

"This glittering evening for a fantastic cause should be a must-attend annual fixture for musical theatre and Eurovision fans alike. Roll on next year!"

says West End Wilma

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REVIEW: WEST END EUROVISION 2019 (Adelphi Theatre) ★★★★★

April 30, 2019 // By: [West End Wilma](#) // [Reviews](#) // Comments are off



Staged for the first time in the rather lovely

Adelphi Theatre, West End Eurovision has raised hundreds of thousands of pounds for **MAD Trust** and its ninth year event did not disappoint.

The **Make A Difference Trust** works tirelessly to support HIV and AIDS related projects in both the UK and Sub-Saharan Africa; as the Chair of the Trust Melanie Tranter herself reminded us it is “a tiny charity, with only two employees the beating heart of the trust...a night like **West End Eurovision** shows the power the arts have to engage in an act of change.”

While emotional speeches and heart warming video clips of the great work the charity achieves was a vital part of the evening, the main event was the competition itself. The stakes were high, as seven of our top current West End shows battled it out for votes from both a panel of celebrity judges, representatives from each show, and text votes from the audience, while recreating their own versions of choice performances from the last few years of Eurovision.

I was lucky enough, early in my career, to have been directed by the genius that is **Richard Gauntlett** in one of his well loved, self penned, panto creations at the Theatre Royal Norwich, and to see him here as our genial host was quite a treat.

Balancing the knife edge of mercilessly poking fun at celebrities both in attendance and “down the road at the Panto Awards” along with shows that have closed/might potentially close soon, no one was safe and nothing sacred! With warm, jolly, camp good fun, I was reminded what a talent Richard is as both a writer and performer and for me he was the perfect host for the event.

The production values were uniformly high from the opening number, and all seven competition performances were of a higher standard than we have seen in previous years. A particular standout moment for me was the cameo **Layton Williams** made in the **Everybody's Talking About Jamie** entry, a cover of Israel's 2018 winning number “Toy” – that man oozes star quality and his dancing is out of this world.

Great humour was brought by the celebrity judges in the form of showbiz legends **Bonnie Langford** and **Wayne Sleep** (as Richard humorously pointed out one of Wayne's complimentary comments was the old adage "Less Is More" to great amusement from the crowd) with well loved Blue Peter presenter **Tim Vincent** and Love Island and 9 to 5's **Amber Davies** to boot.

Special mention must go to the outstanding band under the musical direction and arrangements by **Matheson Bayley** – truly thrilling.

We were treated to performances from Eurovision legend **Dana International** with her infamous winning entry "Diva" and our current great hope for this year's UK entry to Eurovision, All Together Now winner **Michael Rice** with "Bigger than Us" while the votes were counted and verified.

The Celebrity Judge's Prize for "Creativity , Choreography and Production" went to **Wicked's** imaginative entry with Ukraine's "Wild Dances".

In the end however **The Phantom Of the Opera** were the victors of the night, as the first show since the event began to hold onto their crown, winning the trophy for the second consecutive year in a row with 88 points for their cover of Italy's "Grand Amore". With thrilling voices, clever staging and production values, and glorious costume changes and reveals they also won the coveted "Outstanding Gorgeousness" prize, judged by Fly Davis and Jamie Campbell for costume design. A well deserved winner and eliciting two standing ovations from the audience-closely followed by the **Follies** entry, which was a classy French affair with stunning vocals and costumes.

The third prize of the night was won by **Everybody's Talking About Jamie** for the Ident competition (voted for by fans in the run up to the event).

With Eurovision stalwart **Graham Norton** himself presenting the trophies, this glittering evening for a fantastic cause should be a must-attend annual fixture for musical theatre and Eurovision fans alike. Roll on next year!

Reviewed by Nicole Faraday