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Foreword

It was the dress rehearsal of the first semi-final of the 59th Eurovision Song Contest in Copenhagen 2014 that I found myself booing 17-year-old girls off the stage, just because they were Russian. I - and for that matter hundreds of guests at the show - didn't agree with the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation and Putin's politics in general, and let it out on the Tolmachevy twin sisters, quickened by a phenomenon, that I can only call mob mentality. Right at this moment I felt pride and superiority at the same time, only to be followed by shame and regret a second later. I realized, that they could have performed literally any song, and no matter how much I would have liked it, I wouldn't have tolerated it, or better said, them. Upset by these thoughts, that evening left me pondering for a long time. Pondering how and why I felt I had to express my resentment so loudly and so misguided. The search for an answer turned out to be much more complex than I had expected...

For the past six years I have followed, studied and celebrated the Eurovision Song Contest (ESC). Up to the year 2014, when Conchita gloriously won in Copenhagen, nobody really seemed to care about it in Austria, myself included. I watched it quite sporadically ever since I was little but being born almost 25 years after Udo Jürgens' victory for Austria in 1966, I missed the chance of ever feeling particularly enthusiastic about it as a child or young adult. So, when I had the opportunity to join a seminar named "Eurovision Song Contest" at university in the summer of 2013, I was curious. I have often talked about the "embarrassing" and "corny" contestants Austria sent over the years, but I never knew anything about what was happening behind the scenes. I enrolled because I thought I'd like to learn more about this annual event everybody seemed to have an opinion on, but nobody really knew about. Since then, I have never missed a show, I wrote my Bachelor's thesis on it, I presented this thesis at the Eurovision conference in Copenhagen, I went to live shows, I follow the event around the year and I am now writing my Master's thesis on it. Never had I expected this topic to be so interesting, fascinating, controversial, difficult and delighting. Now I annoy my friends and family with random details, facts and figures when I make them watch it with me every year. It was the biggest and

most fun part of my academic studies, and for that I want to thank my teacher and patient advisor Ivan Raykoff. His inspiring lectures, his input and feedback have taught me so much and helped me understand this colourful world of Eurovision a little better. I also want to thank Marco Schreuder for his enriching thoughts and honesty in our interview.

Last, but definitely not least, I want to thank my family, who has never pressured me, and pushed me when I needed to be pushed. I will be forever grateful for your endless and unconditional support.

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Introduction

The day after the ESC final in Vienna in 2015 everything went back to normal, more or less. The fans left, posters and banners were taken down and suddenly the city was quiet again. What was left were same-sex traffic lights, trams carrying the ESC logo and yet another Austrian 0-point entry. It seemed as if Austria was back at square one in the Eurovision world. Was Austria able to rebrand and reposition itself by hosting the ESC, or was it still stuck with old clichés?

Stereotypes often manage to create a distorted image of a nation, and in the case of Austria, classical music seems to be the number one cliché the country is branded with. Brahms, Bruckner, Haydn, Schubert, Strauss, Mozart and many more are the pillars upon which Austria's cultural heritage rests. Paired with a romanticized idea of imperial times, castles and Austria's snowy, alpine landscape, one might wonder how Austria could possibly overcome such an antiquated image, to fully arrive in the 21st century and to present itself as a modern, versatile nation.

The international perception of Austria might have changed on May 10th, 2014. When Conchita Wurst was crowned 'Queen of Europe', people saw Austria in a different light - maybe for the first time. Austria sent a contestant that presented a modern, liberal, progressive, accepting-of-all-lifestyles, open-minded and most of all tolerant nation. But ever since her participation at the ESC 2014 was confirmed, disturbing attempts to boycott her appearance and many torrents of hatred surfaced on the internet. There was an Anti-Conchita-Wurst-petition on Facebook addressed against the ORF and its choice to send the travesty artist to Copenhagen without giving the Austrian population the chance to vote for other contestants. In their opinion, the ORF should have let the taxpayers choose a singer for the ESC. Yet, the many homophobic and transphobic comments are evidence, that "the real motivation for these protests was the fact the ORF had chosen a performer who was not unambiguously male or female."¹ Many of these voices fell silent after she won, but the general tone during that time was sceptical. Another reason for people's

¹ Ivan Raykoff: "Austria, ORF, and Conchita Wurst" in: ORF Texte 2015, p. 35.

doubts might have been the fact that Austria was so very unsuccessful in the past decades, that they thought it was a ridiculous attempt to try something new and “being different” by coming up with someone so polarising.

For the first time in a long time, Austria was in the focus of attention in the ESC-world. By sending such an extraordinary contestant and then having the opportunity to host the ESC the following year, Austria had the chance to redefine itself, and to finally get rid of antiquated clichés. Despite the immense cost to host the ESC, it was an invaluable opportunity; the time-dependent effect the ESC can have for the host country outshines the unavoidable financial sacrifice.² The ORF’s mission statement, in which many things of what the ESC in Vienna would and would not be were listed, was a celebration of a cosmopolitan and diverse host-city. But trying to represent a nation as modern and tolerant can be a delicate issue when being faced with a crisis that goes beyond the country’s frontiers. When the country had to deal with tens of thousands of refugees at the southern border only a couple of weeks after the ESC was held in Vienna, Austria didn’t build a bridge, it built a fence to Slovenia. It was quite clear that there was a vast discrepancy between the image that is being promoted inside and outside the “Eurovision-Bubble.”

The first image of the contest in Vienna in 2015 that one could see on TV - after hearing the Eurovision Hymn - was the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra playing in front of Schloss Schönbrunn (at this exact spot in 1967 the waltz “Wiener Blut” was performed). What seamlessly blended into the classical music canon of great composers born in Austria reconfirmed one’s view of the nation and its musical traditions. This was the moment when orchestral music was reintroduced to the ESC after a long period of absence, at least for the opening. Ninety seconds later Conchita’s victory of 2014 appeared on screen. Soon, after seeing pictures of Austrian landscapes and landmarks, people in Dirndl and Lederhosen playing traditional Volksmusik, people dressing up as Mozart, men dressing up as women, people going hot air ballooning and skiing, dancing ballerinas, young people in a hip club, a Formula 1 car racing in circles, typical Viennese coffeehouses, and the Viennese Prater, it was quite clear what message Austria wanted to send out that

² Irving Wolther, *Kampf der Kulturen: Der Eurovision Song Contest als Mittel national-kultureller Repräsentation*, Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann 2006, p. 140.

night: This country was a place where old traditions can live alongside new and modern lifestyles. Old and new have an equal right to exist, and, furthermore, they can complete each other.

Representing Austria as a very diverse, modern nation when hosting the ESC, is only one part of the equation. What about cultural heritage when it comes to choosing a contestant? If winning is the main priority, what roles do language, traditions and national values play? Do they even stand a chance against modern and mainstream music that goes with the spirit of time?

Apart from a trophy and earning the right to host the next ESC, there are no material rewards for winning, yet the hope for commercial success and an international career attracts many artists to try their luck.³ In the first years of Eurovision, Austria sent songs about waltz, Viennese air and nostalgia. Yet, reminiscing about bygone imperialistic times, when the Austrian empire was large and of significance, was no longer the status quo. Austria still needed to find its place in a postwar world, and get rid of its bad reputation, molded by the Nazi regime. The double sidedness of Austria's role in WWII - being a victim and responsible at the same time - has been resonating in the representation of Austrian identity ever since. As an annual event, the ESC is an opportunity to showcase national identity and reshape the international perception of Austria.⁴

The purpose of this paper is to display the ways Austria used the Eurovision Song Contest as an opportunity to brand itself as a bridge builder and to reposition itself in a post war Europe. By analysing Austria's contestants throughout the years I'd like to try to explain how Austrian identity was represented and how it correlates with the aim of winning. I want to show what has happened in the one year Austria took center stage in the ESC world, after Conchita Wurst had won, and how this new found self-esteem helped to reinvent the nation's image, where classical music and alpine landscapes have dominated the international perception of this small, central European country for a long time.

³ Dean Vuletic, *Postwar Europe and the Eurovision Song Contest*, London: Bloomsbury 2018, p. 1.

⁴ Ibid., p. 62.

In the process of writing this paper the topic had taken on many different directions, as new questions arose. Including 2019, Austria has participated 52 times in the ESC, which means 52 different identities, personalities and songs - finding a leitmotif is nearly impossible. Just like a nation's brand, that tries to catch the essence, identity can't be generalized as one homogeneous adjective or noun to describe what is in fact Austrian. Yet, researching national identity represented in music can help to understand the challenge that a country like Austria, with a rich (classical) musical history, has to face. Its cultural reputation precedes Austria, which on the one hand helps its international prestige, but on the other hand pressures the creative scene to maintain a high standard. The burden of living up to its name becomes apparent in the ESC year after year. For a long period of time, the ESC was dismissed as irrelevant in Austria, but with Conchita's victory Austria's perspective has changed overnight.

To get more information on the terminology of nation and identity, I start with an approach of definition, based on Benedict Anderson's book *Imagined Communities*, moving on to Austria's history since the First Republic up to today, as a member of the EU, and how Austrian identity altered throughout the decades.

Following is a chapter on nation branding and its complex of problems, built on the arguments of Simon Anholt and Paul Jordan, and how (Austrian) nation branding influences the ESC, where political disputes often resonate on and off stage. The next chapter examines Austrian identity in music, from classical music to Austropop, the impact on tourism and the economy, and the set of problems with the term "Heimat", from it being annexed by right wing populism to being an indefinable term that triggers a lot of debates even nowadays. To close the chapter on Austrian identity in music I examine Austria's entries in the ESC year by year. In order to see how different national identity can be represented in pop culture and how variably "Heimat" can be valued and interpreted, I want to take a closer look at Andreas Gabalier and Conchita Wurst, two of Austria's most successful, polarising and conflictive musicians. Both are examples of what Austrian identity can look like in the present – from rural to urban. For more information, I interviewed Marco Schreuder, Eurovision fan and expert and part of Conchita's delegation in

Copenhagen 2014. The last chapter will cover the year 2015, when Austria hosted the ESC for the second time, to demonstrate how the ORF orchestrated each component to maintain Austria's reputation as a cultural superpower. In the end I will argue whether Austria managed to get rid of antiquated stereotypes through participating and hosting the ESC and how the motto i.e. brand "Building Bridges" relates to Austria's identity.

Next to Benedict Anderson's book *Imagined Communities*, I have worked intensely with Irving Wolther's *Kampf der Kulturen - der Eurovision Song Contest als Mittel national-kultureller Repräsentation*, Dean Vuletic's *Postwar Europe and the Eurovision Song Contest* and *Eurovision Song Contest - Eine kleine Geschichte zwischen Körper, Geschlecht und Nation*, edited by Christine Ehardt, Georg Vogt, and Florian Wagner, *Friede, Freude, Quotenbringer - #60JahreSongcontest* by Mario R. Lackner and Oliver Rau and chapters from Dafni Tragaki's *Empire of Song: Europe and Nation in the Eurovision Song Contest* and Ivan Raykoff and Robert Deam Tobin's *A Song for Europe – Popular Music and Politics in the Eurovision Song Contest*. Since the Austrian media coverage of the ESC in Vienna is of great significance, I extended my search for sources to the websites of the Austrian press, especially the ORF, *Der Standard* and *Die Presse* and the *Austria Presse Agentur (APA)*. Lyrics and voting results are taken from www.diggiloo.net, respectively transcribed from recordings on Youtube.

I. The Nation and National Identity

1. Nation, Nationality and Nationalism

The terms nation, nationality and nationalism are very hard to define. Broadly speaking one could say that nationality is a state, nationalism is an attitude,⁵ but there is no precise scientific definition and the theoretical debate will probably never end.⁶ Nationality and nationalism are cultural products that can be applied to various social areas and they can be linked with political and ideological constellations.⁷ The issue of defining nationalism gets more complicated when it is unconsciously being categorized as an ideology just like liberalism or fascism, as it automatically has a negative connotation.

Anderson gives an anthropological definition of a nation: "It is an imagined political community - imagined as bordered and sovereign."⁸ It is imagined, because the members of even the smallest nation will never know, meet or hear of everyone else inside said nation, but the imagination of a community exists in everyone's mind.⁹ It is imagined as bordered, because even the largest community of people lives inside certain borders, beyond other nations.¹⁰ It is imagined as sovereign, because the term was born in a time when the legitimacy of the by the grace of god intended hierarchic-dynastic realms was destroyed by the age of enlightenment and revolution. The term matured with the upcoming of religious pluralism, the territorial spreading of faith and the development of diverse ontological rights to faith. On that account nations dream of being free and independent - albeit under God. The

⁵ Taruskin, Richard: Art. "Nationalism", in: Sadie, Stanley / Tyrell, John (eds.), *The New Grove. Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Vol. 17, London: Macmillan Publishers Limited 2001, p. 689.

⁶ Benedict Anderson, *Die Erfindung der Nation. Zur Karriere eines erfolgreichen Konzepts*, Frankfurt/Main: Campus Verlag 1996, p. 13.

⁷ Ibid., p. 14.

⁸ Ibid., p. 15.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 16.

symbol of this freedom is the sovereign state. Ultimately, nation is imagined as a community, because it is understood as a comradely union of equals.¹¹

The origin of a national consciousness - and therefore the origin of a national identity - can be found in the development of language. According to Anderson, three facts led from a religious worldview and therefore Latin as an ultimate, universal language to national languages. First, the change of Latin itself: through the revival of pre-Christian literature the works of antique authors received a new appreciation and the language moved away from the mundane and churchly use. Through the mystic content of these written words the language itself became a mystery.¹² The second fact is the impact of the Reformation, which again owed its success to the growing book market. Before the letterpress it was easy for Rome to win the battle against heresy, but after Martin Luther's theses were translated into German, they spread very fast. Soon, a religious propaganda war started in Europe that would last an entire century. The coalition between the book market and Protestantism assured a wide circle of readers - especially women and traders who wouldn't understand Latin very well - that were mobilized for political and religious purposes. Not only was the Catholic Church cut to the quick, because another result of this earthquake were the emergence of the Dutch Republic and the Commonwealth of the Puritans, the first major European states that weren't dynasties or city states.¹³

The third fact was the rather slow assertion of national languages. After the collapse of the Western Roman Empire no ruler could monopolize Latin and raise it to an exclusive state language - compared to for example Mandarin in imperial China. Therefore, several languages of government could evolve.¹⁴ The esoteric use of Latin, the Reformation and the evolvement of languages of government were all part of the dethronement of Latin and thus the erosion of the holy community of Christianity.¹⁵

¹¹ Ibid., p. 17.

¹² Ibid., p. 46.

¹³ Ibid., p. 47.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 48.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 49.

The literary languages formed the base for national consciousness in three different ways. First, people who used different French, English or Spanish idioms could not communicate amongst each other, except through the help of letterpress and paper. Thus, millions of people became aware of their own speech range and furthermore they became aware that they exclusively belonged to that speech range. Connected by the letterpress they were the beginning of a national imagined community.¹⁶ Second, the printed book slowed down the alteration of the languages. While the French language of the 12th century was clearly different to the French language of the 16th century, all European languages had reached their modern form by the 17th century. The book market helped the languages to secure a picture of bygone times, which was significant in the subjective imagination of nation.¹⁷ And third, the book market created new “power languages” which distinctively differed to languages of government of older times. Certain dialects were simply closer to literary languages. Other less successful languages had to adjust to literary languages and became less important because their own written form couldn’t sustain. Low German had to assimilate to Schriftdeutsch and became Plattdeutsch, which was basically solely spoken, and therefore a dialect of the high-level language. That way High German and King’s English had an essential status in politics and culture.¹⁸ Degraded by the letterpress Latin, Greek and Hebrew had the same mundane status than all the other plebeian, rivalling languages. They were all equally worth of worship and promotion and were no longer owned by the Church, but by the talking and reading people.¹⁹

The general increase of the alphabetization in trade, industry, communication and national organisation in the 19th century gave power to the national languages in the dynasties. In Austria-Hungary Latin was still the official language in the early 1840s, but then vanished almost immediately as other languages established themselves in science, press, literature, or the business world.²⁰ It wasn’t a nationalistic interest that guided the Habsburgs to replace Latin with German; it was

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 51.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 52.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 75.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 83.

much more the wish for unity and universalism in their realm.²¹ After World War I, the era of dynasties was over. The Berlin Congress was replaced by the League of Nations where non-Europeans weren't excluded anymore. From this time on the nation-state was the legitimate international norm and the national costume replaced the imperial uniforms of the colonial powers.²²

2. Austrian Identity and the First Republic

The plurality of languages, religions and cultures in the Habsburg monarchy became a problem with the development of modern nationalism, which was primarily defined by language, culture and "race". The uniting elements of the state were next to the dynasty, the officialdom and the army, mostly symbolic: Haydn's Emperor's Anthem, emblems and flags, and the Austrian diet. Especially the latter shows the influence and connections beyond the nation's border: The Wiener Schnitzel from Milan, the German Schweinebraten with Sauerkraut and Bohemian Knödel, Palatschinken from Romania and the Hungarian Gulyás are examples for those alleged commonalities.²³

Considering Anderson's argument, that the origin of a national identity can be found in the development of language (see p. 14.), an Austrian identity could only evolve slowly in an empire that once consisted of more than a dozen languages. The collapse of the multi-ethnic state brought a reshaping of Central Europe and thus the basic idea of a nation state and the right of self-determination for the people. Yet in the case of Austria, this right didn't come into effect after the proclamation of the republic German-Austria in 1918. It perceived itself as a part of Germany and therefore didn't develop its own Austrian identity. Whoever was nationalistic in the First republic, wasn't Austrian, but "Alldeutsch", and rejected the land he or she lived in as a political sovereign entity.²⁴

²¹ Ibid., p. 89.

²² Ibid., p. 115.

²³ Karl Vocelka, *Geschichte Österreichs. Kultur - Gesellschaft - Politik*, München: Wilhelm Heyne Verlag 2000, p. 14.

²⁴ Ibid.

With the takeover of the National Socialists many peered at the political and economic success of Germany, yet the price that was to be paid (primarily the persecution of Jews and the rearmament) was disavowed. Any form of identity building was mostly based on the emphasis of the great cultural heritage, especially music. This cultural duty constructed continuity and united the small, politically insignificant state with the greatness of the monarchy.²⁵ Only with the Austrofascism from 1934 to 1938, an ideological resistance against Nazi-Germany started to form, in which some see the core of Austrian consciousness. Rulers conventionalised Austria as “the better Germany”, where Catholicism and culture built the foundation for the nation and its affable and friendly people. Many of those clichés are still being spread today.²⁶

Characteristic for the crisis after 1918 (as well as after 1945) was the escape into culture. The small state perceived itself as a great cultural power, a musical stronghold. It became a stereotype that was marketed worldwide. Alongside music, the monarchy, the former emperors, baroque castles and monasteries were what the Austrians identified themselves with. Landscapes, literature and science (except maybe Sigmund Freud) took the back seat. Starting with the Anschluss, Austria didn't exist anymore and so the sense of identity developed further. After 1945, the demarcation from Germany and the Germans was standing in the foreground. Only a couple of decades after German had become the main factor to help create a common identity, it has now fallen into disrepute on some level.

Official history politics have generally overplayed the dimension of Austria's resistance and state that only Germans seemed to have been National Socialists and anti-Semites. Thereby National Socialism was externalized and shown as something that was imposed from the outside.²⁷ The often quoted saying that the

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 16.

²⁷ Renée Winter in: Magdalena Fürkranz and Ursula Hemetek (eds.), *Performing Sexual Identities. Nationalities on the Eurovision Stage*, Vienna: Department of Folk Music Research and Ethnomusicology 2017, p. 46.

Austrians knew how to portray Hitler as German and Beethoven as Austrian might be striking, yet not completely untrue.²⁸

3. Postwar Austria

After the proclamation of the Second Republic in the last days of WWII, France, Great Britain, the USA and the Soviet Union decided that Austria should be a sovereign state once again. In the Moscow Declarations from 1943 the Allies state their goal of declaring the Anschluss of Austria to Hitler-Germany void after the war would end. With it they also declare Austria to be the first victim of National Socialism, but at the same time it contained the responsibility clause which holds Austria accountable for participating in WWII.²⁹

In November 1945, the first democratic parliamentary elections were held in Austria and the People's Party (ÖVP), the Socialist Party (SPÖ) and the Communist Party (KPÖ) formed a government, yet parliament and administration couldn't make free decisions, since the Allies had reserved the power of decision for another ten years. Austria and Vienna were divided into four zones and were administered by the victorious power. With the help of the Marshall Plan Austria could be rebuilt and after ten years of negotiations of the Allies, a peace treaty, the "Staatsvertrag" (Secretary of State Leopold Figl managed to have the co-responsibility clause of the Moscow declarations removed before the signing)³⁰, was set up. Austria regained full independence in 1955. On October 26th of that year, parliament decided the perpetual neutrality for Austria. With the following economic growth, the lives of the Austrians got better and they therefore started to believe in the nation's future, which contributed to the development of an Austrian identity. The reconstruction of the Staatsoper and the Burgtheater and the introduction of festivals were symbols of

²⁸ Vöclka 2000, p. 16.

²⁹ "Moskauer Deklaration vor 60 Jahren abgegeben", www.derstandard.at (November 3rd, 2003), <https://derstandard.at/1461111/Moskauer-Deklaration-vor-60-Jahren-abgegeben>, last access June 30, 2019.

³⁰ Renée Winter in: Fürnkranz and Hemetek (eds.) 2017, p. 46.

this newly found identity. The fear of a small, unliveable state slowly gave way to the commitment to Austria's independence. Over the years, more and more people felt like Austrians as opposed to Germans.³¹

Many people moved from the countryside to the cities to work, yet Austria was dependent on workmen from abroad, which made it a country of immigration. The economic success and important reforms (e.g. educational reform, family law reform) in the 1970s allowed a social rise for many which meant a widespread interest in a modern and liberal Austria.

In 1986 Austria stood in the international spotlight. During his election campaign for the presidential chair, former secretary-general of the United Nations Kurt Waldheim was accused of having served in the German army and being involved in the war crimes of WWII. Austria was politically sidelined during his presidency that lasted until 1992, with many countries not permitting him to visit.³² The Waldheim scandal cleared the way for the rise of Jörg Haider and the right-wing party FPÖ (Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs) and therefore contributed to new, problematic "Austrianness". In the 1990s Jörg Haider "strategically shifted from pan-Germanism toward a rhetoric of the Austrian body politic ('Volkskörper'), using a term intrinsically linked with National Socialism."³³

In 1989 Austria's situation in Europe changed. With the fall of the Iron Curtain, Austria was no longer a country on the East-West-border of Europe, but right in its middle, which also meant a change in Austria's economy. Tourists from Eastern Europe and business expansions made the Austrian economy more international, yet its wealth was also more dependent on the state of the European and international economy.³⁴

Austria entered the European Union in 1995. Other than the fact that political developments and legislative processes are now more affected by decisions of the European parliament, the entry also brought the Euro in 2002, studying programs

³¹ Vöclka 2000, p. 17.

³² Regina Bendix in: Ulf Hannerz and Andre Gingrich (eds.), *Small Countries. Structures and Sensibilities*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 2017, p. 189.

³³ Ibid., p. 190.

³⁴ <http://www.staatsbuergerschaft.gv.at/index.php?id=40>, last access June 30th, 2019.

like Erasmus and legal improvement for other EU citizens in Austria. It also meant another reorientation in identity: the Austrians had just found themselves as Austrians, but now the new Europeanness influenced this self-perception. Yet, Austria underwent its victimhood once again: when Jörg Haider and the Freedom Party came into government in 2000, the EU imposed sanctions upon Austria for electing a party in breach of the member states' shared values. No other EU member had experienced such sanctions before.³⁵

The expansion of the EU and therefore the internationalisation of the Austrian economy made it one of the richest countries in the world, which also makes it an attractive immigration country; the immigrants in turn contribute to its wealth. Non-natives constitute a substantial component for the workforce, from high- to low-skilled professionals, which causes social tension and nourishes a climate for anti-immigration politics.³⁶ Out of 8,5 million citizens, 1,4 million were born in another country: every 6th Austrian is an immigrant.³⁷ Austria now consists of nine federal states and one official language, German, but Hungarian, Slovene and Croatian are accepted in certain regions. Minority languages and the inclusion of Islam, next to Judaism, Catholicism and Protestantism, maintain aspects of a historical pluralism.³⁸

4. Austria and the “Other”

What makes an Austrian Austrian is an ambivalent question, since there are many kinds of Austrian identity; e.g. Austria is a cultural land, an alpine land, a land of inventions or a land that is still coming to terms with its past. A national affiliation through language, culture and history might be an outdated concept since many

³⁵ Bendix in: Hannerz and Gingrich (eds.) 2017, p. 179.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 175.

³⁷ <http://www.staatsbuergerschaft.gv.at/index.php?id=40>, last access June 30th, 2019.

³⁸ Bendix in: Hannerz and Gingrich (eds.) 2017, p. 182.

weren't born Austrian, but later "learned" to be Austrian. Especially the commitment to nation's values characterises this affiliation, which in the case of Austria means the commitment to democracy and human rights, for which you don't have to be born in Austria.³⁹ Identity can also be established by differentiating and excluding of the "other" in culture, food, religion, sports, language, mentality, fashion and achievements, where rituals and symbols play a big part. To be able to imagine an "us" there must also be a "them".⁴⁰ The everlasting dispute with the German language exemplifies this differentiation; possibly triggered by the fear of losing a part of one's national identity in the course of assimilating to the EU, and therefore moving closer to Germany again, the distinction between Austrian German and German German caused an emotional debate, for instance insisting on the word "Erdäpfelsalat" as opposed to "Kartoffelsalat", both meaning potato salad.⁴¹

Another linguistic peculiarity that has survived to this day can be found in the charm of typical Viennese coffee houses. The often as gruff perceived waiters sometimes address guests in the third person ("Has the gentle lady finished with her coffee?"), a habit that linguistically recalls the distance between aristocracy and others.⁴² As Regina Bendix argues: "It is a reminder of everyone's performance of self - no one is truly one with his identity. The gusto with which such deference is remembered, and re-enacted, even if done playfully, creates a link to the past; the pretence constructs a present still enamoured of pseudo-meritocratic forms of address."⁴³ Yet, what unites all Austrians are the achievements of democracy and the constitutional state, like the separation of church and state, which built the foundation of a functioning society, and also includes immigration and the appreciation of the positive economical contribution of immigrants.⁴⁴

³⁹ Monika Sommer, "Was macht einen Österreicher zum Österreicher", www.kurier.at (October 26th, 2017), <https://kurier.at/wissen/monika-sommer-direktorin-des-hauses-der-geschichte-ueber-oesterreichische-identitaet/294.288.858>, last access June 30th, 2019.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Vocolka 2000, p. 9.

⁴² Bendix in: Hannerz and Gingrich (eds.) 2017, p. 188.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Vocolka 2000, p. 9.

II. Nation Branding

1. What is Nation Branding?

Nation branding - in short - is the attempt to assign a nation with a trademark to shape an international perception, by condensing a nation's cultural, social, geographical and economical essence and using this essence to their advantage.⁴⁵ It communicates a nation's policies and culture to an international audience, as policy advisor Simon Anholt argues:

"We'd reached a stage of history where every country, every city is competing with every other country and every city. [...] This is the consequence of globalisation. They're competing for tourists, investment, capital, talent, for the attention and respect of the world's media, and many other things as well. [...] One of the most significant factors in competitive advantage was not in fact reality, but perception. The reason for this being that most of our customers, those potential tourists, those potential investors know very little about the reality of cities and countries, but they do have very strong views about them. Countries and cities have got images, and I made a parallel with the commercial marketplace, I said that they have brand images, just like products. And just like products, the brand image of a country or city is its most valuable asset, because it's the only thing people know about it. They don't know what the majorities of countries and cities really have to offer but they certainly know what they believe about them. And so paradoxically, perception in the age of globalisation has become more important than reality. And therefore [...] every responsible government needs to be a brand manager, as much as it is a policy maker, and its task as a government is to understand how its country, its city, its region is perceived internationally, and to try to do what it can do to preserve and improve that reputation."⁴⁶

Often nation branding becomes visible e.g. in the wrestling with other states to execute international events, such as the Olympics, football world championships, or world congresses. It is ultimately the manifestation of Joseph Nye's concept of soft power, since "it represents a desire by the countries concerned to make people want to pay attention to their particular nation state, their achievements, and belief in their qualities."⁴⁷ Paul Jordan argues, that the conflict of "Othering" arises since

⁴⁵ Alena Schmuck, "Was sind wir wert?", www.thegap.at (September 12, 2012), <https://thegap.at/was-sind-wir-wert/>, last access June 30th, 2019.

⁴⁶ Simon Anholt, Keynote speech at Eurocities Munich 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=094PjFRAELg>, 0:54 - 2:47, last access June 30th, 2019.

⁴⁷ Paul Jordan, *Nation Branding: A Tool for Nationalism?* in: Journal of Baltic Studies 45:3 2014, p. 284.

through nation branding a nation states not only what it is, but also what it is not, by differentiating between itself and other nations. Additionally, the regionalism within a nation is marketed as one homogeneous entity outside, which is problematic because no matter the size of a nation, an existing pluralism can't be harmonised. Thus, according to Jordan, nation branding is always in conflict with nation building and "a highly politicised activity that affects the way in which national identity is communicated, understood and contested".⁴⁸

Nation branding is a very lucrative business for consultancy agencies: Australia has invested over 205 million euros in three years, South Korea spends 60 million euros every year for the fear of being overshadowed by North Korea's media presence, and in 2009, Kosovo has invested almost 6 million euros in a campaign. Companies, tourists and talents should be attracted, exports should be raised, and diplomatic relations should be improved. Furthermore, the national self-assurance should be strengthened in the process of branding.⁴⁹ The task of slogans such as "Amazing Azerbaijan", "Incredible India", "Welcome to Estonia: Positively transforming" or "Brückenbauer Österreich" for that matter, is to simultaneously reach out to the three large audience groups: businesses, politicians and tourists.⁵⁰

Jordan also raises the complex questions of "How can one brand reflect the diversity of identities and opinions of a society?". Many stereotypes of a nation have evolved over centuries and it is hard to believe that they can be eradicated through a focussed marketing campaign.⁵¹ As Simon Anholt argues, nations have to be branded to be more visible and competitive in an increasingly globalized world, yet what happens when you brand something so complex as a nation or a national identity? It manipulates an image not only outward, but at the same time it constructs boundaries within a nation. It can plant a falsified history and memories and it can encapsulate a nation. Therefore, the attempt to shape and control an image of a nation might not be as innocent as it seems at first sight. In the case of Estonia and

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 286.

⁴⁹ Alena Schmuck, "Was sind wir wert?", www.thegap.at, (September 12, 2012), <https://thegap.at/was-sind-wir-wert/>, last access June 30, 2019.

⁵⁰ Jordan 2014, p. 286.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 299.

its nation branding in 2001/2002, Jordan calls it “representing a friendlier face of nationalism to a global audience.”⁵²

2. Austrian Brand: Bridge Builder

Tourism relies on the circulation of images, and in the case of Austria, the capital Vienna with its countless buildings that are declared a historic monument, is the main supplier. Together with its art and music heritage it dominates the international advertising of Austria.⁵³ Yet, the country’s image hasn’t developed much in the past decades. This lack of progression has a negative effect on the economy, since entrepreneurs don’t see Austria as lucrative business location, as well as on tourism, as it fails to reach young people. What’s missing, is a coherent overall picture that Austria represents to the outside world.⁵⁴

To that end, the Austrian government wanted to study the question of what characterizes the core of Austria and how it wants to be perceived abroad in 2011. Austria should become a real brand. Simon Anholt was hired to deliberate with officials from economy, culture, politics and sports to come up with a national brand. The result, that cost 600.000 euro, came from the past: Referring to the time between 1989 and 2004, the fall of the iron curtain and the EU-enlargement, where Austria acted as a mediating platform between east and west, politically and economically, it should position itself as a bridge builder even stronger.⁵⁵

Yet, the problem with these government ordered brandings is, that it is merely a brief project most of the times, because it is expensive and doesn’t mean great success right away.⁵⁶ The state might only notice the benefit decades later, when

⁵² Ibid., p. 300.

⁵³ Bendix in: Hannerz and Gingrich (eds.) 2017, p. 176.

⁵⁴ Alena Schmuck, “Was sind wir wert?”, www.thegap.at, (September 12th, 2012), <https://thegap.at/was-sind-wir-wert/>, last access June 30, 2019.

⁵⁵ Jeaninne Binder, “Nation Branding: Die Marke Österreich schläft”, www.diepresse.at, (October 26th, 2016), https://diepresse.com/home/wirtschaft/eco1848/5107484/Nation-Branding_Die-Marke-Oesterreich-schlaeft, last access June 30, 2019.

⁵⁶ Alena Schmuck, “Was sind wir wert?”, www.thegap.at (September 12th, 2012), <https://thegap.at/was-sind-wir-wert/>, last access June 30, 2019.

there is a new government in power. For that reason, Anholt now refrains from the term “nation branding”, since it seems to promise that all it takes is money and a good marketing strategy to profoundly change a nation’s international perception.⁵⁷ Anholt sees the solution in a new approach to governance that he calls “competitive identity”; by changing their behaviour and “doing good and talking about it”, nations can actually effectively improve their image.⁵⁸ In his opinion, Austria’s image is generally positive but quite irrelevant and outdated.⁵⁹ Of course that was in 2012, two years before Conchita brought the ESC to Vienna. She also advances the view of putting “we” before “I”, as she expressed in her biography: “Wo Angst herrscht, herrscht auch wirtschaftlicher Stillstand. Wo die Menschen freiheitsliebend und liberal sind, kommt der Erfolg. Krisen werden leichter gemeistert, in der Zukunft sieht man keine Bedrohung.”⁶⁰

3. Politics, Nationalism and Nation Branding in the Eurovision Song Contest

The ESC was born during the Cold War. Officially, political statements in entries have been banned in the contest since the year 2000, yet politics can be seen and heard every year, especially in times of political crisis.⁶¹ Irving Wolther describes it as a staged media event with a ritualistic character that is being instrumentalized to communicate certain political contents.⁶² The ESC has mastered the “art” of Joseph

⁵⁷ Alena Schmuck, “Ein malerisches Nebengewässer”, www.thegap.at, (September 24th, 2012), <https://thegap.at/ein-malerisches-europaeisches-nebengewasser/>, last access June 30, 2019.

⁵⁸ Alena Schmuck, “Was sind wir wert?”, www.thegap.at (September 12th, 2012), <https://thegap.at/was-sind-wir-wert/>, last access June 30, 2019.

⁵⁹ Alena Schmuck, “Ein malerisches Nebengewässer”, www.thegap.at (September 24th, 2012), <https://thegap.at/ein-malerisches-europaeisches-nebengewasser/>, last access June 30, 2019.

⁶⁰ Conchita Wurst, *Ich, Conchita: meine Geschichte; we are unstoppable*, Munich: Langen Müller 2015, p. 95.

⁶¹ Vuletic 2018, p. 3.

⁶² Wolther 2006, p. 122.

Nye's concept of soft power: instead of confrontation and explicitness there is persuasion and suggestiveness; it is "politics that is read between the lines".⁶³

The very fact that it is a contest of nations makes it political. Italy's "Insieme: 1992", Germany's "Ein bisschen Frieden" or Austria's "Keine Mauern mehr" are examples for songs with a clear political message, but politics in the ESC doesn't only come through in lyrics. The event serves as a platform for rebranding nations and presenting national identity, from waving flags and incorporating national traditional elements, to sending political messages, and it has done so from the early years on. One of the first examples was the ESC in Copenhagen in 1964, when a political activist climbed the stage with a banner encouraging the boycott of the dictatorships in Spain and Portugal (Portugal participated for the first time that year). It shows an early awareness for this unique possibility of political activism provided by the media.⁶⁴ In 1969, Austria refused to participate in Madrid to take a stand against Franco's regime. Due to Turkey's first entry in 1975, Greece withdrew its participation and returned the following year with "Panaghia mou" ("My Homeland") to protest the Turk's invasion of Cyprus. During the Falklands War in 1982, Spain contributed a tango at the final in Harrogate, England.⁶⁵

Not only the contestants, but also the viewers and many people around the event get involved: In Baku in 2012 opposition activists protested in front of the Azeri Public Television and Radio Broadcasting Company to achieve the release of political prisoners only a few days before the final.⁶⁶

The ESC 2014 was no exception. Just like politically loaded lyrics, the choice of the performer going to Eurovision can be a political statement, for example Austria's inclusion of the LGBTQ community by sending Conchita Wurst. The Russia-Ukraine conflict has been accompanying the event in a very obvious way. When the Russian

⁶³ A.F. Bohlman and Rehding in: Tragaki, Dafni (ed.), *Empire of Song: Europe and Nation in the Eurovision Song Contest*, Lanham, MD and Plymouth: The Scarecrow Press 2013, p. 282.

⁶⁴ Annemette Kirkegaard in: Tragaki (ed.), *Empire of Song: Europe and Nation in the Eurovision Song Contest*, Lanham, MD and Plymouth: The Scarecrow Press 2013, p. 85.

⁶⁵ Ivan Raykoff in: Raykoff and Tobin (eds.), *A Song for Europe – Popular Music and Politics in the Eurovision Song Contest*, Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate 2007, p.3.

⁶⁶ "Protestors Target Eurovision Preparations", www.telegraph.co.uk (May 25th, 2012), <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/azerbaijan/9289299/Protesters-target-Eurovision-Song-Contest-preparations.html>, last access June 30, 2019.

Tolmachevy sisters performed “Shine” standing on a seesaw being tied together by their hair and ripping apart in a dramatic gesture while singing “*maybe there’s a place, maybe there’s a time, maybe there’s a day you’ll be mine*”, one could feel a tension building up in the arena. It shamefully culminated in the audience booing the twin sisters off the stage. Just as inappropriate were the harsh criticisms Conchita had to face. Russia’s Wladimir Schirinowski, a nationalistic member of parliament, called her victory the demise of Europe, and stated that it was a mistake to give Austria freedom after the Soviet army occupied it until 1955.⁶⁷ The win of a drag queen and the booing of the Tolmachevy sisters, who, to him, embodied what real and pure women were supposed to be, were a case of Europe against Russia, or West against East. Interestingly, the Russian audience voted Conchita in a notable third place.⁶⁸ Sending the innocent 17-year-old twins was a political message in disguise. Sure enough it wasn’t the girls’ intention to be a mouthpiece for Russian politics, they were however exploited from both sides to be a canvas for a newly erupted conflict.

The Ukrainian singer Jamala on the other hand very intentionally used the ESC stage to point a finger at the Ukraine-Russia dispute in 2016. Claiming her song “1944” was about her family’s history and therefore non-political, she managed to convince the jury to let her participate, qualify for the final and win the ESC. The following year the Russian singer Julia Somajlowa was disqualified by the Ukrainian Security Service for breaking the Ukrainian law, because she performed at a gala concert in Kertsch on the Crimean peninsula without having a Ukrainian passport. The EBU (European Broadcasting Union) tried to mediate between the two countries and suggested a live stream from Moscow as a compromise, but Russia announced that they wouldn’t be participating in 2017.⁶⁹ The three Ukrainian hosts stated they wanted them to participate, but unfortunately, Russia denied all of their suggestions. The hosts also said that the Song Contest will be used as a platform

⁶⁷ “ESC-Reaktionen aus Russland: Das ist das Ende Europas”, www.diepresse.at (May 11th, 2014), https://diepresse.com/home/kultur/popco/3803886/ESCReaktionen-aus-Russland_Das-ist-das-Ende-Europas, last access June 30, 2019.

⁶⁸ Yulia Yurtaeva in: Ehardt, Vogt and Wagner (eds.) 2015, p. 111.

⁶⁹ Thomas Seifert, “Song Contest im politischen Kreuzfeuer”, www.wienerzeitung.at (May 8th, 2017), http://www.wienerzeitung.at/nachrichten/kultur/medien/890802_Song-Contest-im-politischen-Kreuzfeuer.html, last access June 30, 2019.

for Ukraine to show “that we can sing and smile albeit the problems and that we feel connected to Europe.”⁷⁰

When discussing the issue of nationalism and politics in the ESC, one has to keep in mind, that it is a contest of TV-stations, the members of the EBU, and not primarily of countries or for that matter musicians. So, when a contestant is being confronted with the accusation of being nationalistic, one primarily has to direct the delegation and TV-station that plans and writes the artists’ concept. Just like sporting events, the ESC focuses on the issue of national identity and esteem in an international setting.⁷¹ The nationalism in the ESC might be a softer version than at a football game for example, but it is nonetheless there. Whether you are into football or the ESC, you cheer on your own nation. Therefore, nation does play an important role in the contest: i.e. when there was only one more open spot left to go through to the grand final in 2014 and Conchita was still waiting for the result, one could hear the crowd chant “Austria! Austria!”, and not “Conchita! Conchita!”. Marco Schreuder though argues, that one must distinguish between a nationalism that pursues political goals and a nationalism in which local and regional traditions are being “dressed up in a pop-costume”.⁷²

Like in every other contest there has to be rivalry - in this case between nations; but since you are not allowed to vote for your own country, you have to give your points to another contestant, another nation. Bloc voting between Scandinavian countries, the Benelux, the Baltic states and the Balkans has been debated often; a collective identity, formed by cultural, historical and political ties between (often neighbouring) countries, makes for loyal allies in the ESC, e.g. there have been religious disputes and civil wars between the Balkan states for hundreds of years, but the countries are still voting for each other since politics might change, but old alliances last.⁷³ In the case of Austria, the generally safe ten or twelve points from and to Germany have gone missing in the last couple of years, whereas the fairly high points from

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Alf Björnberg in: Raykoff and Tobin (eds.) 2007, p. 14.

⁷² Schreuder Interview 2017, see appendix.

⁷³ Katja Rudolph, “Nationalismus beim Eurovision Song Contest: Band in Lederhosen wäre Kitch”, www.hna.de (April 4th, 2014), <https://www.hna.de/kassel/eurovision-song-contest-ere25867/band-lederhosen-waere-kitsch-3535037.html>, last access June 30, 2019.

and to Hungary, Croatia and so forth evoke the memory of the long past Danube-monarchy. These voting habits display the effects of European migration in the ESC: many Serbs, Romanians, Poles and Hungarians live and work in Austria, but vote for their home countries.⁷⁴ Additionally, the “Next-Door-Giant-Effect” explains the unneighbourly reward from Austria to Germany, according to Irving Wolther: Small states give their large neighbours only low points due to their economic and political predominance.⁷⁵ This “diminishing” of the superior neighbouring state in the awarding of points might be one of the reasons why the voting section of the ESC is so popular with the audience.

The ESC offers a stage to act out national consciousness. Small nations such as San Marino or Malta are given the opportunity to play an equal role in the international recognition as Russia, Germany or the United Kingdom. Every nation can consciously act out nationality and national identity, just like the fans dressing in their national colours and waving flags. With the incorporation of world music into mainstream culture came the ESC’s turn to “ethnic-pop”.⁷⁶ The representation of the participating countries indigenous musical styles is not mandatory, yet it has often been implied or regarded as desirable.⁷⁷ Performances with typical national elements were promoted in the ESC rules in 2002: “It is recommended that each song or its performance should express some “national flavour”.”⁷⁸ It might be reasonable to assume, that this “national flavour” is purposefully utilized to create suspense in a competitive situation.⁷⁹ Performers and their songs can represent cultural meanings associated with issues of national, regional and European identity and their representation,⁸⁰ but showcasing national-cultural elements through the nation’s individual entries might not always be the result of a deliberate consideration of the broadcaster. Often it is much more a subconscious identification by the members of a certain nation with its cultural elements expressed through

⁷⁴ Björnberg in: Raykoff and Tobin (eds.) 2007, p. 18.

⁷⁵ Wolther 2006, p. 147.

⁷⁶ Björnberg in: Raykoff and Tobin (eds.) 2007, p. 23.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 19.

⁷⁸ European Broadcasting Union 2002, p. 5, quoted after Wolther 2006, p. 86.

⁷⁹ Wolther 2006, p. 87.

⁸⁰ Björnberg in: Raykoff and Tobin (eds.) 2007, p. 15.

music and performance.⁸¹ One prime example is Guildo Horn's performance of "Guildo hat euch lieb" in Birmingham 1998. The satirical song was targeted at Germany's Schlager tradition with its nostalgic lyrics and easy listening sounds. The implied references had a specific significance to the German (and maybe Austrian) audience, but the rest of Europe could only vaguely understand or perceive the performance as humorous.⁸²

Marco Schreuder argues that authenticity shouldn't be underestimated when it comes to national traditional sounds, as it can be used improperly or misinterpreted: "Authentizität kann aber auch ein missbräuchlich verwendetes Wort sein; weil wer bestimmt was kulturell authentisch ist? Ist eine Roma-Sängerin aus Oberwart nicht auch authentisch für Österreich? Ich sage Ja, natürlich; ich bin aber auch ein liberaler weltoffener Mensch."⁸³ Here one has to differentiate between what is perceived as authentic Austrian and the pluralism of regionality. Therefore, a clear definition of what is authentic would be inadequate, as it is to be defined individually.

Yet, it is due to the dominance of catchy Eurovision pop hits like ABBA's "Waterloo", Herreys' "Diggi-loo, diggi-ley" or Charlotte Nilsson's "Take me to your heaven" that "ethnic" or national traditional sounds are received as strange and often have a negative connotation in a standardized mainstream pop music market.⁸⁴ Marco Schreuder holds the Swedes responsible, as every year a good portion of the Eurovision entries are written and composed by them which creates a pabulum.⁸⁵ Next to Loreen's winning song in 2012, nine other songs in the final (which is a third in total) were written by Swedish composers.

However, the number of folkloristic elements in the ESC has risen since the 1990's. Many entries from south-eastern European countries have been perceived as distinctly ethnic sounding, especially to a western European audience. Turkey's "Every Way That I Can" (2003) and Ukraine's "Dikiye tantsy" ("Wild Dances", 2004)

⁸¹ Thomas Seifert, "Song Contest im politischen Kreuzfeuer", www.wienerzeitung.at (May 8th, 2017) http://www.wienerzeitung.at/nachrichten/kultur/medien/890802_Song-Contest-im-politischen-Kreuzfeuer.html, last access June 30, 2019.

⁸² Andrea. F. Bohlman and Alexander Rehding in: Tragaki (ed.) 2013, p. 283.

⁸³ Schreuder Interview, 2017, see appendix.

⁸⁴ Björnberg in: Raykoff and Tobin (eds.) 2007, p. 19.

⁸⁵ Schreuder Interview 2017, see appendix.

are the successful examples of how national popular music styles have become increasingly important in the process of a creative (re)construction of national identity.⁸⁶

Nationalism often resonates in a rather discreet way. Sometimes it can be found in certain musical styles and dances, for example the Ottoman influenced Sevdalinka-songs from the Bosnian-Herzegovinian entries or the Klapa-singing in Croatia.⁸⁷ Many nations celebrate their cultural diversity; Loreen, the Swedish winner of 2012, has Moroccan parents, in 2016 Australia sent Dami Im from South Korea, and in 2017 Isaiah Firebrace, a young man with Aboriginal parents, to only name a few. By choosing these contestants the nations clearly accentuate their cultural diversity.

Singing in your national language has become more successful in the last couple of years. Jamala, winner of 2016, sang in English and Ukrainian, and Salvador Sobral was the first contestant to win with a song sung entirely in another language than English in ten years. In 1999 Sürpriz sang "Reise nach Jerusalem" in German, Turkish, English, and Hebrew for Germany. Carefully chosen and arranged by ESC proven expert Ralph Siegel - who had already been successful with multi-language songs in the ESC before - Sürpriz was rewarded with points from every country except Lithuania, Cyprus and Ireland and finished in third place. The song blended in Germany's tradition of sending messages of happiness and international peace, mixed familiar and exotic sounds.⁸⁸

On the contrary, national stereotypes, or ethnic elements in Austrian entries often came across as kitch. In 2005, when Global Kryner sang "Y Asi" in Spanish and English, a mixture of latino-pop and alpine-folklore with a large brass section, Austria came in 21st in the semi-final and didn't qualify for the final. The same goes for less experienced musicians: in 2012, when Trackshittaz competed with "Woki mit dein Popo", sung in an Upper-Austrian dialect with subtle Schuhplattler dance elements, they came in last in the semi-final. Compared to the successful entries of south-

⁸⁶ Björnberg in: Raykoff and Tobin (eds.) 2007, p. 21.

⁸⁷ Alexander Preker, "Nationalismus beim Song Contest - gibt es das?", [www.badische-zeitung.de](http://www.badische-zeitung.de/rock-pop/nationalismus-beim-eurovision-song-contest-gibt-es-das--84253790.html) (May 5th, 2014), <http://www.badische-zeitung.de/rock-pop/nationalismus-beim-eurovision-song-contest-gibt-es-das--84253790.html>, last access June 30, 2019.

⁸⁸ A.F. Bohlman and Rehding in: Tragaki (ed.) 2013, p. 292.

eastern European countries, these performances might not have been perceived as authentic.

III. Austrian Identity in Music: Two Concepts

“Tradition ist nicht die Anbetung der Asche, sondern die Weitergabe des Feuers.”⁸⁹

Whether Gustav Mahler has said these words or not is debatable, yet it is very fitting when it comes to the preservation of Austrian music traditions today.⁹⁰ Music serves the validation of cultural heritage and has historically been used to differentiate national identities.⁹¹ When a country like Austria that has such a rich classical musical history, that it imposes the epithet “Musikland” upon itself, the bar is raised extremely high for musicians, composers and musical patrons to live up to that title today, as it has two main functions: to refer to better times and to devalue competition.⁹² It is in their own and their nation’s interest to keep that title by maintaining musical traditions and at the same time to reinvent and expand them.

Austrian music is the inheritance of Mozart, Brahms and others that co-founded the Viennese School of Classical Music. This music and its historical background are being used by the state to reconstitute and rehabilitate social structures of Austrian society; they are the foundation for developing a national consciousness and the cornerstone of political power.⁹³ Based on the debatable differentiation between “Ernste Musik” (“E-Musik”, art or serious music) and “Unterhaltungs Musik” (“U-Musik”, entertainment or light music), national identity can only be founded in the former. Therefore, art music has the power to create and shape the image of a

⁸⁹ “Tradition is not the praising of the ashes, but the passing of the torch” (Translated by the author).

⁹⁰ Gerald Krieghofer, “Irrwege einer Metapher”, [www.wienerzeitung.at](https://www.wienerzeitung.at/nachrichten/reflexionen/geschichten/897102-Irrwege-einer-Metapher.html) (June 10th, 2017), <https://www.wienerzeitung.at/nachrichten/reflexionen/geschichten/897102-Irrwege-einer-Metapher.html>, last access June 30, 2019.

⁹¹ Vuletic 2018, p. 55.

⁹² Renée Winter in: Fürnkranz and Hemetek (eds.) 2017, p. 52.

⁹³ Lila Gürmen and Alexander Leitner (eds.), *Austropop*, Vienna: Verlag des Österreichischen Gewerkschaftsbundes GmbH 1995, p. 140.

nation, inside and outside.⁹⁴ Yet, musical heritage or cultural tradition doesn't stop with a certain era or the death of a composer, it undergoes a constant development and enhancement. Hence it would lead to a dead end to say that the formation of identity is solely attributed to "E-Musik".

Volksmusik transmits the tradition of a nation and differs from one ethnic group to another, from one region to another. In the general linguistic usage it describes the instrumental making of music which is bound to certain dance movements, whereas the vocal making of music is bound to lyrics. In between stands the Volkstümliche Musik in which demotic manners reflect the Austrian society and serve the entertainment.⁹⁵

In the case of the ESC, the music and interpreter take on a representative function for their nation and thereby contribute to the development of a national and cultural identity, which, in turn, helps an individual, to place oneself inside a society.⁹⁶ Another method of identity formation is the historical, linguistic, religious and cultural demarcation of neighbouring nations, which can turn out even stronger the less a nation is aware of its qualities and strengths. Thus it can be assumed, that especially small nations such as Austria, whose identity often underwent transformation, are anxious to preserve their national identity and cultural power.⁹⁷

There are two factors that determine the process of self-discovery in Austria: first, structural dependency on Germany in almost all social areas and second, the lack of a clear ethnic demarcation from the German nation.⁹⁸ The German media giants control a significant part of the film, music and newspaper market in Austria, therefore, the Austrians demand a clear distinction in politics, economy, and culture from their politicians.⁹⁹ Austropop plays an important role in this distinction: it is "not-wanting-to-be-German", but not "Anti-German", in that it is *Austropop*, but at the

⁹⁴ Georg Vogt in: Ehardt, Vogt and Wagner (eds.) 2015, p. 236.

⁹⁵ Gürmen and Leitner (eds.) 1995, p. 141.

⁹⁶ Wolther 2006, p. 59.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Gürmen and Leitner (eds.) 1995, p. 142.

⁹⁹ Edward Larkey, *Austropop: Popular Music and National Identity in Austria*, in: Popular Music 1992, p. 153.

same time it is part of the German culture.¹⁰⁰ What unites Austria and Germany is also a shared language and therefore the development and rise of Schlager music in the German-speaking part of Europe. The term originates in the commercial language where it was used to describe bestsellers. Around 1870, the term was first connected to successful songs of operettas and popular musical comedies. Therefore, the commercial character of Schlager was there since its very beginning; the printing and selling of sheet music contributed to its popularity and foregrounded the composers, rather than the performers (this changed with the invention of sound film and the birth of media-driven cult of stardom). Especially with the end of WWI and the aristocratic milieu, the rise of Schlager as a separate music genre (alongside the rise of vinyl) was unstoppable.¹⁰¹ The misuse of Schlager under the National Socialists as a propaganda tool forbade the popular genre to organically develop after WWII. Destroyed recording studios and radio broadcasting controlled by the allies diverted people's taste towards more international sounds and other musical styles such as the Boogie-Woogie. Yet, given the rough times, many people preferred Schlager and its emotional and escapist lyrics.¹⁰²

1. Musikland Österreich

“Musikland Österreich” is both a collective term for Austria's cultural heritage and yet another brand. Cornelia Szabó-Knotik describes it as a term referring to the closeness between Austria and music and how it plays an important role in Austria's cultural description in terms of identity attribution. It is used both in music publications and tourism in very differential and vague forms up to the present, and its meaning ranges from ideational (identity) to commercial (economy) relevance.¹⁰³

With the urbanisation came the professionalization and standardisation of the civic

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 143.

¹⁰¹ Wolther 2006, p. 89.

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 90.

¹⁰³ Cornelia Szabó-Knotik, “Musikland Österreich”, www.musiklexikon.ac.at (May 6th, 2001), https://www.musiklexikon.ac.at/ml/musik_M/Musikland_Oesterreich.xml, last access June 30, 2019.

music culture, its products, institutions and methods, and therefore a centering of musical progress of art music in the “Musikstadt Wien”. The classical tradition serves as a cultural paradigm of hegemonic power; first for the Habsburg empire and then for building an Austrian identity. Skipping to Austria’s first entries in Eurovision, one can find a few examples where Austria referred to its musical past. Ferry Graf integrated waltz elements in “Der k. u. k. Kalypso aus Wien” in 1959, and Eleonore Schwarz praised the Viennese waltz and ball tradition in “Nur in der Wiener Luft”, showcasing her vocal talent in 1962. The Viennese ball tradition was even placed on the register of intangible heritage by the Austrian UNESCO commission.¹⁰⁴ Udo Jürgens’ Eurovision songs from 1964-1966 seamlessly blend into this melancholic way of relating to the past. Even if he is not hinting at Austria’s musical heritage, he conveys a sense of nostalgia. A couple of Austrian ESC contenders would do so over the decades, which will be displayed in the chapter “Austria in the Eurovision Song Contest”.

The term “Musikland Österreich” is often used in times of political crisis in which (musical) cultural awareness serves the defining of a national identity. For that reason, music that is usually not suspected to be political advertises sympathy outward. After two world wars this argument would promote the musical rehabilitation and initiate the implementation of music festivals or the reconstruction of the Vienna State Opera. A prominent example and probably the most potent image of Austria is the New Year’s Concert of the Vienna Philharmonics.¹⁰⁵ The increasing hype for tickets and sales figures of CD’s show the perfecting of the music business; a business that trades the brand “Musikland Österreich”.¹⁰⁶ In this particular case the brand wants to sell music of the 19th century, especially music of the Strauss dynasty as a part of the Viennese identity.¹⁰⁷

This brand is both cliché and reality since there is still a strong engagement and dedication to push and promote classical music in Austria. The New Year’s Concert

¹⁰⁴ Bendix in: Hannerz and Gingrich (eds.) 2017, p. 188.

¹⁰⁵ Vogt in: Ehardt, Vogt and Wagner (eds.) 2015, p. 237.

¹⁰⁶ Cornelia Szabó-Knotik, “Musikland Österreich”, www.musiklexikon.ac.at (May 6th, 2001), https://www.musiklexikon.ac.at/ml/musik_M/Musikland_Oesterreich.xml, last access June 30, 2019.

¹⁰⁷ Vogt in: Ehardt, Vogt and Wagner (eds.) 2015, p. 237.

or the Vienna Opera Ball are annual events that have a massive impact on tourism by bringing thousands of tourists to Vienna, and they are also broadcast in more than 90 countries with over 40 million people watching worldwide.¹⁰⁸

Modern folk music (and in the broadest sense popular music) is being included in the term “Musikland Österreich”, in addition to art music. First, because it brings the biological constant to the identity concept of folk spirit of the 19th century, the innate aptitude for and liking of music, and second, because it brings the allure of local colour.¹⁰⁹ With the growing emancipation of the federal states and the intense marketing of folk music and regional forms of pop music, the tourist advertising (inland and abroad) keeps on recalling and refreshing “Musikland Österreich” in a cultural memory by promoting traditional music festivals.¹¹⁰

2. Austropop

With the end of the Habsburg monarchy and the proclamation of the First republic in 1918 Austria has lost the access to the sea and with it its size. The Austro-Hungarian Empire once was eight times the size of present-day Austria; the territorial shrinkage of 1919 hasn't fully been absorbed in the Austrian consciousness.¹¹¹ The penchant for self-pity and the yearning for bygone times, where Austria was a mighty empire and a cultural stronghold, have ever since shaped the Austrian soul. It seems as if the downsizing in territory has brought a downsizing in cultural significance, but the latter might have been solely the responsibility of a nation, that has lost belief in its capabilities.

¹⁰⁸ “Neujahrskonzert 2019 unter Christian Thielemann”, www.wienerphilharmoniker.at, <https://www.wienerphilharmoniker.at/neujahrskonzert/neujahrskonzert-main>, last access June 30, 2019.

¹⁰⁹ Cornelia Szabó-Knotik, “Musikland Österreich”, www.musiklexikon.ac.at (May 6th, 2001), https://www.musiklexikon.ac.at/ml/musik_M/Musikland_Oesterreich.xml, last access June 30, 2019.

¹¹⁰ Cornelia Szabó-Knotik, “Musikland Österreich”, www.musiklexikon.ac.at (May 6th, 2001), https://www.musiklexikon.ac.at/ml/musik_M/Musikland_Oesterreich.xml, last access June 30, 2019.

¹¹¹ Bendix in: Hannerz and Gingrich (eds.) 2017, p. 180.

The big paradox in Austrian music is when it comes to classical music, Austria perceives itself as frontrunner, yet popular music is often dismissed as insignificant. There are many possibilities to train as a classical musician like music schools or the conservatoire, but when it comes to promoting popular music the road to success is not the easiest one. In the last couple of decades radio stations and music journalists have mostly played and promoted international pop music. The public-service broadcaster Ö3 declared pop made in Austria dead in the mid 90's and was made a streamlined radio station to survive on the open market.¹¹² This adult-contemporary-format has been synchronized with the international music market for the last 20 years, and underpinned by listener surveys carried out in Austria and Germany.¹¹³ Therefore the royalties for airtime largely go somewhere abroad and not to Austria's creative scene. Austria is constantly in last place when it comes to the percentage of national pop music played on the radio compared to the rest of Europe. The share of Austrian music played on Ö3 in 2013 was only at 8,97%. Two years (and an Austrian ESC win) later it jumped to 16,3%.¹¹⁴ The near future goal is for the ORF to bring the share of Austrian music up to 33% on average on all their radio stations.¹¹⁵

With FM4, another ORF radio station, Austrian indie music has a share of 27, 68% which is the highest of any ORF radio stations. But even most of those musicians have to take other bread-and-butter jobs, because the music market in Austria is simply too small; it is just "a footnote in the German-speaking region of Europe."¹¹⁶ Everything in between is either too alternative for Ö3, or too mainstream for FM4. Marco Schreuder too criticises the lack of engagement when it comes to building a consistent music market: " ... das kritisiere ich auch am meisten Richtung ORF,

¹¹² Thomas Rabitsch: "Pop made in Austria: 'Eh alles nur Mist...'", www.diepresse.at (May 29th, 2014), https://diepresse.com/home/meinung/gastkommentar/3813764/Pop-made-in-Austria_Eh-alles-nur-Mist, last access June 30, 2019.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Oliver Mark, "Österreich-Musik: FM4 hängt Ö3 wieder klar ab", www.derstandard.at (May 8th, 2016), <https://derstandard.at/2000042523012/Oesterreich-Musik-FM4-haengt-Oe3-wieder-klar-ab>, last access June 30, 2019.

¹¹⁵ "Quote für heimische Musik wird erhöht: ORF will 33 Prozent", www.diepresse.at (June 12th, 2018), https://diepresse.com/home/kultur/medien/5445477/Quote-fuer-heimische-Musik-wird-erhoeht_ORF-will-33-Prozent, last access June 30, 2019.

¹¹⁶ Thomas Rabitsch: "Pop made in Austria: 'Eh alles nur Mist...'", www.diepresse.at (May 29th, 2014), https://diepresse.com/home/meinung/gastkommentar/3813764/Pop-made-in-Austria_Eh-alles-nur-Mist, last access June 30, 2019.

dass man hier Künstler aufbaut, aber keine Plattformen bietet, um einen Musikmarkt aufzubauen, um diese Künstler auch nachhaltig zu betreuen und ihnen Chancen und Möglichkeiten gibt.”¹¹⁷ Austrian musicians have only a limited chance to establish a professional career when they get almost no airtime.

Influenced by the diffusion of US and British rock and popular music, domestic styles like folk-like music (*‘Volkstümliche Musik’*) have integrated musical and technical components into their repertoire.¹¹⁸ As a result, new styles and conventions were created, which in turn “form a primary thrust in the cultivation and the development of innovations in musical traditions, which eventually evolve into changes in the cultural identity of the particular country.”¹¹⁹ According to Edward Larkey, Austropop is one of such transcultural styles that has resulted in the transplantation of these foreign musical styles.

Generally speaking, Austropop is all kinds of pop music that was made in Austria or produced by Austrians. A limitation is not quite possible, yet still one thinks of a certain style or certain musicians singing songs about Austrian mentality, often in dialect. Especially the recordings of arranger Christian Kolonovits, singer Wolfgang Ambros and the usage of Viennese dialect are closely linked with the term. It has emerged in the 1960’s as a form of musical culture and is regularly applied to various popular music styles, often including Austrian musicians and foreign producers living in Austria. It is the product of a younger generation of rebellious musicians influenced by the Austrian cabaret tradition, the rise of the Vienna Actionism and English-speaking singer-songwriters. They reject German Schlager and Austria folk-like music, distinguishing themselves especially through their socially critical lyrics. Many artists bewail the “artificial” side of mainstream pop music and Schlager. In the 1971 ESC, Austropop singer Marianne Mendt competed with “Musik”, denouncing the business side of the music industry, just as Schmetterlinge did with their song “Boom Boom Boomerang” in 1977. Quite a few Austrian ESC entries in the 1970s and 1980s were written and produced by Austropop stars like Christian

¹¹⁷ Schreuder Interview 2017, see appendix.

¹¹⁸ Larkey 1992, p. 151.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

Kolonovits, Thomas Spitzer, Peter Cornelius, Wilfried Scheutz, Stefanie Werger, André Heller and Willi Resetarits (who is part of the group Schmetterlinge).

Musicians often distanced themselves from the term Austropop, as it was used by many in a pejorative way. They didn't want to be linked with Austropop since it automatically puts their music in a box with many other individual styles. For the listeners, mostly students in the early years, it embodied a certain provinciality compared to international rock and pop music. The meaning of this provinciality changed with Ö3, as the radio station revalued Austropop in a positive way, emphasising the positive aspects of music connected to home.¹²⁰ One can find comfort, overcome disappointments or feel elated when listening to it, and since basically no one grows up speaking High German in Austria, it is simply a question of authenticity and identification to sing in the same language you speak or think in.¹²¹ Acquiring new musical skills, adapting to the growing popular music business in Austria and learning about the German music market was required to form cultural alliances. Up to today, the artistic strategy of musicians is aligned with the intricate German music market to ensure a career outside of Austria. To that end Wolfgang Ambros recorded an album in Munich in High German in 1973.¹²²

Artists like Falco, Rainhard Fendrich or Die Erste Allgemeine Verunsicherung (EAV) were amongst the few Austrian musicians that made the Top 20 of the German Hitparade. As a result, more and more Austrian record companies decided to produce and distribute Austropop, as opposed to Schlager and Volksmusik. It also filled the gap of Austrian music played on Ö3, after the former ORF director Gerd Bacher decided to leave out Schlager music in the program of the newly found pop music station in 1968.¹²³ Yet, for the larger part Ö3 featured international productions for which the radio station had been criticized. In 1970 Ö3-boss Ernst Grisseemann pointed out it was the record companies' job to produce more Austrian music because there were too few good quality Austrian records, and that he wouldn't play them just because they were produced in Austria. This, as Edward

¹²⁰ Ibid., 157.

¹²¹ Gürmen and Leitner (eds.) 1995, p. 7.

¹²² Larkey 1992, p. 160.

¹²³ Wolther 2006, p. 117.

Larkey points out, “reveals nature of the criterion ‘quality’ as something depending on the tastes of particular audiences and socio-cultural power centres with a particular prevailing aesthetic.”¹²⁴ Ambros broke with this aesthetic in his lyrics by addressing topics of social conflict compared to the happy-go-lucky people in the Schlager scene that would exclusively sing about love and relationships, or the idyllic traditional rural forms of life in the folk-like music.¹²⁵

Even though the German music market is the second largest in the world, many artists sing in English to become internationally popular. There is a set up hierarchy in the music industry, comparable with a sub-colony to a colony, where Austrian artists first have to be successful in Austria to get promoted in Germany, then Europe and then the US music market.¹²⁶ Due to the small size of Austria and its music market and the unwillingness of record companies to take risks when it comes to promoting new, young artists, the music scene is forced to create strategies to get by in the music industry. Many musicians work part time in other jobs and have to expand their repertoire and style to reach a larger audience. TV-appearances, free of charge festivals such as the Donauinselfest in Vienna, opening for international acts, investing in clubs to promote certain scenes or building their own studios can help to establish a career.

As a cultural product of Austria’s postwar youth, Austropop claims to be recognised as an integral aspect of the national cultural heritage. Yet, its rebellious image stands against Austria’s rich classical music supremacy.¹²⁷ Musicians face this struggle day-to-day by having to prove that Austropop is not only a footnote of Austrian culture, but plays a significant part in dusting Austria’s image that stopped developing in the early 1900’s. Especially in the past 20 years Austrian pop musicians have been writing and singing songs more in English and other languages like Turkish, Serbian or Croatian. This clearly shows that “Austria’s pop

¹²⁴ Larkey 1992, p. 163.

¹²⁵ Ibid., p. 165.

¹²⁶ Ibid., p. 182.

¹²⁷ Rosa Reitsamer in: Michael Ahlers and Christoph Jacke (eds.), *Perspectives on German Popular Music*, London and New York, Taylor and Friends Ltd. 2016, p.216.

music reflects more diverse national identities than might be expected for such a small country".¹²⁸

IV. Austria in the Eurovision Song Contest

Only a little more than ten years after the end of WWII the ESC was born. As a Pan-European cultural event it tied Europe's nations together, and created a platform, where north, south, east and (especially in the early years) west faced each other in a friendly competition. Austria's history in the 20th century has been dominated by wars, political carination, international criticism on insufficient denazification, the victim myth of WWII and the constantly changing position on increasing immigration through third countries. The consequential identity crisis mirrors on the Eurovision stage.¹²⁹ Considering Paul Jordan's argument, that "nation branding is both reactive and proactive in drawing attention away from a negative past and representing opportunities that a country can offer the international community in the future",¹³⁰ the ESC serves the same purpose: it offers a platform to show a new, positive image of Austria and to make negative legacy maybe not forgotten, but at least less prominent. It is a chance to present the nation with a new image, that wasn't molded by the Nazi-regime or any war-related stigma and an opportunity to showcase Austria in a new light, to brand it with a new identity.

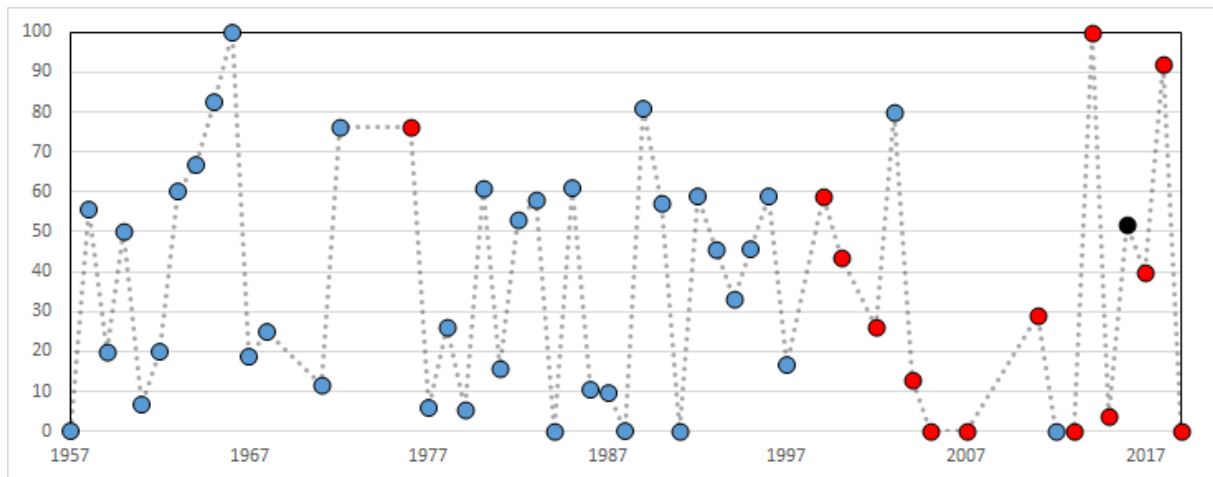
The following pages are a chronological analysis of Austria's contestants, some of which were more successful than others, some of which didn't even qualify for the final. It is an overview of how Austrian identity was represented on the Eurovision stage since 1957 and the attempt to explain the ORF's intentions by sending certain contestants at the end of the chapter.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Caitlin Gura in: Ehardt, Vogt and Wagner (eds.) 2015, p. 65.

¹³⁰ Jordan 2014, p. 299.

Since its first participation in 1957 Austria has sent over 50 candidates to the ESC. Austria's overall performance literally looks like a statistical zigg-zagg:



□ German □ English ● French, 0 = last place or eliminated in the semi-final

1. Musikland Österreich (1957 - 1968)

Austria started off with “Wohin, kleines Pony?”, written by Kurt Svab and Hans Werner, and performed by Bob Martin. The song raised the question of where the pony i.e. Austria was heading; a new direction, a carefree future where the path is the goal. In this case Austria chose to infantilize its self-perception, which underlines the short period of time that Austria has had a new, postwar identity.¹³¹

The following year Liane Augustin sang “Die ganze Welt braucht Liebe” in which she asked for love for everybody and therefore for equality and allies for small Austria in a big world (*“Im großen Weltgetriebe, hat selbst der kleinste Stein, ein zweites kleines Steinchen, solls bei mir anders sein? Nein!”*).

Renée Winter argues, that these first two years provided representational strategies that minimized Austria's political responsibility in the past. When portraying Austria

¹³¹ Renée Winter in: Ehardt, Vogt and Wagner (eds.) 2015, p. 17.

as in need of help and love, as powerless and infantilized, it can't be held responsible for Nazi crimes.¹³²

In 1959 Austria presented a mashup of many different styles. Ferry Graf showed a wide musical spectrum with "Der k. u. k. Kalypso aus Wien", containing waltz (he would not remain the only Austrian contestant to have waltz references in his song), polka, csárdás ("*Doch etwas Paprika liegt ebenfalls drin*"), yodelling, and of course calypso. Above all this song pointed to a time, that counted - compared to the times of the Nazi-regime - as relatively harmless.¹³³ Back in 1959 the imperial times were probably not too long ago to count as "the good old times", but gained international popularity with the famous "Sissi"-films from the mid-fifties.¹³⁴ Furthermore, Ferry Graf claimed the calypso to be Austrian (when its origins are actually in Trinidad Tobago, a hub for slavery), which broached the issue of imperialism and the annexation of marginalized musical genres.¹³⁵ He attempted to remind Europe of the worldwide influence and power Austria once had. The Habsburg Empire was no more, but it was used to underline Austria's role in the world before WWII.

As the Austrian media first started to take notice of the event in 1960, the opinions couldn't be more oppositional: Whereas the newspaper *Krone* praised Eurovision, *Die Presse* called chansons on TV a snoozefest.¹³⁶ Harry Winter sang "Du hast mich so fasziniert", a romantic love song about someone who doesn't return that love. The mentioning of European cities didn't seem to fascinate the European jury.¹³⁷ The wished-for success held off even though the song was written by Robert Stolz, a famous Austrian composer and conductor. The line "*Was nützt's, dass viele fragen, nach längst vergangenen Tagen?*" pointed out the futility of longing for bygone times.

The first public preliminary decision was in 1961. Out of two hundred applications the song "Sehnsucht" by Leopold Andrejewitsch was chosen by the TV-broadcaster,

¹³² Renée Winter in: Fűrnkranz and Hemetek (eds.) 2017, p. 46

¹³³ Renée Winter in: Ehardt, Vogt and Wagner (eds.) 2015, p. 19.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid., p. 20.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

a jury and an audience to be performed by Jimmy Makulis. He was a Greek singer who had great success with German Schlager music, yet in Cannes he only came in last, sharing that position with Belgium. His provenance took up a large part of the Austrian media coverage and thereby produced a debate with a racist subtext. ‘Sehnsucht’ is about longing, desire, long-distance relationships and returning and can be interpreted as a song about the consequence of labour immigration from the perspective of migrants.¹³⁸

In 1962 Eleonore Schwarz sang „Nur in der Wiener Luft“ in waltz time in a very high-pitched operatic voice. It was a three-minute declaration of love for Vienna, its culture, landmarks (“*Stephansdom, Rathausmann, Sacher und Würstelmann*”) and of course, waltz. She fell back on old stereotypes and drew a connection to the topos of the sentimental “Heimatfilme” with regional backgrounds of the 1950s and 1960s. They functioned as a strategy for dealing with Austria’s Nazi-past by externalising National Socialism and reinforcing Austrian patriotism through portraying Austria as a country composed of mountains, lakes and unhurried, friendly people.¹³⁹ Unfortunately Austria came in last, together with Belgium, Spain and the Netherlands. The larger part of the press criticised the song being full of clichés; only *Die Presse* would try to turn around the last place: Since Schwarz had null-points, her demise was merely a sign that none of the judges really understood Viennese music.¹⁴⁰

The year after, Israeli born singer and actress Carmela Corren competed with “Vielleicht geschieht ein Wunder” and bestowed Austria’s highest ranking so far. She was the first Austrian entry to include English lyrics in her song, which might have helped with the score. The press emphasized the better ranking than Germany rather than her provenance afterwards, which points to the tendency of distancing Austria from Germany and being in a state of rivalry after WWII.¹⁴¹

¹³⁸ Renée Winter in: Fürnkranz and Hemetek (eds.) 2017, p. 52.

¹³⁹ Ibid., p. 53.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 54.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

In 1964 the Udo Jürgens era started. In three consecutive years he competed with chansons and Schlager-like songs for Austria, scoring higher each year and winning the ESC in 1966. His first song "Warum nur, warum?" joined the Austrian custom of longing for bygone times. It was a melancholic search for answers that was never dissolved. "Sag ihr ich lass' sie grüßen" in 1965 functioned as a sequel to his 1964 song. It was yet another song about love, desire and longing, a painful breakup and the attempt, to make the best of a bad situation.

The Udo Jürgens trilogy was completed with "Merci Chérie" in 1966. Here, he cleverly bypassed the newly introduced language rule of singing in your national language: apart from the title everything was sung in German and thereby passed the EBU's judgement. In his winning song he sang from an accepting and grateful point of view where he found closure. All his wondering and questions were dissolved, and he could finally let go of the past and look towards the future ("*Schau nach vorn, nicht zurück, zwingen kann man kein Glück*"). With almost twice as many points than the runner-up Sweden, Udo Jürgens won and brought the ESC to Vienna the following year.

On April 8th, 1967 the 12th Grand Prix de la Chanson was held in the grand hall of the Vienna Hofburg Palace. After hearing the Eurovision hymn TV commentator Emil Kollpacher opened the evening with the words "The show must go on", to be followed by the orchestra playing the waltz 'Wiener Blut' under the direction of Johannes Fehring. After only a couple of tacts Udo Jürgen appeared on stage and was handed the baton to conduct a three-four time version of "Merci, Chérie", his winning song of the previous year. TV-host and actress Erica Vaal greeted the audience in six languages and emphasized the fact that so many European voices sound together is much more important than winning. 17 countries were competing on a stage with three large revolving mirrors that gave a new dynamic to the show. Despite the effort of the television direction to show mostly knee shot- and close-up views - possibly to avoid sexualisation - the revolving mirrors let the audience catch a glimpse of bare legs of some contestants.

Peter Horton sang „Warum es hunderttausend Sterne gibt“ for Austria. In the lyrics he asked one question after another and wondered about the meaning of life. Through his confusing phrasing the sentences seem unfinished and were often quite

hard to follow, which might be one of the reasons why he only came in 14th out of 17. That year's winner Sandy Shaw had set a new trend towards upbeat pop music in Eurovision, whereas Peter Horton remained in the Schlager/Chanson genre.

1967 was the last year the contest was broadcast in black and white which led Emil Kollpacher to comment a lot on the contestants clothing and their hair and eye colours. He commented Sandie Shaw's performance with the words: "Vor fünf Jahren war noch Marilyn Monroe unser Schönheitsideal. Das war Sandie Shaw", referring to her being barefoot in a short dress on stage. In the pre-event coverage she was already linked with hippiedom and referred to as an enfant terrible.¹⁴² With her victory, the ongoing pop revolution in Europe (and the rest of the world) had finally arrived in the ESC and opened Eurovision up to be the leading event in the pop genre.¹⁴³

The time between the last contestant and the voting was filled by the Vienna Boys' Choir performing Johann Strauss' "An der schönen blauen Donau" which celebrated its 100th anniversary in 1967, and the Volkslied "Zwoa Sternderl am Himmel" in three-four time. Erica Vaal announced the waltz as being Austria's second national anthem. The mirrors were illuminated from behind and showed pictures of Austria's landmarks such as St. Stephan's Cathedral or Karl's Church.

For the voting Erica Vaal called on every country and repeated their votes in English and French calm and precise. For the first time in the ESC one could catch a glimpse of what was happening backstage in the "Green Room"; shy smiling contestants were awaiting the result. In the beginning everything worked correctly, and Great Britain's win became apparent quite early. Technical difficulties with the counting board interrupted the smooth flow and when Erica Vaal was ready to announce Sandie Shaw the winner, she almost left out Ireland to announce their votes. After apologizing many times and saying goodbye to Dublin on the phone, four lightbulbs announced places one to four on the scoreboard, playing the first four notes of the main theme of "An der schönen blauen Donau".

¹⁴² Melanie Letschnig in: Ehardt, Vogt and Wagner (eds.) 2015, p. 219.

¹⁴³ Victor M. Escudero, "Throwback Thursday: Eurovision 1967", www.eurovision.tv, August 24th 2017, <https://eurovision.tv/story/throwback-thursday-1967>, last access June 30th, 2019.

After Sandie Shaw came back to the stage to receive her prize and singing “Puppet on a String” for the second time, Erica Vaal closed the evening with the following words in several languages:

“Meine Damen und Herren, der Song Contest 1967 in Wien ist zu Ende. Wir beglückwünschen noch einmal das Siegerland und seine Künstler. Wir freuen uns darauf im nächsten Jahr als Gäste in England dem Song Contest 1968 beiwohnen zu können. Allen anderen Beteiligten sagen wir aber Dank für ihre Mitwirkung. Jeder einzelne hat dazu beigetragen diese Veranstaltung zu dem zu machen, was sie sein soll: ein beschwingtes, musikalisches Rendezvous Europas, denn Musik kennt keine Grenzen.”¹⁴⁴

Having the Hofburg as a venue for the ESC was an attempt to rebrand the building: By having such an elegant and modern cultural event, the memories of Hitler’s Anschluss-speech less than 30 years ago on the balcony of the Hofburg were repressed.¹⁴⁵ Instead, an “exhilarating, musical rendezvous of Europe” was celebrated.

1967 was deemed to be sort of a turning point between the ultra-serious, conservative adult event and the development to a modern pop concert for all ages. To attract more young people, half of the jury had to be under 30 years.¹⁴⁶ With the “Summer of Love” knocking on Europe’s doors, the Beatles releasing their album ‘Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band’ and the “Monterey Festival”, the kick-off of the Hippie movement, a change was due in Eurovision.¹⁴⁷ Austria was still coping with its past, and that was the evening’s main agenda. With all its stumbles and technical difficulties, the ESC in Vienna was a way of representing Austria as a cultural stronghold, and the attempt of placing itself in the European political center. Almost 50 years later Austria was still playing that part.

The following year Udo Jürgens wrote the song “Tausend Fenster” to be performed by Karel Gott. The lyrics reflected Austria’s mindset at that time: it was the year of

¹⁴⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QaUYyLlcvCQ&t=3975s>, 1:42:00 - 1:42:35, last access June 30th, 2019.

¹⁴⁵ Letschnig in: Ehardt, Vogt and Wagner (eds.) 2015, p. 223.

¹⁴⁶ “So war der letzte Song Contest in Wien”, www.news.at, May 5th, 2015, <https://www.news.at/a/esc-song-contest-1967-in-wien>, last access June 30th, 2019.

¹⁴⁷ Peter Hammermüller / Österreichische Post AG in: “Die Geschichte des Eurovision Song Contests 1956-2015”, Wien: Ferrytells 2015, p. 27.

upheaval. The 1968 movement had just swept the country, dividing the generations and leaving a gap between the rebellious youth and the more conservative older population. The year was full of student demonstration protesting against the political establishment.¹⁴⁸ With lines like *“Ihr alle kennt euch nicht, in der gleichen Welt von Lärm und Licht”*, or *“Kann da drüben das der Mensch nicht sein, von dem du träumst schon jahraus, jahrein, der dein Zuhause wär? Doch dich trennt von ihm ein Häusermeer”* Karel Gott describes the feeling of being lonely whilst living among thousands of people just like you, a feeling that applied especially to young people, but not to the ESC jury. In a more pan-European context, the song aimed at the division of Central European states through the Iron Curtain.

2. Austropop (1971 - 1997)

The first time Austria didn't take part in the ESC and took a clear political stand was in 1969 when it withdrew from participating due to Franco's dictatorship in Spain.¹⁴⁹ In 1970, four other countries withdrew from participating, next to Austria. Finland, Norway, Portugal and Sweden also kept away due to the alleged voting scandal and the four-way-tie of the previous year.¹⁵⁰

Austria returned to the Eurovision stage in 1971. Marianne Mendt sang “Musik” in Viennese dialect. It was a song that bewailed certain music that was often beautified with artificial *“Licht und Glanz”* (*“lights and glamour”*). Though singing in Viennese dialect might have been a plus in terms of authenticity, it didn't resonate well with the jury; the dramatic sound, the strong singing and the denouncing lyrics were too much of a contrast with the young, blonde woman on stage. 66 points were only enough for the 16th place out of 18.

¹⁴⁸ Official website for the commemorative year 2018 of the Federal Chancellery of the Republic of Austria, <https://www.oesterreich100.at/1968.html>, last access June 30th, 2019.

¹⁴⁹ <http://www.eurovision-austria.com/eurovision-song-contest-1969/>, last access June 30th, 2019.

¹⁵⁰ <https://eurovision.tv/event/amsterdam-1970>, last access June 30th, 2019.

In 1972 Austria sent a group instead of a single performer for the first time, playing guitar and flute on stage. The Milestones, resembling the group Peter, Paul & Mary, sang “Falter im Wind”. It was a demand to step out of the darkness (*“Bleib nicht in den Wäldern”*), to show your true colours (*“Deine Farben flammen auf”*) and to cease the day (*“Hell ist dein Tag, drum tanze schnell”*). Despite their respectable 5th place, Austria withdrew its participation for the following three years.

In 1976 almost all countries sang in English, including Austria for the first time. Waterloo & Robinson performed “My Little World”, clapping and finger-flicking almost all the way through. After a three-year break, Austria returned with an upbeat, feel-good song that was quite successful and came in 5th place. The lyrics were freed from the nostalgia and melancholy Austria brought to the stage in the early years of Eurovision, and they were full of happiness (*“I just love my little world, I don't need no new sensations. All I want is the simple life, loving you is a sweet temptation.”*), and the rhythm invited to clap along. It was a carefree performance, nothing Austria had never presented before, as if bygones were finally left to be bygones. In the last repetition of the chorus female backing vocals could be heard, which gave the song more body and colour. Even though the song was about the love for a woman, the listener was left wondering about the meaning of ‘My little world’ itself. If this little world was actually little Austria, it takes the song to a new level. It makes Austria “more than enough”, or superior to the rest of Europe. It could stand alone, independent, and offered everything you need. This declaration of love for their little world should be the best result for Austria until Conchita won in 2014.

In 1977 Austria sent the group Schmetterlinge to perform “Boom Boom Boomerang” in London. For the first time Austria presented a satire act that would entertain the audience with fun and at the same time cynical lyrics, and costumes with a twist: the men wore suits that were white in the front, and black in the back, as well as face masks on the backside of their heads. They held money in their hands and in line with the lyrics, their back side, representing rich music business men, would turn to the audience on the word “money” (*“Music is money for the record company”*). During the chorus the group performed a choreography that made them look like string puppets, dancing to absurd lyrics: *“Boom Boom Boomerang, Snadderydang,*

Kangaroo, Boogaloo, Didgeridoo, ding dong, sing the song, hear the guitar twang, Kojak, Hijak, me and you.” Apart from these words (that probably translate into many languages) and the first two lines, the song was sung in German. The verses in between were full of sideblows for the music industry (*“Ein gutes Lied ist pures Gold, das hören die Konzernherren von Nashville bis Luzern gern, der Dollar rockt und rollt”, “Mono oder Stereo, live oder im Studio, Album oder Single, klingel, Kassa, klingel!”*), describing the two-sidedness and the exploitive ideology of a capitalist entertainment industry.¹⁵¹ Their criticism of the music machinery and its beneficiaries was only rewarded with eleven points from the jury (whereas winner France got 136 points), and came in second to last.

Springtime performed “Mrs. Caroline Robinson” in 1978 in Paris. Contrary to their look of a proper pop-act from the 1970’s, their song didn’t really deliver on that end. The song was about a witch who fell off her broom and was now about fashion and men, flying around on her balloon. Because of the short and fast-paced verses the story was hard to follow and didn’t allow for any highlights, just like the repetitive singing. They came in 15th out of 20 and dissolved shortly after the ESC.

Dressed all in black, Christina Simon sang “Heute in Jerusalem” in Jerusalem in 1979. The song had jazz and blues elements and was a plea for peace and freedom for this war-torn city. The lyrics conveyed hope, yet the performance as a whole was melancholic and rather dark. Pop music was on the rise for a long time now in the ESC, which unfortunately meant another shared last place for Austria.

In 1980 Austria sent Blue Danube (a reference to Austria’s most famous musical export), to perform “Du Bist Musik”. To a disco sound, the group listed many composers, Austrian and non-Austrian, to be followed with the chorus: *“Du bist Musik, Musik, Musik. Bist meine Harmonie, Melodie, meine Symphonie...”* It was a song that linked love and music, just like Chris Lohner, who announced the Austrian entry, said: *“Ein österreichisches Liebeslied, ganz besonderer Art”*. With a climactic finish, Blue Danube came in 8th place, which was a short ray of hope in Austria’s Eurovision history.

¹⁵¹ Larkey 1992, p. 168.

In 1981 the ESC moved to Dublin. Marty Brem of Blue Danube entered solo for Austria, singing “Wenn du da bist”. He was accompanied by four women, singing and dancing in the background, taking away a lot of attention from the song. There were no uniform movements or outfits, the woman singing wore a low-cut bathing suit, knitted football socks and a golden football helmet. The other three wore headphones and presented seemingly random snippets of various dance styles, as if they were listening to something else. There was no coherent storyline or identifiable order. What could have been a respectable love song became a weird, confusing spectacle, stealing focus away from the music, which meant place 17 out of 20.

The following year the pop duo Mess, consisting of the married couple Elisabeth Engstler and Michael Scheickl, competed for Austria. Their song “Sonntag” was a big hit in Austria after the ESC and stayed on top of the charts for 12 weeks.¹⁵² The performance was youthful, dynamic, fun and colourful - a new side of Austria that Europe hadn’t seen yet. In Harrogate they came in 9th place, even though they were ranked in 3rd place in the bets.¹⁵³

1983 came and the colourful outfits stayed: The group Westend sang and danced to “Hurricane”, a song about a whirlwind of love. Four male singers chased a female dancer, whirling across the stage. The song reminded of Umberto Tozzi’s “Gloria” from 1979 and was rewarded with a frantic applause by a mostly German speaking audience in the Rudi-Sedlmayer-Hall in Munich. In the end they came in 9th out of 20 participating countries.

The following year would bestow another last place upon Austria. Anita’s “Einfach weg” was a step back in Austria’s “musical evolution”, in that the sound took a turn towards the Schlager era. Of course in Austria Schlager was always very prominent, but in Eurovision it had already exceeded its peak. Compared to the previous couple

¹⁵² <https://austriancharts.at/showitem.asp?interpret=Mess&titel=Sonntag&cat=s>, last access June 30th, 2019.

¹⁵³ <https://tvthek.orf.at/profile/Archiv/7648449/1982-Mess-mit-Sonntag/9137240/1982-Mess-mit-Sonntag/9137241>, last access June 30th, 2019.

of years there was a downsizing in sound, in performance, in dynamics and in timbre. The lyrics did convey a strong message about a daring, independent woman who aims for a new start, but the contrast to the actual woman on stage was too big. Anita's performance lacked in drama and self-confidence. After her song ended, the Austrian commentator noted with resignation in his voice: "So, überstanden. Anita hat sich ihres Auftrags wirklich gut entledigt und sie kann weiter aufrecht gehen, egal welche Wertung sie erhalten wird", as if foreseeing the near future.¹⁵⁴

In 1985 Gary Lux competed in Luxembourg. "Kinder dieser Welt" was a plea for more flowers on the asphalt, more rain for dry soil, more courage for the weak, more emotions instead of violence and more songs of light for the children in this world. His performance was full of emotion and desperate hope but compared to Norway's winning Bobbysocks and their cheerful "La det swinge", it didn't convince the jury. Still, he could hold his head up coming in 8th out of 19.

Timna Brauer, daughter of the Jewish artist Arik Brauer, competed with "Die Zeit ist einsam" in 1986. She was sent by the ORF as the answer to the Waldheim-debate that had just erupted, to present a tolerant image of Austria.¹⁵⁵ Brauer, who has experience in various musical genres, sang about loneliness, and the feeling of being tired of searching for someone or something. She came in only 18th out of 20. On the other end of the position table was Belgium's Sandra Kim who was only 13 years old, when she won with her life-affirming and positive "J'aime la vie" in Bergen. Compared to her youthful and jaunty performance Brauer's appearance seemed guarded and gloomy. Austria was - metaphorically speaking - punished at the polls in a contemporary historical context.

Gary Lux returned to Eurovision in 1987 once more. "Nur noch Gefühl" started as a quite strong vocal performance but ended with shaky higher notes. Unfortunately, there wasn't an easy melody to follow and no clear chorus with recognition value. All the emotions and feelings he sang about, interspersed with a saxophone solo, didn't meet the jury's taste - place 20 out of 22.

¹⁵⁴ <https://tvthek.orf.at/profile/Archiv/7648449/1984-Anita-mit-Einfach-weg/9137438/1984-Anita-mit-Einfach-weg/9137461>, last access June 30th, 2019.

¹⁵⁵ Dean Vuletic in: Ehardt, Vogt and Wagner (eds.) 2015, p. 108.

1988 Austria sent Wilfried with his song “Lisa, Mona Lisa”. The whole performance was quite bumpy and confusing, as there was a lot of inconsistency on stage. He sang about a femme fatale who broke his heart, yet his leaning pose on stage looked too casual, as if he was not affected by her. Also, his voice jumped from breathy to screechy quite often, making him sing off-key. It was a bizarre performance through and through, that left him without any points in last place. Even years later it was voted the worst entry in history at an ESC fan-club meeting.¹⁵⁶

Thomas Forstner entered for Austria in 1989. Only a couple of months before the Fall of the Wall, he performed “Nur ein Lied” in Lausanne, written by Dieter Bohlen. It was a song about a peaceful, united future, full of hopes and dreams (*“Damit keiner mehr allein im Dunkeln steht, und sie wiederkommt, die Liebe auf der Welt. Und jeder Mensch in Freiheit leben kann, und die Waffen werden Blumen irgendwann. Dafür lohnt es sich, ein Träumer zu sein”*). His message of freedom seemed to resonate with the jury; Forstner came in 5th place, which was a big success and finally ended a long losing streak.

Simone followed in his footsteps the next year. In 1990, the time of the German reunification, she sang “Keine Mauern mehr” in German, English, French and Croatian. The song started with Simone and her background musicians standing hand in hand, and from the first verse on it was a proclamation of peace and freedom, full of hope and optimism (*“Zur selben Zeit vor einem Jahr hat niemand sich’s gedacht, dass unser Freiheitsdrang den Sprung nach vorne macht”*). Other countries like Ireland, Germany, Norway and Italy (who won that year) addressed political topics, too. Actually the group Duett should have entered for Austria that year; the singer fainted on stage during the Austrian preliminaries and got voted (maybe out of pity) to go to Zagreb. Yet, a little later it was found out that Duett had already tried their luck with the song “Das Beste” at the German preliminaries in

¹⁵⁶ Marco Schreuder, “Als Wilfried beim Song Contest war”, [www.derstandard.at](https://derstandard.at/2000061418972/Als-Wilfried-beim-Song-Contest-war) (July 7th, 2017), <https://derstandard.at/2000061418972/Als-Wilfried-beim-Song-Contest-war>

1988, therefore the runner-up Simone got her chance, and came in 10th out of 22 countries.¹⁵⁷

In 1991 Thomas Forstner returned to the Eurovision stage. With “Venedig im Regen” he turned to Schlager music again, this time less successfully. The whole performance seemed old-fashioned and the singing was partly noticeably off-key. The lyrics only told portions of a story and were interspersed with words of melancholy (rain, longing, night, dreaming, frozen, lost...). Another last place with null-points was the result.

Dieter Bohlen wrote another song for Austria; “Zusammen geh’n”, performed by Tony Wegas in 1992. It was a powerful ballad about trust and love and had also parts in English and Italian. Everything seemed authentic, from the emotion in his voice and movements to his gesturing and facial expression. The chorus was quite catchy and the melody easy on the ear and secured him the 10th place. He entered again the following year with “Maria Magdalena”. The lyrics were full of religious and mythological terms and opposites (Deluge, eternity, siren, Odysseus, heaven and hell, live and death, good and bad, rich and poor), many of which translate into several languages. He got 12 points from Bosnia-Herzegovina and landed midfield at the 14th place.

In 1994 Ireland won for the third time in a row, the only one performing without a live orchestra. Austria sent the 15-year-old Petra Frey to Dublin to sing “Für den Frieden der Welt”. Unfortunately she was hard to understand when singing in a lower pitch, which might have taken points away, yet her message was strong: in times of war in Yugoslavia and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict she sang for peace and freedom (*“Für den Frieden der Welt, für die Hoffnung nach Licht, für die Wahrheit, die keiner mehr sieht. Für die Menschen die frier’n und die keiner mehr sieht, dafür singe ich euch dieses Lied”*) and came in 17th out of 25.

¹⁵⁷ Marco Schreuder, “Abgelehnt: Song-Contest-Songs die es nicht auf die Bühne schafften”, [www.derstandard.at](https://derstandard.at/2000016202392/Abgelehnt-Song-Contest-Songs-die-es-nicht-auf-die-Buehne) (May 22nd, 2015), <https://derstandard.at/2000016202392/Abgelehnt-Song-Contest-Songs-die-es-nicht-auf-die-Buehne>, last access June 30th, 2019.

Jazz and soul singer Stella Jones entered for Austria in 1995 with „Die ganze Welt dreht sich verkehrt“, a feel-good-song with saxophone solos and background singers. She came in 13th out of 23 participants. It was the first time Austria sent a person of colour to the ESC, but it wouldn't be the last time.

In 1996 Austria tried something completely new: The blind soul singer and piano player George Nussbaumer performed the gospel-like “Weil's dr guat got” (“Because you're feeling good”) in a Vorarlberg dialect, which is one of the strongest dialects in Austria. Vorarlberg is the most western county in Austria and its dialect is similar to Schwitzerdütsch. In the eastern part of Austria hardly anyone can understand it, let alone speak it. The five-person choir sang and whirled across the stage while Nussbaumer played the piano. In the newly introduced qualification Nussbaumer came in 6th, and then 10th in the final, which was a huge success considering the choice in genre and dialect.

Bettina Soriat entered in 1997. Apart from the title “One Step” that started off the chorus, the song was sung in German. The upbeat song with heavy bassline was about an extinguished flame, a sexually boring relationship. To lines like “... *beim Sex bist du so schnell wie Raumschiff Enterprise, mit Lichtgeschwindigkeit lieg' ich bei dir auf Eis. So nicht, so will ich nicht*”, she danced in revealing clothes all the way through. Not only did the song fail at the ESC, it also flopped in Austria and didn't even enter the charts. In Dublin Bettina Soriat came in 21st out of 24 participants. Due to the bad result Austria had to pause in 1998.

3. Nation Branding (1999 – present)

With 1999 English had finally arrived in Austria's ESC entries. The rule of singing in your national language had been abandoned, as well as the live orchestra. 18-year-old Bobbie Singer, who was in the middle of graduating from high school, competed with “Reflection” in Jerusalem and came in 10th, a respectable position. The song was easy on the ear but compared to that year's winner Charlotte Nilsson and her

song “Take me to your Heaven”, her performance was quite restrained and shy, possibly due to a lack of experience. Nevertheless, her midfield position secured Austria a place in the contest the following year.

The Rounder Girls sang “All To You” in Stockholm, a very catchy song that animated to sing along. The soul/jazz/pop-trio consisted of Tini Kainrath, Kim Cooper and Lynne Kieran, who have had great musical success in Austria. In 2001 the Austrian government faced diplomatic sanctions from the EU because of the inclusion of the right-wing populist Freedom Party (FPÖ) in a coalition. It was a political statement of the ORF to send the Rounder Girls - with two members of colour - who had recently participated in demonstrations against the anti-immigration policies of the FPÖ.¹⁵⁸

The Olsen Brothers won with “Fly on the Wings of Love” for Denmark. Unfortunately, with a 14th place for the Rounder Girls Austria didn’t make the cut for the ESC in 2001.

The ESC in Tallinn in 2002 was the first without any German lyrics at all. Manuel Ortega entered for Austria with “Say a Word”. With dreamy eyes, a typical boy-band-look and blowing kisses into the camera, he performed well and enthusiastically, but the song was packed with lyrics with almost no time to breathe between the repetitive chorus and the unusually long verses: *“If you’re feeling lost and alone, I’ll be there to help you carry on. If you’re feeling blue and you need a friend, I’ll be there to give you a helping hand. If you feel like losin’ your pride, I’ll be there to give you a place to hide. If you feel your life goes wrong, I’ll be there if you need someone to lean on.”* From a political perspective, the lyrics denounced isolationism and promoted the advantages of an international cooperation, which reminds one of the fundamental idea of unity of the EU.¹⁵⁹ His performance might have been too eager to play in the upper league, yet he received 12 points from Turkey and ended up in the 18th place out of 24, securing Austria a start in the following year.

¹⁵⁸ Vuletic 2018, p. 168.

¹⁵⁹ Gura in: Ehardt, Vogt and Wagner (eds.) 2015, p. 75.

In 2003 Austria sent its most polarising contestant so far. Alf Poier, Austrian comedian, satirist, painter, songwriter and ESC-sceptic sang “Weil der Mensch zählt” in Styrian dialect in Riga. It was an alleged ironic song, and ESC parody, that included elements of nursery rhymes, 1980’s Austropop and hard rock and at the same time addressed the issue of species extinction (*“Es sterben bald alle Vögel, es sterben bald alle Käfer, nur im Bett da liegt der Adam, und vermehrt sich mit der Eva”*). He sang about woodland creatures and Mother Hulda and about how small the difference between humans and primates was. Between the chorus and the verse there was an unexpected change to hard rock music where he punched his fist in the air with an angry face. His “band” consisted of cardboard animals playing instruments, and deliberately off-key singing women, to prove that the vocals were in fact live.¹⁶⁰ The whole performance moved from quirky, to funny, to bizarre to the feeling of not knowing what exactly was happening on stage. Poier calls it the worst song he has ever written on his homepage: “Im Jahre 2003 erreichte ich mit dem schlechtesten Lied, das ich jemals geschrieben habe, beim Eurovisions Songcontest in Riga den 6. Platz. Es war mir eine Ehre, diese Veranstaltung geistig zu grundieren und mit meiner Gegenvehemenz etwas aufzuwerten. Jeder bekommt das, was er verdient!”¹⁶¹ In an interview right after his first rehearsal in Riga, he said that Europe was “spiritually dead” because every country started to look alike, and that there were no more individuals. He was annoyed because he wasn’t allowed to grab his crotch on TV, where at the same time it is perfectly normal and accepted that there are movies that glorify violence. To him, this contradiction was a reflection of Europe. When asked if he thought he was better than the other participants, he answered: “I don’t think it’s important if someone is better, everyone has to do, what he really has to do, and maybe I’m more honest than many of them.”¹⁶² His honest (yet very satirical) and individual performance on stage bestowed the best result upon Austria since 1989, an unexpected 6th place (which was only surpassed by Conchita in 2014 who had the same manager, Rene Bertio).

The semi-final was introduced to the ESC in 2004. Due to Alf Poier’s success in the previous year Austria went straight through to the final. The newly formed boyband

¹⁶⁰ Gura in: Ehardt, Vogt and Wagner (eds.) 2015, p. 78.

¹⁶¹ Official website of Alf Poier, <https://www.alfpoier.at/biographie/>, last access June 30th, 2019.

¹⁶² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jGjbWarplE>, 2:53 - 3:03, last access June 30th, 2019.

Tie Break competed for Austria in Istanbul. They won the Austrian preliminaries with their song “Du Bist” yet at the ESC final they only came in 21st out of 24 participants. It was a mundane pop ballad that unfortunately accentuated the inexperienced and largely off-key singing of the young members.

In 2005 Austria had to go through the semi-final for the first time. Global Kryner performed “Y asi”, that could be described as new Volksmusik with alpine sounds, world music elements, and a chorus in Spanish. It was the first time an Austrian contestant performed in a traditional costume, which at the same time promoted the conservative Austrian regionalism and a corny stereotype. Also, it was the first time since 1956 that Austria was yodelling on the ESC stage. The song was about a girl from Cuba who came to Austria and was disappointed in the slowness of Austrian dances. She inspired the Austrian music and dance style with “her shaking hips” and then fell in love with a yodelling boy. Interpreting the song in a contemporary context, not only the slow dances, but also the dozy society would need some inspiration and could benefit from new cultural influences.¹⁶³ With only 30 points, their international love story with volksmusik and ska elements didn’t qualify for the final.

Austria paused in 2006 and returned in 2007 with Eric Papilaya, former *Starmania* participant, performing “Get A Life - Get Alive”, a stadium rock song about tolerance. It was also the official Life Ball opening song that year. The annual event is also a brand Austria likes to decorate itself with. The ORF tried to point out the Life Ball in the ESC again and again throughout the years. In 2003, the Austrian televoting results were broadcast live from the Life Ball. In 2004, the members of Austrian participants Tie Break were wearing red ribbons and in 2007, Eric Papilaya’s stage décor consisted of a large red ribbon.¹⁶⁴ His background singers and dancers were dressed in red bodysuits with rhinestones and feathers, which reminded one of Mozart’s Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte*. Again, Austria’s hope was crushed when Papilaya only came in second to last in the semi-final, which meant another pause

¹⁶³ Gura in: Ehardt, Vogt and Wagner (eds.) 2015, p. 77.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 72.

from Eurovision. This time Austria sat out three years because the ORF officials considered the contest to have become too political.¹⁶⁵

Infected by the German's euphoric triumph with Lena Meyer-Landrut in 2010, Austria returned to Eurovision in 2011 with Nadine Beiler, the winner of the casting Show *Starmania*. She also won the preliminary show *Guten Morgen Düsseldorf* and was sent to Germany. Nadine Beiler had a very strong and colorful voice and her song "The Secret is Love" really showed her talent, especially the first verse where she sang a capella. Like Papilaya, her message was about love and tolerance and the pursuit of a peaceful world. There was a sense of hope that this time it would work; she was a talented singer, and her song was a message of love. For the first time since the introduction of the semi-final, Austria qualified for the final. Even though the jury voted her in 5th place, the televoting dragged her final ranking down to a disappointing 18th place out of 25. The slow rhythm was probably not memorable enough to leave an impression.¹⁶⁶

In 2012 Austria sent Lukas Plöchl and Manuel Hoffelner aka Trackshittaz to Baku. They had already competed in the Austrian preliminaries for Düsseldorf the year before and came in second. With "Woki mit dein Popo" they won *Österreich rockt den Song Contest 2012* with a wafer-thin lead of 51% to 49% against Conchita Wurst. They called their style "Traktor-Gangster-Party-Rap", in reference to their Upper-Austrian dialect and "Après-Ski-Musik", where partying and dancing should overcome any language barrier.¹⁶⁷ Yet, their choice of language could simply not reach an international audience. The dynamic show with neon lights and go-go girls on a stage that looked like a night club certainly put the spotlight on them, as well as the accusation of being sexist in the forefront of the ESC.¹⁶⁸ Their computer-generated sound was interspersed with accordion elements and their dancing included Schuhplattler movements. With only 8 points they came in last place at the semi-final and had to travel home.

¹⁶⁵ Vuletic 2018, p. 157.

¹⁶⁶ Gura in: Ehardt, Vogt and Wagner (eds.) 2015, p.75.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 81.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 82

The next year it was back to innocent pop. Natalia Kelly won the preliminaries with her song “Shine” and competed in Malmö with the unfavourable start number one. Compared to the previous year the Austrian entry was restrained and plain. Despite Kelly’s strong vocal performance, she also failed to qualify for the final.

For budgetary reasons the ORF decided not to have a preliminary show for the ESC in 2014.¹⁶⁹ Since the Austrian’s decisions of the last couple of years seemed to not conform to Europe’s taste in music, the ORF went in a completely new direction and gave Conchita Wurst a second chance after 2012. Sending a drag queen might also have been a deliberate decision responding to Russia’s newly introduced law to ban the promotion of homosexuality to minors.¹⁷⁰ Conchita went to Copenhagen and spread her message of peace and freedom, and that your nationality, gender, sexuality and look don’t stand in the way of your success and happiness. Her climactic performance of “Rise like a Phoenix” was rewarded with 290 points, including 12 points from Norway, Belgium, Switzerland, Spain, Finland, the UK, Greece, Ireland, Israel, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden and Slovenia. She got 5 points from Russia in the end - yet the null-points from the Russian jury (as well as the German jury). All Austrian daily newspapers agreed on her victory being a strong sign for tolerance and against Russia.¹⁷¹ A vast discrepancy in the voting results could also be seen between the results of the televoting and the jury of several central and eastern European states, such as Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Macedonia, Montenegro and Poland. As a consequence of their fear of the negative impact supporting Conchita could have on their image and professional opportunities in their society, the jury placed her low, whereas she was popular in the televoting.¹⁷² By sending her the ORF challenged those European countries with anti-gay laws.¹⁷³ For the first time in a long time Austria had a new face and the chance to benefit from the attention it was getting from the rest of Europe, to speak up on political topics with Conchita as the ambassador for human rights and equality.

¹⁶⁹ “Song Contest 2014: Österreich schickt Conchita Wurst”, www.diepresse.at, September 10th, 2013, https://diepresse.com/home/kultur/popco/1450966/Song-Contest-2014_Oesterreich-schickt-Conchita-Wurst-, last access June 30th, 2019.

¹⁷⁰ Vuletic 2018, p. 175.

¹⁷¹ Maria Katharina Wiedlack and Masha Neufeld in: Ehardt, Vogt and Wagner (eds.) 2015, p. 156.

¹⁷² Vuletic 2018, p. 192.

¹⁷³ Vuletic 2018, p. 176.

Never before did Austria produce such a polarising internationally successful pop star.

Vienna took on the challenge of hosting the ESC in 2015. In the national preliminaries “Eurovision Song Contest - Wer singt für Österreich?” Austria voted for The Makemakes, an indie rock band that had supported Bon Jovi in 2013. They were accused of plagiarism since their song “I’m Yours” reminded of Coldplay’s “The Scientist”, yet the ORF confirmed that authorised experts rebutted the allegations.¹⁷⁴ With a secured place in the final, The Makemakes started with number 14. The song was well structured and sung, yet there wasn’t much happening on stage, compared to some other dramatic performances that night. By far, they didn’t get the most out of the high-tech stage and light engineering. The bass player and the drummer looked under-challenged and slightly bored. Unfortunately, not even the burning piano could save their performance in the end. Together with Germany, Austria came in last with null-points (ultimately, they were ranked second to last because of their low starting number). Never before in the history of the ESC did the host end up with null-points. The Makemakes might have suffered from the lack of attention, since everybody was focussed on hosting the event.

The next year Austria was back to square one. The French singing Zoe Straub won the Austrian preliminaries 2016 with “Loin d’ici”. Full of confidence and a big smile she performed very well in Stockholm and ended up in the middle, 13th out of 26 in the final. In her case, the gap between the jury and televoting points was rather big; while she only got 31 from the juries, the fans rewarded her with 120.

The exact opposite happened a year later for Nathan Trent (who was chosen internally by the ORF): While he got 93 points from the juries, he didn’t get a single point from the televoting. His feel-good song “Running on air” was - apart from some off-key notes in the end - well performed and full of optimism, yet maybe a little too plain. Just like Zoe, he landed a midfield position: 16th out of 26.

¹⁷⁴ Jan Feddersen, “Ähnliches, nicht Gleiches”, www.eurovision.de (March 24th, 2015), https://www.eurovision.de/feddersens_kommentar/Song-The-Makemakes-I-Am-Yours-nicht-geklaut-von-Coldplay-plagiat116.html, last access June 30th, 2019.

In 2018 the ORF chose to send someone with ESC experience: Cesár Sampson had already been standing on the ESC stage in 2016 and 2017 as a background singer for Bulgaria. His songwriters Sebastian Aman and Boris Milanov had co-written songs for the Serbian, Bulgarian and Macedonian entries the previous years. The consummate musician and producer sang “Nobody But You”, a rather calm soul pop song with piano accompaniment. He stood on a high raised platform that slowly lowered back down to the stage which made him look powerful yet empathic. The jury voted him in 1st place, combined with the televoting he came in 3rd, behind Israel and Cyprus.

Especially in the past two decades Austria strove towards a new branding.¹⁷⁵ In the years after the rise of the right-wing party FPÖ and its leader Jörg Haider at the end of the 1990s, the ORF sent more and more liberal minded contestants with an immigrant background. The EU wanted to curtail right wing populist and extremist parties in Europe and wanted to make an example of Austria by imposing sanctions on Austria.¹⁷⁶ In 2000 the Rounder Girls were sent to Stockholm; two members were English speaking Afro-American women who had had great success in Austria singing at the Vienna State Opera or the Burgtheater. They were the answer to a conservative coalition and showed the EU, that Austria wasn’t a racist or xenophobic country. They contrasted strongly to a European view of Austria at that time.¹⁷⁷ Manuel Ortega, son of a Spaniard sang “Say a Word” in Tallinn in 2002. In 2007, Eric Papilaya, who is of Indonesian origin, participated in Helsinki. In 2012 it was the Traskshittaz with Lukas Plöchl, who has a Chinese father, competing in Baku. The year after, the USA-born Natalia Kelly, daughter of an American father and a Brazilian mother, performed in Malmö. With Conchita Wurst in 2014 the success was finally here: Austria won the ESC with a contestant who couldn’t be more polarising. Her name alone was multicultural and a bridge between female and male and she embodied diversity, acceptance and liberal-mindedness. She was the bridge that was built between Austria and the rest of Europe. The next year, Austrian born Zoe Straub sang “Loin d’ici” exclusively in French, which was a first for Austria. In 2017 it was Nathan Trent, who has an Italian mother and grew up bilingual,

¹⁷⁵ Gura in Ehardt, Vogt and Wagner (eds.) 2015, p. 65.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 68.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 69.

competing in Kiev. Cesár Sampson's parents are from the Caribbean islands St. Lucia and Trinidad, but he grew up in Austria. With their multicultural roots, these contestants created a new picture of Austria, far away from reveling in the aching past, absenting from the Schlager era and embracing a diverse and progressive present.

As Dean Vuletic argues, Austria is the best example for a state that draws "on their classical music traditions in their ESC entries as well, which was also a way of fashioning national identities through musical genres associated with historical eras that preceded the political instability and wars in the first half of the twentieth century."¹⁷⁸ References to Austria's classical music traditions could be found especially in entries during the Cold War, such as "Nur in der Wiener Luft", performed by the opera singer Eleonore Schwarz. It was interspersed with words like "*Walzermelodie*", "*Johann Strauss*", "*Schubert*" and "*Staatsoper*" in 1962. Blue Danube performed the song "Du bist Musik" in which they listed many examples for Austrian composers and musical genres in 1980.¹⁷⁹

As diverse as these artists were, as diverse were their successes. They all represented Austrian identity in their own way, but there was never a certain leitmotif that connected them. After every other contest Austria's self-esteem was crushed, to a point where it withdrew from participating again and again. Yet, a bad result can strengthen a "Wir sind wir"-mentality, provoked by the subconscious duty to justify "your" song, which can remain engraved in a nation's cultural memory.¹⁸⁰

Often, the lack of success was brushed aside by playing down the dimension and significance of the ESC in Europe, yet it seems as if Austria was trying to catch-up in the pop music market, where it has never been perceived as a frontrunner. As Derek B. Scott argues it appears to be "important to select a musical style that is well known in Europe and appeals across the generations."¹⁸¹ As pop music and other musical styles evolved, Austria always seemed a couple of years behind,

¹⁷⁸ Vuletic 2018, p. 58.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 59.

¹⁸⁰ Christine Ehardt in: Ehardt, Vogt and Wagner (eds.), 2015, p. 326.

¹⁸¹ Derek B. Scott: "Imagining the Nation, Imagining Europe", in: *Musical Style and Social Meaning. Selected Essays*, Abingdon: Ashgate 2010, p. 192.

desperately trying to conform to the mainstream and struggling with a balance act between reminiscing in the past and trying to fit in a modern Europe. With the language barrier gone Austria's contestants could reach a broader audience, yet at the same time it often meant distancing themselves from their national language. Therein lies a big conflict of weighing the representation of national identity against the aim of winning. Andrea F. Bohlman and Alexander Rehding hold the two levels (a national and the Eurovision level) responsible for this discord:

"We can broaden our scope and generalize these issues of multivalent signification, since the areas of friction between the national and the Eurovision levels are an integral component of the annual rituals of Eurovision. The crux, in many ways, is that national decisions try to accomplish two things at once: first, the task at hand is to choose a song that is relevant to - and represents in an exemplary fashion - the domestic market. Or, to put it in less explicit economic terms, the task is to choose an act that embodies the salient values of the domestic musical culture. [...] And second, it is hoped that the chosen song will at the same time do well on an international level, garnering a victory for its country. [...] Often, the resulting dissonance between the national and European levels leads to the performance's failure to achieve a high ranking."¹⁸²

Quite a few times did Austria's taste not match Europe's taste. Especially in the past decades when Austria held preliminaries, the winning contestant often wouldn't even qualify for the final. The consequential ruffled ego and resentment amongst the Austrians towards the ESC suffocated any euphoria and hope in the bud.

Immigrants have always played a big role in Austria, especially since the postwar period, when the economy boomed and many guest-workers from Turkey, Yugoslavia and Eastern Europe came to Austria and therefore shaped the nation's demography and culture.¹⁸³ From the very early years that Austria participated in the ESC, this new demographic was reflected in its participants: Jimmy Makulis (1961) was from Greece, Carmela Corren (1963) from Israel and Karel Gott (1968) from former Czechoslovakia. Since then, the ORF tried to represent Austria as a cosmopolitan nation. Together with Western Germany it was the country that

¹⁸² A.F. Bohlman and Rehding, in: Tragaki (ed.) 2013, p. 283-284.

¹⁸³ Irene Brickner, "Wie die Gastarbeiter Österreich veränderten", www.standard.at, May 14th, 2014, <https://derstandard.at/1399507543662/Wie-die-Gastarbeiter-Oesterreich-veraenderten>, last access June 30th, 2019.

probably benefited most of the annual opportunity to refashion and overcome its negative reputation associated with National Socialism and WWII.¹⁸⁴

With the rising of British pop music and therefore the rising of the English language in music in Europe, it got more challenging to be successful in your national language at the ESC, but many found a way to bend the rules in their favor. With titles respectively choruses like “Merci, Chérie”, “La La La”, “Boom Bang-a-Bang”, “Hallelujah”, “Diggi-loo, Diggi-ley”, “Rock Me”, and “Diva” many countries managed to win the contest by abiding the rules and breaking them at the same time. One could argue that since the abrogation of the language rule, the ESC has primarily become a competition of pop songs and moved further away from being a competition of nations, but on the other hand it meant that every nation had the same chance. It was small nations such as Denmark, Estonia and Austria that took the initiative and asked for a changing of the rule that constituted countries to sing in their national language up until 1998, but also Germany and Russia welcomed the alteration.¹⁸⁵

The winning language in Eurovision moved away from French in the early years to mostly English from the late 1960’s on. Up to today there have been 31 winning songs in English (that’s almost half the total) and only two in German, one of which was Udo Jürken’s French titled song “Merci, Chérie”. German has never been a successful Eurovision language even though it is the largest native language in Europe.¹⁸⁶ According to a study of 2014, only 4% of the Austrian interviewees want the language rule back, and only 17% prefer another language than English.¹⁸⁷ In contrast to other ESC countries which mostly switched to English after the abrogation of the language rule, Austria’s contestants tried dialects or other languages.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁴ Vuletic 2018, p. 62.

¹⁸⁵ Jan Feddersen, “Politiker fordern ESC-Lieder auf Deutsch”, www.eurovision.de, https://www.eurovision.de/feddersens_kommentar/Politisches-Getoese-um-Deutsches-beim-ESC,sprache176.html, last access June 30th, 2019.

¹⁸⁶ “EU diskriminiert die Deutsche Sprache”, May 27th, 2008, www.welt.de, <https://www.welt.de/politik/article2038479/EU-diskriminiert-die-deutsche-Sprache.html>, last access June 30th, 2019.

¹⁸⁷ Weigold in: Ehardt, Vogt and Wagner (eds.) 2015, p. 41.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., p.42.

The ORF and the performers tried many different directions, characters, genres and languages. The variety of entries over the decades mirrors Austria's musical landscape as there are ballads, rock, pop, schlager, chansons, soul, funk, yodelling and "Traktorgangsterpartyrap", all of which have a place in Austria. It seems as if the ORF often sent certain contestants out of politically motivated reasons, whereas whenever the Austrians had the opportunity to take part in the decision-making process, they mostly seemed to favour contestants and songs that they felt represented Austrian identity best to the rest of Europe, often including traditional national elements such as dialects or regional music styles. Nevertheless, the musicians competing in the preliminary shows were preselected by the ORF and experts of the music industry and could be influenced through staging the performance, thus the ESC candidates were never exclusively chosen by the Austrian audience.¹⁸⁹ One could say that Austria's national representation is located somewhere between tradition and progress.

3.1. Tradition and Progress: Andreas Gabalier, Conchita Wurst and "Heimat großer Töchter und Söhne"

The term "Austrian" is often accompanied by the term "Heimat" - it is even there in the Austrian national anthem.¹⁹⁰ There is no exact English equivalent, but it can be explained by it being a term that ties you to a certain place and being the best place there is. It refers to the relation between humans and space. Definitions range from it being a harmless, yet emotional transcription of one's origin, to being a politically ideological fighting term. For a long time it belonged exclusively to the vocabulary of the right wing, and was often associated with National Socialism and nostalgia, but in the meantime it has conquered all political camps. It implies a demarcation between everybody and everything that belongs to and in it, and everybody and

¹⁸⁹ Gura in: Ehardt, Vogt and Wagner (eds.) 2015, p. 84.

¹⁹⁰ Lyrics of the Austrian National Anthem, see appendix.

everything else; from your next-door neighbour to a neighbouring state. It also implies a sense of safety for everybody included but at the same time excludes marginalized groups such as immigrants, refugees and religious or sexual minorities. Thus, the question “Where are you from?” also implies “What are you?” and “Where is your origin?”, a very intimate investigation of identity.¹⁹¹

In this wide spectrum of Austrian music and identity there are two artists who stand on opposite sides of the bridge: Andreas Gabalier and Conchita Wurst. Both are very successful in what they are doing, and both name Austria their “Heimat”, yet they couldn’t be more different. They represent the rural and the urban, the old-fashioned and the modern, the traditional and the progressive Austria. Andreas Gabalier and Conchita Wurst are huge projection screens for Austrian identity, and both trigger conflictive emotions in people. Their rivalry, blown up by the media, peaked when Gabalier was awarded “Live Act of the Year” at the 2015 Amadeus Awards, and said: “Man hat’s nicht leicht auf dieser Welt, wenn man als Manderl noch auf ein Weiberl steht.”¹⁹² in his acceptance speech, hinting at Conchita and the dialogue on tolerance and acceptance her victory opened in Austria.

Interestingly, Gabalier grew up in Graz, Austria’s second largest city, and Tom Neuwirth (Conchita Wurst’s civil name) on the countryside in Bad Mitterndorf with only 3000 residents, yet both were drawn to the opposite from a young age. Gabalier spent most of his childhood at his grandparents’ farm, and Conchita moved from Bad Mitterndorf to Graz at only 14 years of age to attend to an institution of higher education for fashion design.¹⁹³ After Tom’s first steps of independence he entered the casting show *Starmania* in 2006 where he came in second place. Nadine Beiler, who won the competition, would go to Eurovision four years later.

At this point, he had already come out. After *Starmania*, he finished school, moved to Vienna and started doing drag. He chose his stage name Conchita, because it was a synonym for a sweet and sexy woman and Wurst because he didn’t really

¹⁹¹ Rogaunig, Sarah / Doderer, Imogena: “‘Heimat’ - was ist das eigentlich?” in: *Heimat, fremde Heimat*, ORF 2, March 31st, 2019, 1:30 pm.

¹⁹² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RX6iFMP2AIU>, 1:57-2:02, last access June 30, 2019.

¹⁹³ Wurst 2015, p. 19.

care about what others might think: “Es ist mir Wurst” is a synonym for “I don’t care” in Austria.¹⁹⁴ After a couple of years of working in the burlesque scene and gathering a fan base on social media, Tom Neuwirth decided that it was time for the next step: participating in another casting show as his stage persona Conchita Wurst. She came in 6th place in *Die große Chance* and met her mentor and future manager René Berto, who had also managed Alf Poier, Austria’s ESC entry in 2003.¹⁹⁵ Berto drew up the concept for Conchita going to Eurovision in 2014 and presented it to the ORF, before even showing her first or having a song prepared. The ORF’s programme director Kathrin Zechner agreed and decided to go with Conchita,¹⁹⁶ after she had already competed for a spot in Baku 2012, but lost to Trackshittaz.

In the weeks before the final Conchita travelled through Europe and gave over 400 interviews to talk about her mission of acceptance and love. Her promo tour ended in April in London with the Eurovision Party at Café de Paris.¹⁹⁷ During her journey she came to realize what being European really meant to her:

“Unterwegs spürte ich in jeder Faser meines Körpers, dass ich ein Kind Europas bin. Dieser atemberaubend schöne, aber viel zu oft blutgetränkte Kontinent, wo wir Geschichte mit jedem Atemzug aufnehmen können. [...] Zur Zeit meiner Geburt was es das durch den eisernen Vorhang getrennte Europa. Als ich ein Jahr alt war fiel die Berliner Mauer, die Sowjetunion und der Warschauer Pakt lösten sich auf, Ost und West näherten sich einander an. Heute leben wir in Zeiten, von denen Abermillionen unserer Vorfahren nicht einmal träumen konnten. Auf meiner Reise durch den Kontinent brauchte ich in der Regel nicht den Ausweis zu zücken, um von einem Land ins andere zu gelangen. Ich zahlte meinen Kaffee in einer Währung und konnte mich mit den meisten Menschen in einer gemeinsamen Sprache unterhalten. Diese Errungenschaften sind so gewaltig, dass sie manchmal schon wieder banal wirken. [...] Ich liebe die wunderbar verschiedenen Kulturen unseres Kontinents wie auch die einzigartige Möglichkeit, sie in einem einigen Europa gemeinsam zu erleben.”¹⁹⁸

After her victory in Copenhagen, Conchita starred in commercials for an Austrian bank,¹⁹⁹ she appeared on many international TV shows and sang at the Life Ball in Vienna only one week after the ESC final. Her performance was included last minute

¹⁹⁴ Wurst 2015, p. 42.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 47.

¹⁹⁶ Schreuder Interview 2017, see appendix.

¹⁹⁷ Wurst 2015, p. 56.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 57.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 122.

into to an already fixed schedule.²⁰⁰ She started to be more politically active and met with many Austrian politicians, she spoke before the European Parliament and met Ban Ki-moon at the UN office in Vienna.²⁰¹ In 2015 she was the new face of the Life Ball campaign, the biggest HIV-Charity-Event in Europe. That year the ball was taking place only one week before the ESC final, which brought even more media attention to Vienna. With Conchita being the testimonial for both events, the Life Ball and the ESC were undoubtedly linked.

This particular campaign for the Life Ball ties together the old with the new. Photographer Ellen von Unwerth brings Gustav Klimt into the 21st century, by putting Austria's most polarizing face on the "Goldene Adele", one of Klimt's most famous paintings.

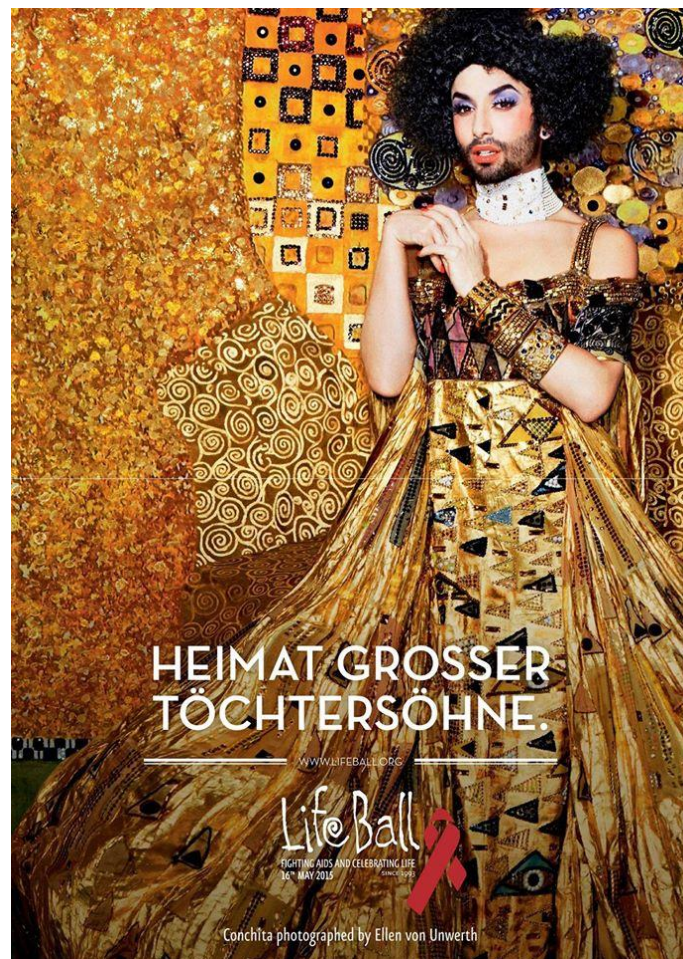


Figure 1: Poster of the Life Ball 2015, Conchita Wurst as Gustav Klimt's "The Woman in Gold"

²⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 66.

²⁰¹ Ibid., p. 120.

Klimt was a very important Austrian painter of the Viennese Art Nouveau era, who is still present everywhere you go in Vienna. His paintings can be bought on postcards, umbrellas, shopping bags, dishes, pens, pillows and many other items. Here, the caption says “HEIMAT GROSSER TÖCHTERSÖHNE.”, which hit the ravages of time: it refers to the alteration of the lyrics of the Austrian national anthem, which were changed from “*Heimat bist du großer Söhne*” to “*Heimat großer Töchter und Söhne*”.

A country’s national anthem links patriotism, national identity and musicality. In Austria, athletics - and footballers in particular - are expected to sing along to the national anthem. Whenever they don’t, the question about them being “echte Österreicher”, real Austrians, is being raised. Austria’s current figurehead is David Alaba, Austrian born footballer with Nigerian and Filipino roots. He plays for Bayern München and is one of Austria’s strongest players. Even though he never sings along to the anthem he is considered a national hero,²⁰² who helps to create a tolerant and open-minded international picture of Austria.²⁰³

Austrian football player Toni Polster stopped singing along to the anthem after he was being mocked because the camera captured him singing along quite asynchronous, leading a comedian to use this incident for his program.²⁰⁴

The discussion about singing or for that matter not singing along to the anthem before the start of a sporting event has taken on an interesting dynamic: it comes and goes with a team’s success and its failure. Whenever a team loses the question about patriotism is being raised. Most recent example is the German born football player Mesut Özil. When playing (and losing) against Mexico, Özil didn’t sing along to the anthem but prayed for a win. After Germany’s unexpected early trip home after the group stage at the football World Championship in Russia 2018, he was being openly criticized by the media for taking a picture with Turkey’s president Recep Tayyip Erdogan in May, because he was being accused of supporting

²⁰² Matthias Mödl, “Alaba: ‘Bei der Hymne gehe ich komplett in mich’”, www.krone.at (October 24th, 2013), <https://www.krone.at/380436>, last access June 30, 2019.

²⁰³ Schreuder Interview 2017, see appendix.

²⁰⁴ Marlene Nowotny, “Patriotismus auf dem Prüfstand”, www.orf.at (June 24th, 2018), <https://orf.at/stories/2443841/2443840/>, last access June 30, 2019.

Erdogan in his election campaign. This incident opened up a debate about integration and racism and ended with Özil's resignation from the German national team by him saying: „Ich bin Deutscher, wenn wir gewinnen, und ein Immigrant, wenn wir verlieren.“²⁰⁵

Success in football is always being linked with good and right integration of immigrants. France's victory in their home country at the World Championship in 1998 is another example: their national colours blue, white and red were all of the sudden not bleu-blanc-rouge anymore, but bleu-blanc-beur, a reference to their players originating from Arabia.²⁰⁶ Their victory was celebrated as successful social multiculturalism. The same can be seen today: With winning the World Championship 2018, France's slogan "Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité" was now changed to "Liberté, Égalité, Mbappé", in reference to their goal-getter Kylian Mbappé.²⁰⁷

The lyrics of the Austrian national anthem were changed after the National Council voted for more gender equality after stating that the old version would discriminate women. There was a lot of controversy in the media about the alteration. Austrian football players were criticized for singing the original version before a game. Very quickly it became a political debate about whether one was liberal-minded and modern, or conservative and even sexist. Suddenly, no more athletes sung along to the anthem, or at least left out that particular line to prevent being targeted by the media. The debate had reached its peak when Andreas Gabalier sang the old version at the Formula 1 Race "The Grand Prix of Austria" in 2014, only six weeks after Conchita had won the ESC in Copenhagen. After being criticized by many individuals, he declared himself to be a victim and being a "toy tossed around by politicians".²⁰⁸ He also stated the way he sang it is how he had learned it in school

²⁰⁵ "Mesut Özil tritt aus Nationalmannschaft zurück", www.welt.de (July 22nd, 2018), <https://www.welt.de/sport/fussball/article179781626/Mesut-Oezil-Nach-Erdogan-Affaere-Ruecktritt-aus-Nationalmannschaft.html>, last access June 30, 2019.

²⁰⁶ Marlene Nowotny, "Patriotismus auf dem Prüfstand", www.orf.at (June 24th, 2018), <https://orf.at/stories/2443841/2443840>, last access June 30, 2019.

²⁰⁷ Stefan Brändle, "Liberté, Égalité, Mbappé", www.derstandard.at (July 15th, 2018), <https://derstandard.at/2000083526462/Liberte-Egalite-Dembele>, last access June 30, 2019.

²⁰⁸ Haberfellner, "Andreas Gabalier: Offener Brief zur Bundeshymne von Österreich", www.schlagerportal.com (July 12th, 2014), <http://www.schlagerportal.com/andreas-gabalier-bundeshymne-brief-120714>, last access June 30, 2019.

and that he didn't see why he should change the way of singing it now. He even published an open letter to the public defending his choice in lyrics.²⁰⁹

The Austrian "Volksrock'n'roller" Andreas Gabalier is the antipode to what Conchita embodies. No other Austrian musician attracts such a large audience at the moment. The content of his music borders right-wing populism (even though he claims to be non-political) and he often toys with the term and definition of "Heimat".²¹⁰ Throughout his albums it plays a central role, often connected to the mountains and Alps, which represent an important part of his interpretation of "Heimat". This becomes very clear in his lyrics as he constantly mentions them and even portrays himself as a big, mighty mountain.²¹¹ In interviews he names the Alps and the mountaintops as a place to retire from the daily grind and as a source of inspiration.²¹² Even though he grew up in Austria's second biggest city Graz, he identifies his grandparents' farm in the countryside as his home and dreams about a romantic alpine cabin up in the mountains, where he can have a simple and calm life.²¹³ In reality the population in the countryside is decreasing, especially since the migration into the cities from the 1970's, mechanized farming and the declining demand for farm workers. Especially young people with an education migrate into the cities to find employment.²¹⁴

Similar to the time of Schlager in the postwar period the demand for distraction and entertainment to dive into a dream world seems to be strong. Just like then, Gabalier recites different genres - albeit quite superficial. However, the Schlager in the postwar period would often deal with far away, exotic places, whereas Gabalier's music praises distinctive regional features - thereby he creates a certain "Inland-

²⁰⁹ See appendix.

²¹⁰ Suchy, Irene (editor), *Indrada*, Radio Ö1 (ORF), April 5th, 2019, 10:05 am.

²¹¹ Andreas Gabalier, "Mountain Man", Echo 2015 (March 26th, 2015), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=89LJdluyegl>, 0:01-0:58, last access June 30, 2019.

²¹² Andreas Gabalier: *Volksrock'n'roller-Live*, DVD, Universal, Stadthalle Vienna, October 12th, 2012.

²¹³ Thomas Zeidler: *Andreas Gabalier. Aus dem Leben des VolksRock'n'Rollers*, München: Riva Verlag 2014, p. 171.

²¹⁴ "Städte wachsen, Land dünnt weiter aus", www.orf.at (June 16th, 2015), <https://orf.at/v2/stories/2284396/>, last access June 30th, 2019.

Exotism”.²¹⁵ In his music he opposes tradition to progress, just as he opposes elements of Volksmusik to elements of rock’n’roll. He manages to place his “Volksrock’n’roll” next to terms like “Jodelfox”²¹⁶ or “Polkapunk”; a fusion of genres. It’s a tightrope walk between the bond to his “Heimat” on one side, and a “sex, drugs and rock’n’roll”- attitude on the other.

Gabalier’s songs are aimed at the feeling of not being able to adjust to an urban lifestyle and he is the exponent of a certain “good old times”-mentality that many people who reject a modern lifestyle can relate to. However, this phenomenon doesn’t apply to only one, but many age groups as one can see at Gabalier’s concerts.²¹⁷ Another explanation is that his lyrics often convey nostalgia, but his music is modern pop.

Other than the mountains Gabalier introduces many other Austrian stereotypes like the Austrian culinary art, alleged Austrian values, Austrian costumes like Dirndl and Lederhosen and traditional fairs. E.g. in his song “Dahoam” he places seemingly random terms next to each other but doesn’t substantiate them. Just like the music, the lyrics have no dramaturgy and he is quite vague and imprecise and therefore allows a broad audience to identify with him. Through a collective identity these stereotypes have a uniting function. This sense of national belonging manifests territorially and materially and is being lived out in a social community. For this exact community - in this case his fans - Gabalier appears authentic, natural and approachable; he is one of them.

The term “Heimat” plays a different role in each of his five albums. In the beginning, it is a central element, but loses importance over the years and takes the backseat. On his debut album *Da komm’ ich her* (which is already a reference to his origin) Gabalier focuses on specific nostalgic aspects and national values. With songs like “Steirerland”, “Auf der Alm”, “Obersteirer” and “Meine Heimat” he paints a picture that lets nobody doubt the love he has for his homeland. In “Steirerland”

²¹⁵ Christian Glanz, “Schlager”, www.musiklexikon.ac.at (May 6th, 2001), http://www.musiklexikon.ac.at/ml/musik_S/Schlager.xml, last access June 30th, 2019.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ Gabalier, Andreas: *Volksrock’n’roller-Live*, DVD, Universal, Stadthalle Vienna, 2012.

catchphrases such as “Gstanzl”, “Heimatland”, “Steirergwand”, “Stolz”, “Dirndl” and “Freundschaft” dominate the song and are aimed at the national pride of the listener. Same can be found in “Auf der Alm” and “Obersteirer”; only “Meine Heimat” breaks ranks, as it is sung in High German and doesn’t incorporate into the line of his songs organically. This could be the first attempt to appeal to a larger, more international audience, especially Germany. It is an album filled with stories about picturesque landscapes, traditions of home and amicable values. Gabalier sings about a place that couldn’t be more beautiful and that inspires him every day. In between there are songs such as “Mit dir”, “Amoi seg’ ma uns wieder” and “In deinen Armen zu liegen”, which are about personal relationships. The change between the love for your homeland and the love for another person strengthens the message of this album: “Heimat” is not just a place; it is a feeling.

From his second album *Herzwerk* on, his music changes from a folklike to a more international sound. Responsible are his manager Klaus Bartelmus and his German producer Mathias Rosko.²¹⁸ Gabalier stays true to his message; in the songs “Bergbauernbuam” and “Dahoam” the term “Heimat” connects a territorial and an emotional side. “Bergbauernbuam” is a song about friendship and solidarity and the fact that said “Mountain-farmer-boys” are the strongest and most potent men in the world, justified by the hard life in the mountains. Thereby he draws a bow to a bad-boy-attitude, like the machismo of rock’n’roll.

Volksrock’n’roller is the album with the most “Heimat”-references. “12-Ender Hirsch”, “Vergiss die Heimat nie”, “Dahoam bin i nur bei dir” and “Heimatsöhne” are about “Heimat” - but only in the lyrics. The music couldn’t be further away from a folklike, native sound. Even the media is unable to categorize him and his music; they call him Alpine-Elvis, Robbie Williams of Volksmusik and James Dean in Lederhosen.²¹⁹

“Volksrock’n’roller” is a very programmatic song, in which he creates his brand. He sings about his music being somewhere in between Volksmusik, Austropop and

²¹⁸ Zeidler 2014, p. 149.

²¹⁹ Zeidler 2014, p. 83.

rock'n'roll, even though only the latter shows to advantage - it reminds more of a U2- or Robbie-Williams-like stadium sound. It correlates to the song "12-Ender Hirsch", because on one hand it has a rock sound, but on the other hand you can hear a rough yodeller. The lyrics of "Volksrock'n'roller" would actually fit better into the sound of "12-Ender Hirsch", since Gabalier is mixing various genres in it. Especially in live versions of "Volksrock'n'roller" the sound is harder, and his voice rougher. In the breaks he speaks in English. It seems as if his musical background is irrelevant; his songs are arranged in a way so that the live sound can quickly be adapted to stadium rock.

"Vergiss die Heimat nie" has a very romantic theme. Gabalier sings about the relationship to his grandmother who had passed away. It is one of the few Gabalier songs that connects religion with "Heimat", as he conveys that god gave it and one should be thankful for it. Combined with the yodelling and the glockenspiel in the end it communicates a certain feeling of nostalgia and homesickness. This longing for "Heimat" is also expressed in the line „*denn am olla olla schenstn is daham*“.²²⁰

"Daham bin i nur bei dir" works in a similar way. He sings about a woman he loves and switches between dialect and High German. An emotional level is being added to the territorial level of "Heimat", because the lyrics implicate that "Heimat" is only complete when this woman is there too.

When he published the album *Volksrock'n'roller* in 2011, he was accused of depicting a swastika on the cover, which he always denied.²²¹

²²⁰ "There is no place like home" (translation by author.)

²²¹ Michael Bonvalot: "Wie rechts ist Andreas Gabalier?", [www.vice.com](https://www.vice.com/de_at/article/3bybvb/wie-rechts-ist-andreas-gabalier) (June 27th, 2014), https://www.vice.com/de_at/article/3bybvb/wie-rechts-ist-andreas-gabalier, last access July 8th, 2019.



Figure 2: Cover of Andreas Gabalier's album *Volksrock'n'roller*

Since at least then, Gabalier was put under the microscope after every song, interview or statement he released, but his fans would defend him. Members of the nationalist, anti-israel and far right political movement PEGIDA (Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the Occident), started the “Gabalier-Kreuz-Challenge”: members would have their picture taken in the exact same pose and posting them online.²²²

The song “Home sweet Home” on the album of the same title has nothing to do with Gabalier’s musical roots anymore. Blues-like elements, a harmonica and a rough singing voice remind of the Route 66 or a lonesome cowboy in a western movie rather than the Austrian highlands. The fact that he is singing in English supports his attempt to adopt an American sound and reach a larger, international audience. In “Traditional Clothing” “Heimat” is presented only very superficial. Again, he sings in High German mixed with dialect with a rather rough voice, over an insignificant sound of rock and pop elements. “Heimat” is apparently in the focus, but not really.

²²² “Pegida unterstützt Gabalier mit ‘Gabalier-Kreuz-Challenge’”, www.derstandard.at (February 2nd, 2019), <https://www.derstandard.at/story/2000097557316/pegida-unterstuetzt-gabalier-mit-gabalier-kreuz-challenge>, last access July 8th, 2019.

The song “Man of Volksrock’n’roll” wants to sell his brand ‘Volksrock’n’roller’. He recites his greatest hits and mentions that he comes from the mountains in the same breath; he establishes an associative connection between his success and his origin:

*“I bin a kerniger Bergbauernbua vo de Madl ihre Wadl griag i net gnua
geh min Frühwirth an heben bis er einschlofen kau
Bin a 12ender Hirsch sing a Liad fia di
sog zum Sweet Little Rehlein so liab hob i di
jo do nur do bin i dahoam*

*I’m a man from the mountain high that’s where I belong
and I’m playing you my song
I am strong yes I’m the one singing from my soul
I’m the man of Volksrock’n’roll,
yes I’m the man of Volksrock’n’roll”²²³*

On his 5th album *Mountain Man* “Heimat” completely takes the backseat. Only the songs “Mountain Man” and “Köngin der Alpen” play associative with the term, however, the sound is way more commercial and incomparable with his old work. The quite fictitious character Andreas Gabalier/Volksrock’n’roller/Mountain Man has now reached a comic reality. The single “Mountain Man” begins with film soundtrack like elements to build up tension and then changes to a pop song with call and response passages, and again, he sings in German and English. In the comic video he is a superhero who saves damsels in distress and flies them to a modern cabin up in the Alps.

There is also a cover version of “Edelweiss” from the 1959 musical *The Sound of Music* on this album, although other than the original, it is sung in German. He changes most of the lyrics but keeps the essential passages: “*Bless my homeland forever*” becomes “*Schütze die Heimat zu jeder Zeit*”. Here Gabalier comes back to the idea of the pure, white and alpine. The Edelweiss is another Austrian stereotype

²²³ Andreas Gabalier, “Man of Volksrock’n’roll”, www.songtexte.com, <https://www.songtexte.com/songtext/andreas-gabalier/man-of-volksrocknroll-235754bb.html>, last access June 30th, 2019.

loaded with symbolism. It is on the Austrian two Cent coin (it was also on the one Schilling coin), it is being used again and again for Austrian post stamps, it is in the logo of the Austrian alpine rescue service and can often be seen in TV spots for beer amongst others.²²⁴ It stands against wind and weather, stands for strength, the lean beauty of the Alps, adventurousness, nostalgia, honesty and purity.²²⁵ Many of these values that can be found in Gabalier's earlier lyrics - it seems only logical that he would sing about the alpine flower. Producing a cover version of an already quite old song and counting on the song's recognition value might be another way of trying to reach a larger audience outside of Austria, where 'The Sound of Music' is well known and popular.

In summary, he is using the term "Heimat" in a very selective way and factors out possible disadvantages of the portrayed scenery, like the rural exodus, or the decreasing infrastructure. "Heimat" has a strictly positive connotation: "Wenn ich über Heimat singe, meine ich es in einem sehr positiven Sinn. Ich habe ein Problem damit, dass man dieses Wort immer beschmutzt. Man muss diesen Begriff nicht immer braun anmalen. Heimat ist für mich schon immer etwas Schönes gewesen, eine heile Welt."²²⁶ Yet, the created picture is loaded with outmoded clichés and thus inauthentic. The stereotypes he uses are wide-ranging and undefined, so that uniting words like "us" or "our" create a national identity that conveys a collective attitude to life, national pride and a certain value system. He designs a picture loaded with ideals that serves the purpose of escaping reality together for three and a half minutes.

Musically, he doesn't express "Heimat" because he is geared to his American idols. By creating a collage of unsubstantial terms, he invites the listener to coin their own story. He admits to "classic values",²²⁷ but "Heimat" is not precisely defined. One of the reasons for success might be the many possibilities for interpretation and identification. The attempt to classify his musical style is to no end, because he

²²⁴ <http://www.edelweissbier.at/>, last access June 30th, 2019.

²²⁵ <http://www.alpenblumen.net/edelweiss.php>, last access June 30th, 2019.

²²⁶ "Andreas Gabalier spricht über Heimat und Volks-Rock'n'Roll", www.haz.de (July 18th, 2018), <https://www.haz.de/Nachrichten/Kultur/Uebersicht/Andreas-Gabalier-im-Interview-ueber-Heimat-und-Volks-Rock-n-Roll>, last access July 8th, 2019.

²²⁷ Zeidler 2014, p. 94.

doesn't create something new, but strings together various genres. The only absolute term that never changes, is his female counterpart which provides a projection screen. He refers to it again and again - the woman is his echo. The separation of gender roles is more pointed out in his music than in Austrian folk music in general.²²⁸ With terms like "Mäderl", "Sweet little thing", "Zuckerpuppe", "Baby", "Weiberl", "Sweet little Rehlein", "Kleine Mäderl" and many more, women are being belittled, which is especially problematic since young girls too are listening to his music. Yet, every form of criticism is being dismissed as an illusion or "gender-polluted".²²⁹

3.2. Austria Hosting the Eurovision Song Contest 2015

The great challenge of hosting the ESC was an opportunity for Austria to underline its status as cultural superpower as well as to fix its place in a modern, cosmopolitan center of Europe. According to Irving Wolther, the national economy dimension of the ESC also holds a political component.²³⁰ Progressive political views, a modern lifestyle and of course tolerance with Conchita as an ambassador for human rights were the qualities, Austria praised itself with. In order to implement all that into hosting, the ORF released a list with all goals and intentions in the form of a mission statement. It reads almost like a political agenda, emphasizing Austria's qualities, its progressiveness and "the liberal-minded image of our country". It promises to not be "Austrian-centered" or promote "popular Austrian stereotypes which are common for our country" (without naming them).

²²⁸ Suchy, Irene (editor), *Indrada*, Radio Ö1 (ORF), April 5th, 2019, 10:05 am.

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Wolther 2006, p. 143.

The ORF has established a Mission Statement for the ESC 2015.

WHAT THE ESC 2015 IN VIENNA IS ...

The ESC 2015 is going to be a cosmopolitan party of tolerance, acceptance and variety

The ESC 2015 will be Europe's biggest TV show of the year and will be organised and produced state-of-the-art by ORF

The ESC 2015 will be the biggest musical competition for young singers from all over Europe and is characterised by respect, fairness and transparency

The ESC 2015 is going to have the distinction of artistic quality and originality Austria, located in the heart of Europe, will be a charming, liberal and generous host for all participants

The ESC 2015 is a modern and progressive European TV event which imparts the image to the rest of the world of a modern Austria with strong European roots

The ESC 2015 will celebrate its 60th anniversary in Austria self-aware and happy

The ESC 2015 will be Austria's creative interpretation of this big event, which will show the liberal-minded image of our country

The ESC 2015 is going to be a shared project for all Austria and the entire team is aware of that unique opportunity

The ESC 2015 will be barrier-free, and will, therefore explore new avenues

The ESC 2015 will be an internationally-certified 'green event' having sustainability as a negotiating principle

... AND WHAT IT'S NOT

The ESC 2015 will not be arrogant or autocratic

The ESC 2015 is celebrating its 60th anniversary but nevertheless won't be nostalgic

The ESC 2015 won't advance the popular Austrian stereotypes which are common for our country at international events

The ESC 2015 will not be 'Austrian-centered' – the focus will be on Europe

The ESC 2015 won't be wasteful or assume vast proportions

Figure 3: ORF Mission Statement, ESC 2015

After it became clear that Austria would be hosting the ESC for the second time, almost every federal state applied to host the event.²³¹ In the media it seemed as if the search for the right place was more than just the logical consequence of infrastructure and general capacity; a hype was created to get the whole country excited for this big event.²³² When Vienna was officially made host-city, the branding began. Out of hundreds of proposals for a slogan the organizers picked "Building

²³¹ "Morgen endet Bewerbungsfrist für den Song Contest 2015", www.diepresse.at, (June 12th, 2014), <https://diepresse.com/home/kultur/popco/3819969/Morgen-endet-Bewerbungsfrist-fuer-Song-Contest-2015>, last access June 30th, 2019.

²³² "Song Contest in Wien: Kritik aus Graz", www.steiermark.orf.at (August 7th, 2014), <https://steiermark.orf.at/v2/news/stories/2661835/>, last access June 30th, 2019.

Bridges” to be most suitable for the Contest in Vienna. Dr. Alexander Wrabetz, general director of the ORF, commented the motto as following:

"The end of the Second World War marks the 70th time European countries shake hands with each other - in Austria, the country that has always assumed a central role as a mediating instance, as a bridge between the East and the West. We understand this slogan as a logical extension of the idea Conchita Wurst formulated at the 2014 Eurovision Song Contest and also lived: the importance of openness, tolerance across all borders for a joint interaction. With the song contest in Vienna, we want music to build bridges across borders, cultures and languages. In light of the unifying power of this great common European event, we invite all to build bridges and to join hands."²³³

Also the historical background of the year 2015 was of significance: it was not only the 70th anniversary of the end of WWII, but also the 60th anniversary of Austria entering the UN, the 20th anniversary of Austria's accession to the EU, and the 200th anniversary of the birth of the Congress of Vienna.²³⁴ Austria hosted an event where almost all European nations came together for the 60th time, to reach out to one another, in a country that has ever since taken on the part of a bridge builder between east and west.²³⁵

With the slogan “City of Vienna - #12points” the Austrian Design company “En Garde” placarded everything; parks, trams, advertising pillars and much more. The hashtag #12points was used on almost every ESC-posting on social media channels, and “En Garde” started an online campaign where people could upload their favourite pictures of Vienna, vote for the best with #12points and win tickets for the final show.²³⁶ Conchita Wurst's voice could be heard on public transport, announcing stops (especially around the Stadthalle and the public viewing spots).

²³³ “Vienna 2015 Slogan revealed”, www.eurovision.tv, September 11th, 2014, <https://eurovision.tv/story/vienna-2015-slogan-revealed>, last access June 30th, 2019.

²³⁴ Vuletic 2018, p. 201.

²³⁵ “Song Contest 2015 hat ein Motto: Building Bridges”, www.derstandard.at, September 12th, 2014, <https://derstandard.at/2000005479998/Song-Contest-2015-hat-ein-Motto-Building-Bridges>, last access June 30th, 2019.

²³⁶ “#12Points für die Song Contest Stadt Wien”, www.engage.net, <https://www.engage.net/projects/city-branding-vienna-song-contest/#.WgMvJLWDPOj>, last access June 30th, 2019.

Right before the ESC and the Life Ball, Vienna was equipped with new traffic lights. As a sign of open-mindedness and tolerance, 120 traffic lights were renewed with either opposite-sex or same-sex couples and a heart. Vice-mayoress Maria Vassilakou of the Green Party initiated the project. She got the idea on a trip to Australia, where she saw the silhouette of Kate Shepard, first president of the National Council of Women in New Zealand, on several traffic lights: "Der Zuspruch zu den Ampelpärchen ist wirklich überwältigend. Das ist großartig für die Akzeptanz von lesbischwulen Paaren und ein echtes neues Motiv für Touristen in Wien."²³⁷

Furthermore, the campaign was meant to bring more attention to traffic lights and increase security at crossings. They were one of the few things that stayed after the Eurovision week was over. The international media reported on it; even the British newspaper "The Guardian" covered the story.²³⁸ On the official website²³⁹ one can find infos on the Europride in Vienna in 2019 and buy t-shirts and other accessories with the logo on it, which reminds of the brand "Ampelmann-Berlin".²⁴⁰



Figure 4: New traffic lights in Vienna

For the first time, the ESC was executed as a green event, meaning considerate handling of resources, using regional and sustainable products and offering

²³⁷ "Wiener Ampelpärchen", <https://www.wien.gv.at/verkehr/ampeln/neue-ampelsymbole.html>, last access June 30th, 2019.

²³⁸ "Vienna's gay, straight and lesbian crossing lights show all walks of life", www.theguardian.com, May 13th, 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/may/13/viennas-gay-straight-and-lesbian-crossing-lights-show-all-walks-of-life>, last access June 30th, 2019.

²³⁹ <https://www.ampelpaerchen.rocks/>, last access June 30th, 2019.

²⁴⁰ <http://www.ampelmann.de/>, last access June 30th, 2019.

accessibility and inclusion as well as translation into international sign language, in the context of “Building Bridges” and breaking down language barriers.²⁴¹ Another bridge was built by inviting Australia to join the ESC for the first time, initiated by the ORF together with the EBU.

Ulli Sima, eco councilwoman of Vienna, took the execution as a green event for granted:

“Als Umweltmusterstadt ist es eine Selbstverständlichkeit, den gesamten Event umweltfreundlich auszurichten und mit hohen Ökostandards zu punkten. Wien hat sich in den letzten Jahren zu einer pulsierenden Eventstadt entwickelt. Überall wird auf umweltfreundliche Gestaltung geachtet. Deshalb wollen wir den Song Contest zum Öko-Event machen.”²⁴²

In the sustainability report all measures and implementations to make Eurovision green were listed. It proved the immense effort of hundreds of people involved in organising and executing a green event, from renewable energy, 96 tons of recycling material, saving 1.000 tons of carbon dioxide, eco-friendly transportation, fair trade coffee, organic catering for all accredited guests (such as 15.900 liters of milk and 128 kg of mountain cheese), to returnable and reusable cups and LED lights.²⁴³

Over 100.000 guests visited the in total twelve shows in the Stadthalle. Another 120.000 watched and celebrated the ESC in “Eurovision Village” on the Rathausplatz in the city center. From Eastern- to Western Austria there were 49 public viewing places and the EuroClub in the Ottakringer Brewery with over 7.000 visitors for partying after hours.

As mentioned in the introduction, the Vienna Philharmonics inaugurated the 60th Eurovision Song contest by playing in front of Schloss Schönbrunn, after the “Eurovision fanfare” could be heard. The viewers were taken on a cinematic journey through Austrian sceneries, cities and their residents to the Vienna Stadthalle,

²⁴¹ „Eurovision Song Contest“-Veranstalter ORF: „Wir sind Song Contest“, May 13th, 2015, https://www.ots.at/presseaussendung/OTS_20150513_OT50103/eurovision-song-contest-veranstalter-orf-wir-sind-song-contest, last access June 30th, 2019.

²⁴² <http://www.greenmusicinitiative.de/2015/05/green-esc/>, last access June 30th, 2019.

²⁴³ <https://der.orf.at/unternehmen/humanitarian/esc-nachhaltigkeitsbericht100.pdf>, last access June 30th, 2019.

where Lidia Baich played Udo Jürgens' "Merci, Chérie" on the violin, followed by Conchita presenting the official "Building Bridges"-hymn together with the Vienna Boys Choir, the multinational Superar Choir and rapper Left Boy, joined by the presenters Arabella Kiesbauer, Mirjam Weichselbraun and Alice Tumler in the end.²⁴⁴ They were accompanied by the Radio Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Peter Pejtsik. As per usual the final was officially declared open with the words "Good Evening Europe". With 27 countries competing for the title, 2015 was the biggest grand final in the history of the ESC so far; over 200 million people watched the live shows.²⁴⁵ The stage was designed as an eye made out of 1.288 LED-pipes, a symbol for bridging, according to ORF TV-director Kathrin Zechner: „Das Auge steht als Symbol für den Brückenschlag – für ein respektvolles Miteinander zwischen Kulturen, Ländern und Menschen".²⁴⁶

Having three female hosts was another first for the ESC. Next to Conchita Wurst hosting the Green Room, Alice Tumler, Arabella Kiesbauer and Mirjam Weichselbraun led through the evening. They are well known TV-hosts and represented Austria's cultural diversity: They live in three different European countries and speak several languages. Alice Tumler's mother is from Martinique, Arabella Kiesbauer's father is from Ghana, and Mirjam Weichselbraun has Austrian born parents. In an interview after they were presented at a press conference Kiesbauer said: "Es geht um Toleranz, um Gleichberechtigung, um ein Zeichen gegen Rassismus zu setzen. Da dabei zu sein ist sehr wichtig und erfüllend."²⁴⁷ Zechner stated they were chosen out of a strong belief "...dass man die Gestaltungsfähigkeit, das Kraftvolle, das Intelligente, das Kluge, das Vielseitige der Frauen, als 50 Prozent der Gesellschaft selbstverständlich weiß, aber nicht selbstverständlich sichtbar macht."²⁴⁸

²⁴⁴ See appendix.

²⁴⁵ "Vienna 2015", <https://eurovision.tv/event/vienna-2015>, last access June 30th, 2019.

²⁴⁶ "Das wird die Bühne beim Song Contest", January 21st, 2015, www.wien.orf.at (January 20th, 2015), <https://wien.orf.at/news/stories/2690228/>, last access June 30th, 2019.

²⁴⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sfKLZP-eTF4>, 1:27-1:38, last access June 30th, 2019.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., 0:50 - 1:05.



Figure 5: ESC Hosts 2015: Arabella Kiesbauer, Mirjam Weichselbraun, Alice Tumler

Originally introduced in 1970 the short postcard videos serve as a buffer in between the acts to reset the stage design for the next contestants. They only last half a minute but can be used by the host broadcaster to show specific content to influence viewer's perception of the hosting nation. Bohlman describes the postcards as a bridge: "The postcard is a bridge from Europe with all its differences political, ideological and cultural, to the Europe celebrated for its potential sameness."²⁴⁹

In the 2015's postcards the contestants were being picked up in their home country and presented with a gift which was connected to a certain tradition or facet of Austria. These were subdivided into three categories; first, outdoor activities such as skiing, bungee jumping, hiking, river-surfing, climbing, playing ice hockey and dog sledding, second, Austrian products, such as Swarovski crystals, Sachertorte, honey and the clothes of Austrian fashion designer Lena Hoschek, and third, Austria's cultural hotspots such as the Vienna opera ball, the Burgtheater, the Museumsquartier, Bad Ischl and the Spanish Riding School with its Lippizaner horses. It is a journey through Austria's culture, economy, science, tradition sports with modern spirit. Many videos were underlined by a subtle waltz playing in the

²⁴⁹ Philip V. Bohlman in: Tragaki, Dafni (ed.), *Empire of Song: Europe and Nation in the Eurovision Song Contest*, Lanham, MD and Plymouth: The Scarecrow Press 2013, p. 36

background and all of them ended with a freeze frame of the contestant in front of a cultural institution such as the Vienna Volkstheater or the Musikverein by night. These videos very well showed the “popular Austrian stereotypes” that were promised not to take center stage in the mission statement. The postcards were used to promote an Austrian brand, to show its versatility, neutrality, beauty and wealth but also tradition. It sells fun, youth and culture and again, one can see that old and new belong together as a part of the Austrian identity.

For the interval act the ORF decided to show another musical side of Austria. Alice Tumler and Mirjam Weichselbraun announced percussionist Martin Grubinger & the Percussive Planet Ensemble as “an outstanding musical talent to build bridges between all those [musical] traditions. He is one of the world’s most famous percussionists, and Austrian.”²⁵⁰ They played a ten-minute piece based on themes of famous Austrian composers such as Mahler and Bruckner, accompanied by the Arnold Schönberg Choir and the Ebensee Glöckler, which were named UNESCO cultural heritage of Austria. It is a rural custom that the Glöckler move from town to town wearing bells around their waists and large, colourful hats. The so called “Schönperchten” are light bearing spirits that drive away the bad night spirits. Their march, which traditionally takes place on January 5th, the end of the Twelve Days/Nights, and the sound of their bells are supposed to “wake” the grains underneath the snow and make them grow.²⁵¹

²⁵⁰ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KYLz7714_UE&t=1831s, 2:22:21 - 2:22:31, last access June 30th, 2019.

²⁵¹ “Glöcklerläufe im Salzkammergut”, www.salzkammergut.at, <https://www.salzkammergut.at/detail/article/2569-gloecklerlaeufe-im-salzkammergut.html>, last access June 30th, 2019.



Figure 6: Interval Act Martin Grubinger & the Percussive Planet Ensemble, Ebensee Glöckler



Figure 7: Interval Act Ebensee Glöckler

This musical potpourri built a bridge between classical, traditional and modern. Also, visually there was a bridge built in the hall: and elderly woman and a young boy formed a heart with their arms which then was imitated by the contestants in the Green Room and the audience. By bringing different genres and time periods together the whole performance showed the diversity and richness of Austrian music. It also confirms Annemette Kirkegaard's categorisation of two typical

Eurovision intermission show trends: Tradition, nostalgia and history were combined with highly modern technological abilities in a (live) popular music production.²⁵²

During the voting Austria was determined to show what was promised in the mission statement: tolerance and togetherness. Halfway through the voting Polina from Russia had gathered the most points, but also the most boos in the hall. Since the live audience often consists of devoted, longtime Eurovision fans, it is not unusual for them to have a different taste than the televoting audience. Conchita tried to defuse the situation by calling on the audience to give Polina a big applause and reassuring her that she deserved to be in the lead. It seemed as if she wanted to protect and defend her from being a canvass for a political dispute. Shortly before the contest the press suggested that the producers had installed “anti-boosing technology” to prevent the embarrassment the Tolmachevy sisters had to endure in the previous year; Russia’s involvement in the Ukraine crisis and the country’s anti-gay laws had led to very noticeable jeers.²⁵³

Just as the bookmakers predicted, Måns Zelmerlöw won for Sweden with 365 points before Russia and Italy. His flawless performance displayed the advanced, interactive LED-technology. ORF director Dr. Alexander Wrabetz was content with the outcome of the event: “Wir haben eine tolle Visitenkarte abgegeben für Österreich.” Less the revenue, the estimated overall cost of 15 million euros was not exceeded.²⁵⁴

Not quite as successful was the Austrian entry The Makemakes. With null-points, they ended up in the second to last place before Germany (due to their low starting number). They took it with a great deal of humor and posted a video of them singing

²⁵² Kirkegaard in: Tragaki (ed.) 2013, p. 88.

²⁵³ Corey Charlton, “Eurovision song contest installs 'anti-boosing' technology for the first time to hide jeers aimed towards Russia's singer over the country's military aggression in Ukraine”, www.dailymail.co.uk (May 20th, 2015), <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3089648/Eurovision-song-contest-installs-anti-boosing-technology-time-hide-jeers-aimed-Russia-s-singer-country-s-military-aggression-Ukraine.html>, last access June 30th, 2019.

²⁵⁴ “Schweden siegt beim 60. Eurovision Song Contest in Wien”, www.derstandard.at (May 24th 2015), <https://derstandard.at/2000016310239/Favoriten-Sieg-fuer-Schweden-bei-dem-60-Eurovision-Song-Contest>, last access June 30th, 2019.

“We are the Zeros of our time”, in reference to the winning song ‘Heroes’, later that night.

Ten days after the final, Vienna’s mayor Michael Häupl drew a positive balance:

"Wien ist sehr stolz, den 60. Eurovision Song Contest' zu Gast gehabt zu haben. Gemeinsam mit dem ORF ist es gelungen, ein einzigartiges Musik-Event auf die Beine zu stellen. Mit großem Engagement, aber auch Wiener Charme haben wir es geschafft, den Eurovision Song Contest in der ganzen Stadt erlebbar und spürbar zu machen: Tausende internationale und nationale Gäste, aber auch alle Wienerinnen und Wiener haben gemeinsam ein friedliches Fest der Musik gefeiert und das ESC-Motto 'Building Bridges' mit Leben erfüllt. Die positiven Reaktionen aller, die das Event in Wien miterlebt haben, zeigen, dass der Image-Gewinn für unsere Stadt enorm ist. Die Stimmung dieser Tage wird uns immer in Erinnerung bleiben!"²⁵⁵

The ORF tasked the pollster “Integral” with a survey about how the Austrians felt about the ESC in Vienna. 88% of the respondents saw it as a good opportunity to present Austria to the world, 75% were proud of the holding of the ESC and considered the most positive part of hosting the effects on the Austrian economy. 82% believed Austria’s level of familiarity to have grown and Austria’s tourism to be boosted, which leads to the conclusion, that the common mood in Austria was positive. International media representatives too rated the ORF as a host very high. The grade for the overall satisfaction was 1.6 (on a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being the best), hospitality was rewarded with a 1.4, and the press center with a 1.9. All in all, 101.173 guests visited the overall 12 shows between May 18th and 23rd. 1565 journalists were on-site and 800 volunteers from 41 different countries helped realizing the Eurovision Song Contest under the motto “Building Bridges” in Vienna.²⁵⁶

²⁵⁵ “Stadt Wien und ORF: Erfolgreiche Bilanz des ‘Eurovision Song Contests’”, www.ots.at (June 2nd, 2015), https://www.ots.at/presseaussendung/OTS_20150602_OTS0126/stadt-wien-und-orf-erfolgreiche-bilanz-des-eurovision-song-contest, last access June 30th, 2019.

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

V. Conclusion

„Liberal-minded“ and „tolerant“ seem to be the trigger words of the mission statement. In many regards Austria managed to achieve its goal as to appear modern and liberal and to have fully arrived in the 21st century, leaving its past behind. With the motto “Building Bridges” it has reaffirmed its reputation as the mediator in Europe, playing literally a central role in politics and culture. Yet, what does a bridge builder actually do? By being in the neutral middle, Austria denies itself the opportunity to really have its own, distinct opinion. It mediates (or at least it pretends to mediate) between political views and saves itself from having to formulate arguments or take position. Whether this is coincidental or not is up for discussion. Despite the political motto “Building Bridges”, the ORF focused largely on apolitical aspects such as classical music, artists or scenic qualities when it came to presenting Austria,²⁵⁷ which, again, deviates the attention away from any political attitude. Yes, the ESC showed Austria’s progressive position when it comes to gender equality, sustainability, lifestyle and liberal-mindedness, but what happens outside the Eurovision world?

Only a couple of weeks after the final in Vienna, the Syrian refugee crisis peaked. Thousands crossed the border in the south and Austria built a fence to regulate the flow of refugees. Here too, Austria acted as a bridge, transporting many refugees on trains and busses to Germany, the destination most of them headed for, after Chancellor Angela Merkel’s “Wir schaffen das”-speech at the Federal Press Conference in August 2015 created a stir in the European refugee policy.²⁵⁸ What may seem as a bridge full of hope for fugitives was actually just a backdoor for Austria’s asylum policy: Austria has taken on a large number of refugees, but still only a small fraction compared to Germany or Sweden.²⁵⁹ The Europe-wide discussion on refugees and integration played into the hands of Austria’s

²⁵⁷ Vuletic 2018, p. 202.

²⁵⁸ “Sommerpressekonferenz von Bundeskanzlerin Merkel”, www.bundesregierung.de (August 31st, 2015), <https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/aktuelles/pressekonferenzen/sommerpressekonferenz-von-bundeskanzlerin-merkel-848300> , last access July 8th, 2019.

²⁵⁹ “Deutschland bietet in Europa den meisten Flüchtlingen Schutz”, www.tt.com (June 25th, 2018), <https://www.tt.com/politik/weltpolitik/14515557/deutschland-bietet-in-europa-den-meisten-fluechtlingen-schutz>, last access June 30th, 2019.

conservative center-right government (2017-2019). The fear of loss of Austrian identity and culture allowed them to tighten asylum policies. They even wanted to make German the official language spoken on the schoolyard during breaks to prevent immigrants speaking in their mother tongue.²⁶⁰ Here again, we come back to Anderson's argument of language being the origin of identity (see p. 14.): successful integration and therefore a shared identity can only occur when learning German. Presumably unknowing, right wing politicians abuse Anderson's anthropological derivation for their interests.

The agitation around Andreas Gabalier's statements and the confrontation with Conchita Wurst display how divided Austria is when put in a political context. His loose and selective definition of "Heimat" allows a very broad audience to identify with his music, yet at the same time sets very strict boundaries and excludes everything and everyone, that deviates from his conservative and alleged traditional normative. Marco Schreuder sees this division as a big part of the Austrian identity that also came to light in the Austrian presidential election in 2016.²⁶¹ In the run-off poll, former Green politician Alexander van der Bellen won with a wafer-thin lead of 50,3%, compared to FPÖ candidate Norbert Hofer with 49,7%. The FPÖ demanded a rerun, but this time van der Bellen achieved 53.8%. The emotional debate on the refugee crisis reigned the election campaign and therefore secured a boost for the FPÖ. The candidates of the political center, the ÖVP and SPÖ, dropped out of the race with only 11,1% and 11,3%.²⁶² This result showed how politically divided Austria had become. Just like a pendulum Austria's politics has been swinging from left to right and back again over the past decades, only to gain momentum.

The complexity of the Austrian identity crisis is reflected on the ESC stage. When Austria first entered the ESC, it hadn't quite digested the imperial times yet, when Austria was still grand and important. Just like decades ago, Austria is still coming to terms with its past today. The combination of Austria's victimization and the assignment of guilt is the two-sided burden of the aftermath of WWII, that has

²⁶⁰ "Deutsch als Pflichtsprache am Schulhof", www.kleinezeitung.at (September 26th, 2018), https://www.kleinezeitung.at/kaernten/villach/aktuelles_villach/5502851/FPOeForderung_Deutsch-als-Pflichtsprache-im-Schulhof, last access October 5th, 2019.

²⁶¹ Schreuder Interview 2017, see appendix.

²⁶² <http://wahl16.bmi.gv.at/1604-0.html>, last access June 30th, 2019.

molded the Austrian identity ever since. Up until Conchita competed, Austria didn't tap its full potential when it came to presenting a strong "bridge-building-image" in the ESC. The Austrian entries were largely focussed on either presenting musical quality and diversity or dealing with the past, whether it was its war shaped reputation or nostalgia in the early years. National elements were mostly only sung about, but not actually incorporated in the sound or genre. The fear of being labelled too nationalistic or "Heimat-loving" might resonate in the process of choosing a contestant and song and led to the pursuit of a sound suitable for the mass. Any time Austria did evidently include traditional components, it was more often than not punished with low points. The Austrian press has described the performances with rather cautious words such as "honorable", "satisfying", "brave" or "surprising" over the decades.²⁶³ Up until the late 1980's the blame was put on someone else like the jury, the orchestra or the voting system. Only when Austria's victimhood in WWII was scrutinised again after the Waldheim-debate, the presses and broadcaster's rhetoric changed. Results were accepted and the defeat admitted, and mistakes were sought and found in the inner ranks. Therein mirror the strategies of coping with the Austrian past.²⁶⁴

Only after Conchita had won in Copenhagen she was praised as an Austrian figurehead of tolerance and acceptance. Beyond the borders also, Austria is confronted with its past: When Conchita received 12 points from Israel, a German newspaper wrote: "Aus 13 Nationen bekam Siegerin Conchita Wurst am Samstagabend 12 Punkte: aus Holland, Belgien, der Schweiz, Großbritannien, Schweden, Italien, Portugal, Irland, Finnland, Spanien, Slowenien und sogar aus Israel."²⁶⁵ With the words "sogar aus Israel" a certain incomprehensible astonishment resonates. As if to say, the song of a former national socialist or external anti-Israel positioned state must be really good if it gets 12 points "even from Israel".²⁶⁶ Austria's sense of self might have been strengthened by newspapers

²⁶³ Ehardt in: Ehardt, Vogt and Wagner (eds.) 2015, p. 327.

²⁶⁴ Ibid. p. 333.

²⁶⁵ "Deutsche Jury verhindert zwölf Punkte an Conchita Wurst", [www.stern.de](https://www.stern.de/kultur/musik/eurovision-song-contest/esc-wertung-fuer-oesterreich-deutsche-jury-verhindert-zwoelf-punkte-an-conchita-wurst-3691208.html) (May 11th, 2014) <https://www.stern.de/kultur/musik/eurovision-song-contest/esc-wertung-fuer-oesterreich-deutsche-jury-verhindert-zwoelf-punkte-an-conchita-wurst-3691208.html>, last access June 30th, 2019.

²⁶⁶ Faisst and Wagner in: Ehardt, Vogt and Wagner (eds.) 2015, p. 145.

entitling Austria as being tolerant after Conchita won, but one has to keep in mind that that was just a snapshot in Austria's (ESC) history.

Austria is definitely not a country consisting exclusively of bridge builders, open-minded people or liberals, and that's why a nation's brand simply cannot translate into a nation's identity. The question of what it means to be Austrian will probably never be answered since everybody needs to decide for him- or herself. Expressing and performing identity through pop culture makes the seesaw visible. But what seems to be the common denominator is a "good-old-times-mentality" paired with a modern lifestyle. The Austrians like to rummage in the past but enjoy the benefits of what the Second Republic and social state have given to them. Its long-gone imperial dimension still mentally echoes in its redefined borders; it is a proud nation with an inclination to belittle itself.

Compared to the more politically connoted brand "Building Bridges", Austria's best-selling brand "Musikland Österreich" is of higher significance in an economical context, but also when it comes to the benefits for Austrians and their sense of identity. Austria's musical history is a fixed component of the national identity and impossible to play down, whereas Austria's international political power is limited. One could rely on Austria's cultural significance in the past, and today Austrians can be an active part in maintaining its reputation. Therefore it is important to cultivate this image and to position itself more broadly when it comes to promoting not only classical, but also popular music, to secure an international image that is freed from nostalgia. It is a battle between a cosmopolitan diverse and a traditional conservative image that is though constantly accompanied (and sometimes overshadowed) by Austria's predominance in classical music. Even Conchita Wurst and Andreas Gabalier have approached classical music to benefit their careers: Conchita released an album of covers recorded with the Vienna Symphonics and Gabalier performed for MTV Unplugged in the venerable Golden Hall at the Wiener Musikverein, accompanied by an orchestra.

Just as important as Conchita's victory was for Austria's international perception, it triggered a lot of debates on gay rights, homophobia, transphobia and tolerance within Austria. It increased awareness of the issues of sexual minorities and

“prompted national political leaders to declare that it was time for Austria to adopt same-sex marriage.”²⁶⁷ Even though the proposal was rejected only a month after Austria hosted the ESC, same-sex marriage became legal on January 1st of 2019. The constitutional court of justice revoked the different rule for hetero- and homosexual couples, founded on the non-discrimination rule of the gender equality law. Austria didn’t become super-liberal overnight, but Conchita represents a considerable large part of the Austrian society.²⁶⁸ If Conchita hadn’t won in Copenhagen and started a nationwide dialog, the situation might still be in a deadlock. Therefore, the “Conchita-Effect” is a time dependent effect; her victory can be seen as a symbol for social cohesion.²⁶⁹

In a way, Austria didn’t get a new brand, but its existing brand was renewed. Whether the dusted and then improved brand “Bridge Builder” will sustain or not has yet to be seen, but during that one week in May 2015 it was implemented in every possible way: old and new, east and west, male and female, tradition and progress, fans and critics, Austria and Europe (and in this case Australia, too). It was not just a juxtaposition of nations, it was their union. To some extent Anderson’s concept of nations being “Imagined Communities” (see p. 13.) applies to the ESC too: Eurovision can be seen as an imagined community, because ‘the imagination of a community exists in everyone’s mind’ and ‘it is understood as a comradely union of equals’. As a pan-European event, the ESC aims to connect and mediate, but also demonstrates pluralism, since its members come together to compete; they are equal, yet individual.

Compared to the ever so successful Sweden, Austria represented itself without any self-mockery when hosting, argues Marco Schreuder.²⁷⁰ Stereotypes of Austria’s cultural image have not been enfeebled but accentuated, possibly because Austria has done so poorly in the past decades that it tried to get the best out of this (almost) unique opportunity. It also proves Simon Anholt’s argument, that perception has

²⁶⁷ Vuletic 2018, p. 202.

²⁶⁸ Claus Pirschner: “Was hat die Wurst gebracht?”, www.fm4v3.orf.at (May 12th, 2015), <https://fm4v3.orf.at/stories/1758758/index.html>, last access July 8th, 2019.

²⁶⁹ <https://derstandard.at/2000036627084/Song-ContestDer-Conchita-Effekt-wissenschaftlich-betrachtet>, last access June 30th, 2019.

²⁷⁰ Schreuder Interview 2017, see appendix.

become more important than reality (see p. 22.), because classical music and the alps might be Austrian stereotypes, but they are also reasons why people visit; they are the images that people know and connect with Austria.

Overall, hosting the ESC is one of many tesserae in the mosaic of reinventing the image of a nation. Conchita's victory was a game-changer for the representation of Austria in the ESC. Her winning song is symbolic of Austria's ESC history: With millions of people watching, Austria has risen like a phoenix from an underdog to an indispensable element in Eurovision.²⁷¹ In an international context this might seem trivial, but with the ESC coming back every year, it is an opportunity for Austria to effectively add nouns and adjectives to its reputation. Next to men in Lederhosen singing about alleged traditional and national values, there is now a drag queen advocating for minorities, equal rights and open-mindedness.

Moreover, one has to keep in mind, that everybody has a different point of view. To a Spaniard, Austrians might seem tall and light-skinned, whereas it might be just the opposite to a Swede. Conservatives from Russia might think Austria is too liberal, and for Germans, Austria might not be tolerant enough. All of Europe watches the same show, yet they do so from different angles.

²⁷¹ Schreuder Interview 2017, see appendix.

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Interviews

Personal Interview with Marco Schreuder, November 22nd, 2017, for transcription see appendix. p. 97.

Appendix

Lyrics of the Austrian National Anthem

Land der Berge, Land am Strome, Land der Äcker, Land der Dome, Land der Hämmer,
zukunftsreich.

Heimat großer Töchter und Söhne, Volk, begnadet für das Schöne, Vielgerühmtes
Österreich, Vielgerühmtes Österreich.

Heiß umfehdet, wild umstritten, Liegst dem Erdteil du inmitten, Einem starken Herzen
gleich.

Hast seit frühen Ahnentagen Hoher Sendung Last getragen, Vielgeprüftes Österreich,
Vielgeprüftes Österreich.

Mutig in die neuen Zeiten, Frei und gläubig sieh uns schreiten, Arbeitsfroh und
hoffnungsreich.

Einig lass in Jubelchören, Vaterland, dir Treue schwören, Vielgeliebtes Österreich,
Vielgeliebtes Österreich

Source: <https://www.bundestkanzleramt.gv.at/bundeshymne>

Andreas Gabalier's open letter on Austria's National Anthem

Liebes Österreich!

Ich habe mich für eine große, verstorbene Dichterin und deren literarisches Werk stark gemacht! Und das aus Überzeugung sowie es eigentlich alle Künstler Österreichs machen sollten!

Ganz nach dem Motto - „Wer nichts weiß muss alles glauben“ - muss ich darauf aufmerksam machen, dass es in Österreich ein Urheberrecht gibt, welches dem Schutz dieser Werke dient!

Der Gesetzesbeschluss von 2012 bzgl. der Textänderung der Originalfassung unserer Bundeshymne ist mehr als fragwürdig, da der Gesetzgeber zum einen dem Urhebergesetz anscheinend nicht Folge zu leisten hat, und es zum anderen laut diesem Beschluss es ausschließlich der Republik Österreich gestattet wurde den „neuen Text“ auf Veranstaltungen der Republik Österreich zu singen!

Es ist somit keinem Musiker im Zuge einer Privatveranstaltung (wie Formel 1, Ski-Rennen, Fussballveranstaltungen etc.) gestattet, einen abgeänderten Text der Originalfassung zu singen! Da fragt man sich wer hier Gesetze mit Füßen tritt !? Ich hätte demnach auch nichts anderes als „Heimat bist du großer Söhne“ singen dürfen, und anderenfalls mit einer Klage auf Urheberrechtsverletzung durch die Rechteinhaber und Rechtsnachfolger der Paula von Preradovic rechnen müssen, und dieses Gerichtsverfahren auch zu Recht verloren!

Ich bin auch der Meinung, dass man sich auf diverse andere Art und Weise für die Rechte unserer Frauen im Land einsetzen kann und soll als sich im österreichischen Volksliedgut zu vergreifen. RedakteurInnen die meine Wertschätzung gegenüber unseren Frauen aufgrund eines kabarettistisch gemeinten Liedertextes wie (Sweet little Rehlein), der mit einem Augenzwinkern für fröhliche und heitere Stunden in meinen Konzerten geschrieben wurde, in Frage stellen, kann ich bei Gott keine Aufmerksamkeit schenken, weil sie damit allen Ernstes Wildtiere mit Frauen vergleichen! Ich weiß auch nicht, wie man es sich im Zuge des Argumentationsnotstandes dieser Großdiskussion anmaßen kann, mich auch noch in ein rechtes Eck schieben zu wollen. Das hat nichts mehr mit Pressefreiheit, sondern

mit massiver Rufschädigung zu tun, und davon distanzieren mich auch ganz klar und deutlich!!!

Zeitgemäß sollten wir uns vielleicht auch überlegen den Stephans Dom in Wien in den Stephanien Dom umzutaufen, Mozart auf seinen Bildern die Haare zu schneiden, weil seine Frisur veraltet ist und dem Lindwurm in Klagenfurt Brüste umzuhängen, weil unsere Geschichte nicht mehr in diesen verkrampften Gender Wahnsinn hineinpasst!

In diesem Sinne wünsche ich einen schönen Sommer und freue mich auf ein Wiedersehen bei meinen Open Air Konzerten im August!

Volks Rock'n'Roller

Andreas Gabalier

!!! NUR DAS ORIGINAL IST LEGAL!!!

Source: <https://www.schlagerportal.com/andreas-gabalier-bundeshymne-brief-120714>

Personal interview with Marco Schreuder

Recorded on November 22nd, 2017

Wie kamen sie ursprünglich zur Politik?

Eigentlich komme ich auch aus der Kunst, ich habe am Reinhard Seminar Theater Regie studiert, es war eine schwierige Zeit damals, ich kam nicht aus einem reichen Elternhaus. Dann bin ich in die Organisation von Kultur, zum Kulturmanagement, gekommen und habe damals schon viele journalistische Artikel geschrieben und wurde da auch schon politisch, vor allem queer-politisch. Es waren die frühen 90er und ich hatte relativ gute Kontakte zu NGO's in Ungarn, Rumänien, und dann haben mich immer mehr Zeitschriften aus Deutschland und Holland gefragt ob ich für sie schreiben könnte. Dann bin ich in die Redaktion von einem Wiener lesbisch-schwulen Magazin, das „Bussi“, gerutscht, das konnte sich aber finanziell nicht tragen. Und dann überlegte ich „Was mache ich jetzt?“ – der Vorteil war das ich in sämtlichen Queer-Newslettern drinnen war. Denn dann kam einmal von den Wiener Grünen ein Email aus dem Rathaus, mit der Vassilakou vorne drauf mit der Aufschrift „Wer traut sich für mich zu arbeiten?“. Sie suchten einen Menschenrechte Referenten und ich habe mir gedacht das würde sich ergänzen. Es hat

gut funktioniert und ich hab als Mitarbeiter 2001 begonnen und 2005 war ich dann auch schon Kandidat und musste noch Österreicher werden und das hat dann auch geklappt.

Sie sind Obmann der Fachgruppe Werbung Wien, was kann man sich darunter vorstellen?

Das ist ein Amt in der Wirtschaftskammer, und ich habe die politische Hauptverantwortung. Ich vertrete 12000 Mitglieder, davon sind 65% EPU's (Ein-Personen-Unternehmen), das geht von Grafikdesignern bis Werbeagenturen, vom Meinungsforschungsinstitut bis Adressverlag oder Eventmanager, und ich vertrete sie politisch. Im Moment verhandle ich gerade den Kollektivvertrag mit der Gewerkschaft.

Was ist ihre Verbindung zum Song Contest und wie hat ihre Begeisterung dafür begonnen?

Es ist ein Schlüsselerlebnis gewesen, es war 1976. Ich war 7 Jahren alt und kurz davor sind meine Eltern von Holland nach Österreich gezogen. Der 1976er Song Contest kam ja aus Den Haag, das war die Stadt in der meine Großeltern lebten. Meine Mutter betonte „das ist jetzt dort, das ist live!“, und ich war total begeistert und hab zum ersten Mal so ein Europe-Feeling bekommen. Angeblich ist das auch das Alter wo man beginnt geographische Dimensionen zu begreifen. Ich war so begeistert, dass ich mir was live anschauen kann was in Den Haag passiert, das ich gut kannte. Ich hab eigentlich gehofft dass meine Großeltern im Publikum sitzen – das taten sie natürlich nicht aber das war so meine Vorstellung. Ich hab die Lieder hübsch gefunden, und seitdem hab ich nie einen mehr verpasst. Ich habe jeden Song Contest gesehen, natürlich in unterschiedlicher Ausprägung. In meinen Teenager Jahren, meiner Sturm und Drang Phase, wo ich nur Indie-Musik und The Smiths hörte und Nick Cave und so, hab ich mir dann trotzdem noch den Song Contest angeschaut, das war sozusagen meine Guilty Pleasure. Irgendwann, mit einer stärkeren queeren Identität hab ich dann auch wieder selbstbewusst gesagt „Ja, ich bin Eurovision Fan!“, auch wenn ich zu Hause FM4 höre.

Mit welchen Aufgaben waren sie als Kommunikationsmanager von Conchita betreut?

Das war pures Chaos am Anfang. Eigentlich hab ich angefangen mit dem Team Conchita durch den René Berto, den kannte ich noch aus als ich noch in diesen Kulturbetrieben

gearbeitet habe. Ich habe ja schon 2012 angefangen für den standard.at den Eurovision Blog zu schreiben, und er wusste dass ich mich da gut auskenne, die Fans kenne, die Welt kenne, und er kannte sie ja auch noch von Alf Poier. Er hat mich eben gefragt und ich hab ihm ein paar Hinweise gegeben und hab ihm gesagt was ich Promo-technisch machen würde im Vorfeld. Wenn du irgendein Sänger oder irgendeine Sängerin im Feld von 43 Kandidaten bist, dann ist die Wahrscheinlichkeit in einer Talkshow in Estland oder in Irland oder in Portugal unterzukommen eher gering. Aber als Drag Queen mit Bart interessieren sich die Leute wahnsinnig. Dann weiß ich noch Weihnachten 2013, habe ich mir rund 100 Songs angehört und ich sollte einen Song für die Conchita mit aussuchen und ich war für „Rise like a Phoenix“. Und the rest is history, wie man so schön sagt. Sie gewann, und wir kamen zurück und René Berto bat mich um ein Treffen. Er brauchte einen Kommunikationsmanager da er 2000 Anfragen am Tag hatte und nicht wusste wie er das bewältigen soll. Leider sind sogar Anfragen aus den USA in Whatsapp verloren gegangen – Perlen die man gerne mit Handkuss angenommen hätte. Es musste gemanaged werden, und ich hatte als Politiker schon Presseerfahrung, auch wie Journalismus tickt. Auch die schlechten Seiten des Journalismus, Schlagzeilen betonend und skandalisierend und übertrieben. Die Boulevardisierung in Österreich ist sehr stark, auch in den Qualitätsmedien mittlerweile.

Es musste bewältigt werden, man musste die 100en Anfragen die da kamen einfach aussieben und 99% absagen. Conchita war ja auch stark politisch besetzt – sie wollte lieber Künstlerin sein aber sie hat da schon auch Unterstützung gebraucht. Es ging vor allem um Europaparlament, Ban Ki Moon, UNO... wie kannst du Botschaften setzen? Wenn etwas in der Welt passiert, wie reagiert man darauf? Sie reiste täglich in ein anderes Land und sie brauchte ihre Briefings. Ich erstellte ihr Unterlagen zum Beispiel zur menschenrechtlichen Situation in diesem Land, zur aktuellen Diskussion, zu Minderheitenfragen, zur Ehe von gleichgeschlechtlichen Paaren etc. Sie wurde immer wieder mit Gender Fragen konfrontiert. Es gab eine riesen Schlagzeile „Conchita kritisiert das Adoptionsrecht in Deutschland“ und das hat sofort Wellen geschlagen.

Warum hat Conchita gewonnen? Und: Braucht Österreich einen in den Medien so präsenten Kandidaten um zu gewinnen?

Ich glaub nicht dass man Medienpräsenz braucht um zu gewinnen. Das ist eine gute Frage, die sich 43 Fernsehstationen jedes Jahr wieder aufs Neue stellen müssen. Keiner weiß es in Wahrheit, Deutschland ist so verzweifelt dass sie jetzt ein mega Konstruktionsprojekt machen. Ich glaube es ist nicht planbar und das macht den Song

Contest auch so besonders. Es ist bis zu einem gewissen Grad erahnbar, aber es hat immer Eigendynamiken. Es muss an diese einen Tag zu diesen 3 Minuten eine Person glaubwürdig sein, mit sich selbst im Reinen sein, den Moment genießen, wissen was er oder sie will, und der Zauber muss sowohl auf der Bühne als auch zum Publikum hinter den Bildschirmen funktionieren. Das zu planen ist meiner Meinung nach nicht wirklich möglich. Was möglich ist, ist dass du die beste Vorbereitung machst, damit sich der Künstler wohl fühlt und den Moment genießen kann und die Sau rauslässt. Aber auch die Vorbereitung darauf ‚wer bin ich, was erzähle ich?‘, ein bisschen Medientraining ist natürlich notwendig. Vor allem bei den ganz jungen Künstlern, die haben natürlich noch nicht diese Lebenserfahrung. Oft singen sie schreckliche Liebesschmerz-Trennungslieder und du weißt der „Bua“ hat das nie erlebt. Ich glaub es darf auch was schiefgehen, aber wenn du musst glaubwürdig rüberkommen. Deshalb habe ich auch den Sieg der Ukraine und Portugal prophezeit. Da kommt dieser Moment, du stehst vor Ort und schaust dir die erste Probe an, und dann verschiebt sich auch nochmal was, wie dieses Jahr leider mit Italien. Das ist der Zauber – man kann das auch nicht in Worten beschreiben, aber ich spür ob mich was erreicht oder nicht. Bei San Remo war die Magie da, das war wow. Es ist immer noch in meiner Playlist der meistgehörten Songs 2017 – der Siegersong (Portugal) funktioniert im Fitnessstudio nicht so gut. Bei Conchita war es natürlich dieses Gesamtpaket. Es gab schon vorher Drag Queens beim ESC – das allein ist es nicht. Es ist schon auch die politische Botschaft die sie verkörpert hat. Aber sie hatte nie eine Regenbogenfahne oder eine Österreich Fahne in der Hand. Denn sie repräsentiert nicht die LGBT-Community, sie repräsentierte nicht Österreich; wir haben sie geschickt denn sie repräsentiert die Menschenwürde an sich. Und das ist natürlich eine Botschaft die grenzüberschreitend ist. Und das hat sehr gut funktioniert. Österreich tut sich schwer denn es ist nicht in einem kulturellen Umfeld eingebettet so wie die Balkanländer oder Skandinavien die sozusagen einen gemeinsamen Pop Markt haben. Wir sind sehr isoliert, und deshalb war es für Österreich auch sehr wichtig zu zeigen wie du dich positionierst. Und das haben Zoe und Nathan gut gemacht aber da war halt das drinnen was drinnen war. Conchita hatte natürlich auch einen genialen Song, das darf man nicht vergessen. Und sie hat eine fantastische Stimme und sie war so mit sich und hat den Moment so genossen, sie war nicht abgelenkt, sie war voll da. Und wenn du das schaffst, dann hast du Siegeschancen.

Beim ESC spricht man gerne vom soften Nationalismus, ganz aktuell der diesjährige Gewinner aus Portugal der sozusagen wieder zu den musikalischen Wurzeln seines Landes zurückgekehrt ist und quasi ein Fado Lied gesungen hat:

Wie manifestiert sich für sie Nationalismus im ESC, bzw. gibt es besondere Ereignisse oder Beiträge die ihnen dazu einfallen?

Ich glaub man muss ganz stark unterscheiden zwischen dem Nationalismus ganz klare politische Ziele verfolgt, und so etwas wie regionale oder lokale Traditionen in Popgewand zu verkleiden. Weil der Hubert von Goisern macht das, er ist für mich aber alles andere als ein Nationalist, und da würde ich Salvador Sobral auch einordnen, der ja fließend Englisch spricht, und übrigens mit einer Band mit Musikern aus Amerika oder Südafrika spielt; also den würde ich nie als Nationalisten einordnen. Natürlich war von Anfang an die Idee des Eurovision Song Contests kulturelle Vielfalt zu zeigen, und da gehören natürlich Sprache, regionale Eigenheiten und so weiter einfach dazu. Der allererste Song der je bei Eurovision gesungen wurde war *De vogels van Holland*, Die Vögel von Holland – ich find damit sagt man alles. Und das war keine Nationalistin, das war eine die einfach ihr Land besingt und die Vögel wie sie da fliegen und diese flache Landschaft und so. Und ich tu mir da jetzt mit dem Begriff Nationalismus schwer. Ich glaube schon dass bei manchen Acts die Grenze natürlich verschoben worden ist in Richtung Nationalismus. Es gab ja auch immer wieder politische Kampfsymbole, nicht immer versteckt. Als Aserbaidshan 2011 gewonnen hat sind sie auch mit der türkischen Fahne auf die Bühne gekommen, oder eine Armenierin die mit einer Bergkarabach Fahne im Green Room saß, was natürlich verboten ist. Auch den Krim Konflikt versucht man immer so weit wie möglich aus dem Contest raus zu halten ohne das es wirklich gelingt. Wobei man die Frage stellen muss, ob bei Jamala oder auch die Teapacks die für Israel mit Push the Button angetreten sind, die eher beschrieben haben wie das so ist, wenn man in einem Land im Konflikt lebt, was das aus einem macht, und im Falle der Jamala ja sogar noch historisch zurückblickend... Da kann man sich die Frage stellen ‚ist das Nationalismus‘? Ich traue mich nicht diese Frage zu beantworten. Für mich ist Nationalismus dann, wenn eine Delegation auftritt und glaubt sie sind die Besten, besser als alle anderen und die anderen sind scheiße, ich sag das ganz bewusst. Es gab solche Delegationen; wie zum Beispiel bei Russland erlebt man das immer wieder – obwohl man dazu sagen muss, dass sie die letzten Jahre bemerkt haben, dass das nicht so gut ankommt. Das hat sich seit Wien deutlich verbessert. Filipp Kirkorow ist eigentlich ein weltoffener Mensch, aber natürlich glaubt er immer noch Putin ist einer der weltbesten Staatsführer die es gibt. Es sind ja keine Länder die dort auftreten, sondern TV-Sender – das darf man nicht vergessen. Es sind aber vorwiegend staatliche TV-Sender. Und wie das so ist mit öffentlich-rechtlichen TV-Sendern wird das in jedem Land anders gehandhabt. In manchen Ländern sind sie extrem unabhängig von irgendwelchen Regierungen und politischer Einflussnahme und in manchen Ländern sind sie extrem politisch beeinflusst. Als in Österreich 2000 schwarz-

blau an der Macht waren schickten wir ja die Rounder Girls mit zwei schwarzen Frauen dabei und das war vielleicht auch irgendwo politisch, aber nicht nationalistisch. Man hat von Österreich einfach ein gewisses Bild, es gibt nun mal Klischee Bilder, das ist so. Conchita hat dem etwas entgegen gesetzt und hat damit nicht nur in Europa viel bewegt, und viele Menschen bewegt, sondern sie hat auch in diesem Land. In den sozialen Medien dominieren zurzeit diese Hasspostings, und sie hat sich dem entgegengesetzt – viele lechzten auch danach. Ich glaube dass das heute immer noch funktionieren würde.

Der ESC bietet eine Plattform nationale Identität auszuleben und zu repräsentieren vor allem wenn man den Song Contest veranstaltet – wie hat Österreich das bewerkstelligt? Bzw was glauben sie will Österreich von sich zeigen und wie wird Österreich vom Rest Europas tatsächlich wahrgenommen? Also Stichwort Ampelpärchen, 3 weibliche Moderatorinnen und Conchita an sich als polarisierende Persönlichkeit.

Eigentlich überlegen sich das die Sender jedes Jahr aufs Neue. Manche lassen das Publikum entscheiden, und manche sagen wir suchen das selber aus. Ich vertraue auf Experten mehr als auf den Massengeschmack eines Landes, denn der entspricht oft nicht dem Massengeschmack Europas. Bei manchen funktioniert es aber – die Schweden z.B. schaffen das. Die Schweden voten für Songs die in ganz Europa funktionieren. Deutschland schafft das überhaupt nicht was auch sehr interessant ist. Aber was ich eigentlich sagen wollte; der ORF entscheidet das jedes Jahr aufs Neue. Manchmal sind das musikalische Gründe, weil es einfach ein guter Song ist. Manchmal waren es Vorentscheidungen bei denen das Publikum entschieden hat, wobei natürlich die Redaktion eine Vorentscheidung trifft. Aber da geht man eher auf Vielfalt damit die Sendung spannend ist und die Quoten stimmen. Ich glaube, dass es da keine Regel gibt. Bei Conchita war es eine mutige Entscheidung. René Berto hat einfach ein Konzept geschrieben ohne das mit Conchita abzusprechen und hat es dem ORF geschickt. Und die Kathi Zechner hat gesagt „Wir sind mutig, wir schicken sie.“, obwohl wir noch keinen Song hatten.

Österreich hat aber leider auch keine Tradition was diese Vorentscheidung angeht. Wir haben kein Sanremo und kein Melodifestivalen, leider. Dadurch hat der ORF aber auch die Möglichkeit sich frei zu entscheiden. Seit 2016 sucht Eberhard Forcher ja die Acts aus und ich finde er macht das gut. Er kommt vom Radio, er hat kein Eigeninteresse, er ist von keiner Plattenfirma oder ein Manager, er selber hat nichts davon. Er hat nur die Liebe zu Austropop. Der einzige Kritikpunkt ist, dass er ein Radio-Ohr hat, aber bei Eurovision

braucht man auch ein Fernseh-Ohr. Man braucht beides. Der Sobral ist zum Beispiel absolut nicht radiotauglich. Den kann man auf Ö3 nicht spielen. Rise Like a Phoenix war auch kein Radiosong. Ich glaube nicht das man einen Song schicken muss der radiotauglich ist, es ist immerhin eine Fernsehshow. Wer 3 Minuten am besten unterhält, am besten fesselt, und am meisten fasziniert – auf welche Weise auch immer – der gewinnt. Das kann eine schöne Stimme sein und gar keine Performance, oder umgekehrt, oder nur der Song an sich. Meistens ist es eine Mischung von allem, aber das Publikum will unterhalten und gefesselt werden. Der Song gewinnt.

Der Song Contest ist ja tatsächlich noch immer ein grenzüberschreitendes aber auch Generationen überschreitendes Event. Ich hab mit den in den 70er Jahren mit meiner Oma angeschaut. Da kamen auch die Nachbarn um zusammen zu schauen. Was ich damit sagen will; Hard Rock Hallelujah kannst auf Ö3 auch nicht spielen, aber es war der geilste Song von dem Abend, weil's einfach Spaß gemacht hat. Und das haben sich in Europa alle gedacht, dass es geil war. Und du kannst es nicht erfinden – es ist entweder da, oder nicht da.

Sind nationale „traditionelle“ Elemente der Schlüssel zum Erfolg oder eher ein Hindernis?

Mit Sobral gibt es wieder eine totale Hinwendung zum Nationalen, zur Sprache, zu Authentizität, was ich für total wichtig halte. Authentizität kann aber auch ein missbräuchlich verwendetes Wort sein; weil wer bestimmt was kulturell authentisch ist? Ist eine Roma-Sängerin aus Oberwart nicht auch authentisch für Österreich? Ich sage Ja, natürlich; ich bin aber auch ein liberaler weltoffener Mensch. Ich glaube, dass wir in den letzten Jahren tatsächlich ein Problem hatten, und zwar der mega Erfolg des Schwedischen Pops. Schwedische Komponisten haben tatsächlich für alle die Lieder geschrieben, ein Drittel bis die Hälfte aller Songs waren schwedische Kompositionen, und es wurde ein Einheitsbrei. Es ist ja auch legitim, weil man will ja ganz Europa überzeugen. Bulgarien hat in den letzten 2 Jahren top Positionen mit einer österreichischen Komposition (Sebastian Aman) gehabt, der ein bisschen mit Schweden zusammen arbeitet. Aber jetzt durch den Sieg von Sobral gibt es wieder so eine Überlegung ‚Wie kannst du dich stärker unterscheiden?‘. Ich glaube, dass das besondere wieder mehr gesucht wird, und viele glauben wahrscheinlich mit eine national-folkloristischen oder einer regionalen Besonderheit oder Sprache wieder punkten zu können. Es ist interessant, denn seit dem es keinen Turbofolk aus dem Balkan mehr gibt, schneiden die Balkanländer wieder schlechter ab, und ich vermisse es auch irgendwie, denn ich finde es

gehört ein bisschen zu Eurovision dazu. Ich fände ein bisschen Abwechslung wieder gut! Ich finde regionale Besonderheiten oder folkloristische Noten in Songs unterzubringen legitim. Ich selbst bin im Salzkammergut aufgewachsen und habe dadurch ein gutes Ohr und kann gut unterscheiden zwischen guter Volksmusik und Volks-verblörender Dodeleien. Auch Hubert von Goisern kommt ja von dort. Und ich glaube dass du sehr weltoffen Folklore verwenden kannst. Ich glaube, dass Nationalismus in einem Event wo Länder gegeneinander antreten nicht zu vermeiden ist, da kommen wir nicht drum herum. Bei der Punktwertung ist es fast noch schlimmer, wo man Freundschaft und Feindschaft klar sehen kann. Zum Beispiel der Russland-Ukraine Konflikt der in den letzten 3 Jahren den Song Contest so dermaßen dominiert, das ist schon direkt lästig. Nichtsdestotrotz ist der Song Contest der einzige Event bei dem man sich anders als beim Fußball für die anderen freut, man singt ja trotzdem ihre Lieder mit. Man macht in Reykjavik dieselben Partys wie in Tel Aviv und in Moskau dieselben Partys wie in Lissabon. Und man ruft nicht für sich selbst an. „You can not vote for your own country“ ist für mich einer der schönsten Sätze des Song Contests. 2010 war ich in Oslo erstmals live dabei als Eurovision Tourist. Ich kam zur Halle und das erste was ich sehe war eine albanische Familie die gemeinsam mit schwulen Bären aus Spanien und Teenager Girls aus Schweden und sie fotografierten sich gegenseitig. Ich stand da mit offenem Mund und dachte mir es ist noch besser als ich erwartet hätte. Und in dem Moment wusste ich, wenn es den Song Contest nicht gäbe müsste ich ihn erfinden. Weil Europa hat nicht viel was man gemeinsam hat. Man hat Sport, aber da ist man in einer ganz starken Konkurrenzsituation, es gibt die Politik und sonst? Was gibt es noch wo man gemeinsam eine Party feiert? Mir fällt nichts ein außer Eurovision. So gesehen ist er Länder betont und international zugleich. Er betont das regionale oder Länder-spezifische und betont aber auch das Europäische. Man darf nicht vergessen; der Song Contest wurde erfunden 10 Jahre nach dem 2. Weltkrieg. Das ist eine kulturelle Leistung die wirklich beachtenswert ist. Und eigentlich finde ich man müsste dem Song Contest irgendwann einmal den Friedensnobelpreis geben. Nirgendwo sonst wird eine staatliche Delegation so mit queeren Themen konfrontiert wie beim ESC, nämlich auch aus Ländern die sich nie darum kümmern und sich nicht dafür interessieren und zum Beispiel auch ganz diskriminierende Gesetzgebungen haben, vor allem wenn sie ihn selber ausrichten müssen. Ich finde dieser Event kann was, und der erzeugt was. Und genau dadurch dass die Queeren ihn nicht für sich in Anspruch nehmen, denn er ist kein Queerer Event – er ist nur ein Event der von Queeren besonders geliebt wird, und sie haben dort eine besondere Präsenz – das macht ihn so besonders. Es ist keine Regenbogenparade.

Österreich hat das hervorragend gemacht. Bis heute, wenn ich irgendwo hinreise, auch in Kiew, wird mir ganz oft von Journalisten gesagt „Vienna was so great, it was one of the best Eurovisions we had, the people were so nice“. Der ORF hat etwas geschafft was wirklich besonders war. Er hat es geschafft Volunteers zu rekrutieren die mit so viel Liebe und Leidenschaft dabei waren. Die haben den Song Contest geprägt. Unbezahlt! Die waren hilfsbereit, freundlich und mit Hingabe dabei wo alle nur den Mund offen hatten wie toll sie waren, das muss man wirklich sagen. Natürlich hatte Österreich eine andere Repräsentationspolitik als etwa die Schweden, denn die Schweden sind es gewohnt eine wichtige Rolle beim ESC zu spielen, deswegen konnten die sich auch mit ein bisschen Selbstironie auf die Schippe nehmen. Das ist den Österreichern nicht gelungen. Die Österreicher hatten keine ironische Art mit sich selbst umzugehen, sondern sie wollten sich schon als schön und toll repräsentieren. Die Postcards waren alle Tourismus Werbung pur. Ich fand's toll und völlig legitim, denn es ist eine unfassbar große unbezahlte Werbung die man als Nation machen kann. Es lief damals ja auch noch der Nation Branding –Prozess, deswegen war ja auch Building Bridges auch das Motto. Und ein paar Wochen später marschierten die Flüchtlinge über die ungarische Grenze – und ab dem Augenblick wäre dieses Motto nie nie nie mehr möglich gewesen.

Was ich sehr widersprüchlich finde, denn das Motto war Building Bridges, im gleichen Jahr hat Österreich aber keine Brücke gebaut sondern einen Zaun zu Slowenien.

Ja aber am Anfang haben wir ja noch Brücken gebaut. Ich stand selber am Bahnhof, beim Train of Hope, und ich hab eine Drogerie leergeräumt mit allen Artikeln die gebraucht wurden und habe es hingebraucht und dort geholfen. Und da war das Building Bridges schon da, also es gibt in Österreich Brückenbauer, und das sollten wir nie vergessen. Weil der ESC muss vereinen, aber er muss auch für Nationalismus – nicht im faschistischen Sinn, sondern im rechts-konservativen Sinn, nennen wir es Patriotismus – Platz machen, grad weil er ja vereinen will. Und wir können ja nicht so tun als ob es diesen Nationalismus in Europa nicht gäbe, das wäre ja auch Quatsch. So gesehen hat Wien dieses lebens-offene gezeigt, aber Conchita hat das auch vorgelebt. Es war ja nicht Andreas Gabalier 2014 als Gewinner, sondern Conchita. Hätte Gabalier gewonnen wär die Geschichte ganz anders ausgegangen, dann hätten wir wahrscheinlich Lederhosen angehabt. Andererseits habe ich auch eine Lederhose, es hätte schon lustig sein können. Mein Nachbar hat eine Lederhose und der war im KZ. Also ich hab da nicht diese Berührungsängste... Und die Ampelpärchen, das war ja die Stadt Wien, nicht der ORF,

das war schon mehr ein innenpolitisches Signal. Natürlich wars cool, dass das in CNN und Al Jazeera gelaufen ist, das war ja auch eine Tourismuswerbung. Es gibt ja auch einen Ampelpärchen Shop. Aber das war ein politisches Signal der Wiener Stadtregierung aufgrund der innenpolitischen Diskussion die wir in diesem Land führen, auch heute noch. Und einmal sind wir in der Opposition und einmal die anderen. Jetzt werden die Ampelpärchen dieses Landes in der Opposition sein.

Der Eindruck ist also geblieben?

Also innerhalb der Song Contest Community ganz stark. Man muss aber auch sagen dass die österreichische ORF Delegation da sehr super war. Die repräsentieren Österreich wirklich gut, auch im Ausland. Also das ist wirklich eine sehr sympathische Delegation, die haben immer noch diesen freundlichen, hilfsbereiten Spirit. Und sie präsentieren Österreich wirklich sehr gut in einer klassischen Weise und das trägt zum Ruf bei, die sind bei den Fans einfach beliebt. Österreich hat sich wirklich gemausert vom Underdog zu einem fixen Bestandteil des Song Contests den man auch ernst nimmt.

Auch über den Song Contest hinaus? Hat sich das Land „gebessert“? Und hat der ESC dazu beigetragen? Hat Österreich geschafft mit alten Stereotypen und Klischees zu brechen?

Ich glaube wir haben es geschafft, neben den bekannten Klischees die man in Österreich hat ein anderes Bild auch international zu platzieren, das es auch dieses Österreich gibt. Das Österreich der Conchitas und der Ampelpärchen und der Toleranz und des Respekts und der Vielfalt. Die Bilder von den Helfern am Bahnhof sind ja genauso ein Teil davon. Ich glaub das der Song Contest da nur ein Mosaiksteinchen ist. Ich glaube, dass auch ein David Alaba dazu beiträgt ehrlich gesagt. Es geht immer um das Zusammenwirken von vielen Dingen und nicht nur von einer Sache. Zum Beispiel hätte die Französische Revolution nie begonnen wenn auf Island nicht ein Vulkan ausgebrochen wäre. Das Getreide ist nicht mehr gut gewachsen, die Preise stiegen an und die Leute konnten sich das Brot nicht mehr leisten und waren unzufrieden mit dem König. Was ich damit sagen will; es sind oft die Zufälligkeiten von verschiedenen Aspekten die gleichzeitig passieren. Genauso warum jetzt die Grünen aus dem Parlament rausfliegen... Was man nachhaltig ändern könnte, was Österreich nicht geschafft hat - und das kritisiere ich auch am meisten Richtung ORF – ist, dass man hier Künstler aufbaut, aber keine Plattformen bietet um einen Musikmarkt aufzubauen, um diese Künstler auch nachhaltig zu betreuen und ihnen

Chancen und Möglichkeiten gibt. Zum Beispiel in Schweden hat man ständig Auftritte. Die Conchita hat dort mehr Fernsehshows gemacht als in Österreich, weil es dort vielmehr diese Formate gibt. Man ist hier nicht so stolz auf seine Künstler komischerweise...

Wenn sie Österreich als ein Produkt mit ein paar Worten „branden“ müssten, welche Worte wären das? Als Österreicher/als Niederländer| Schwach, nicht zeitgemäß, irrelevant.

Ich hätte gern, dass die Lederhose und die Drag Queen mit Bart Hand in Hand gehen, dass man sich gegenseitig respektiert und nicht bespuckt, aber das ist sehr politisch. Da red ich ja quasi schon von den Wahlen. Vor allem die Auseinandersetzung Hofer/Van der Bellen war grauenhaft. Dieses Land ist extrem gespalten. Diese Spaltung ist in Österreich das, was ich am stärksten als Identität wahrnehme. Das ist aber meine persönliche Wahrnehmung. Ich sehe aber nicht wie dieser Spalt wieder schließbar ist. Das ist ja so in einigen Ländern derzeit. Die USA, zum Beispiel. Was ich so spannend in Österreich finde; ich bin liebend gern auf der Alm und ich liebe die Weltoffenheit in dieser internationalen Metropole in Wien, und ich sehe darin keinen Widerspruch. Für mich ist der Großglockner genauso Teil der österreichischen Identität wie der türkische Greissler da drüben.

Warum ist die Flüchtlingskrise, im Vergleich zum Krim-Konflikt noch nicht im Song Contest angekommen?

Ich hab mir auch schon mal gedacht, wann schickt jemand eine syrische Truppe zum ESC? Ich glaube es traut sich irgendwie keiner drüber. Das ist so ein spaltendes Thema, sehr polarisierend. Wobei man ja nicht gegen, sondern für einen Song stimmen, und gewinnen kann. Ich meine wir hatten schon Migranten und ethnische Minderheiten. Österreich hat auch schon zweimal einen Roma geschickt. Ich würde es zwar begrüßen, wenn ein syrischer Flüchtling über den Verlust der Heimat singen würde, aber ich glaub da ist die Angst zu groß vor dem Shitstorm. Wenn ein österreichische Jude darüber singen würde, wie seine Großeltern im KZ umgekommen sind fände ich das auch legitim und nicht politisch zu sehen. Wo man die Grenze zieht ist die Frage. Der Song Contest hatte immer politische Songs, mehr oder weniger versteckt. Genauso was queere Botschaften betrifft. Ich sage nur „Nous les Amoureux“. Der Song Contest ist ja auch eingebettet im Weltgeschehen. Bei einer zunehmenden Emanzipation einer queeren Community hat sich natürlich ihre Sichtbarkeit innerhalb der Eurovision Welt auch manifestiert, vor allem in den 90ern.

Lyrics of the official theme song “Building Bridges”

performed by the ESC Vienna-Allstars (Conchita Wurst, Arabella Kiesbauer, Mirjam Weichselbraun, Alice Tumler, Left Boy, Vienna Boys' Choir, Superar Choir, ORF Radio Symphony Orchestra), written by Dorothee Freiberger, David Bronner and Kurt Pongratz

It's only love that we seek, To break the silence we speak, To find a rhythm divine, So we can shine!

For every teardrop that falls, For every question that calls, There is an answer out there, waiting somewhere!

If only for tonight we're building bridges, No turning back, we're on our way, Lighting up the sky, we're building bridges, That we burned yesterday, If only for tonight we're building bridges, And they will stand the test of time, We can build a bridge until it reaches out, Across the borderlines, We've got a show tonight!

We fly tonight! We're building bridges alright, ba da daai, We're on the edge of the night!

If only for tonight!

We're building bridges tonight, We're stepping into the light, We're reaching out to the stars, The future's ours!

We're building bridges tonight, We're on the wings of heroes, So won't you come on today? For this could be your day!

Left Boy! Two hundred million viewers, I'd never thought I'd see the day, They asked me if I'd rep my city, I said okay, Yo this right here, when you walk up on the stage and they all just disappear, Kiss me dear, make me feel like they love me, Listen here, it's the moment that they've all been waiting for, When they ramba-lamba-ya, ya eh come on!

Left Boy!

When the lights go on (lights go on)

We'll look neon (we'll look neon)

Who will do it? (who will do it?)

Celine Dion? (Celine Dion?)

When the lights go on (lights go on)

We'll look neon (we'll look neon)

Who will do it? (who will do it?)

Only for tonight we're building bridges, And they will stand the test of time, We can build a bridge until it reaches out, Across the borderlines, We've gotta show tonight!

We fly tonight! We're building bridges alright, ba da daai, We're on the edge of the night! If only for tonight!

Source: [http://eurosong-contest.wikia.com/wiki/Building_Bridges_\(song\)](http://eurosong-contest.wikia.com/wiki/Building_Bridges_(song))

List of Austrian entries in the Eurovision Song Contest

Year	Title	Artist	Composer	Language	Result
1957	Wohin, kleines Pony?	Bob Martin	Kurt Svab, Hans Werner	German	10/10
1958	Die ganze Welt braucht Liebe	Liane Augustin	Günther Leopold, Kurt Werner	German	5/10
1959	Der K.u.K. Kalypso aus Wien	Ferry Graf	Norbert Pawlicki, Günther Leopold	German	9/11
1960	Du hast mich so fasziniert	Harry Winter	Robert Stolz, Robert Gilbert	German	7/13
1961	Sehnsucht	Jimmy Makulis	Leopold Andrejewitsh	German	15/16
1962	Nur die Wiener Luft	Eleonore Schwarz	Bruno Uher	German	13/16
1963	Vielleicht geschieht ein Wunder	Carmela Corren	Erwin Halletz, Peter Wehle	German, English	7/16
1964	Warum nur, warum?	Udo Jürgens	Udo Jürgens	German	6/16
1965	Sag ihr, ich laß sie	Udo Jürgens	Udo Jürgens,	German	4/18

	grüßen		Frank Bohlen		
1966	Merci, Chérie	Udo Jürgens	Udo Jürgens, Thomas Hörbiger	German, French	1/18
1967	Warum es hunderttausend Sterne gibt	Peter Horton	Kurt Peche, Karin Bognar	German	14/17
1968	Tausend Fenster	Karel Gott	Udo Jürgens, Walter Brandin	German	13/17
1969	No Participation				
1970	No Participation				
1971	Musik	Marianne Mendt	Richard Schönherz, Manuel Rigoni	Viennese dialect	16/18
1972	Falter im Wind	Milestones	Richard Schönherz, Heinz Rudolph Unger	German	5/18
1973	No Participation				
1974	No Participation				
1975	No Participation				
1976	My Little World	Waterloo & Robinson	Gerhard Heinz	English	5/18
1977	Boom Boom Boomerang	Schmetterlinge	Willi Resetarits, Lukas Resetarits	German	17/18
1978	Mrs. Caroline Robinson	Springtime	Walter Markel, Norbert Niedermayer	German	15/20
1979	Heute in Jerusalem	Christina Simon	Peter Wolf, André Heller	German	18/19
1980	Du bist Musik	Blue Danube	Klaus-Peter Sattler	German	8/19
1981	Wenn du da bist	Marty Brem	Werner Böhmler	German	17/20
1982	Sonntag	Mess	Michael Mell, Rudolf Leve	German	9/18
1983	Hurricane	Westend	Peter Vieweger Heli Deinboek	German	9/20

1984	Einfach weg	Anita	Brigitte Seuberth, Walter Müller	German	19/19
1985	Kinder dieser Welt	Gary Lux	Mick Jackson, Michael Kunze	German	8/19
1986	Die Zeit ist einsam	Timna Brauer	Peter Janda, Peter Cornelius	German	18/20
1987	Nur ein Gefühl	Gary Lux	Kenneth Westmore, Stefanie Werger	German	20/22
1988	Lisa, Mona Lisa	Wilfried	Klaus Kofler, Wilfried Scheutz	German	21/21
1989	Nur ein Lied	Thomas Forstner	Dieter Bohlen, Joachim Horn-Bernges	German	5/22
1990	Keine Mauern mehr	Simone	Marc Berry, Mario Botazzi	German, English, French, Serbo-Croatian	10/22
1991	Venedig im Regen	Thomas Forstner	Robby Musenbichler, Hubert Moser	German	22/22
1992	Zusammen geh'n	Tony Vegas	Dieter Bohlen, Joachim Horn-Bernges	German	10/23
1993	Maria Magdalena	Tony Vegas	Christian Kolonovits, Thomas Spitzer	German	14/25
1994	Für den Frieden der Welt	Petra Frey	Alfons Weindorf, Karl & Johann Brunner	German	17/25
1995	Die Welt dreht sich verkehrt	Stella Jones	Mischa Krausz	German	13/23
1996	Weil's dr guat got	George Nussbaumer	Mischa Krausz, George Nussbaumer	Vorarlberg dialect	10/23
1997	One Step	Bettina Soriat	Marc Berry, Martina Siber	German, English	21/25
1998	No Participation				
1999	Reflection	Bobbie Singer	Dave Moskin	English	10/23

2000	All to You	Rounder Girls	Dave Moskin	English	14/24
2001	No Participation				
2002	Say A Word	Manuel Ortega	Alexander Kahr, Robert Pfluger	English	18/24
2003	Weil der Mensch zählt	Alf Poier	Alf Poier	Styrian	6/26
2004	Du bist	Tie Break	Peter Zimmermann	German	21/24
2005	Y así	Global Kryner	Edi Köhldorfer, Christof Spörk	English, Spanish	Failed to qualify
2006	No Participation				
2007	Get A Life - Get Alive	Eric Papilaya	Greg Usek, Austin Howard	English	Failed to qualify
2008	No Participation				
2009	No Participation				
2010	Np Participation				
2011	The Secret is Love	Nadine Beiler	Nadine Beiler, Thomas Rabitsch	English	18/25
2012	Woki mit deinem Popo	Trackshittaz	Lukas Plöchl, Manuel Hoffelner	Upper-Austrian dialect	Failed to qualify
2013	Shine	Natalia Kelly	Natalia Kelly, Alexander Kahr	English	Failed to qualify
2014	Rise like a Phoenix	Conchita Wurst	Ali Zuckowski, Julia Maas	English	1/26
2015	I Am Yours	The Makemakes	Jimmy Harry, Dominic Muhrer	English	26/27
2016	Loin d'ici	Zoe	Christoph Straub, Zoe Straub	French	13/26
2017	Running On Air	Nathan Trent	Bernhard Penzias, Nathan Trent	English	16/26
2018	Nobody But You	Cesár Sampson	Cesár	English	3/26

			Sampson, Sebastian Arman		
2019	Limits	Paenda	Gabriela Horn	Englisch	Failed to qualify

Abstract

This master's thesis examines the topic of the representation of Austrian national identity in the Eurovision Song Contest (ESC). An analysis of the Austrian contestants since 1957 shows the struggle of a historically and culturally distinguished nation that tries to challenge outdated clichés and find its place in a modern postwar Europe. In the two years Austria hosted the ESC in Vienna (1967 and 2015), the national broadcaster ORF could orchestrate every element of the show to establish the nation not only as “Musikland,” but also as “Bridge Builder.” The complex challenges in defining Austria's reputation since WWII (“the first victim” of National Socialism, yet jointly responsible at the same time) are mirrored on the ESC stage when traditional Austrian elements have almost no place, considering the fear of being branded as nationalistic or patriotic. With Conchita Wurst's victory, a new era started in 2014. Austria developed from an underdog to an important and respected contender in Eurovision, and the nation could add further idealistic nouns and adjectives—such as “tolerance,” “liberal,” and “progressive”—to its reputation.

Diese Masterarbeit behandelt das Thema der Repräsentation der österreichischen nationalen Identität im Eurovision Song Contest (ESC). Eine Analyse der österreichischen Beiträge seit 1957 zeigt die Herausforderung einer historisch und kulturell herausragenden Nation veraltete Klischees zu entkräften und ihren Platz in einem modernen Nachkriegseuropa zu finden. In den zwei Jahren, in denen Österreich den ESC in Wien austrug (1967 und 2015), konnte der ORF jedes Element der Show genau orchestrieren, um sich nicht nur als „Musikland“ sondern auch als „Brückenbauer“ zu etablieren. Die komplexe Aufgabe Österreichs Reputation seit dem 2. Weltkrieg zu definieren (das „erste Opfer“ des Nationalsozialismus und gleichzeitig Mitverantwortlicher zu sein), spiegelt sich auf der Bühne des ESC's wieder, denn traditionelle österreichische Elemente finden kaum einen Platz, da die Angst als zu nationalistisch oder patriotisch gebrandmarkt zu werden zu groß ist.

Mit dem Sieg von Conchita Wurst im Jahr 2014 brach eine neue Ära an. Österreich konnte sich vom Außenseiter hin zu einem wichtigen und respektierten Mitbewerber in der ESC-Welt entwickeln und somit den Ruf der Nation um weitere idealistische Nomen und Adjektive - wie „Toleranz“, „liberal“, und „progressiv“-ergänzen.

Curriculum Vitae

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Ausbildung

- 2014-2016: Masterstudium der Musikwissenschaft, Universität Wien
- 2010-2014: Bachelorstudium der Musikwissenschaft, Universität Wien,
Bachelorarbeiten: „Musikpolitik und politische Musik in der DDR“, „12 Points for English - National Identity vs. World Language at the Eurovision Song Contest“
- 2005-2009: BORG 1, Hegelgasse 12

Erfahrung

- seit 2017: Verkaufsassistentin, Guide, *Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Wien, Musikverein*
- 2015 - 2017: Archivmitarbeiterin, *SRA – Skug Research Archiv*
- 2017 - 2017: Produktionsassistentz, *Herbsttage Blindenmarkt*
- 2015 - 2015: Persönliche Assistenz

Konferenzpräsentationen

- „12 Points for English – Austrian Identity vs. World Language“ – Eurovision Song Contest Conference, Kopenhagen 2014

Sprachen

- Deutsch (Muttersprache)
- Englisch (fließend in Wort und Schrift)
- Italienisch (Grundkenntnisse)
- Latein (Grundkenntnisse)

Sonstiges

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