

= Ireland in the Eurovision Song Contest 2007 =

Ireland participated at the Eurovision Song Contest 2007 after Radio Telefís Éireann ( RTÉ ) , the Irish broadcaster , internally selected the Irish traditional group Dervish to represent them at the 2007 contest , held in Helsinki , Finland .

Although RTÉ internally selected the artist to represent Ireland at the contest , the song that Dervish sung was selected by the Irish public during The Late Late Show on 16 February 2007 . The song selected was " They Can 't Stop the Spring " , which was composed by John Waters and Tommy Moran . Having automatically qualified to the final after coming in 10th in 2006 , Dervish only managed to receive five points , all from Albania , placing last of 24 countries . This was the first time Ireland came last in the contest , after winning a total of seven times in its history , more than any other country in the contest .

After the contest , reactions in Ireland were unsettled , with talks of " vote hijacking " and calls for a new selection for Eurovision . Criticism was also given to Dervish 's performance at the contest .

= = Background = =

Ireland first entered the Eurovision Song Contest in 1965 , making their 41st participation in 2007 . Ireland has won the contest seven times in total and no other country has equaled or beaten that record . The country 's first win came in their sixth entry , in 1970 , when then 18 @-@ year @-@ old Dana won with " All Kinds of Everything " . Ireland holds the record for being the only country to win the country three times in a row ( in 1992 , 1993 and 1994 ) . Ireland also has the only three @-@ time winner ( Johnny Logan , who won in 1980 as a singer , 1987 as a singer @-@ songwriter , and again in 1992 as a songwriter ) . In recent years , however , Ireland 's impressive record at Eurovision has taken a turn , with only two Top 10 results during the 2000s , and Ireland 's first last place finish in 2007 .

The Irish national broadcaster , Radio Telefís Éireann ( RTÉ ) broadcasts the event each year and organizes the selection process for the entry . Many methods of selection have been used , with the most common method used by RTÉ being a national final featuring a multi @-@ artist , multi @-@ song selection in which regional juries , and later the public , chooses the winner . In recent years the artist has sometimes been selected internally by RTÉ , with the song being chosen by the public .

= = National final = =

= = = The artist = = =

RTÉ decided to continue internally selecting the singer that would represent them at the contest after coming in 10th in the Eurovision Song Contest 2006 in Athens with Brian Kennedy and " Every Song Is a Cry for Love " . Many names were rumoured to be in contention to represent Ireland in Helsinki , with the front @-@ runner being three @-@ time winner , Johnny Logan , after he said in an interview on Tubridy Tonight that he would represent Ireland in the contest once again if " everything was right , and that everyone was in agreement " , including the song he would sing . However , a deal between RTÉ and Logan was not agreed upon and Logan was not selected to represent Ireland at the contest .

Apart from Logan , many other artists were popular with the book @-@ makers , including You 're A Star winner Lucia Evans , host of the Eurovision Song Contest 1997 Ronan Keating , as well as winner of the 1992 contest Linda Martin . However , RTÉ announced in November 2006 that they had selected Irish traditional group Dervish to sing for Ireland at the contest . Dervish consists of Cathy Jordan ( vocals and bodhrán ) , Bob The 2nd , ( reck the head ) Brian McDonagh ( mandola ) , Tom Morrow ( fiddle ) , Michael Homes ( bouzouki ) , Shane Mitchell ( accordion ) and Liam Kelly ( flute and whistle ) .

== The songs ==

Songwriters were told that they had until 8 January to submit their songs to RTÉ . The songs submitted needed to be suitable to both Dervish and the contest , with all eligible songs having to pass through a judging panel to reduce the number of songs to four that would be performed at the national final . The judging panel included Shay Healy , the songwriter of " What 's Another Year " which was the winning song for Ireland in 1980 . More than 200 songs were submitted to the judging panel at RTÉ , with only 4 of them selected to compete at the national final .

The four selected songs were " The Thought of You " , a traditional Irish ballad which uses Irish traditional instruments throughout the piece , such as a whistle , a fiddle and a bouzouki ; the song was composed by Matti Kallio . The second song " Walk With Me " was composed by Stigg Lindell , and is also a ballad , however more upbeat than " The Thought of You " . The third was " They Can 't Stop The Spring " , composed by John Waters and Tommy Moran , which features a long whistle introduction , and prolific use of the bouzouki and fiddle , as well as use of the bodhrán . It is a ballad , slow at the beginning which speeds up towards the end . The fourth song , " Until We Meet Again " , was composed by Malachi Cush , Pam Sheyne , Martin Sutton and Don Mescall and is an up @-@ tempo song , which still includes Irish traditional themes , especially in the use of instruments like the bouzouki , guitar and fiddle .

== The final ==

The national final was held on 16 February 2007 on the popular chat @-@ show The Late Late Show , hosted by Pat Kenny ( who also hosted the Eurovision Song Contest 1988 ) . The interval act included Dana singing " All Kinds of Everything " ( the winner of the Eurovision Song Contest 1970 ) , Eimear Quinn singing " The Voice " ( winner of the Eurovision Song Contest 1996 ) and the Brotherhood of Man singing " Save Your Kisses for Me " ( winner of the Eurovision Song Contest 1976 ) . Also singing was Dmitry Koldun , the Belarusian entry to the 2007 contest , with his song " Work Your Magic " .

The first song to be performed was " The Thought of You " which involved the group playing around Jordan who sang at a microphone stand . The whistle and accordion player were sitting down . The second song " Walk With Me " , involved more movement by the group than the first song , with Jordan at the microphone stand while the whistle and accordion player were again sitting down . The third song was " Until We Meet Again " , and featured lots of movement by the group with arm movements by Jordan . The fiddle and accordion players were seen sitting down . The final song was " They Can 't Stop The Spring " , which began slowly with a long tin whistle introduction , before speeding up towards the chorus . The song also featured Jordan playing the bodhrán behind the microphone .

The winner of the contest was " They Can 't Stop the Spring " , beating the favourite " Until We Meet Again " to second place . Dervish went on to sing the song in Helsinki .

== Eurovision ==

After coming in 10th in the 2006 contest , Ireland automatically qualified to the final of the 2007 contest in Helsinki . Commentary on RTÉ One for both the final and semi @-@ final , which was broadcast in Ireland even though it was not part of it , was made by Marty Whelan , while Larry Gogan provided commentary on RTÉ Radio 1 . Before the contest , " They Can 't Stop the Spring " received a change in its performance , with the instrumental break in the song being increased in length . The odds of Ireland 's win at the contest varied between bookmakers , ranging from 25 ? 1 up to 51 ? 1 , however , the writer of the song John Waters believed that Dervish could win the contest .

Three @-@ time winner Johnny Logan criticised the contest when interviewed in the Danish newspaper Ekstra Bladet . He disapproved of the its lack of orchestra , the televoting system as well

as the allowance of free language in the contest , calling it a " karaoke contest " .

= = = Final = = =

Dervish performed " They Can 't Stop the Spring " fourth on the night of the final , held on 12 May 2007 . Jordan was dressed in a red and white dress , while the men were dressed in plain black shirts , with jeans . The song was performed quicker than in the national final , but did not lose its Irish traditional quality . The performance by Dervish involved lots of movement , as well as some dancing by the group . The group was accompanied by a background showing large flowers in bloom . The song , however , was not well received by the European audience and Dervish only managed to collect 5 points , all from Albania , placing last for the first time in Ireland 's history at the contest .

= = = Points awarded to Ireland = = =

= = = Points awarded by Ireland = = =

= = After Eurovision = =

Despite coming in last at Eurovision , Dervish announced that they would continue to play their music , saying that they " play [ it ] for music 's sake " and that " it 's about heart and soul , it 's not about votes " . It was also announced that , despite Ireland 's last place , RTÉ received an increase of viewership over the 2006 numbers ; RTÉ received 780 @, @ 000 viewers for the final , marginally higher than in 2006 . Despite this , reactions in Ireland were unsettled , with talks of " vote hijacking " after Ireland gave 12 points to Lithuania , getting little elsewhere .

A TV special was aired on RTÉ on Dervish , however this faced criticism from Irish local media on RTÉ 's choice of Dervish as well as the production of the forthcoming show after Dervish 's last place in the contest , with claims that their performance on the night of the contest was " disastrous " . Demands were also made that RTÉ change their selection method for Eurovision .

Rumours spread that RTÉ would withdraw from the 2008 contest , however RTÉ announced changes to the selection of the Irish entry for the 2008 contest , abandoning The Late Late Show format and reverting to the " National Song Contest " format used in Ireland prior to 2001 .