

= Melodifestivalen =

Melodifestivalen (/ m?l?di?st?v?l?n / ; literally " The Melody Festival ") is an annual music competition organised by Swedish public broadcasters Sveriges Television (SVT) and Sveriges Radio (SR) . It determines the country 's representative for the Eurovision Song Contest , and has been staged almost every year since 1959 . Since 2000 , the competition has been the most popular television programme in Sweden ; it is also broadcast on radio and the Internet . In 2012 , the semifinals averaged 3 @. @ 3 million viewers , and over an estimated four million people in Sweden watched the final , almost half of the Swedish population .

The festival has produced six Eurovision winners and eighteen top @-@ five placings for Sweden at the contest . The winner of the Melodifestival has been chosen by panels of jurors since its inception . Since 1999 , the juries have been joined by a public telephone vote which has an equal influence over the final outcome . The competition makes a considerable impact on music charts in Sweden .

The introduction of semifinals in 2002 raised the potential number of contestants from around twelve to thirty @-@ two . A children 's version of the competition , Lilla Melodifestivalen , also began that year . Light orchestrated pop songs , known locally as schlager music , are so prevalent that the festival is sometimes referred to as Schlagerfestivalen (" The schlager festival ") by the Swedish media . However , other styles of music such as rap , reggae , and glam rock have made an appearance since the event 's expansion . The introduction of a grand final in Stockholm has attracted substantial tourism to the city .

= = Origins = =

With seven nations competing , the first Eurovision Song Contest took place in Lugano , Switzerland in May 1956 . Sweden 's first contest was the third , in 1958 . Without broadcasting a selection , Sveriges Radio (SR) chose to send Alice Babs to the contest in Hilversum . The song selected was " Samma stjärna lyser för oss två " , later renamed " Lilla stjärna " . It finished fourth at Eurovision on 12 March 1958 .

The first Melodifestival , incorporated into the Säg det med musik radio series , took place on 29 January 1959 at Cirkus in Stockholm ; eight songs participated . Four " expert " juries in Stockholm , Gothenburg , Malmö , and Luleå decided the winner . The competition was won by Siw Malmkvist performing " Augustin " , but SR decided that the winning song ? regardless of its original performer ? would be performed by Brita Borg at Eurovision . This policy , of selecting the artist for Eurovision internally and having other artists perform potential Swedish entries at Melodifestivalen , was stopped in 1961 . The competition became a stand @-@ alone television programme in 1960 , known as the Eurovisionslagern , svensk final . In the event 's early years , it was broadcast to Norway and Denmark through the Nordvision network . The competition adopted its current name , Melodifestivalen , in 1967 .

The Melodifestival has failed to be staged on three occasions . In 1964 , the competition was cancelled due to an artist 's strike ; Sweden did not send a song to Eurovision that year . Sweden was absent at Eurovision for a second time in 1970 because of a Nordic boycott of the voting system , which had led to a four @-@ way tie for first place at the 1969 contest . After SR staged the 1975 contest in Stockholm , left @-@ wing groups argued that Sweden should not spend money to win and host Eurovision again . This led to mass demonstrations against commercial music and the organisation of an anti @-@ commercial Alternativfestivalen . Therefore , Sweden decided not send a song to Eurovision 1976 , but returned in 1977 .

= = Participation = =

Hundreds of songs and performers have entered Melodifestivalen since its debut . Although songwriters living outside Sweden were once not allowed to enter Melodifestivalen , the 2012 contest marked the first time foreign songwriters could submit entries , provided that they

collaborated with a Swedish songwriter . To be eligible , songwriters and performers must be at least sixteen years of age on the day of the first Eurovision semifinal .

Until 2001 , participation in the festival was limited to a single night . The number of contestants ranged from five to twelve . A two @-@ round system was used intermittently between 1981 and 1998 , in which all but five of the contestants were eliminated in a first round of voting . Failure to reach the second round under this system was seen as a major failure for a prominent artist ; when Elisabeth Andreassen failed to qualify in 1984 , it almost ended her career . The introduction of weekly semifinals in 2002 increased the number of contestants to thirty @-@ two . At least ten of the contestants must perform in Swedish . A CD of each year 's competing songs has been released since 2001 , and a DVD of the semifinals and final since 2003 .

Melodifestivalen has been the launch @-@ pad for the success of popular local acts , such as ABBA , Tommy Körberg , and Lisa Nilsson . The competition has played host to performers from outside Sweden , including Baccara , Alannah Myles , and Cornelis Vreeswijk . Melodifestivalen participants have also represented ? and unsuccessfully tried to represent ? other countries at Eurovision . While local success for Melodifestivalen winners is common , most contestants return to obscurity and few have major international success . The impact that the competition makes on the Swedish charts means an artist need not win the competition to earn significant domestic record sales . For example , the song which finished last at Melodifestivalen 1990 , " Symfonin " by Loa Falkman , topped the Swedish singles chart . The most recent occurrence was 2016 with Samir & Viktor 's song " Bada Nakna " . In 2007 , twenty @-@ one participants reached Sverigetopplistan . The week after the 2008 final , songs from the festival made up the entire top fifteen on the domestic singles chart .

= = Selection of contestants = =

The process of narrowing thousands of potential entries down to thirty @-@ two lasts over seven months . SVT directly selects sixteen entries from amongst the submissions from the public at large . Fifteen additional entries come from special invitations made by SVT or other entries that SVT has selected from amongst the submissions . Finally , the thirty @-@ second entry is selected via the online " Webbjoker " competition , open to artists whose music has not available for sale in Sweden prior to the deadline . The entire process can begin as early as May of the previous year and is finished by January .

= = = Songs = = =

SVT begins looking for songs nine months before the start of the televised Melodifestival (within days of the previous year 's Eurovision final) . The deadline for submission is in September and songs can be in any language . In the pre @-@ selection , song length is limited to three minutes and twenty seconds ; songs must be shortened to three minutes if they reach the final twenty @-@ eight and qualifying songs may also be remixed .

The submission process is overseen by members of the Swedish Music Publishers Association (SMFF) , whose task is to reduce the number of songs , which have numbered over 3 @, @ 000 a year since 2002 , to around 1 @, @ 200 . The 3 @, @ 440 entries received in the preselection for Melodifestivalen 2009 is the most in the competition 's history . The SMFF 's choices are then given to a sixteen @-@ person jury of music professionals , SVT staff and other members of the public . The jury ranges from teenagers to people in their fifties . The songs that qualify , along with their composers and lyricists , are announced at the end of September . This is often followed by fervent speculation over who will perform the songs . Songwriters that qualify must provide interviews to SVT , attend a press conference before the competition , and remain open to promotional appearances if their song reaches the final .

= = = Artists and wildcards = = =

SVT selects performers for the entries . Artists who perform the demo of a song automatically enter the competition ; they must perform their songs if suitable alternate performers cannot be found . The artists ' songs risk disqualification if they refuse . In the past , this rule led to the disqualification of , among others , Carola 's " När löven faller " in 2003 and Stephen Simmonds 's " So Good " in 2006 . SVT may also give songs to other performers without considering the interests of the demo artist . This prevented the Brandsta City Släckers (in 2004) and Pernilla Wahlgren (in 2005) from performing the songs they had submitted . Replacements for disqualified songs fare unpredictably at the competition . In 2006 , " Naughty Boy " by Hannah Graaf (the replacement for Simmonds ' song) finished second to last in its semifinal . In 2002 and 2007 , by contrast , the replacements performed by Jan Johansen and Måns Zelmerlöw reached the final ten . The contestants that will perform the twenty @-@ eight qualifiers from the preselection are announced in late November . Singer @-@ songwriters are common . As such , artists often confirm that they will participate before the official announcement .

The wildcard (joker) system was introduced in 2004 to diversify the music featured . Four artists , one in each semifinal , are invited by SVT to enter a song of their choice into the competition , provided it does not breach the rules . The wildcard songs and artists are announced in January . Since the wildcards ' introduction , three have won the competition . Today in 2011 there are 15 wildcards .

= = Hosting = =

The venues for each year 's Melodifestival are announced in September of the preceding year . The semifinals are held in towns and cities throughout Sweden . The 16 @,@ 300 @-@ capacity Ericsson Globe in Stockholm has hosted the final since the semifinals were introduced in 2002 , through to 2012 . In 2013 , the final moved to the newly built Friends Arena in Solna Municipality , Stockholm County . The Scandinavium in Gothenburg was offered the 2005 final , but turned it down as it clashed with a Frölunda ice hockey match .

The event spent its early years at one venue : Cirkus in Stockholm , which hosted the first ten competitions . It has hosted the final of Melodifestivalen seventeen times in total . The Stockholm Globe Arena has hosted seven finals , and SVT 's headquarters in Stockholm has staged five . The competition first took place outside Stockholm in 1975 as part of a decentralisation policy at SR . Stockholm has hosted thirty @-@ seven finals in total , including the first fourteen . Gothenburg has hosted eight , and Malmö seven . The competition 's final has never been held outside these cities . Before the expansion , the host of the previous year 's Melodifestival would host the Eurovision Song Contest in the event of a Swedish victory . Hence , the 1985 Eurovision was held in Gothenburg , and the 1992 contest in Malmö . Since 2002 , the only venue that has hosted more than three semifinals is Gothenburg 's Scandinavium , which has hosted one every year since 2003 . In 2008 , Andra Chansen was held in Kiruna , north of the Arctic Circle .

= = Televised rounds = =

The televised Melodifestival lasts five weeks and consists of six live shows : four semifinals , in which eight songs compete ; a Second Chance round featuring songs which narrowly missed out on qualification from the semifinals ; and a grand final . Ten songs comprise the final : two automatic qualifiers from each of the semifinals , and the two most popular songs in the Second Chance round . In 2015 , there are seven songs for each semifinal , and twelve (eight winners and four from Andra Chansen) in the final .

= = = Semifinals and Second Chance = = =

Prior to the introduction of the current format of semifinals (deltävlingar) in 2002 , the competition was usually a single live show . Under the current system , four semifinals are broadcast at 20 : 00 CET on consecutive Saturday nights . The semifinals begin in early February , and eight songs

compete in each show .

Unlike in the final , no juries are used ; televoting decides the results . The songs are performed live with telephone lines open for the first round of voting ; the song receiving the most votes in the first round automatically qualifying to the final , skipping the second round . The remaining top 4 battled again for a place in the final and Andra chansen round - the 2nd placed song qualifying to the final , and the 3rd and 4th placed songs progressing to Andra chansen . Both finalists reprise their entries at the end of the broadcast . The organisation of a semifinal system for Melodifestivalen popularised televised heats at national Eurovision selections . A similar system was adopted by the Eurovision itself in 2004 .

The Second Chance round (Andra chansen) is the fifth heat in which the ninth and tenth places in the final are decided . The third- and fourth @-@ placed songs from each semifinal (eight songs in total) compete in the event . The first Second Chance round in 2002 had a panel of former winners decide the two finalists . Between 2003 and 2006 , the semifinal performances were re @-@ broadcast , and a round of voting narrowed the songs to three or four . Another round then determined the two finalists . The programme was broadcast on the Sunday afternoon after the fourth semifinal . It was held in a smaller venue than those that would have hosted the semifinals ? such as Berns Salonger in Stockholm , which hosted the Second Chance round in 2005 .

In 2007 , the Second Chance round became a full semifinal , taking place in a venue comparable in size to those hosting the others . The expanded Second Chance takes place on a Saturday night , adding an extra week to the event 's timetable . The format of voting also changed with the introduction of a knock @-@ out system . The system pairs the eight songs off against each other , then narrows them down to four before pairing them off again . The winners of the two second round pairings go through to the final . The two finalists do not reprise their songs at the end of the programme .

= = = Final = = =

The final takes place at 20 : 00 CET on a Saturday in mid @-@ March . Ten songs (11 songs in 2009 , 12 in 2015) participate : two from each semifinal , two from the Second Chance round , and , only in 2009 , the international jury 's choice . A running order is decided by the competition 's supervisors the week before to ensure that similar songs and artists are kept apart in the final . Dress rehearsals for the final are held on the prior Friday , and tickets sell out almost as quickly as those for the final itself . The final attracts much tourism to its host city ; a survey in 2006 showed that 54 % of spectators had travelled from outside the host city , Stockholm . Of these , 6 % had come from outside Sweden .

As at Eurovision , a broadcast of the EBU logo introduces and closes the television coverage , accompanied by the prelude to Marc @-@ Antoine Charpentier 's setting of " Te Deum " . Video " postcards " introduce the entries . The final includes interval performances , which are performed while the juries deliberate and before the televote closes . Former Melodifestivalen contestants have performed as interval acts in the past , including Lena Philipsson in 2005 and the multi @-@ artist medley of former entries in 2000 .

The winner receives a trophy , Den stora Sångfågeln (The Great Songbird) , from the previous year 's winner . The trophy , designed by Ernst Billgren , was unveiled in 2005 and awarded to all previous Melodifestivalen winners at the Alla tiders Melodifestival gala in March of that year . The winner of the competition reprises their song at the end of the event .

= = Voting = =

Before the introduction of the current voting system in 1999 , a group of regional or age @-@ based juries decided the winner of Melodifestivalen . In 1993 , televoting was used experimentally , but proved unsuccessful . The Swedish telephone network collapsed due to the number of calls , and claims by the Swedish tabloid press suggested the use of televoting had drastically altered the results . Evening newspapers released what they claimed to be the back @-@ up juries ' votes ,

which showed that the winner , Arvingarna 's " Eloise " , would have finished fourth had the juries ' votes counted . SVT never confirmed the accuracy of these claims .

The current voting format introduced in 1999 is a positional voting system , similar to that used at the Eurovision Song Contest . The voting is made up of two segments , in the first of which juries announce their votes ; in the second segment the televoting result is announced . The total value of votes has usually been 2 x 473 points , which means that televotes and juries have an equal 50 / 50 weighing in the final result . The juries , usually 11 , have represented either Swedish regions or , since 2010 , countries participating in the year 's Eurovision Song Contest . Each jury award 1 , 2 , 4 , 6 , 8 , 10 , and 12 points to their top seven songs . After the jury voting , the televoting result is revealed by the hosts in ascending order . Between 1999 and 2011 , the televoting points were fixed ; the top seven songs would receive 11 , 22 , 44 , 66 , 88 , 110 and 132 points . Starting in 2011 , televoting points are given to each entry based on its percentage of total vote . If an entry receives 10 % of the televotes it will be equivalent to 10 % of 473 points , i.e. 48 points . The song with the highest number of points at the end of the voting is the winner .

Telephone lines open immediately after the radio preview for the final and do not close until the juries have voted . Two telephone numbers are used for each song , giving voters the option of whether to donate money to SVT 's Radiohjälpen charity appeal or not as they vote . Viewers can also vote by text message , and only residents of Sweden can vote .

The votes of the juries are announced by spokespeople who are not members of the juries . The votes are read in ascending order , beginning with one point and finishing with twelve . When read , they are repeated by the host , for example :

Spokesperson : " Ett poäng till melodi nummer två . " (One point to song number two .)

Presenter : Ett poäng till (name song) . " (One point to (name song) .)

Since 2012 , most spokespeople have announced the points in English , with the hosts repeating them in Swedish .

As the votes are announced , they are collated on a graphic scoreboard . SVT varies the way the jury votes are announced from year to year . For example , the finalists of Expedition : Robinson acted as spokespeople in 2004 , and in 2006 Fredrik Lindström announced jury tallies using the dialects of each region . The final of Melodifestivalen has broken Nordic voting records on several occasions ; in 2007 , voting figures exceeded two million for the first time .

If there is a tie , the song that has received more votes from the public receives the higher position . There have been two ties for first place in the history of the contest . In 1969 , Tommy Körberg tied for first place with Jan Malmsjö . The juries then voted for their favourite out of the two , leading to Tommy Körberg winning . In 1978 , Björn Skifs tied for first place with Lasse Holm and Wizex (performing together) ; a similar tie @-@ break process resulting in Skifs winning .

= = Winners = =

Fifty @-@ five of Sweden 's fifty @-@ six Eurovision representatives have come from Melodifestivalen . Sweden has won the Eurovision Song Contest six times : in 1974 , 1984 , 1991 , 1999 , 2012 and 2015 . Sweden has the second highest number of wins for a country at Eurovision ; only Ireland has won the contest more often . The 1974 Eurovision winner , ABBA 's " Waterloo " , was voted the most popular Melodifestivalen song of all time at the Alla tiders Melodifestival gala in March 2005 . Later that year , it was voted most popular Eurovision song of the contest 's first fifty years at a gala in Copenhagen . The following table lists those entries which finished fifth or higher at Eurovision :

= = Presenters = =

This list includes those who have acted as presenters of Melodifestivalen . In 1986 , there were two presenters for the first time , while in 2000 , 2004 , 2005 and 2006 , various people were presented the shows .

= = = Presenters who have competed at Eurovision = = =

= = = Presenters who have presented the Eurovision in Sweden = = =

= = Rules = =

Most of Melodifestivalen 's rules are dictated by those of the Eurovision Song Contest . However , regulations have been introduced by the Swedish broadcasters . The competition 's official rules are released by SVT early in preparation for each year 's Melodifestival , to ensure any changes are noted by songwriters and performers .

There was a limit of six people on stage for each performance . This included the Melodifestivalen choir (huskören , literally " the house choir ") , a five @-@ person group of flexible backing singers used by most participants . Artists could use some or all of the back @-@ up singers , or use their own group . All vocals had to be completely live ; human voices were not allowed on backing tracks . However , from 2009 , the number of performers allowed on stage was eight , and voices were allowed on backing tracks . A live orchestra was used every year from the event 's debut to 2000 , except 1985 and 1986 . Two orchestras were used between 1960 and 1963 , a large orchestra and Göte Wilhelmsons kvartett , a jazz quartet . Since 2001 , participants have performed to backing tracks .

Entries cannot be publicly broadcast until the semifinals are previewed on radio . Entries eliminated in the semifinals may be broadcast as soon as the semifinal has finished . An embargo is placed on songs that qualify for the later rounds until the previews for the Second Chance are broadcast . After this , restrictions on the broadcast of contestant songs are lifted .

Broadcasters sometimes make sweeping changes to winning songs before they go to Eurovision . For example , at Melodifestivalen 1961 , Siw Malmkvist won with " April , April " . Performing after her victory , she stumbled on the lyrics of the song and laughed out loud . The press criticised this as childish . SR replaced her with Lill @-@ Babs for the Eurovision Song Contest . The 1987 winner " Fyra bugg och en Coca Cola " , performed by Lotta Engberg , is another example ; the song 's title was changed to " Boogaloo " for Eurovision , as use of a brand name was against the Contest 's rules . This name was chosen as Sweden 's two previous Eurovision winners had also included the suffix " -loo " .

Until 1999 , competing songs were only permitted in Swedish , apart from 1965 , 1973 , 1974 , 1975 . This did not stop most winning entries recording English (and other language) versions of their songs . Since the abolition of Eurovision 's language restrictions in 1999 , regardless of the performance language at Melodifestivalen , every Swedish entry has been in English . Spanish , French , Greek , Italian , Portuguese , Bosnian and Persian are among the other languages to have featured . Cameron Cartio 's entry in Melodifestivalen 2005 was performed in a constructed language .

= = Media coverage = =

Melodifestivalen is broadcast on television , radio and the internet . It is broadcast on SVT1 with international coverage on SVT World . Until 1987 , the competition was broadcast on Sveriges Radio TV , later known as TV1 . Between 1988 and 2000 , the event was broadcast on different channels depending on where it was held . Finals in Stockholm were broadcast on Kanal 1 (formerly TV1) while finals in Gothenburg or Malmö were broadcast on TV2 . Sveriges Radio has broadcast the event on P1 , P3 and P4 , where is currently broadcast .

Although the final is traditionally held on a Saturday , in 1990 it was held on a Friday . TV2 suggested this would attract more viewers . In 1991 , it was held on Easter Sunday for the same reason . The 2002 final was delayed by a week for coverage of the 2002 Winter Olympics .

The competition has had an official website since 1999 . Webcasts have been provided since 2005

. Since 2006 , between February and the Eurovision final in May , SR has webcast a radio station dedicated to the competition called P4 Melodifest . On P4 , the public previews semifinalists every Friday . Broadcast the night after the final , a dagen efter (" the day after ") television programme acts as an epilogue to the event . It gauges the reactions of the finalists after the competition 's climax . No commentary is given for the event on television . Carolina Norén is commentator on the event for Sveriges Radio . The festival has been broadcast in widescreen since 2002 and Dolby Digital since 2004 .

The competition 's viewing figures have been rising since 2002 . In 2007 , approximately 4 @. @ 1 million Swedes ? almost 44 % of the country 's population ? watched the final , and between 2 @. @ 9 million and 3 @. @ 2 million viewers watched each of the semifinals . The viewing figures for the 2007 festival are nearly two million short of the highest recorded viewing figures from 1990 . Melodifestivalen is given heavy coverage in the Swedish press . A study by the Economic Science and Communication Department at Karlstad University concluded that coverage from the press may have influenced the results of the 2007 festival .

= = Musical styles and presentation = =

Melodifestivalen 's image has evolved throughout its existence , but one word has defined the competition 's music : schlager . In Sweden , schlager (a German word literally meaning a " hit ") represents any song associated with the competition , from the jazz music featured heavily in the 1960s to entries such as Linda Bengtzing 's in 2006 . Christine Demstader of The Local described Swedish schlager as " typically characterized by an annoyingly repetitive melody and trivial lyrics of little or no meaning " .

Jazz artists such as Monica Zetterlund and Östen Warnerbring won the event in the 1960s . ABBA , who won Eurovision in 1974 , went on to be Sweden 's most successful music export . The group influenced not only Melodifestivalen , but the entire Swedish mainstream music scene . In the 1980s , Bert Karlsson 's Mariann Grammofon record label was responsible for the prevalence of " easy , memorable tunes " . The early twenty @- @ first century has seen more variety in the competition , such as The Ark 's " retro glam rock " effort and Afro @- @ dite 's disco winner .

On @- @ stage gimmicks have long been a part of performances at the competition . Lena Philipsson 's use of a microphone stand in her performance of " Det gör ont " at the 2004 competition is an example . When Philipsson hosted Melodifestivalen in 2006 , four tongue @- @ in @- @ cheek short films were broadcast during the semifinals to show what had happened to the microphone stand in the years since her win . Pyrotechnics are another common gimmick in Melodifestivalen performances . After the 2007 event , Karolina Lassbo of Dagens Media criticised the festival 's musical content and production , arguing that the 1988 competition was " the time when Melodifestivalen was still a schlager competition " and the event had become " a cross between [reality series] Fame Factory and [inter @- @ city game show] Stadskampen " .