

thebadseed

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02 – “MORE NEWS FROM NOWHERE” A NATION IN THE THROES OF... EUROVISION. BY WAYNE FLASK

hat a strange month, February 2009

Word on the street had it that there was a nasty flu *passa* that had already claimed huge numbers of victims. Tragedy-eyed congregations queuing in village grocery stores or lotto offices, wrapped in scarves and jackets that seemed oh-so-thin, complaining about the malevolence of this new threat to our nation's health and the doctors' reticence to hand out antibiotics. As many a storekeeper rolled his eyeballs, stopping to stare momentarily at some

dirty neon tube hanging from the ceiling, we heard how so-and-so's son had had to take sick leave for the first time in nine years as the doctor, who was evidently too lazy, only recommended over-the-counter medication.

It was only a matter of days before the evil malady got the better of me too, knocking me out for 10 long days. Relegated to the status of a sitting duck in a world suffocated by tonnes of digital entertainment opportunities, I had ample time to catch up on Many Things I Should Have Done Before (But Always Forget), the least useful of which was devouring 30 episodes of *The Shield* (two-and-a-half seasons for you).

Talk of suffocation.

This year, my usual contact never turned up with Eurosong Festival tickets. A blessing in disguise, I thought, as I was spared the sub-zero temperatures of the MFCC – a perfect match for the abysmal level of large stretches of the spectacle.

Of course, I'm aware that the Eurosong Festival is always a hugely divisive issue on these islands, comparable to veritable hot potatoes like illegal immigration or "utility" rates (which were once called electricity bills, but the recession has made us all sound snazzier).

I, for one, wish to show my solidarity to thousands of TV viewers who endured a charade of rotten lyrics, off-

tune singing, repetitive brainwashing attempts at advertising, scripted presenting and, most of all, a horrible dress sense throughout with monstrous cleavages that should simply never appear on the telly.

It only gets worse as time goes by. The Eurosong festival has run out of steam, losing ideas and clinging quickly to any emerging new faces. Many songs sound alarmingly familiar, some singers are luridly off-key and, quite frankly, the winning song-writing recipe keeps slipping through our fingers.

Finally, a look at recent score sheets tells us that the Eurovision Festival has been churning out repeated disappointments in recent years, which have seen our proud colours (carried by the likes of *Marija I-Maltija* at one point

tumbling inexplicably from near winners, to also-rans, to the depths of laughing-stock and finally to non-starters.

There are the usual excuses, mostly ranging from our geographic location to the odd *they don't want us in Europe...* a lot of this parochial paranoia. Our product just doesn't sell, period, even though sociologist, music critic and grocery regular Doris Parascandolo* and her analysis are hell bent on proving me wrong.

Despite the huge lure to both avid followers and sarcastic denigrators, practically the whole Eurosong Festival exercise has become pointless. Unfortunately, those who want to see something new have to enjoy an aged, stolid ox trudging through the red soil during a torrential downpour.

Why doesn't the government organise a national X-factor – promising a record deal of sorts to aspiring debutants? That would get people to really pull up their

socks to meet the tougher standards of the big boys, rather than participate in a cheesy festival perennially derided in all other countries.

I'm tempted to thank Chiara Siracusa. Not so much for her deserved victory on a night when her material was clearly head and shoulders above the loitering mediocrity of the others but because she deserves every plaudit for her startling honesty in the recent interview she gave to a local newspaper. The order of the day included her weight, her personal life, relationships in the green room and the real value of the Eurovision, among others.

I'm not a fan of either Chiara or the genre and, frankly, I couldn't care less if Malta comes first, fifth or 29th in the Eurojoke Festival. It bothers, me, however, to read the bullshit posted by a few individuals who spend their day conjuring up copious, odious messages about Chiara's weight. It's high time to end this senseless gibberish.

Our keyboard insurgents should keep in mind past results before posting their nonsense. Catwalk hopefuls like Faniello and Morena have forayed into Eurovision and returned home with a "1" on the scorecard and a DNQ respectively. And there have been other colourless modelling feats (Times Three springs to mind, for obvious reasons).

I suggest these e-terrorists take some time off polluting *timesofmalta.com's* servers and have a look at the Wiki page on The Gossip's frontwoman, Beth Ditto – a strange yet worthy girl icon on the music scene. Beth refused to launch the band's album at Topshop, replying instead: "Give me the job. I want to design. I want you to make clothes for big girls, big boys. I want you to make big sizes."

Otherwise, all this hail of guerrilla critique becomes a bit... suffocating.

Finally, a deserved word of praise goes to Hairypamp. Jean and Simon (not sure which one's Hairy and which one's Amp) have been plugging away at a "big name" for April following two eyebrow-raising performances by Manchester indie hotshots Autokat and Italian ambient gurus Port Royale.

The "big name", it turns out, is none other than Therapy?, the same band that led many a drunken teenage singalong in the typical Paceville hangouts. This one isn't for the faint-hearted, so, see you there on the 30th.

Hope you can remember your own name.

hatemail to roughtrade@wayneflask.com

*Apologies to the real Doris Parascandolo who should be out there somewhere.

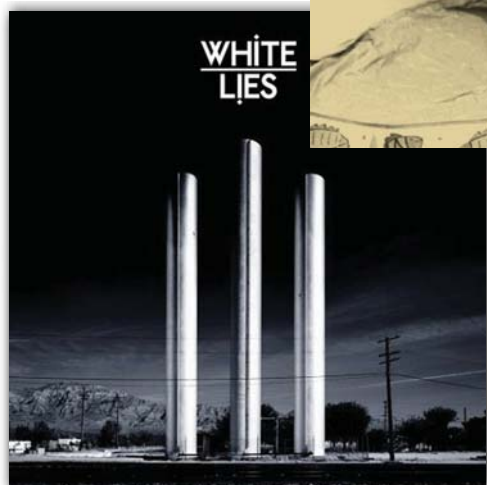
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Alice in Chains – MTV Unplugged



Belle & Sebastian – BBC Sessions



White Lies – To Lose My Life...

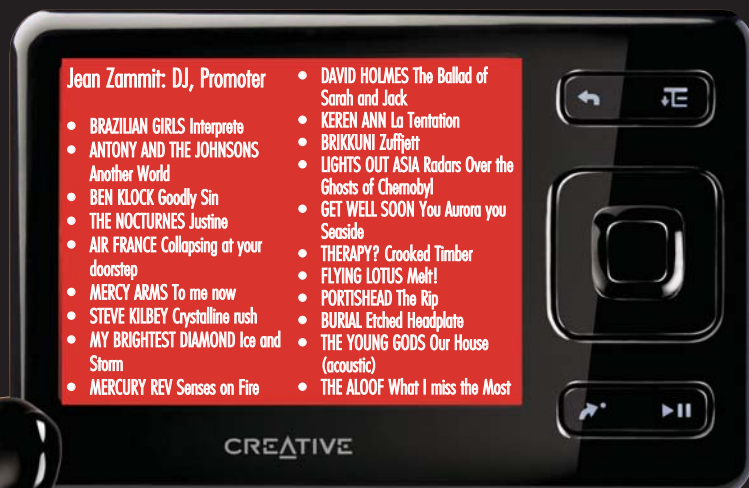
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| Jean Zammit: DJ, Promoter | • DAVID HOLMES The Ballad of Sarah and Jack |
| • BRAZILIAN GIRLS Interpretate | • KEREN ANN La Tentation |
| • ANTONY AND THE JOHNSONS Another World | • BRIKKUNI Zurjett |
| • BEN KLOCK Goodly Sin | • LIGHTS OUT ASIA Radars Over the Ghosts of Chernobyl |
| • THE NOCTURNES Justine | • GET WELL SOON You Aurora you |
| • AIR FRANCE Collapsing at your doorstep | • Seaside |
| • MERCY ARMS To me now | • THERAPY? Crooked Timber |
| • STEVE KILBEY Crystalline rush | • FLYING LOTUS Melt! |
| • MY BRIGHTEST DIAMOND Ice and Storm | • PORTISHEAD The Rip |
| • MERCURY REV Senses on Fire | • BURIAL Etched Headplate |
| | • THE YOUNG GODS Our House (acoustic) |
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