

★★★★★ "A truly beautiful thing"

5 stars for West End Eurovision from BroadwayWorldUK!

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BWW Review: WEST END EUROVISION, Adelphi Theatre

[by Emma Watkins Apr. 29, 2019](#)



Although I'm a huge Eurovision fan, and a regular West End-goer, I'd never made it to an edition of West End Eurovision. But this year that changed - and boy am I glad!

West End Eurovision does exactly what it says on the tin: casts of West End musicals compete by performing past Eurovision songs to win over juries of their peers (two per show) and the live audience.

Despite it being a one night only event (held annually from 2009-2014 and reinstated in 2018 after a 3-year hiatus), this isn't throwaway, or thrown together.

The night started with an opening number paying close homage to *That's Eurovision!*, which opened one of the semi-finals in Sweden in 2016, but tweaking the lyrics to make them West End appropriate. It was an early sign of the quality to come.

Our convivial but appropriately cutting host [Richard Gauntlett](#) introduced the celebrity judges for the night: [Tim Vincent](#), [Amber Davies](#), [Wayne Sleep](#) and [Bonnie Langford](#), who would give their feedback on each performance from the lofty heights of one of the Adelphi's boxes.

Each of the competing casts then performed, preceded by their "ident movies".

First up was the cast of *Only Fools and Horses* performing cult Eurovision classic *Dancing Lasha Tumbai*, Ukraine's 2nd placed entry from 2007, complete with replica sparkling silver outfits.

The cast of *Everybody's Talking About Jamie* next performed *Toy*, Israel's winning song from 2018, featuring fluorescent make-up and some extraordinary moves from the even more extraordinarily buff [Layton Williams](#).

The cast of *Aladdin* performed *Monsters*, Finland's entry from last year, with choreography and costumes that felt like a nod towards *The Lion King*. Closing the first half was the cast of *Mamma Mia!* with Iceland's 2010 entry *Je ne sais quoi*, with some extremely convincing "was that meant to happen?" choreography seemingly inspired by *The Play That Goes Wrong* ...

First to perform in the second half was the cast of *Follies*, all show girl feathers and headdresses, with France's 1977 entry *L'oiseau et l'enfant*, an extremely classy affair that brought the house down.

But just when you thought that couldn't be topped, along came the cast of Phantom of the Opera with *Grande Amore*, Italy's 3rd placed entry from 2015. This operatic number was a perfect choice, and throwing in a couple of Eurovision-worthy costume changes was a stroke of genius.

Finally, the cast of Wicked closed the competition with a performance of Ukraine's winning entry from 2004, *Wild Dances*, with true-to-Ruslana costumes and choreography.

After performances from the UK's representative for this year's Eurovision Song Contest, [Michael Rice](#) (showing his excellent vocals with *Bigger Than Us*) and living Eurovision legend Dana International (performing her 1998 winning song *Diva*), it was time to crown the winners.

Before the overall winner was announced, prizes were awarded to Everybody's Talking About Jamie for Best Ident Movie, Phantom of the Opera for Best Costume (Outstanding Gorgeousness), and Wicked, given the Judges' Award for best choreography and direction.

Then, in a voting sequence worthy of Eurovision itself (although actually rather more slickly presented!) first the show juries gave their votes, and then the audience's text votes were added to reveal the overall winner... Phantom of the Opera, who won for the second year running!

The full result was as follows:

1. The Phantom of the Opera - 88 points
2. Follies - 80 points
3. Wicked - 62 points
4. Aladdin - 52 points
5. Mamma Mia! - 42 points
6. Everyone's Talking About Jamie- 40 points
7. Only Fools and Horses - 16 points

Every cast member, and everyone involved in putting this production together (choreography, costumes, direction, lighting, sound, live band), deserve huge congratulations for what is surely one of the most uniquely entertaining and enjoyable nights of the year in the West End.

The effort put in by the casts, all for a single performance, is phenomenal and clear to see on the stage. And the sense of freedom and joy among the performers, to be doing something different for one night only, was palpable.

But not only that: it's all for an amazing cause, raising money for the Make A Difference Trust, a small but amazing charity which supports HIV and AIDS projects in both the UK and Africa. The fact that such an incredible night is put on for charity, with everyone volunteering their time and effort, is a truly beautiful thing.

Long may West End Eurovision continue - and I know I'll be back again in 2020!

Photo credit: Gaz Sherwood PBGstudios.com