

Welcome Europe!

Eurovision Gala to celebrate European Union enlargement • Live from Berlin, Warsaw and Malta

Friday, 30 April 2004, 20.15 p.m.

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Friday, 30 April 2004, 10.15 p.m.

Welcome Europe !

Eurovision Gala to celebrate the enlargement of the European Union
Live from Berlin, Warsaw and Malta

Direction	Volker Weicker
Camerawork	Henning Juhl
Sound	Reinhard Reiser
Production	ZDF / Schwanstein Entertainment AG Berlin / TVP/PBS commissioned by the EBU
Production managers	Maike Baum, Matthias Boerner
Editors	Martin Schneider, Stephan Reichenberger
Duration	120'

Contributors

Cecilia Bartoli, mezzo-soprano
Roger Waters
Michael Flatley ("Lord of the Dance")
Mikis Theodorakis
Katarina Witt
Brainstorm
Michalis Hadjiyiannis
Neiokoso
and many others

The European Union Youth Orchestra
Chief conductor Vladimir Ashkenazy

Presenter Nina Ruge

A detailed programme of the gala was not available at the time of this press release.

**Eurovision Gala on ZDF
to celebrate eastern enlargement of the European Union**

Europe is getting bigger! On 1 May the number of European Union member countries will grow from 15 to 25 – grounds for celebration and an occasion to be marked by ZDF with a two-hour Eurovision Gala.

Nina Ruge will be hosting the show in the Konzerthaus at the Gendarmenmarkt in Berlin, where she will welcome a huge Europe-wide television audience and greet some of Europe's most prominent people from the politics, the arts and society to accompany the proceedings. The show includes a prime example of pan-European cultural achievement at the highest level: the European Union Youth Orchestra, headed by its chief conductor Vladimir Ashkenazy. And the mezzo-soprano Cecilia Bartoli will also be there as a star guest.

The ten EU newcomers – Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Cyprus – are sending along their best-known and most popular musicians to perform on stage. These are all top acts from the classical, pop and folk music. The music will be interspersed with live feeds from the second venue of the evening: an open-air stage in Warsaw set against the splendid backdrop of the old Royal Castle.

Each country will make a short presentation of itself with a "video postcard", which is to be introduced by a well-known friend of the country from "old Europe".

On this historic evening there will be a countdown to accession – not once but twice: due to the different time-zones, the three Baltic states and Cyprus will formerly become members an hour earlier, at 11 p.m. Central Europe time. The countdowns will be accompanied by a choir of children from all 25 member countries, who plan to give the first ever performance of a European children's anthem, sung from the steps of the Berlin Konzerthaus.

At midnight, the moment of accession of the six other "newcomers", the show will go live to Malta for the programme's dramatic climax: set to the music of Roger Water's (Pink Floyd) pre-première of his latest work, the world-famous light artist Gert Hof will stage his spectacular "Light Monument", a firework display of light and colour on a gigantic scale.

Thanks to Europe-wide transmission via the EBU network (Eurovision), this unique event will be witnessed by millions of television viewers. And the public in Berlin can also watch the proceedings outside on a big screen at the Gendarmenmarkt.

The Berlin gala is being held at the invitation of ZDF Director-General Markus Schächter and EBU President Arne Wessberg. The event's official sponsors are the President of the European Parliament, Pat Cox, the President of the European Council, Bertie Ahern, and the President of the European Commission, Romano Prodi.

**Gert Hof's "Light monuments":
putting magic into historic moments**

Gert Hof, who was born in 1951 in Taucha near Leipzig, is a director, designer, light artist, author and university lecturer. His spectacular light monuments have turned celebrations at locations throughout the world into mega-events – whether in Berlin, Moscow, Athens or Peking.

Gert Hof studied philosophy and dramatic arts in Leipzig and has been a stage director since 1975 with engagements in Leipzig, Berlin and elsewhere. Back in the 1980s he was already busy as a director, designer and artistic director with various rock and avant-garde musicians, including the East German bands Silly and Pankow, the West Berlin-based group Einstürzende Neubauten, John Cale and Joachim Witt. Gert Hof was awarded an MTV European Music Award in 1998 for his work with Rammstein. In 1999 he received an ECHO in recognition of his overall artistic direction of live concerts.

Gert Hof was also commissioned for the millennium celebrations in Berlin, Athens, Budapest and Beijing, which attracted millions of people to each location. Indeed, the Beijing spectacle was watched by 1.2 billion Chinese on their TV screens. With his company Light Monuments GmbH, founded in 2002, Hof has designed and produced monumental light displays in many locations, including Dresden to mark the flood disaster, Red Square on Moscow Day and Cyprus for the opening of the wall. In preparation for the Eurovision's "Welcome Europe" gala, he is collaborating with the rock musician and composer Roger Waters to put on a dazzling spectacle in Malta. This is to be broadcast live around midnight as the grand finale.

"Ça Ira": Roger Water's soundtrack to a finale of fireworks on Malta

Englishman Roger Waters, who was born in 1943 in the Surrey village of Great Bookham, rose to world fame as a solo artist and founding member of the legendary rock group Pink Floyd. He led the band during its most creative years to global success with albums like "Dark Side of the Moon" and "The Wall".

After various solo projects, he plans to release his first classical opera, "Ça Ira", at the end of 2004. Based on the classical symphonic tradition the work is written for an 84-piece orchestra, three soloists (tenor, baritone and soprano) and an adult and children's choir. The libretto was written by Frenchman Étienne Roda Gil. "Ça Ira" deals with the French Revolution as a metaphor for people's strength in their fight for freedom, equality and fraternity – values that today still embody the ethical foundations of the European Union.

At the grand finale a part of this opera will be pre-premiered in the accession country of Malta, where it will be performed in front of the dramatic backdrop of Valletta and illuminated by the light artist Gert Hof.

Guest contributors at the gala in Berlin**The European Union Youth Orchestra – a symbol of European integration**

The European Union Youth Orchestra (EUYO) is a living example in the sphere of the performing arts of the ongoing process of European integration. The orchestra was born out of the idea of creating a symbol for the European ideal: a community of nations working together for peace, harmony, social justice and human dignity. This pan-European orchestra gave its first concert in 1978, conducted by its musical founding father Claudio Abbado.

The emotional power of music transcends boundaries – young (14 to 23 years of age) talented musicians from every EU member state have been coming together for over 25 years under the direction of world-famous conductors to play music at the highest level. While working towards their common goal of orchestral excellence, the musicians build close friendships and in this way “playfully” contribute to a cultural understanding in Europe.

The EUYO is now regarded as one of the leading symphony orchestras. With its timbre and its elan, it has been delighting audiences from all the great stages of the world under the baton of chief conductor Vladimir Ashkenazy. The President of the European Parliament, Pat Cox, is the current president of the orchestra, which receives financial support from European Union funds.

Conductor Vladimir Ashkenazy

At home in concert halls all over the world, Vladimir Ashkenazy is one of the most multi-talented musicians of our time. Born in 1937 in the Soviet town of Gorki, he studied the piano at the Moscow Conservatory. He built up a huge international reputation as a pianist and won numerous accolades, taking first prize in, for instance, the 1955 Chopin Competition in Warsaw, in the 1956 Queen Elisabeth Competition in Brussels and in the 1962 Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow. Since 1970 he has concentrated increasingly on conducting. Ashkenazy often stands as a guest conductor at the lectern before the world's great orchestras. He has served as the musical director of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and Berlin's German Symphony Orchestra, and he was chief conductor of the Czech Philharmonic from 1998 to 2003. In addition to his numerous tours, he has recorded a wide-ranging CD repertoire.

Vladimir Ashkenazy is famous for this virtuosity, his technical brilliance and his "intensive objectivity" in interpretation, whether as a pianist, a conductor or a chamber musician.

This maestro with savoir vivre has been artistic director of the EUYO since 2000. He is also the honorary conductor of both the Icelandic Symphony Orchestra and the Philharmonic Orchestra and plans to take over the post of musical director of Tokyo's NHK Symphony Orchestra in September 2004.

Cecilia Bartoli, mezzo-soprano

Cecilia Bartoli is the most successful classical artist of our time. Whatever challenge she takes on – the result delights the critics and enthral audiences. Cecilia Bartoli has dedicated her latest CD to the alleged Mozart murderer, Antonio Salieri. And just as she did with another forgotten composer, Christoph Willibald Gluck, she has managed to make Salieri a best-seller almost overnight. The CD was number one in the classic charts for weeks and even rose to position 33 in the pop-charts.

The secret of the mezzo-soprano's success is her perfect voice and an enthusiasm that is catching. Cecilia Bartoli is highly concentrated on stage and exudes energy – an energy that is directly picked up by her audiences.

Cecilia Bartoli was born in Rome in 1966. As a child she was given singing lessons by her mother, who has remained her only teacher. At the age of 19 she made her stage debut as Rosina in Rossini's "The Barber of Seville" at her local opera house. Her breakthrough came in Paris at a "Hommage à Maria Callas" in 1988, when she came to the attention of Karajan, Barenboim and Muti. Since then her career has taken her to all the world's great concert halls and opera houses. Cecilia Bartoli has been awarded many international prizes, not least the Grammy and the ECHO Classic.

Presenter Nina Ruge

"Alles wird gut!" – goes her familiar closing catch-phrase. It was this optimism that persuaded presenter Nina Ruge, who was born in Munich in 1956, to quit her safe civil services job as a secondary school teacher in 1987 and go to Berlin to work as an assistant director on film and television productions. She was instant success and has been working for ZDF since 1989, first as the co-presenter of the news programme "heute-journal", then as presenter of "heute Nacht". Nina Ruge was used to be seen on camera for RIAS, presenting the breakfast show, and then for its successor network, Deutsche Welle TV, fronting the programmes "Standpunkte" and "Boulevard Deutschland". On 3sat she has headed the talk-shows "Sonntagshow" and "PEP", the political "Tagesgespräch" and the "Newsquiz".

On ZDF the attractive TV journalist has been presenting her political talk-show "Ruge. neunzehnZehn" on 3sat since 1996 and the successful celebrities magazine "Leute heute" since 1997.

An all-round talent, Nina is an experienced gala presenter, successful book author and, since 1997, a Unicef patron.

Photo library

Relevant photos are available from ZDF's library at: <http://bilderdienst.zdf.de>,
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