

International Studies in
FINE ARTS

EDITOR

DOÇ. DR. ŞENOL AFACAN

June 2025

Genel Yayın Yönetmeni / Editor in Chief • Eda Altunel

Kapak & İç Tasarım / Cover & Interior Design • Serüven Yayınevi

Birinci Basım / First Edition • © Haziran 2025

ISBN • 978-625-5897-32-9

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Serüven Yayınevi / Serüven Publishing

Türkiye Adres / Turkey Address: Kızılay Mah. Fevzi Çakmak 1. Sokak

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Baskı & Cilt / Printing & Volume

Sertifika / Certificate No: 42488

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Chapter 1

MUSICAL PERIODIZATIONS IN THE EUROVISION SONG CONTEST¹

Buket GENÇ²

1 This study is an extension of the doctoral thesis entitled “Ideology, Media, and Popular Music: Turkey’s Eurovision Process as a Hegemonic Space,” which was accepted at Dokuz Eylül University Institute of Fine Arts in 2019 under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Ayhan Erol. The extension focuses specifically on the section titled “Musical Transformations in the Eurovision Song Contest,” aiming to further explore and elaborate on the original research.

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INTRODUCTION

In conveying the historical trajectory of the Eurovision Song Contest, this study underscores the continuous borrowing and periodization of song categories, representing distinct genres or styles within this historical framework. The categories devised for this study are constructed around winners or top-three performers and are framed within the overarching styles characterizing specific periods. Consequently, the headings devised for this study are evaluated in the context of differentiating trends within specific time intervals and mainstream genres. The primary objective is to explore the relationship between ESC and the music industry, particularly within the context of Eurovision songs and mainstream music genres/styles. However, before delving into these song categories, it is pertinent to provide an introduction regarding the concept of a song.

At its simplest definition, a song, created through the repetition of one or more distinct melodic sections, has emerged as the closest ‘form’ within expressive cultures to human communities, owing to its use of lyrics and relative brevity. Across the world’s various nations and over different eras, the term ‘song’ used to express these musical pieces has been employed in various forms to reflect different languages and cultural attributes. In many societies, verbal music is more prevalent than purely instrumental music. Even in Western art music and many other cultures, instrumental music often derives from or is associated with the song form (e.g., *Canzona da Sonar*, *Klezmer*, etc.). It is beyond dispute that profit-oriented entities, such as companies, significantly shaped the 20th-century cultural landscape. Within this framework, it is evident that specific popular culture genres were privileged while others were excluded. For instance, very few films were made without individual heroes. Similarly, popular music styles that did not adhere to the three-to-five-minute song format were not easily produced and played on the radio. It should be noted that nearly all popular music forms consist of three-to-five-minute songs, and this emphasizes that democratization of access to the tools of cultural production within the culture industry has not occurred. Nevertheless, it is essential to acknowledge that culture industry forms, in their current manifestations, should not be regarded as entirely independent of the ability of consumers to guide, restrict, and shape them (Erol, 2015: 178).

The central point to be emphasized is that the song format, characterized by the repetition of one or more distinct melodic sections, was already an expression style and form widely preferred by almost all Western and non-Western societies for centuries before industrial production. Therefore, the three-to-five-minute song format is not an ‘innovation’ invented by the industry to “herd and control” people. To assert that the

culture industry primarily ‘uses’ this form as a commodity by subjecting it to processing is a different statement altogether (Erol, 2015:179). Consequently, stating that ESC songs have a national identity-creating and reflect a world of meaning and, thus, necessitate a different perspective while also asserting that ESC songs are produced for entertainment purposes and should be assessed within the framework of industrial popular music categories invites a multi-faceted examination. For example, Scott approaches this issue more from the latter perspective. According to him, Eurovision songs fall within the category of entertainment music. These songs belong to the lineage of popular song types that emerged in the 19th century and nurtured urban European taste. In other words, these songs have urban rather than rural roots and are associated more with commercial song production than folk song traditions. Urban popular music has drawn attention to and benefited from tradition. However, these songs are not as esoteric or irrelevant to urbanites as to appeal only to tourists, as evidenced by the fact that they contain a few yodels in a Swiss pop song, for example. However, urban songs have an advantage: they can easily travel to other cities, as urban and primarily metropolitan experiences, regardless of where they have acquired this feature, are much more widespread. Urban sensibility is characterized by an inclination towards cosmopolitan tastes and liberal attitudes, and the Eurovision Song Contest serves to satisfy these two trends (Scott, 2010:187). The approach to the Eurovision Song Contest aligns with Bohlman’s fundamental arguments regarding song styles within the context of Eurovision. He argues that Eurovision’s song styles are primarily oriented towards a cosmopolitan hybridization quest rather than a conscious authenticity, drawing from popular rather than folk traditions. The formula used to shape a successful Eurovision winner is no secret, and it is not surprising that those who have delved into these formulas, such as Ireland’s Jonny Logan and Germany’s Ralph Siegel, have done so intelligently (Bohlman, 2007:46).

In pursuit of identifying musical expressions that the entire European audience would appreciate, persistent efforts have led to a music style characterized by a certain level of repetition and low originality in songs. For instance, as Bjönberg (1987) expresses regarding their homeland, Sweden, “A specific genre of continental European pop music is considered a prototype for a good ESC song” (Wolther, 2012:167). Consequently, ESC (Eurovision Song Contest) has often been ridiculed for endorsing popular music that conforms to national stereotypes, is excessively costly, and is deemed outdated. Such biases have undermined the success of ESC, which has been achieved through international collaboration and technological skills. Criticisms mocking ESC’s cultural cheapness or kitschiness are unfair, considering that the contest showcases various

popular music stars, presents songs with political and social commentary, and goes beyond mere superficiality (Vuletic, 2018:2).

In his assessment of the Eurovision Song Contest, Philip Bohlman primarily delves into the significance of the song within Europe and its role in the history of nations and nationalism beyond Europe. Bohlman states that a song is much more than a 'text' representing historical narratives. It transcends being merely an object or subject in the narration of national history. In the context of European national histories, the song takes on an extraordinary role, shaping nationalism in highly complex forms. The song becomes a realm of action, essentially a historical domain. Through its performance, the song transforms symbols into action. It translates local narratives into national history, not only by reconstructing time (historical moments) but also by doing so at times when the nation's historical agency requires a new and distinct discourse (Bohlman, 2007:52). A new and distinct discourse implies change, both in terms of musical expression and in broader aspects. Hence, Bohlman emphasizes that the closer we examine change, the more we witness paradox. Bohlman addresses the paradox in the context of minorities, nations, and international interactions. However, in the current context, the paradox is as follows: the meaning of local, regional, or national songs at every level is a composite of relationships within and beyond their contexts. While these composite structures are labeled, categorized, and named by genre or style, it is important to note that the music industry is a significant determinant. Therefore, in the following discussion, we will review these within the framework of periodization and, of course, the styles predominant in these periodizations. First, however, it would be beneficial to evaluate the lyrics of Eurovision songs.

It is indeed challenging to confine the thematic content of Eurovision Song Contest (ESC) songs to love, the sea, and travel. Nearly all the themes used in popular song traditions, both nationally and internationally, find representation within the ESC. Within the context of popular music analysis, there should be more reasonable motives for delving into lyrical analysis. For instance, the assumption that one can 'read' societal forces producing them through song lyrics may be one of the most significant reasons. However, most lyrical analyses have taken the form of content analysis, which tends to oversimplify the relationship between words and 'reality' and overlooks the structural freedom of verbal and musical meaning-making systems. In general, for those who tend to evaluate the content of lyrics as commonplace, even rock music with high volumes and, at times, provocative or rebellious lyrics is within the family of ideas that constitute normative culture. Apart from the ability of melodic memory or melody recall, it is unnecessary to discuss the impact and ease of

remembrance of lyrics in a song on specific individuals who resonate with a personal or collective interest or even sensitivity. While it may not be at the same level of ease of recall, it serves as a motivating focal point for those who listen to the same lyrics with a completely “different” personal or collective sensitivity (Erol, 2009:180). Here, the issue of everyone understanding the lyrics in the same language also arises. This debate combines with whether ESC songs should be sung in the national language or in English, which is considered a universal language. Singing in English in the ESC can be interpreted as a competitive aspect. Many countries may prefer to use English in Eurovision songs because they believe it will lead to more successful results than singing in their national language. However, statistically, the competitive advantage of English compared to the national language cannot be established. Therefore, the choice of English ultimately depends on the speculations of television executives that align with the general language preferences of ESC viewers (Wolther, 2012:167). Whether ESC songs are in English or the national language, the use of sound and word clusters that can blur, or even be considered meaningless, the meaning conveyed through language can add another dimension to this discussion. For example, the lyrics of some songs that have participated in Eurovision, including many winners, contain “primitive” or instinctual sound imitations made by abandoning a language-specific vocabulary to attract a broader audience. These songs have repetitions like ‘ding dong’ or ‘boom bang,’ aiming for a “universal” appeal beyond linguistic boundaries. For instance, Spain’s 1968 winner ‘La la la’ with Massiel, the 1969 winner in the UK ‘Boom Bang a Bang’ with Lulu, the 1975 winner in the Netherlands ‘Ding Dine Dong’ with Teach-In, Israel’s 1978 grand prize winner ‘A Ba Ni Bi’ with Izhar Cohen, and Sweden’s 1984 victory with ‘Diggi Loo Diggi Ley’ with Herreys (Scott, 2010:185). The connotations of song lyrics are determined by conventions, genres, and the styles to which these conventions refer. Thus, the word’s literal meaning is always adapted by “musical processes.” The musical processes within ESC songs are categories, genres, and styles that correspond to certain historical periodizations. It would be appropriate to consider them concerning mainstream trends in the industry interrelated with each other. It is worth noting that this section will be approached regarding ESC winners or those who placed in the top three and the styles that characterize the period in general.

1. Swing-influential Pop Songs Period (1956-1964)

In the musical characteristics and lyrics of previously winning songs, there has been frequent discourse regarding whether a ‘formula’ has been established to secure victory in the competition (Deshwal et al., 2021). For instance, Scott approaches Eurovision success with a desire to discover if

there exists any prescribed methodology. While one of the primary aims of the competition is to showcase various song styles from different countries, songs closely associated with the representing country have not garnered significant favor. For instance, Germany participated in 1956 with a typical cabaret-style song (Scott, 2010:191). However, it is possible to make a general assessment of the songs that won between 1956 and 1964. During this initial period, a predominant feature was a large orchestra structure. Specifically, the songs that clinched victory from 1956 to 1960 were predominantly Swing-style, primarily reliant on string instruments. Except for the winner in 1956, they were typically performed by a soloist accompanied by an orchestra, without regular rhythmic elements such as drums and bass. The orchestral arrangements were akin to classical music orchestras, with musicians following their sheet music to execute their performance. The orchestra members displayed practices similar to symphony orchestras, with male musicians wearing tuxedos and suits, female musicians donning dresses, etc. A similar situation applied to soloists. While soloists did not follow sheet music, they often followed the conductor's cues. During their performance, soloists did not engage in physical expressions like dancing. Singers who consistently delivered their songs often smiled during their performances. The performances were captured with a single camera, and the footage was in black and white, with costumes reflecting the characteristics of that era.

Returning to the musical features, within the first five years of the initial period, the pervasive influence of the impending global rock 'n' roll wave had yet to materialize. These initial years primarily saw a fusion of traditional European popular music styles with Afro-American influences, particularly Tin Pan Alley songs. Generally, European popular music owes more to African-American styles than to national styles (Scott, 2010:187). Consequently, the relationship between the Eurovision songs and the European continent can be likened to that of jazz with the African continent, both significantly stronger and stronger. Therefore, from the early 1960s onwards, a universe where pieces were reconfigured, such as pieces reassembled with different components, began to emerge.

In shaping the musical styles of Eurovision songs, songwriters (composers) and producers turn to the past to evoke a sense of familiarity. This style can be one that the audience finds appealing, and it necessitates revisiting the winning formula of the past. If this formula has worked for ABBA or Celine Dion, why not savor success years later when it is revived? If hip-hop or country music has universal appeal, why shouldn't it capture Europe's interest? However, simple revival is risky, as it must grapple with how nostalgia has transformed the past (Bohlman, 2007:60). Therefore, reverting to the style or musical design of past-era winners or

highly acclaimed songs and artists, like the characteristic styles of each era, does not guarantee success in winning the competition or attracting attention. In other words, moving within the prevalent styles of the time is not a foolproof path to winning the ESC. The winning song results from various factors, especially the convergence of the musical and non-musical dimensions outlined above (economic, cultural, political, etc.) at a certain point.

2. The European Popular Music Tradition (1964-1974)

Between 1964 and 1974, songs that won first place in the competition generally exhibited a swing-influenced structure that had been present since 1956. Furthermore, a consistent rhythmic pattern was introduced into the swing structure during this time. Large orchestras accompanying the soloists were not prominently featured on stage during performances. In this era, vocalists outside the orchestra began to accompany the soloists on stage. Those on stage during performances started to incorporate solo instruments into their acts. Male soloists continued to wear tuxedos or suits, while female soloists opted for more straightforward and elegant attire instead of the dresses they had previously worn. During their performances, soloists and vocalists would complement the songs with physical movements, such as dancing.

Previously, the recordings were done with a single camera during the competition, and this practice continued within this time frame. However, around the late 1960s, performances started to be broadcast in color.

Scott (2010) asserts that national styles tended to take a backseat in this competition, suggesting the emergence of a European style. However, what he means by a European style could very well be something that merely represents popular expressions that have circulated widely across Europe, crossing generations, including schlager, chanson, musica leggera, zabavna glabza, easy listening, music theater, and film music (Scott, 2010:187). For instance, the 1967 Eurovision winner, 'Puppet on a String,' drew inspiration not from British pop music of the time but rather from 'Zwei Kleine Italiener,' a style known in Germany and Continental Europe as schlager or chanson. Nevertheless, it is essential to remember that not all songs from this period, including the winning ones, necessarily participated in the competition based on the style reflected by this tradition. For instance, the 1968 Eurovision second-place song, 'Congratulations,' drew inspiration from Greek culture and closely resembled the Zorba dance. Dana's 'All Kinds of Everything,' which won in 1970 for Ireland, is a typical Waltz Boston and the only winning song in all competitions (Scott, 2010:188). It is worth noting that the French Waltz Boston

was a very popular ballroom dance in the 1930s, also known as cross-step waltz or, initially, the French ‘Valse Boston.’

Moreover, in cases where there is no expectation for how a country’s music should sound, blending musical elements can sometimes be perplexing. In 1972, a Greek singer named Vicky Leandros won for Luxembourg with a song sung in French. While the song began as a ballad with a heroic horn part, it also featured sprinkled mandolin tones reminiscent of Italian ‘*musica leggera*,’ making it syncretic (Scott, 2010:191).

From 1956 to 2016, it was commonly assumed that any of the 1438 songs performed in the ESC, including the winners, could achieve commercial success. Some are still considered international hits throughout Europe today (Vuletic, 2018:1). However, this only holds for some of the music industry, national or international, in every era. Nevertheless, it is essential to acknowledge that the relationship between commercialization and Eurovision has been particularly evident during specific periods, significantly influencing the competition’s songs. The following period best exemplifies this phenomenon.

3. Pop and Disco Period (1974-1980)

Commercialism represents a cultural logic driven by market interests or organizational mimicry. Commercialism’s cultural dynamics are not exclusive to popular music alone. However, this dynamic has dramatically contributed to the explosion of pop/rock since the 1950s. A notable example of commercialism is the acceptance of rock aesthetics by mainstream or middle-of-the-road popular music styles. This is significant because the incorporation of electric and electronic instrumentation into pop/rock and traditionally considered ‘easy listening’ styles and genres has blurred the distinction between pop/rock and other forms of popular music. The Eurovision Song Contest is an illustrative case: the songs performed in this competition increasingly embraced electrification in the 1980s, and by the 1990s, they largely leaned towards a pop/rock trend. This represents a sharp departure from the ‘popular song’ tradition that dominated the competition until the 1970s (Regev, 2002:256). The most significant moment in this distinct shift occurred in 1974, notably when ABBA won the competition and garnered international attention and commercial success.

The regular rhythmic structure that persisted since 1964 gave way to the disco era with ABBA’s victory in 1974. During these years, groups rather than soloists made their mark on the competition. One distinguishing feature of ABBA, an important group of the disco era in terms of visual and musical attributes, was its impact on fashion, as seen in the

colorful and comfortable outfits ABBA members wore during the competition. These outfits reflected the characteristics of that era and influenced the fashion choices of soloists and musicians participating in the competition in subsequent years. Performance recordings began to utilize various cameras in many ways from 1974 onwards. The large orchestra that previously occupied the stage took a back seat during these years, and groups started performing with their small orchestras. During performances, vocalists and performers began to showcase choreographed routines rather than singing their songs in front of a stationary microphone. Therefore, alongside many other aspects surrounding the Eurovision Song Contest, it is necessary to acknowledge that stage arrangement, including dance, costumes, and lighting, would impact determining the competition's outcome. A striking example of this is the performance of Bucks Fizz's 'Making Your Mind Up' in 1981, where female singers had their skirts removed by two male singers during the performance, revealing a mini-skirt made of two pieces of fabric, a move that likely impressed the jury, as noted by Eurovision historian Jan Feddersen (Scott, 2010:185). Bucks Fizz won the ESC for the United Kingdom in 1981 and carried the tonal ideal and dance of the preceding era into the next.

4. Light Pop Music (1980-1995)

The characteristics of the period spanning from 1974 to the early 1980s gave way to a phase referred to as "light pop music" in the 1980s. Similar to previous years, the stage featured a single soloist and vocalist. Large orchestras that had accompanied soloists since 1974 remained in the background during these years. While soloists or vocalists on stage used to employ live instruments, the playback method was gradually introduced around the late 1990s. This "half-playback" method involved playing all orchestral sections of the song to be performed in the final as a pre-recorded track while the performer sang live over this playback. Many soloists who participated in the competition during these years became popular figures after achieving success. For example, in 1987, Johnny Logan participated in the competition with "Hold Me Now" and Celine Dion with "Ne Partez Pas Sans Moi." Following their participation, they, like ABBA, became internationally recognized names. During this time, the soloists who performed on stage often favored attire reminiscent of the disco era. Male soloists and vocalists typically wore suits or trousers with colorful shirts, while female soloists and vocalists donned colorful yet elegant attire. The comfortable clothing preferred during the 1970s disco era was replaced by more stylish attire, although the bead details and accessories in the clothing were reminiscent of that era. Furthermore, during these years, accompanying vocalists often wore matching outfits. Performance recordings during this time were captured from various an-

gles using numerous cameras, and thanks to various technological advancements in stage lighting and setup, the performances on stage became more captivating. This light pop music trend that began in the 1980s continued until the late 1990s.

The mixing of styles and the overt use of reviving previous styles have been evident in Eurovision Song Contest (ESC) songs throughout history. However, a simple revival always carries risks. For instance, Germany's second-place song at Eurovision 1987, "Las die Sonne in dein Herz," had reggae influences. England's third-place song at Eurovision 1973 and Luxembourg's winning song in 1983, "Si la vie est un cadeau," had spiritual and liturgical qualities. It was considered necessary for many countries to choose a musical style that would be well-known in Europe and appeal to different generations. Norway's winning song in 1985, "La Det Swinge," exemplifies how a contemporary song with a nostalgic atmosphere was created, with references to early rock 'n' roll and swing similar to Bill Haley's "Rock Around the Clock" (1955). The song attempted to attract audiences from different generations but also sought approval from European countries due to the general appeal of this music style. However, "Let it Swing" was not swing or rock 'n' roll; in other parts of the song, it paid homage to ABBA's pop music (Scott, 2010:192).

It is worth noting that during this period, ESC began to feel like much more than just a song contest. It started to mobilize and polarize audiences in ways similar to what international sporting events had done before. However, it is also evident that the competition was not equally significant in all participating countries (Wolther, 2011:66). For instance, according to Scott (2010:192), the Eurovision Song Contest was looked down upon in the 1960s in the UK and was never considered a part of youth culture, but it can find favor in our postmodern era, where many things have changed.

5. World Music (1995-2005)

"World Music" emerged in the late 1980s as a marketing label for popular music originating from non-Western countries. However, it reached a certain level of maturity and audibility in an industrial sense around the mid-1990s. To understand the concept of World Music, one must consider the convergence of popular music traditions from non-Western regions with the conventional norms of Western popular music. The notion of World Music represents a reversal of the flow of global culture. This is because Western popular music, which has been accused of endangering musical diversity, is being reappropriated by interactions with many music cultures, including non-Western popular music, resulting in new

syntheses (Erol, 2009: 234). At the Eurovision Song Contest, there was a belief that songs should be balanced with qualities believed to have pan-European appeal in terms of ethnicity. Therefore, cultural, national, ethnic, and other elements have been blended with international popular music norms. However, this trend still needs to be evaluated regarding the mainstream influences affecting international popular music during the period (Scott, 2010:192).

Since the turn of this century, Europe's diversity policies have consistently turned towards the central stage of the Eurovision Song Contest. The most evident proof of this trend occurred between 2001 and 2005, when each winning contestant came from the "East" (Bohlman, 2007:49). However, it is possible to place the history of examples with ethnic/minority/cultural, etc., musical components and those that can be evaluated within the framework of World Music within the designated period. In other words, for instance, Turkey's third place in the 1997 ESC with Şebnem Paker's song 'Dinle' and Greece's appearance in 1997 with Marianna Zorba's 'Horapse' should be considered as examples woven with national/ethnic/cultural musical expressions. The shaper of this trend can be shown as Eimear Quinn's 'Voice,' which won first place on behalf of Ireland in 1996, and Norway's 'Nocturne,' the winner of the 1995 Eurovision. The song, performed by Secret Garden, is a distinctive Norwegian character folk-inspired hunter's ballad, which could be considered an excellent example in the World Music category. The song is probably not considered World Music by Norwegians but rather as Norwegian popular music with national colors. However, this applies to all similar examples with national, regional, ethnic, etc., musical influences with similar effects.

Nevertheless, in the first half of the 2000s, these examples categorically left their mark on Eurovision. Bohlman, who evaluates the success of these Eastern voices in Eurovision concerning ethnic, minority, national culture, and especially identity issues, expresses the songs of the countries that have won first place at the ESC in this context as follows:

"In 2001, Estonia secured victory with Tanil Padar & Dave Benton, accompanied by 2XL. The underlying identity issues in this context encompass Afro-Caribbean/African American/Baltic EU membership. In 2002, Latvia clinched the top prize with Marie N, with identity issues centering around the Russian minority in Latvia, Flamenco, and matters of social gender and sexuality. In 2003, Turkey's Sertab Erener emerged as the winner, raising identity issues associated with Turkey's EU membership, Islam, and the Iraq War. In 2004, Ukraine triumphed with Ruslana, where identity issues involved ethnic minorities in Ukraine (Huzuls)

and East-West EU policies. 2005 witnessed Greece's victory with Elena Paparizou, prompting discussions around Balkan and Southeastern European identity matters and Greek-Turkish relations. Finally, in 2007, Serbia secured first place with Marija Serifović, with identity issues rooted in the Balkans, Southeastern Europe, the Ottoman legacy, and matters related to sexuality." (Bohlman, 2007:50).

It is beneficial to reiterate that these examples do not solely revolve around the dominance of a specific ethnicity, minority, or national culture's musical elements. In other words, these songs allude to products crafted by blending "local" elements within a composition with conventional norms of international popular music (such as genre, style, instrumentation, sonic ideals, etc.). For instance, the song won by Estonia with Tanil Padar and Dave Benton prominently reflects pop and funk elements.

6. Pop Music, Rock, Metal, and World Music (2005-)

When evaluating the winners and performers at the Eurovision Song Contest (ESC) from 2005 onwards, it is challenging to attribute them to a single music genre or trend. However, considering the victories achieved, it becomes evident that the ESC champions showcase a range of songs influenced by popular music, transitioning from pop to rock and metal, occasionally including World Music elements. The victory of Finland in 2006, following a clustering of trends between 2001 and 2005, altered the course towards the East, although to a limited extent. It was only with Serbia's victory in 2007 that the Eurovision contest once again returned to the newer territories of Eastern Europe (Bohlman, 2007:49). It is worth noting Russia's victory in the ESC in 2008, represented by Dima Bilan. Furthermore, by the time the ESC reached its 2009 final, it had reached 45 countries in Europe and was watched by over 122 million viewers, according to the European Broadcasting Union (Wolther, 2012:165).

Due to the elimination of playback infrastructure in the 2000s, the requirement for live performance led singers and groups to focus on details beyond just performing their songs. Non-musical elements, evaluated as stage shows, significantly contributed to winners' success during these years. Additionally, live performances in this period exhibited differentiation based on dance, choreography, and mise-en-scène. Within this framework, the performances at the Eurovision Song Contest that began in the 2000s and continued to evolve serve as a context that demonstrates how symbiotic and intertextual relationships are constructed in popular music performance.

At the beginning of this century, Eurovision policy shifted towards Eastern Europe, shaping a trajectory towards the voices of European diversity. The new competitive structure characterizing recent Eurovision songs necessitates a reevaluation from multiple perspectives, offering new opportunities for evaluating minority voices and introducing novel possibilities for the voices we hear in global popular music practices (Bohlman, 2007:46). Since the ESC is a flexible tool of cultural diplomacy, it has allowed for the participation of artists who have gained symbolic significance for political reasons related to gender, citizenship, race, religion, and sexuality, in addition to ethnicity and nationality (Vuletic, 2018:7). This, of course, has had an impact on the competition songs and the overall atmosphere of the ESC.

After Norway in 2009 and Germany in 2010, the ESC victory turned towards the East again, with Azerbaijan winning in 2011. Following Sweden's victory in 2012 with an electronic dance music-inspired song, Denmark in 2013 referred to World Music by prominently featuring percussion instruments and tin whistles, drawing from Scottish and Northern European folk music elements in "Only Teardrops." With her bearded appearance, Conchita Wurst, representing Austria in 2014, brought attention to gender and transgender rights, contributing to a new dimension of discussions similar to those sparked by Dana, who competed for Israel in 1998 with the song "Trans." In 2015, Sweden took the top spot once more, and in 2016, Ukraine, an Eastern European country, emerged victorious. The victory by Jamala, a singer of Tatar descent, in 2016, with her song "1944," brought World Music colors back to the ESC stage. Salvador Sobral, the winner in 2017, secured victory for Portugal with a retro-style ballad that incorporated swing elements and effectively used the Portuguese language. In 2018, Netta's victory for Israel with the song "Toy," which drew on elements from Japanese popular culture, once again demonstrated that there is no single determinant for the selection and success of Eurovision songs. These songs are constructed and receive points based on various reference points and musical components in the national selection processes and the competition.

CONCLUSION

The term "Eurovision" was initially used in a network-sharing system established in the 1950s by institutions affiliated with the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) to facilitate the exchange of broadcasts among themselves. In 1955, intending to create an event that would unify post-war European broadcasting, the EBU laid the foundations for the Eurovision Song Contest based on this concept. The first Eurovision Song Contest took place in 1956 in the Swiss city of Lugano, and it has since be-

come one of Europe's and even the world's most significant music events.

Whether successful past songs' musical and lyrical characteristics have formulated a 'formula' for winning the competition has been frequently debated in the contest's history. However, it has been observed that adhering to the stylistic trends of a particular era or returning to the genre/style/tonal design of previous winners or highly acclaimed songs and artists does not guarantee success, as evidenced by the contest's history spanning more than 60 years. Success in the Eurovision Song Contest should be seen as the result of various factors, particularly the convergence of musical and non-musical dimensions (economic, cultural, political, etc.) at a certain point.

The Eurovision Song Contest, established with the primary goal of creating an opportunity based on cooperation in national public broadcasting, is a media event organized with the contributions of European Broadcasting Union member broadcasters. However, in addition to this, the contest also serves another purpose: to encourage the creation of new songs in the popular music field. From this perspective, Eurovision songs can be evaluated within the framework of musical genres and styles that overlap with specific periods. Therefore, throughout its historical development since 1956, the contest has developed specific song categories, which have become recognizable over the years. This study emphasizes that songs categorized at specific intervals in certain years, i.e., certain genres or styles, are constructed with elements borrowed from each other both historically and in contemporary times, and these elements are constantly modified and transformed.

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Chapter 2

TRANSFORMING MONOCHROME INTO COLOR IN RENAISSANCE PAINTING: GRISAILLE AND GLAZING¹

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¹ This study was developed with the assistance of OpenAI's language model to enhance clarity, coherence, and structure. The tool was used solely for editorial and linguistic refinements.

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During the Renaissance, painters revolutionized pictorial depth and realism through innovative techniques. Grisaille – the practice of painting in shades of gray – and glazing – layering translucent paint – both emerged as vital methods to achieve convincing three-dimensional forms and luminous color transitions. By focusing on grisaille underpainting and subsequently applying color glazes, Renaissance masters managed to create works with unprecedented depth and refinement.

This research aims to provide a brief historical and technical analysis of grisaille and glazing, exploring their origins. It highlights notable practitioners including Giotto, Leonardo da Vinci, Andrea del Sarto, and Hugo van der Goes, examining how their use of grisaille and glazing transformed the visual language of Renaissance painting. Subsequent section examines the origins and definition of grisaille, elucidating why it became a foundational practice in medieval and Renaissance art.

GRISAILLE

Grisaille is a monochromatic painting technique that relies primarily on varying shades of gray to establish form, depth, and tonal gradation. While its roots can be traced to medieval manuscript illuminations, stained-glass windows, and frescoes, it evolved into a significant artistic practice during the Renaissance, serving as both an underpainting and a standalone art form (Redhouse Dictionary of Art Terms and Concepts, 2011, s. 125). The term “grisaille” derives from the French word gris, meaning gray (Merriam Webster Dictionary, 2025), reflecting the primary hue employed in this technique. Historically, grisaille was used not only in panel and canvas painting but also in decorative arts, stained-glass windows, and manuscript illuminations. By the 14th century, it had become a prominent method for creating compositions that emphasize tonal values, structural clarity, and three-dimensional effects. Artists employed this method to predefine light and shadow relationships, offering a visual map that guided the subsequent application of colors. By focusing on tonal gradation first, it could be ensured that the structural integrity and realism of the final work without the distraction of managing multiple pigments simultaneously. This approach also reduces the likelihood of compositional errors, as the artist could refine structural elements in grayscale before committing to costly pigments (Barrett & Stulik, 1995). The concept of grisaille painting developed during a time when artists faced significant limitations in pigment availability. Old masters frequently used grisaille not only as an underpainting technique but also as a standalone method to optimize the use of scarce and costly pigments. By applying transparent color glazes over grisaille base, they achieved realism and luminosity in their paintings (Grisaille and Its Expressive Power,

2024). This method was particularly advantageous when combined with glazing techniques, as the structured tonal foundation of grisaille provided an ideal surface for the paintings.



Van Eyck, J. (c. 1434–1436). *Annunciation [Painting]*. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., USA.¹

During this period, artists typically produced their own pigments by grinding and mixing raw materials. High-quality pigments such as vermillion and lead white were expensive and difficult to obtain, prompting artists to adopt strategic layering techniques. They often used less costly pigments for initial layers and reserved premium materials for the uppermost glazes to enhance the painting's final appearance. Notably, both Leonardo da Vinci and Andrea del Sarto applied a thin layer of *imprimatura*² followed by an opaque grisaille underpainting. They carefully blended oil with pigments, particularly in facial areas such as the cheeks,

1 In Jan van Eyck's *Annunciation*, subdued, stone-like architectural details convey a monochromatic, relief-like appearance that echoes the principles of grisaille. The subdued tonal areas in the upper portion of the composition employ a monochrome palette that captures the illusion of sculpted forms, illustrating how a limited range of grays can heighten spatial and structural clarity. By contrast, the Archangel Gabriel and the Virgin Mary's drapery showcase multiple thin, translucent layers of oil paint—glazes that produce luminous color gradations and subtle transitions of light.

2 A thin, preliminary glaze applied to the surface of the painting (Merriam Webster Dictionary, 2025).

to create smooth transitions and a luminous glaze effect. This systematic layering approach not only maximized the use of valuable resources but also played a crucial role in achieving depth, realism, and lifelike vibrancy in their masterpieces (Borrero, 2020).



*Van der Goes, H. (c. 1475). Portinari Altarpiece (exterior panels) [Painting].
Uffizi Gallery, Florence, Italy.³*

In oil painting, the typical materials for grisaille were, a neutral ground (often a gesso-primed panel or canvas toned with a neutral imprimatura) and a limited palette of grays. Painters commonly mixed black pigment (such as carbon black or bone black) with white lead to obtain a range of grays. Some recipes recommended adding a bit of raw umber or other earth pigments to tweak the warmth or coolness of the gray. Artists used brushes to apply the paint in gradients, carefully blending to avoid abrupt transitions. Because oil paint dries slowly, painters doing oil grisaille could feather and model the wet paint to create soft transitions of tone. In fresco, which dries quickly, the artist had to work in sections and blend tones rapidly on the wet plaster. A skilled frescoist like Giotto or Andrea

³ On the exterior panels of the *Portinari Altarpiece*, Hugo van der Goes employs grisaille to evoke the illusion of carved stone and accentuate structural clarity. By confining the Annunciation scene to muted tones, van der Goes lends a sculptural aura to the outer wings, thus heightening both the optical illusion of relief and the dramatic contrast with the richly colored interior panels once the altarpiece is opened.

del Sarto achieved subtle mid-tones by scumbling⁴ a thin veil of pigment or by stippling, creating half-tones that would read as intermediate grays (Borrero, 2020).



Giotto di Bondone. (c. 1303–1305). *Virtues and Vices* [Fresco]. Scrovegni Chapel, Padua, Italy.⁵

Grisaille often served as an underpainting – a foundational layer over which colors were later glazed. Renaissance painters realized that starting with a monochromatic underlayer helped define the composition’s tonal structure and three-dimensional form early in the process. This practice is described by Cennino Cennini and later art treatises as working in dead color or painting in gray to set the values. Variants of grisaille underpainting included the verdaccio (green-toned monochrome) underpainting and brunaille (brown-toned monochrome). All these methods provided a value map that guided the application of color. The neutral underpaint had the advantage of not biasing the colors applied on top – it “will not distract if [some underpaint] is not completely covered,” and helps the artist judge tones correctly. When properly done, the underpainting and overpainting optical mix yields rich results without muddying the colors. Renaissance artists like Giotto and Jan van Eyck practiced such layered approaches, knowing that a well-executed monochrome layer could enhance the unity and depth of the final painting (Cennini, 1922, s. 122).

4 To reduce the brightness by applying a thin layer of opaque or semi-opaque paint with a brush that is nearly dry (Merriam Webster Dictionary, 2025)

5 In Giotto’s *Virtues and Vices* frescoes, figures are rendered in predominantly grisaille, creating a trompe-l’œil effect that mimics carved sculpture. By limiting his palette to shades of gray, Giotto accentuates the volumetric modeling and apparent solidity of each allegorical figure, thereby fusing the painted surface with the illusion of sculptural depth. This restrained tonality not only highlights the artist’s grasp of light and shadow but also stands in deliberate contrast to the more vividly colored biblical narratives elsewhere in the chapel.



Del Sarto, A. (1511–1526). Baptism of the People [Fresco]. Chiostro dello Scalzo, Florence, Italy.⁶

GLAZING

Glazing can be seen as a technique almost inseparable from the rise of oil painting in the Renaissance. Unlike tempera (which dries opaque and matte), oil paint can be thinned into transparent films that, when layered, produce depth and nuanced color modulations. A glaze is essentially a thin, translucent layer of oil-based paint, made by mixing pigment with a high proportion of oil or resin medium and little opaque filler. Renaissance painters typically used linseed or walnut oil as binders, sometimes bodied by cooking or sun-thickening to make a varnish-like medium. They would grind pigments known for transparency – like alizarin crimson (madder lake), verdigris, or ultramarine – into this medium to create colored glazes. Each glaze layer, painted over a fully dried underlayer, would subtly alter the color below while letting light pass through and reflect. The effect is cumulative: multiple layers of different hues can create

⁶ Andrea del Sarto's *Baptism of the People*, part of the fresco cycle at the Chiostro dello Scalzo in Florence, employs grisaille. By minimizing color, Del Sarto accentuates the sculptural volume and subtle play of light and shadow, thereby imbuing the figures with a heightened sense of depth and devotional gravity.

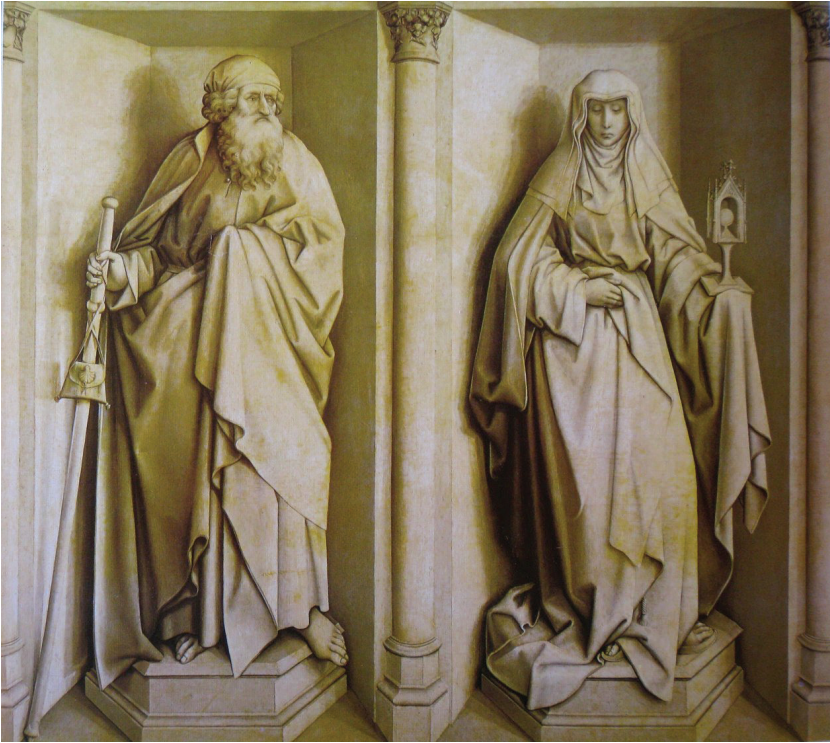
complex optical color blending, and layers of dark translucent paint can enrich shadows without making them look flat. In the final stages, layers of color and intricate details were applied over the grisaille underpainting using very thin and transparent glazes. Each successive application of oil paint enriched the artwork's depth, texture, and luminosity, offering artists precise control over the final image. This method required meticulous attention to detail, with each layer contributing to the piece's durability and timeless quality—a testament to the technical mastery and dedication of Renaissance painters (Elkins, 2021, s. 208).



*Van der Weyden, R. (c. 1446–1452). The Last Judgement (exterior panels)
[Painting]. Hôtel-Dieu de Beaune, Beaune, France.*

The application of thin, transparent glazes over a fully developed grisaille underpainting enabled the underlying grisaille structure to define forms with precision while simultaneously preserving the purity and clarity of the overlaid colors. Highlights were created by applying minimal local color, relying on the brightness of the white underpainting to maintain light intensity. However, rendering dark tones presented unique challenges, as transparent pigments required multiple layers to achieve

the desired depth and opacity. Artists had to carefully build these darker areas step by step, ensuring tonal balance and enhancing the overall sense of realism. Highlighted areas in grisaille painting appear thin and refined, with color applied in luminous glazes free of visible brush marks. The transparent nature of these glazes allows the grisaille underpainting to shine through, creating a radiant, light-filled effect. In contrast, shadows and dark tones are built up with thicker layers of paint, forming textured surfaces that create noticeable ridges under raking light where they intersect with delicate highlights. This contrast demonstrates the artist's skill in manipulating light and shadow to generate depth, volume, and realism in their work. The combined use of grisaille underpainting and glazing techniques enhances not only the illusion of three-dimensionality but also the painting's overall richness and complexity. The subtle interplay of light and shadow, coupled with nuanced variations in color, produces a dynamic and captivating visual experience. These methods, employed by artists from the early Renaissance through the Baroque period and beyond, allowed for the creation of visually coherent compositions where each layer contributed to the finished piece's unity and expressive power. The juxtaposition of dark and light values, along with the precise application of highlights and shadows, can be seen as fundamental to representational painting. Techniques such as grisaille underpainting and glazing enable artists to achieve depth and realism. Through the skillful manipulation of these elements, painters produce works that are visually striking and intricately detailed, captivating viewers with their lifelike representations and radiant color effects (Barrett & Stulik, 1995).



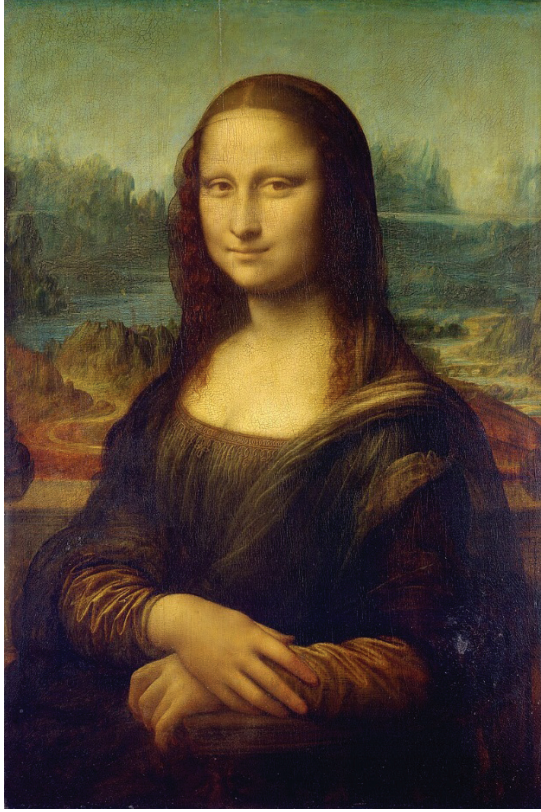
Campin, R. (c. 1425–1430). Saint James and Saint Clare [Painting]. Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, Barcelona, Spain.⁷

Scientific analysis of Leonardo da Vinci's paintings shows the astonishing finesse of his glazing: researchers found that some of Leonardo's sfumato⁸ glaze layers are only about 1–2 micrometers thick each. Leonardo stacked many such layers (up to perhaps 30–40 micrometers total in areas like the Mona Lisa's face) to achieve imperceptible transitions from light to dark. Each layer required drying time and extremely controlled application – often with the brush barely loaded and applied in tiny strokes or even with the fingertips to smooth (indeed, fingerprints have

⁷ Robert Campin's *Saint James and Saint Clare*, features a grisaille, lending the figures a sculptural, relief-like quality. Through measured tonal variation and careful manipulation of light and shadow, Campin heightens the volumetric presence of each saint, evoking the visual impression of carved stone rather than painted color. This strategic restriction of hue not only foregrounds form and texture but also underscores the Northern European predilection for meticulous detail and precision in early fifteenth-century panel painting.

⁸ Sfumato is a painting or drawing method characterized by delicate shading that creates seamless, nearly undetectable transitions between colors and tones, comes from the Italian term sfumare, meaning “to tone down” or “to fade away like smoke. Most famously associated with Leonardo da Vinci and his followers, it involves subtle shifts from light to dark without relying on outlines or sharp borders, thereby achieving an exceptionally lifelike representation of facial features and atmospheric conditions (Britannica, 2025).

been detected in the paint surface of some Leonardo works, indicating he blended glazes with his finger) (New light on Leonardo Da Vinci's faces, 2010).



Leonardo da Vinci. (c. 1503–1506). Mona Lisa [Painting]. Louvre Museum, Paris, France.

Key tools for glazing included fine sable brushes for smooth application and sometimes pouncers or blenders made of soft cloth. The painter had to ensure the glaze was uniform and without streaks. They also manipulated the medium: adding a touch of solvent (like turpentine) could make the glaze layer thinner and faster-drying; adding resin (like Venice turpentine or mastic varnish) could increase gloss and depth. A successful glaze creates a “stained glass” effect on the canvas: light penetrates the translucent paint and bounces off the opaque layer beneath, its color enriched on the return. The National Gallery of Art describes the advantage of the oil-and-glaze technique: it “allowed artists to build up layer after careful layer of translucent glazes, blending color and reflecting light to mimic appear-

ances in a way not possible with the flat, opaque colors of quick-drying tempera paints”. In practice, this meant a red robe in a van Eyck or Titian painting might begin as a solid dull red shape in opaque paint but achieve its final glowing crimson through multiple glazes of transparent red lake, each intensifying and deepening the hue. Shadows could be glazed with brownish or greenish transparent pigments to darken them without losing the sense of form or underlying details. Highlights were usually left in the opaque underlayer (or lightly touched with opaque paint later) because too many glaze layers would diminish their brightness (Netherlandish Painting in the 1400s).



Leonardo da Vinci. (c. 1481). Adoration of the Magi [Painting]. Uffizi Gallery, Florence, Italy.⁹

⁹ Leonardo da Vinci's *Adoration of the Magi* exhibits an unfinished, predominantly monochromatic underlayer that reveals the artist's meticulous planning for subsequent glazing. The visible brownish-gray groundwork emphasizes structure, light, and shadow before the addition of full color. In its partial state, the painting exposes Leonardo's layered approach to composition and form, wherein carefully applied tonal gradations, outlines, and contours prepare the foundation. This glimpse into the early stages of Leonardo's process underscores his commitment to methodical underpainting, paving the way for the subtle tonal shifts and refined glazing later observed in his more fully realized works.

CONCLUSION

Grisaille and glazing were indispensable in the Renaissance painter's repertoire. Historically, grisaille had its roots in medieval art forms, but in Renaissance, it can be said that it matured into both a practical underpainting technique and a visual style. Glazing, facilitated by the medium of oil paint, allowed Renaissance artists to attain a vibrancy and subtlety of color that matched their advances in capturing form. Artists from Giotto to Leonardo, from Andrea del Sarto in Italy to Hugo van der Goes in Flanders, each harnessed these techniques in unique ways. Through grisaille, painters honed the drawing and tonal structure underpinning their works; through glazing, they perfected the surface and coloristic unity. The result was a level of realism – a convincing depiction of three-dimensional forms in space, with lifelike textures and atmospheres – that defines Renaissance art. These techniques also reflect the Renaissance ethos: a fusion of science (observation of light, experimentation with materials) and art (creative illusion, narrative clarity). In the continuum of art history, the innovations of grisaille and glazing in the Renaissance laid the groundwork for the naturalistic techniques of Baroque and later periods. Yet, even within their own time, they stand as a testament to the Renaissance artists' relentless pursuit of *verità* (truth) in art – a truth achieved by painstaking technique and profound understanding of how form and color perceived. These innovations laid the groundwork for later movements, demonstrating the Renaissance commitment to harnessing both scientific observation and aesthetic imagination in the quest for verisimilitude.

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