



# It's Eurovision!

'I'll be encouraging everyone in the UK to raise a glass to Sir Terry Wogan,' says Graham Norton

There's likely to be a huge cheer at tonight's Eurovision Song Contest in Stockholm when we reach song number nine. Not because it will be the end of the show – sorry, it won't even be the halfway mark – but because that's when the host nation gets to perform.

It's something called *If I Were Sorry*, by a chap called Frans, since you ask, but up in the commentary box it will be a poignant moment for the BBC's Graham Norton. His legendary predecessor, Sir Terry Wogan, who died in January and who covered Eurovision on more than 30 occasions, was forever joking about the contest's ninth song being a key moment.

"It's famous," Graham says, "because Sir Terry always warned me not to have anything to drink until that point!" "So at song number nine this year I'll be encouraging everyone back in the UK to

**EUROVISION SONG CONTEST 2016, TONIGHT, 8PM, BBC1**

**WHEN I'M DOING THE COMMENTARY, I STILL HEAR SIR TERRY IN MY HEAD**

**GRAHAM NORTON**

raise a glass, to join me and cheer the memory and legacy of Sir Terry Wogan."

Graham knows only too well how much he owes to Wogan – his fellow Irishman's gloriously sardonic commentary having been the high point of so many Eurovision nights. At least as far as viewers in Britain were concerned.

"He'll always be associated with Eurovision," Graham acknowledges. "He took a role that wasn't really a role at all and he totally transformed it into the job it is today. When I'm doing the commentary I still hear Sir Terry in my head. I'm sure lots of other people do, too. It's a night that'll forever be associated with him."

For many years, of course, Eurovision was also associated with consistent UK success, thanks to the likes of Sandie Shaw, Lulu, Brotherhood Of Man, Bucks Fizz and Katrina And The Waves. But that seems

a lifetime ago now – almost literally for the pair representing us tonight, former *The Voice* contestants Joe Woolford and Jake Shakeshaft. When Katrina earned the UK its last Eurovision victory 19 years ago, with *Love Shine A Light*, Jake and Joe were two and one respectively.

"My earliest Eurovision memory," Jake tells us, "is actually Gina G's song, *Ooh Aah... Just A Little Bit*, from 1996. That does seem a bit strange, considering how young I was and obviously I wasn't watching the show itself, but it went on to be played at every school disco, so I grew up listening to it. It wasn't until some years later that I realised it had been the UK's 1996 entry."

As for Joe, the first time he sat and watched a full night of Eurovision madness was in 2007 – "the year that Scooch were on it. I remember every last detail of that performance," he laughs.



Could you beat Joe and Jake?

Barely out of their teens, how much is our UK Eurovision duo, Joe and Jake, really likely to know about the contest's history? You'd be surprised. At the end of our interview, we sprang these 10 Eurovision-themed questions on the pair – and they scored an impressive nine correct answers. In most cases, they even butted in before the end of the question. "We just know this stuff," said Joe. "We're not bad," cried Jake. So, can you beat them and get all 10? Answers at the foot of the page.

- 1 Which boy band sang for us in 2011?
- 2 Which legendary West End composer wrote Jade Ewen's entry in 2009?
- 3 The UK's last Eurovision victory was *Love Shine A Light* by Katrina And The Waves. But in which year did it win?
- 4 What was the name of our winning entry in 1976, performed by Brotherhood Of Man?
- 5 With what song did Bucks Fizz win for the UK in 1981?
- 6 In which UK town did ABBA win in 1974 with *Waterloo*?
- 7 Sandie Shaw gave the UK its very first Eurovision victory with *Puppet On A String* in 1967. But what did she wear on her feet?
- 8 Cardiff's James Fox, who sang for us in 2004, had competed the previous year on a BBC talent show. What was it called?
- 9 Samantha Womack, who sang for the UK (as Samantha Janus) in 1991, is now a character in BBC1's *EastEnders*. Who does she play?
- 10 How many times has the UK won the Eurovision Song Contest?

Scooch, in case you're fortunate enough to have wiped them from your memory, was a grim novelty act whose members dressed as airline cabin crew while performing an innuendo-laden song called *Flying The Flag (For You)*. It finished a richly deserved 22nd out of 24.

That kind of placing, mind you, is fairly typical for the UK at Eurovision these days, even when we do send a half-decent entry.

So have Joe and Jake any idea what they are letting themselves in for? After all, their song, *You're Not Alone*, despite being upbeat and instantly infectious, has been given odds as long as 50-1 by some bookies.

"To be honest," says Joe, "you just need to take all that with a pinch of salt."

"At the end of the day," adds Jake, "it's just an amazing competition. We really want to get a good result for the UK, because the public voted for us to represent them. We owe it to them to do our very best."

Meanwhile, Graham Norton has been busy finalising his own preparations for tonight's contest, familiarising himself with the performers and their performances and trying to get his head around yet another new voting system – one that this time involves keeping the public and the jury votes separate.

"I think I get it," he says, a little warily. "And I think it's a good idea, as you won't know who has won until the very end."

"The only thing is it'll make the show longer. And that's one thing Eurovision really doesn't need to be."

Mike Ward



Which year did Katrina And The Waves win?



Can you name Bucks Fizz's winning song?



What did Sandie Shaw wear on her feet?



In which UK town did Abba win with Waterloo?



Who does Samantha Womack play in EastEnders?

**ANSWERS**

1. Blue
2. Andrew Lloyd Webber
3. 1997
4. *Save Your Kisses For Me*
5. *Making Your Mind Up*
6. Brighton
7. Nothing
8. *Fame Academy*
9. Ronnie Mitchell (Joe and Jake thought it was Roxxy, who is Ronnie's sister)
10. Five

PHOTOGRAPHS: