The British Public Reflects on the Upcoming Eurovision 2012 Competition by Sean Burke

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For decades the Eurovision Song Contest has bought the various nations of Europe together in the spirit of music and healthy competition. First debuting in 1956, Eurovision is one of the longest running television shows in history and regularly draws in hundreds of millions of viewers from across the globe each year. The 2012 Eurovision event is due to take place in Baku on 22-24 May 2012.

Despite its enduring legacy and large international audience, people in the UK are often said to have mixed feelings about the competition. A recent online survey of UK residents has revealed more information on how the British public really feel about the upcoming Eurovision 2012.

When asked how often they watch the Eurovision song contest, around 42% of survey respondents said they watch it every year. Though this figure may suggest that Brits are relatively enthusiastic about the competition, the fact that 38% of respondents said they never watch the contest reveals just how split the UK public is on the subject of Eurovision.

One of the reasons why UK residents may feel ambivalent about the Eurovision Song Contest is their perception of how well the countryâ€™s own contestant will fare. The UK contestant for Eurovision 2012 is Leister-native Engelbert Humperdink, who will sing â€˜Love Will Set You Free.â€™ The online survey revealed that only 16% of respondents expect Humperdink to place in the top 10 of contestants, while only 1.4% thinks he will win the competition.

This lack of confidence in their countryâ€™s entry isnâ€™t the only factor swaying public opinion of the competition. Indeed, a large portion of survey respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed that the UK benefits from taking part in the contest (45%). Only 16% of survey respondents believed the competition to be in any way beneficial for the country.

Thus, rewards surveys reveal that public opinion surrounding the Eurovision song contest is mixed, with many UK respondents feeling less than enthused about the upcoming event. However, even though many of those questioned do not fancy Humperdinkâ€™s chances to bring home the top prize, 42% of people still plan to watch it. These conflicting figures are perhaps a testament to the contestâ€™s ability to ensnare even the most uninterested of viewers.

Like it or not, the Eurovision Song Contest is an annual phenomenon thatâ€™s almost impossible to ignore. Though some may view it as cheesy and dated, others see it as a positive way in which the nations of Europe can join together. This year, as a global recession continues to threaten Europeâ€™s unity, the light-hearted contest will be a rare occasion in which Europe is discussed for its music and culture, rather than its political and economic strife.

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