



## EUROVISION 2009: THE BIGGEST PRODUCTION IN HISTORY



EUROVISION 2009 - Moscow

In our last issue of *The Plan* (May 2009), CAST gave you a sneak preview to The Eurovision Song Contest in Moscow, where **wysiwyg** was helping the crew prepare for an elaborate production. The show indeed proved to be the biggest and best in history, breaking records in everything from number of production days, number of viewers and even roof load, with everyone agreeing in the end – “this one can never be outdone.”

The event was broadcast live from Moscow’s Olimpiyskiy Arena in front of a live audience of 18,000 to an estimated 200 million television and internet viewers, second worldwide only to the Olympic Opening Ceremonies.

Procon Event Engineering GmbH of Hamburg, Germany provided all technical crew and equipment for the colourful array of 42 songs, 3 opening acts, and 3 interval acts packed into 3 live broadcasts. Production Manager Ola Melzig oversaw the Procon crew of over 70 throughout their 52-day stay in Moscow.



EUROVISION pre-programming studio in London

Here’s the schedule: May 12, Semifinal 1. 18 countries perform their original song live with a 32-second break between songs to change sets. At the end of the 18 songs, the public votes live via televoting during a 15-minute interval act (although countries are not allowed to vote for themselves). The top 10 countries go on to the finals on May 16. May 14, Semifinal 2. Same schedule as Semifinal 1 but with 19 new countries. May 16, Finals. 25 countries – 10 from Semifinal 1, 10 from Semifinal 2, plus last year’s winner, Russia, and the “Big Four” countries – UK, France,



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Germany and Spain. The voting for the finals is based on points and the country with the most points wins the contest and will host the show next year.

In addition to a rigorous schedule, this year incorporated some of the most complex opening and interval acts in Eurovision history, including Cirque du Soleil and Fuerza Bruta in the final, involving everything from trampolines and bungee jumpers to water-filled swimming pools lowered from the arena ceiling with performers swimming and splashing over the heads of the audience.

Award-winning Lighting Designer Al Gurdon, along with the team from his company, Incandescent Design, was contracted to



Cirque Du Soleil swims over the audience during the interval act

**Eurovision 2009- Continued**

provide lighting design & front of house services for Eurovision. Gurdon handpicked over 750 moving lights, 250 LED lights and 100 conventionals to compliment a mass of LED. "The goals of the organizers were ambitious, but everything they aimed to do was achieved. We had to design a huge variety of looks in a relatively short time period, but it all worked," said Gurdon.



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The rig included 72 PRG Bad Boy luminaries, 400 Martin MAC 2000 Washes, 76 MAC 600 washlights, 135 Clay Paky Alpha Spot 1200s, 10 Syncrolite SX 10K fixtures, 13 Vari\*lite VL3000 and 112 Martin Atomic strobes with colour changers, to name a few. The roof load stood at an astounding 140 tons and the total stage area was over 100 metres wide, covered in over 21,000 square feet of LED.



EUROVISION 2009 - Cirque du Soleil performing on stage

All of the stage and audience Lighting was controlled through one Vari\*Lite Virtuoso and one Grand MA Fullsize, controlled by Andrew Voller and Ben Cracknell. Voller and Cracknell used **wysiwyg** for the pre-programming as Essential lighting. The original plan was for the entire team, including video, to use one single ESP Vision system on a video projector. The problem was that with the number of lights they were using it was too slow, taking up to 20 hours per song to render in some cases. They instead moved to independent **wysiwyg** systems to get the best performance and enable them to get a lot more work done. In addition, very little of the video content was prepared while the team was in

London so it made no sense to previsualize these elements. Voller explains, "**wysiwyg** was a huge timesaver for us, which was crucial for a show of this magnitude. There were 42 songs, plus 3 interval and 3 opening acts to be prepared for the live broadcasts. **wysiwyg**'s advanced visualization enabled us to get the bulk of the songs pre-programmed in London to a point where they only required focus updates and tweaks on-site in Moscow. We could not have delivered such a large and complex show as the Eurovision Song Contest without the capabilities of **wysiwyg** for pre-programming."

Once all the votes were tallied, Norway's song "Fairytale", written and performed by Alexander Rybak took home top honors, meaning the contest will be held in Norway 2010.

*Looking back* at our sneak preview, did anyone notice that we had posted the photo of the winner before the votes were even tallied?

Now that's pre-visualization!

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Sneak Peek at Eurovision 2009  
by Joan Lyman Melzig



Photo Image of Eurovision 2009 set from Moscow, Russia

**EXCLUSIVE:** **wysiwyg** at Eurovision Song Contest in Moscow