eurovisions-BSL-interpreter-steals-iconic-brilliant-performance-fans-beg-represent-UK-year-didnt-realise-sign-language-graphic.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[4]](https://www.cyprus-mail.com/2025/05/07/israels-inclusion-at-eurovision-2025-sparks-backlash-in-switzerland-and-beyond), [[7]](https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/tv-radio/2025/05/10/eurovision-song-contest-how-are-organisers-reacting-to-criticisms-of-israel)

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-14724159/Eurovisions-BSL-interpreter-steals-iconic-brilliant-performance-fans-beg-represent-UK-year-didnt-realise-sign-language-graphic.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://apnews.com/article/38de9d9fc86f75180036a6834edae2c2> - Austrian singer JJ, full name Johannes Pietsch, won the 69th Eurovision Song Contest in Basel, Switzerland, with his pop-opera song 'Wasted Love.' Israeli singer Yuval Raphael came second with 'New Day Will Rise.' The event was marked by political tensions, including protests against Israel's participation due to the ongoing Gaza conflict. Despite these tensions, the contest aimed to promote unity through music, with organizers emphasizing inclusivity and neutrality.
3. <https://apnews.com/article/e484340e9d33ba5fb3926e10a668c86a> - Israel's participation in the 2025 Eurovision Song Contest in Basel, Switzerland, 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 attack, qualified for the final with her song 'New Day Will Rise.' Despite her personal connection to the violence, anti-Israel demonstrations were held, with protesters questioning why Israel was allowed to compete when Russia was banned after invading Ukraine.
4. <https://www.cyprus-mail.com/2025/05/07/israels-inclusion-at-eurovision-2025-sparks-backlash-in-switzerland-and-beyond> - Israel's inclusion in the 2025 Eurovision Song Contest has sparked backlash in Switzerland and beyond. Critics question the European Broadcasting Union's decision to allow Israel to participate amid the Gaza conflict, citing double standards since Russia was excluded in 2022. Protests have been organized by Palestinian organizations and human rights groups, accusing the EBU of normalizing Israel's actions in Gaza. The EBU defends its decision, emphasizing Eurovision's apolitical nature and the representation of Israel by its public broadcaster, KAN.
5. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-warns-travelers-to-eurovision-to-avoid-protests-not-show-jewish-israeli-symbols> - Israel has issued a warning to travelers attending the Eurovision Song Contest in Basel, Switzerland, advising them to avoid displaying Jewish or Israeli symbols to prevent potential protests. The warning comes amid ongoing political tensions surrounding Israel's participation in the contest, with concerns about possible demonstrations and disruptions. The European Broadcasting Union has emphasized the non-political nature of the event and has implemented measures to ensure the safety and security of all participants and attendees.
6. <https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/article/2024/may/09/israel-qualifies-eurovision-song-contest-final-protests> - Israel has qualified for the final of the Eurovision Song Contest in Malmö, Sweden, despite thousands of pro-Palestinian demonstrators protesting against its participation. Israeli singer Eden Golan performed in the second semi-final, receiving a mix of applause and boos from the audience. The European Broadcasting Union has defended its decision to allow Israel to compete, emphasizing Eurovision's non-political nature and the importance of unity through music.
7. <https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/tv-radio/2025/05/10/eurovision-song-contest-how-are-organisers-reacting-to-criticisms-of-israel> - Organizers of the Eurovision Song Contest are responding to criticisms of Israel's participation amid the Gaza conflict. Israeli entrant Yuval Raphael, a survivor of the October 2023 Hamas attack, is set to perform 'New Day Will Rise' in the final. Critics, including former Eurovision contestants, have called for Israel's exclusion, citing double standards since Russia was banned in 2022. The European Broadcasting Union emphasizes Eurovision's apolitical stance and the representation of Israel by its public broadcaster, KAN.