# Eurovision winners lean into minor keys and authenticity to capture audiences



The Eurovision Song Contest, a dazzling showcase of musical talent, cultural diversity, and creative expression, offers a complex tapestry that both performers and viewers intertwine. With an audience of around 163 million people, each with their unique perspective, the quest to craft a winning entry transforms into a multifaceted endeavour where lyrical themes, staging, and originality hold paramount importance.

Experts outline that successful songs commonly resonate with six broad lyrical themes: love, unity, self-assertion, partying, history, and music-making. Notably, songs focusing on self-assertion, such as Conchita Wurst's "Rise Like a Phoenix," have proven particularly effective. Wurst's powerful performance in 2014 not only showcased her vocal talent but also aligned with a growing trend of embracing themes of empowerment and identity, which resonate with the contest's evolving audience. Similarly, the recent success of Salvador Sobral's "Amar Pelos Dois" lights a beacon for performers aiming for authenticity in their presentation.

Staging, often seen as a critical element, is advised to maintain simplicity. Thomas Stengaard, a songwriter behind Denmark's 2013 winner "Only Teardrops," suggests that accessible visuals can be more memorable. He emphasises a connection to childhood understanding: "If you asked a kid to draw that staging, they could." This sentiment aligns with vocal coach Carrie Grant’s assertion that an extravagant stage must align with a powerful performance. Conchita Wurst's minimalist approach, eschewing backing dancers for a focus on her vocal delivery, echoes this principle.

The tone of a song also plays a pivotal role in its potential success. Recent statistics indicate a shift toward minor keys, which now dominate the contest, providing a richer emotional depth often valued by judges and audiences alike. In 2023, a striking 85% of entries performed in minor keys, highlighting a notable trend as performers adapt to the evolving preferences of the Eurovision electorate. Interestingly, Remember Monday’s attempt with a major-key song, "What the Hell Just Happened," aims to disrupt this pattern, suggesting that innovation can create a memorable distinction amid the crowd.

Catchiness in song composition is another essential component. Elizabeth Hellmuth Margulis notes that while repetition firmly anchors a piece, an unexpected twist can elevate it beyond the ordinary. The iconic costume changes in Bucks Fizz's "Making Your Mind Up" serve as an illustrative reminder that memorable moments can occur at the intersection of visual and musical creativity. This interplay of a strong chorus and visual surprises is vital for capturing both audience engagement and jury approval.

Moreover, experts advocate that while a polished presentation is crucial, it must not overshadow the song’s quality. A delicate balance is necessary: exquisite staging that serves to enhance, rather than eclipse, the core musical presentation. This insight reflects the sentiment that Eurovision truly rewards those who authentically express their cultural identity amidst often grand theatricality.

Interestingly, data reveals that solo artists, particularly those aged between 25 and 34 years, tend to have a higher likelihood of success, with pop love songs prevailing as a popular genre. Historical data illustrates that while English dominates the winning entries, a few exceptions highlight the representational power of native languages, creating a celebration of cultural diversity within the contest framework.

As anticipation builds for future contests, aspiring Eurovision stars would be wise to heed these nuanced strategies from industry veterans: cultivate a dynamic presence, create an authentic connection with audiences, and never underestimate the power of a well-placed surprise. Ultimately, the blend of emotional resonance, striking visuals, and a relatable narrative could pave the way for the next Eurovision champion, reflecting both individuality and the collective spirit of Europe and beyond.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraphs 1, 2, 3
2. Paragraphs 4, 5
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Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cdr5lvgzz07o> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://oneurope.co.uk/editorial/the-winning-formula-crafting-the-perfect-eurovision-entry/> - This article discusses key elements for crafting a successful Eurovision entry, emphasizing the importance of a strong, memorable chorus, powerful vocals, unique and authentic presentation, engaging stage performance, originality, and cultural representation. It highlights examples like Loreen's 'Euphoria' (2012) for its anthemic chorus, Conchita Wurst's 'Rise Like a Phoenix' (2014) for powerful vocals, and Salvador Sobral's 'Amar Pelos Dois' (2017) for its intimate performance. The piece underscores that authenticity and originality can set an act apart in the competition.
3. <https://phoenixesc.com/2023/05/02/editorial-what-makes-a-great-eurovision-performance/> - This editorial explores various factors contributing to a great Eurovision performance, including staging and visual effects, costume reveals, good camerawork, choreography, crowd interaction, orchestra and live music, and the 'wow factor.' It provides examples such as Kate Miller-Heidke's 'Zero Gravity' (2019) for unique staging, Bucks Fizz's 'Making Your Mind Up' (1981) for costume reveals, and Chanel's 'Slomo' (2022) for choreography. The article emphasizes that a combination of these elements can elevate a performance and captivate both the audience and juries.
4. <https://populous.com/article/sing-to-win> - This article delves into strategies for winning the Eurovision Song Contest, highlighting the importance of standing out visually while maintaining a strong song. It advises against overly gimmicky staging, noting that while unique visuals can attract attention, they should not overshadow the song's quality. The piece also discusses the significance of singing in English to reach a broader audience and suggests that memorable tunes often trump complex lyrics. Building a media presence and engaging in cross-border publicity are also emphasized as crucial for success.
5. <https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2021/may/22/eurovision-tips-from-the-pros-on-how-to-win> - This article provides insights from industry professionals on winning the Eurovision Song Contest. It emphasizes the need for dynamic and engaging performances, noting that incorporating unexpected elements can captivate audiences. For instance, Israeli songwriter Doron Medalie adapted his winning song 'Toy' (2018) to include various twists, keeping the audience engaged. The piece also highlights the importance of cultural representation and authenticity, suggesting that acts that embrace their cultural identity and present it uniquely have a competitive edge.
6. <https://edition.cnn.com/2015/05/22/eurovision-60-winning/index.html> - This CNN article explores memorable Eurovision performances and the impact of unique costumes and staging. It highlights acts like Finnish metal band Lordi, who won in 2006 with elaborate monster costumes, and Bucks Fizz's iconic skirt-ripping routine in 1981. The piece underscores that distinctive visual elements can leave a lasting impression on both the audience and juries, contributing to a performance's success.
7. <https://preply.com/en/blog/how-to-win-eurovision/> - This article analyzes data to identify patterns among Eurovision winners. It reveals that solo artists aged 25-34 are most likely to win, with pop love songs being the predominant genre. The piece also notes that while English is the most common language for winning songs, there are exceptions. Additionally, it highlights that memorable tunes often outweigh complex lyrics, and building a strong media presence is crucial for success.