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EMBARGOED UNTIL 1300 CET TUESDAY 28 FEBRUARY

EBU launches Eurovision Choir of the Year



The European Broadcasting Union (EBU) is excited to launch a new TV talent competition format for amateur choirs, Eurovision Choir of The Year, as an addition to the Eurovision Family of Events led by the well-known Eurovision Song Contest.

The first edition of Eurovision Choir of the Year will be produced by host broadcaster Latvian Television (LTV) and Riga Tourism Development Bureau (LIVE RIGA) on 22 July at the Riga Arena in the Latvian capital.

Choirs from 7 EBU Member countries (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, Germany and Slovenia) will compete for the title, with prizes including a recording deal for the winning choir.

Each choir will perform a six minute unaccompanied set in any genre and will be judged by a high-profile jury including British composer John Rutter and Latvian mezzo-soprano Elīna Garanča.

The show will be hosted by Grammy-winning composer and conductor Eric Whitacre and LTV culture presenter Eva Ikstena.

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“Singing in choirs is a healthy, social and artistic activity that anyone, young or old, musically experienced or not, can take part in - and one which is growing in popularity across the world,” said EBU Head of Live Events Jon Ola Sand.

“Eurovision Choir of the Year will showcase the vast possibilities of the human voice and aims to inspire new singers to get involved.”

“Latvia has an abundant heritage of ancient choir traditions, inspiring our Song and Dance Festivals and bringing our choirs international acclaim, said Ivars Belte, Chairman of the Management Board at LTV.

“With a great sense of honour and responsibility, we are preparing to host singers from all across Europe in Riga, establishing a new tradition – the Eurovision Choir of the Year. It is a great pleasure for us that Latvia will become the first country to participate in this promising event, and an even greater pleasure that the organisers are the Latvian Television in collaboration with Riga municipality.”

Eurovision Choir of The Year will take place within the leading international competition European Choir Games, operated by German promoter Interkultur and organised in collaboration with LIVE RIGA. 150 choirs are expected in Riga to participate in the event.

Günter Titsch, president of Interkultur is excited by the co-operation: “We have seen a huge rise in popularity in choral singing over recent years and we’re delighted to partner with this new TV format which will bring the joy of singing together to a wide audience.

“As Interkultur’s motto goes, ‘Singing together brings nations together’”

The EBU and Interkultur hope to continue the partnership within a future edition of the European Choir Games and World Choir Games, creating a new annual format.

Riga was also the host city for the World Choir Games in 2014 and LTV made a number of highly successful productions during that competition. Eurovision Choir of the Year is part of the Grand Prix of Nations Riga 2017 event and the 3rd European Choir Games which will be held in Riga from 16-23 July.

Participating broadcasters:

- ORF (Austria)
- RTBF (Belgium)
- DR (Denmark)

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- ERR (Estonia)
- LTV (Latvia, Host Broadcaster)
- WDR (Germany)
- RTV (Slovenia)

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About the EBU

The European Broadcasting Union (EBU) is the world's foremost alliance of public service media (PSM). Our mission is to make PSM indispensable. We have 73 Members in 56 countries in Europe, and an additional 33 Associates in Asia, Africa, Australasia and the Americas.

Our Members operate nearly 2,000 television and radio channels together with numerous online platforms. Together, they reach audiences of more than one billion people around the world, broadcasting in more than 120 languages.

We are one EBU with two distinct fields of activity: member services and business services.

Our member services strive to secure a sustainable future for public service media, provide our Members with a centre for learning and sharing and build on our founding ethos of solidarity and co-operation to provide an exchange of world-class news, sports news and music.

Our business services – operating under the Eurovision brand – are the media industry's premier distributor and producer of high-quality live news, sport and entertainment with over 70,000 transmissions and 100,000 hours of news and sport every year.

We have offices in Brussels, Rome, Dubai, Moscow, New York, Washington DC, Singapore and Beijing. Our headquarters are in Geneva.

Discover more about the EBU on www.ebu.ch.

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About the Eurovision Family of Events

Eurovision Song Contest

The Eurovision Song Contest is one of the oldest television shows in the world and holds the Guinness World Record for the Longest Running Annual TV Music Competition.

First staged on 24 May 1956 the competition between Members of the European Broadcasting Union will reach its 62nd edition in Kyiv in May 2017.

A total of 43 countries will take part in the 2017 Eurovision Song Contest. Two Semi Finals and Grand Final will be held in the Ukrainian capital Kyiv following the victory of Jamala with her song "1944" at the 61st Eurovision Song Contest in Stockholm.

The winner of the Eurovision Song Contest is decided by adding together the votes from individual juries of music professionals in each country with the votes from viewers watching at home.

51 nations have competed at least once in the Contest which has been held in 25 cities in 40 countries.

Junior Eurovision Song Contest

The Junior Eurovision Song Contest is one of the world's highest profile talent events for children between the ages of 9 and 14.

Since its inception, the Junior Eurovision Song Contest has allied itself with the Eurovision Song Contest as a training ground for nurturing emerging talent. The Junior Eurovision Song Contest sets the standard for entertainment TV and embodies diversity, creativity and respect.

Launched in 2003 the annual contest promotes outstanding young singers in the field of popular music.

The 14th edition took place on Sunday 20 November 2016 in Valletta, Malta. 10-year-old Mariam Mamadashvili from Georgia won the competition with the song Mzeo (Sun).

Eurovision Young Musicians

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Eurovision Young Musicians been held every two years since 1982. It is an international classical music event aimed at offering the broadest possible stage to talented young classical musicians aged between 11 and 19 years old; helping them embark on an international career. It alternates with the Eurovision Young Dancers.

18-year-old saxophonist Łukasz Dyczko, from Poland, won Eurovision Young Musicians 2016. The final of this renowned competition took place on Saturday 3 September 2016 at the Roncalliplatz in Cologne, Germany.

Eurovision Young Dancers

Eurovision Young Dancers is a biennial competition first staged in 1985 and open to solo dancers aged between 16 and 21.

The aim of the competition is to provide a showcase for top-class contemporary artistic dance performances and bringing the finest young dancers to international attention, in front of a large television audience. It alternates with the Eurovision Young Musicians.

18-year-old Viktoria Nowak from Poland won Eurovision Young Dancers 2015. The final of the competition was held on Friday 19 June 2015 at the New Theatre in Pilsen, Czech Republic.