

= Ireland in the Eurovision Song Contest 2008 =

Ireland participated in the Eurovision Song Contest 2008 after Radio Telefís Éireann (RTÉ) held a national final , Eurosong 2008 , to select the Irish entry for the contest , held in Belgrade , Serbia . For 2008 , RTÉ reverted to their multi @-@ song multi @-@ singer format that had previously been used to select the Irish entry at Eurovision . Six artists competed in the final , with the Irish public choosing the winner through televoting and SMS . Residents of Northern Ireland could also take part in the voting through televoting and SMS . The winner was Dustin the Turkey with the song " Irlande Douze Pointe " . At Eurovision , he placed 15th in the semi @-@ final , failing to qualify for the final of the contest .

= = Background = =

Ireland first entered the Eurovision Song Contest in 1965 and has since entered a total of 41 entries up to 2007 with its 42nd contribution in 2008 .

Ireland has won the contest seven times in total , with no other country beating or equalling that record . The country 's first win came in their sixth entry , in 1970 , with then @-@ 18 @-@ year @-@ old Dana winning 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) , as well as having the only three @-@ times 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 selection its 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 , choosing the winner . In recent years the artist has sometimes been selected internally by RTÉ , with the song being chosen by the public , and previously a talent show format , You 're a Star , was used between the years 2003 and 2005 .

= = Eurosong 2008 = =

= = = Format = = =

After placing last in the Eurovision Song Contest 2007 , RTÉ announced that they would review their position in the contest with Tara O ' Brien of RTÉ saying that they would " definitely be having a sit @-@ down and looking at our geographical position and going through the whole process . " RTÉ reached a consensus and agreed to change the selection process and revert to the " National Song Contest " format that was used in Ireland before 2001 , resulting in seven Irish winners .

Eurosong 2008 was the name of the Irish national final that replaced 2007 's selection process for 2008 . An open call for songs by RTÉ was conducted , with the deadline for submissions set at 23 January 2008 . A judging panel , including Irish Eurovision winner Linda Martin , reduced the shortlist of entries from the 150 songs submitted to RTÉ to just six entries . Of the 150 songs submitted , many were by previous Irish national final songwriters , including Karl Broderick (Ireland 2005 songwriter) , Niall Mooney (You 're A Star 2004 songwriter) and Marc Roberts (Ireland 1997) . Similar to the " National Song Contest " that Ireland adopted until 2001 , the contest not only took song quality into account , but also visual presentation and proposed performance details . Three judges were present at the contest , giving their views on the songs , as well as their personal opinions . They were Louis Walsh , Irish music manager and X Factor judge , Dana Rosemary Scallan , Irish Eurovision winner of 1970 , and Marija Perić , winner of the Eurovision Song Contest 2007 for Serbia .

The six songs that competed in the contest were revealed on 3 February , with the artists featuring children 's television presenter / puppet Dustin the Turkey and former Irish Eurovision entrant Marc Roberts .

== = The songs == =

== = = Donal Skehan == = =

Donal Skehan entered a song composed by Joel Humlen , Oscar Gorres and Charlie Mason , called " Double Cross My Heart " . Mason had previously written a song for pop band Monroe for the German national final in 2007 . The song is a pop song , described by Skehan as " Eurovision by numbers " . It was performed by Skehan with two male and two female back @-@ up dancers , as well as a male back @-@ up singer , with Skehan wearing a silver waistcoat and trousers . The performance started with Skehan singing in a spotlight , with the dancers swaying in the background , before coming out and dancing around him .

== = = Dustin the Turkey == = =

Rumours circulated around Ireland after a news @-@ piece on the RTÉ website claimed that famous Irish children 's @-@ TV presenter Dustin the Turkey had entered a song for Eurosong , then called " Twelve points , douze points " . When the list of songs that was issued by RTÉ , it did in fact include Dustin , who was then tipped as the favourite to win the contest . Dustin 's entry , " Irelande Douze Pointe " , is a mock entry , making fun of the Eurovision Song Contest , with lyrics such as " Drag acts and bad acts and Terry Wogan 's wig " . The title of the song also mocks the contest , mimicking the famous phrase from Eurovision " douze points " . The song was composed by Darren Smith , Simon Fine and Dustin (aka Johnny Morrison) . Dustin was present on stage in a trolley , with Kitty B (Kathleen Burke) and Ann Harrington singing backing vocals , along with three male back @-@ up dancers . The performance began with Dustin being wheeled out from the side of the stage by a cloaked figure , with the trolley also being cloaked . The cloaks were removed and the performance included a lot of dancing by the back @-@ up dancers , bathed in green , white and orange , the colours of the Republic of Ireland flag .

== = = Maja == = =

Slovenian singer Maja Slatin?ek had entered her song , " Time to Rise " , composed by herself and Ziga Pirnat , into not only the Irish final , but also the Slovenian and Romanian finals as well . Slovenian broadcaster Radiotelevizija Slovenija (RTV SLO) did not choose Slatin?ek 's song to compete in EMA 2008 , the Slovenian final , but RTÉ and the Romanian broadcaster Televiziunea Român? (TVR) allowed her to compete in their respective national finals . Slatin?ek withdrew from the Romanian final , with her and Pirnat saying that the chance of competing in Ireland was higher than that of Romania , with the Romanian national final , Selec?ia Na?ional? 2008 , containing 24 songs over two semi @-@ finals . The " possibility of being among the Irish finalists , one of the biggest powers in Eurovision , was an offer we could not turn down , " said Slatin?ek . Slatin?ek 's performance involved her singing for the first half of the song with four male dancers coming in later on , and performing artistic moves around her . The end of the performance involved her being raised on a box , with her plain white dress being lowered over it .

== = = Leona Daly == = =

Leona Daly entered the contest with " Not Crazy After All " , composed by herself and Steve Booker . The song was performed by Daly in a dark coat , that was taken off during the performance to reveal a red dress . She was accompanied on stage by a band , consisting of a guitarist ,

keyboardist and drummer in shirts and ties , as well as a female backing singer wearing a black dress .

= = = = Liam Geddes = = = =

Liam Geddes submitted " Sometimes " to the judging panel at RTÉ , written by Susan Hewitt . The song was performed by Geddes on the night of the contest in a red shirt and suit , as well as with a female pianist , a violinist and cellist , as well as a male and a female backing singer . The song began with Geddes sitting on a stool , leaning against the piano , before he got up and walked around the stage .

= = = = Marc Roberts = = = =

Marc Roberts sang " Chances " at Eurosong 2008 , composed by himself . Roberts performed the Irish entry to the Eurovision Song Contest 1997 in Dublin , finishing in second place . His performance at Eurosong involved him singing from a microphone stand , with two male and two female singers singing back @-@ up , with the female singers swaying to the song . Roberts wore a shirt and tie , with the backing singers wearing black .

= = = The final = = =

Eurosong 2008 was held at the University Concert Hall in Limerick , on 23 February 2008 and hosted by Ray D 'Arcy . The University Concert Hall also hosted the Eurosong 1994 national heat , where " Rock ' n ' Roll Kids " was selected to represent Ireland , securing Ireland 's sixth win .

The interval act of the contest was of jury member Marija ?erifovi? singing " Molitva " , the song with which she won the Eurovision Song Contest 2007 . After Dustin the Turkey was announced as the winner , he closed the show singing his song : " Irlande Douze Pointe " .

Dustin won Eurosong 2008 , and went on to represent Ireland in the first semi @-@ final of the Eurovision Song Contest 2008 on 20 May 2008 . Only the winner of the final was announced ; it is unknown where the other five songs placed .

= = At Eurovision = =

Since Ireland came last in the Eurovision Song Contest 2007 , Dustin was obliged to perform his song in one of the two semi @-@ finals of the 2008 contest . The EBU split up countries with a friendly voting history into the two different semi @-@ finals , to give a better chance to other countries to win . On 28 January 2008 , the EBU held a special draw which determined that Ireland would be in the first semi @-@ final , held on 20 May 2008 .

Dana , one of the judges at Eurosong , spoke out against Dustin 's entry , calling it a " mockery of the competition " and calling for Dustin and RTÉ to withdraw from the contest . The entry was also said to have been in breach of the rules of the contest , due to the mocking nature that could " bring the Shows or the ESC as such into disrepute " , however , the song was not disqualified . Due to the controversial nature of his entry , Dustin received widespread publicity over his entry before and after his victory . He was mentioned in Spanish media before winning Eurosong and after his victory , Dustin appeared on This Morning , a popular British morning programme on ITV , during Saint Patrick 's Day celebrations .

For the contest , the commentator for the semi @-@ finals and final on RTÉ One and Two was Marty Whelan , while the commentator for RTÉ Radio 1 was Larry Gogan .

= = = Semi @-@ final = = =

Dustin , along with his back @-@ up dancers Kitty B and Ann Harrington , sang at the first semi @-@ final on 20 May 2008 , performing 11th on the night . The EBU had forced a change of lyrics of

the Eurovision performance of the song after the Greek broadcaster Ellinikí Radiofonía Tileórasi (ERT) complained over the use of " Macedonia " in the lyrics of the song in light of the Macedonia naming dispute . The EBU reference group forced the Irish delegation to either change the lyrics of the song to " FYR Macedonia " or similar , or remove Macedonia from the lyrics altogether .

The stage show at the semi @-@ final included Dustin in his trolley , wearing a silver suit . The trolley was dressed in green , white and gold , with the girls wearing gold dresses , green gloves and head @-@ dresses in green , white and gold . Two of the male backing dancers wore large green , white and gold wings and danced around the stage , while the third back @-@ up dancer wore a gold jump suit . The stage involved rippling effects of black and white , as well as waves of green , white and orange through the LCD screens on the stage . Despite being one of the favourites to win the contest outright , Dustin only managed to receive 22 points , placing 15th of the 19 countries competing and failing to reach the final .

= = = Points Awarded by Ireland = = =

= = After Eurovision = =

After his Eurovision experience , Dustin returned to Ireland where he launched a campaign against the Lisbon Treaty in the European Union , calling for a ' No ' vote by the Irish on the referendum for the amendment of the Irish constitution to allow the adoption of the treaty . Dustin 's campaign included the slogan " They didn 't vote for us . Get them back . Vote ' No ' to Lisbon " , referring to his failure at Eurovision .

RTÉ also announced that it was seeking a new television format for the turkey , targeting a more mature audience , but the show would not be in a chat @-@ show format . Pilots were currently in production ; however , RTÉ was not expected to air the show until 2009 .