

= Greece in the Eurovision Song Contest 2008 =

Greece entered the Eurovision Song Contest 2008 with the song " Secret Combination " , written by Konstantinos Pantzis with lyrics by Poseidonas Giannopoulos . The song was performed by Kalomoira , an American singer of Greek descent who had previously won a Greek talent show . In February 2008 , as part of the selection process organized by the Greek national broadcaster Ellinikí Radiofonía Tileórasi (ERT) , three competing artists ? Chrispa , Kostas Martakis , and Kalomoira ? performed their prospective entries live during a televised broadcast watched by nearly two million viewers . " Secret Combination " was selected to represent Greece at the Eurovision Song Contest by a combination of a public televote and panel of judges .

Following a promotional tour of many European cities , " Secret Combination " came first in the first of the Eurovision semi @-@ finals at Belgrade in May , and was seen as a possible competition winner . In Greece 's twenty @-@ ninth Eurovision appearance on May 24 , " Secret Combination " initially led the voting with full marks from six countries . However , the song ultimately finished third , behind Russia and Ukraine . Greece had previously won the competition in 2005 .

After the show , the song went on to chart in several European countries , reaching number one in Greece and Cyprus . Kalomoira , citing differences with her record label , briefly moved to the United States before returning to Greece in January 2009 ; she regards her Eurovision performance as a pivotal moment in her career , and stated in an interview that her desire was for the people of Greece to be proud of her performance , regardless of the competition 's outcome .

= = Background = =

Prior to the 2008 Contest , Greece had participated in the Eurovision Song Contest twenty @-@ eight times since its first entry in 1974 , winning it in 2005 with the song " My Number One " performed by Elena Paparizou , and being placed third twice : in 2001 with the song " Die for You " performed by the duo Antique and in 2004 with " Shake It " performed by Sakis Rouvas . Following the introduction of semi @-@ finals for the 2004 contest , Greece has had a top ten placing each year . Greece 's least successful result was in 1998 when it placed twentieth with the song " Mia Krifi Evesthisia " by Thalassa , receiving only twelve points in total , all from Cyprus .

The Greek national broadcaster , Ellinikí Radiofonía Tileórasi (ERT) broadcasts the event in Greece each year and organizes the selection process for its entry . From 2004 to 2006 , ERT had selected high @-@ profile artists internally and set up national finals to choose the song , while in 2007 it held a televised national final to choose both the song and performer . For the 2008 Eurovision Song Contest , ERT decided again to hold a televised national final after failing to secure a big name artist : As every other year since his first participation in the 2004 contest , ERT asked Sakis Rouvas to represent Greece but he did not accept . ERT officials had also approached Elli Kokkinou to represent Greece , but she declined the offer as she was pregnant .

= = Before Eurovision = =

= = = Selection procedure = = =

On December 17 , 2007 , ERT officially announced the three participants for the Greek national final : Kalomoira , Kostas Martakis , and Chrispa ; all of them young performers and mainly new to the Greek music scene . Greek singers Martakis and Chrispa , though young and fairly new , had album releases at the time of the contest . Kostas Martakis had emerged from the reality talent show Dream Show in 2006 , releasing the album Anatropi (Reversal) in 2007 which reached # 9 in the Greek chart . Chrispa started her musical career in 2003 and had released four studio albums . Kalomoira , born in the United States but of Greek descent , had gained popularity in Greece after winning the Greek talent show Fame Story in 2004 . Before her Eurovision appearance , she had released three studio albums , the first of which was certified gold .

The participants ' songs had to be submitted to ERT by January 25 , 2008 in order to be accepted . On February 3 , 2008 , Kalomoira and Kostas Martakis ' songs for the national final were leaked via the internet , three days before ERT set release date before a press conference on February 6 , 2008 . At the February 6 press conference at the Athens Hilton Hotel , ERT officially revealed the songs to the media and public as well as more details about the national final . The national final would take place on February 27 , 2008 at the Athinon Arena with the winner being chosen via 60 % Televoting / SMS Messaging and 40 % internal jury .

= = = = The songs = = = =

= = = = " A Chance to Love " = = = =

Chrispa 's record label , Minos EMI , chose a song composed by Marios Psimopoulos with lyrics by Antonis Papas . Antonis Papas had previously written lyrics for Elina Konstantopoulou 's " Pia Prosephi " in 1995 and Antique 's Die for You in 2001 which both represented Greece . The provisional title of the song was " SOS for Love " , but it was later changed to " A Chance to Love " . The song has an ethnic style , described as a " Dance Oriental " , with lyrics in both Greek and English .

= = = = " Always and Forever " = = = =

Kostas Martakis and his record label , Sony BMG Greece , chose " Always and Forever " , a song by Dimitris Kontopoulos with lyrics by Vicky Gerotherodou . Kontopoulos is known for his dance @-@ pop songs and had previously submitted songs to past national finals including " Welcome To The Party " for Anna Vissi in 2006 . The song was originally presented at the ERT press conference in its original form as a pop song with a rock feel to it , but for the national final he sang a dance version of it .

= = = = " Secret Combination " = = = =

Kalomoira , and her record company Heaven Music , had several submissions , from which they chose " Secret Combination " , an upbeat R & B song composed by Konstantinos Pantzis with lyrics by Poseidonas Giannopoulos . Though the song had an American production style , it did contain some Greek musical elements , such as the use of a darbuka (Greek hand drum) with a western rhythm . Giannopoulos also wrote lyrics for " Comme Ci , Comme Ça " (Cyprus 's Eurovision song in 2007) , while Pantzis has written over 300 songs , some of which have been featured on over 17 platinum and 25 gold certified albums .

= = = = Result = = = =

The national final took place on February 27 , 2008 at 10PM CET at the Athinon Arena on a stage that was slightly bigger than the previous year 's . Kalomoira , Kostas Martakis , and Chrispa each sang their chosen song live ; the winner was selected via 60 % Televoting / SMS Messaging and 40 % internal jury . The president of the jury , which included Christos Dantis , ERT executive Johnny Kalimeris , Mr. Gontakas and Mr. Andrikakis (representatives from ERT 's TV and Radio divisions) , was singer Mimis Plessas . The show was hosted by the two Maggira sisters , known also as actresses and comedy singers in Greece . As in the previous year 's show , additional entertainment by participants from other countries in the Eurovision Song Contest was featured . The international participants included Rebeka Dremelj from Slovenia , Nico & Vlad Miri?? from Romania , Elnur Hüseynov and Samir Javadzadeh from Azerbaijan , and Evdokia Kadi from Cyprus . Sarbel , Greece 's 2007 entrant , also performed his entry " Yassou Maria " as well as the previously unheard single " Eho Trelathi " . The national final was streamed live on New Hellenic Television (NET) , ERT World

, and the official websites of ERT and the Eurovision Song Contest . The whole show had a Las Vegas show girl theme .

Despite a few small faults in the program , the production ran more smoothly than in 2007 . It lasted about two and a half hours and ERT 's broadcast topped the programs aired on February 27 by 45 @. @ 9 % according to AGB Hellas ; it is estimated that 1 @. @ 9 million viewers watched the show . Kalomoira was the overall winner , coming first in the televoting , and second in the jury vote .

= = = Promotion = = =

To promote " Secret Combination " , a music video was officially released on March 14 , 2008 . It was shown exclusively on NET , but was available internationally through ERT World . The director was Kostas Kapetanidis , who had also directed the video of Helena Paparizou 's 2005 winning entry .

Before her appearance at the contest , Kalomoira went on a promotional tour , singing " Secret Combination " in several Eurovision countries . The first stop was Azerbaijan on March 22 , 2008 , where she made guest appearances on many major television and radio programs ; staying until March 26 . On March 27 , Kalomoira arrived in Romania for a three @-@ day stay , where she again appeared on television and gave interviews . After a brief break , she traveled to Turkey , arriving on April 10 , where she posed for pictures , gave interviews to the local media , and went shopping through the Grand Bazaar along with Turkish media . She also met with Patriarch Bartholomew I of Constantinople , who wished her success and presented her with a medallion . By April 17 , Kalomoira had reached Bosnia and Herzegovina ; in addition to hosting a show on PINK TV , she appeared on television shows , gave many interviews , and met with Elvir Lakovi? Laka and his sister Mirella , Bosnia and Herzegovina 's entrants in the contest . Kalomoira then went to Belgrade , Serbia , where she was a guest star on a morning television show , performed " Secret Combination " live on Radio Television of Serbia , and had an interview with FOX TV . She spent one day in Belgrade and returned to Greece to conclude her tour .

= = At Eurovision = =

Although Greece had been granted a spot in the 2008 final because of its seventh place finish at the Eurovision Song Contest 2007 , it had to compete in a semi @-@ final for the first time since 2004 because of new rules put into effect by the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) . In previous years , countries that received a top 10 placing were automatically granted a spot in the next year 's final without having to compete in a semi @-@ final , but for 2008 , the EBU changed the automatic qualification regulations so that all countries except the " Big 4 " (France , Germany , Spain , and the United Kingdom) and host country , would have to pass through one of two semi @-@ finals . The EBU split up countries with a friendly voting history into separate semi @-@ finals , to give a better chance for other countries to win . Greece and Cyprus had often been accused of favoring each other , with each awarding the other the maximum number of points (twelve) at the previous contest . On January 28 , 2008 , the EBU held a special draw which determined that Greece would be in Semi @-@ final 1 held on May 20 , 2008 in Belgrade , Serbia ; Cyprus was subsequently placed in the second semi @-@ final .

The Maggira Sisters were the commentators for both the semi @-@ final and final while Alexis Kostalas was the Greek jury spokesperson .

= = = Semi @-@ final = = =

Kalomoira presented " Secret Combination " nineteenth (last) in the first semi @-@ final on May 20 , 2008 . In March 2008 , Konstantinos Pantzis , the composer , announced that there would be a few tweaks to the song for its appearance at Eurovision . The changes included a new beat to the introduction and a few changes to the chorus . ERT announced that this new version would be presented to the EBU as the official version of the song .

The stage show included new choreography , as well as Victoria Halkiti and Nektarios Georgiadis as backing vocalists . Kalomoira started off the show sitting on a diamond sequenced bench held up by her dancers . She then got down and started a dance routine with complex choreography . There was also a large purple book on stage that opened up as a heart shaped pop @-@ up book that Kalomoira stepped out of when she sang the lyrics " an open book " . In time with the book opening , Kalomoira removed her pink dress revealing a pink and silver mini @-@ dress underneath . Toward the middle of the song during the break , the cameras cut to Kalomoira who was doing a provocative dance ; shaking her whole body . At the end of the song , she was slightly lifted up by her dancers . The background image on stage was a skyline of buildings that moved with glowing lights . She wore clothes exclusively by JLO and managed to finish in first place out of nineteen countries , receiving 156 points .

= = = Final = = =

Kalomoira performed a repeat of her semi @-@ final performance at the Eurovision Final on May 24 , 2008 . She was the twenty @-@ first act out of twenty @-@ five countries , after Azerbaijan and before Spain . Having led initially in the voting , Greece finished in third place behind Russia and Ukraine , receiving 218 points . Greece received 12 points , the maximum number of points a country can give to another country , from six countries . The broadcast received 93 % ratings and was watched by over six million people in Greece .

= = After Eurovision = =

" Secret Combination " became a successful hit throughout Europe , peaking at number one in Greece and Cyprus and charting in a number of other countries .

During a press conference in Athens after the final , Kalomoira said that " it was an honor ... to represent Greece in this contest " and thanked Greece because they supported her from the first moment she said she would compete . However , she reported later that she had returned to the United States because she felt mistreated by her record label and was not paid for several arrangements she had made with Heaven during her stay in Belgrade and had to pay for many things herself . In an interview with Downtown Magazine , Kalomoira 's father stated that she was treated " like dirt " by Heaven Music and that she may or may not continue her singing career , but that it was up to her . In response , Makis Pounetzis , the new CEO of Heaven Music , claimed that he was " surprised " by Kalomoira 's remarks and couldn 't offer an explanation , though he did say that her contract would be honored should she choose to go back and sing again . Kalomoira returned to Greece in January 2009 , and in an interview with Eleni Menegaki , she said that her Eurovision participation was the biggest thing that she has done in her career , and that it was also one of the most personal events in her life that will always be remembered with good memories . When asked if she expected to do so well in the competition , she stated that she had always wanted to do well , but above all she wanted the Greek people to be proud of the performance regardless of how well it did . In the same interview , host Eleni Menegaki stated that many , including herself , viewed Eurovision as a defining point in Kalomoira 's career to date : her mature professional performance distanced her from the innocent little girl image associated with her participation in Fame Story .

= = = Points Awarded by Greece = = =