

it launched the careers of abba and celine dion: can the 2010 eurovision song contest do the same for a girl group from croatia?

BY ROWENA CARR-ALLINSON

EURO★STARS

LOVERS OF BUBBLE-GUM POP AND NAFF ANTHEMS rejoice! The Eurovision Song Contest screens live from Oslo on Saturday 29 May, and more than 100-million viewers will be tuning in to watch this annual kitsch-fest that's loved and loathed in equal measures.

Just to be clear, we at *bmibaby* love it, and as we're about to launch a summer service to Dubrovnik from East Midlands (30 May to 26 September), it seemed like the perfect time to take a look at one of the acts in the running to represent Croatia. According to Ivan Horvat, who runs the most successful local Eurovision fansite (www.eurosong.hr), this year the smart money is on Feminnem, a girl group made up of Neda Parmac, Pamela Ramljak and Nika Antolos. Neda and Pamela joined forces after meeting on the set of *Croatian Idol* in 2004, while Nika is the third girl to fill the group's final spot ("We're like the Sugababes!").

The girls are natural-born performers. Pamela, who studied music in Dubrovnik and sang with the Dubrovnik Symphony Orchestra, took the traditional route as a professional backing singer for Croatian and Bosnian stars until she teamed up with Neda. As for Neda, who grew up near Dubrovnik, it's in her blood: "I come from a family of musicians. I started singing at the age of six and haven't stopped since."

There were 16 acts vying for the honour to represent Croatia. Feminnem's song, *Lako je sve* ("Everything is easy"), was written by their producer. "We fell in love with it as soon as he started playing on his piano," says Neda. "We wanted lyrics straight away – so we wrote them in 30 minutes!"

The blonde trio might have another advantage: Neda and Pamela have already experienced Eurovision, when they

represented neighbouring Bosnia Herzegovina in 2005. Can the girls reignite Croatia's successful run of the late 90s? Only if they take top spot in Croatia's Eurovision campaign first.

★★★★★★ **NEWS FLASH!** ★★★★★★

They did! Seems we were right on the money: just before going to press, Croatia's entry in the 2010 Eurovision Song Contest was announced... and the winner was Feminnem! Good luck to the girls – we'll be watching on TV on 29 May, but if you're in Dubrovnik, watch it live at Irish pub Katie O'Connor's (4 *Dropceva*, Old Town, www.katieoconnors.com). For live music, Ines Nanic of Dubrovnik Event (www.dubrovnikevent.com) says to head to the Hard Jazz Cafe Troubadour: "an institution in town" (2 *Buniceva Poljana*, tel: +385 20 323476). Its owner, Marko, has a secret of his own: he came fifth in the Eurovision Song Contest for Yugoslavia in 1968, just behind Cliff Richard!



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BEST OF BRITAIN

It has to be the perky 1981 winners, Bucks Fizz, with *Making Your Mind Up*. Who can forget the skirts that came off halfway through?



THE TOP 10 MEMORABLE MOMENTS OF EUROVISION

2 BEST DISCOVERY

There's no doubt ABBA wins this one. The Swedes sang *Waterloo* in 1974... and history was made.

3 BEST PANIC ATTACK

In 2008, Sweden sent a boy to do a man's job. A victim of sudden stage fright, as he read out the votes he looked terrified, froze and could barely get a word out. Bless.

4 BEST USE OF ALUMINIUM FOIL

Cross-dressing spaceman, Verka Serduchka, got a standing ovation for the Ukraine in 2007... dressed in tinfoil.

5 BEST BEARDS

Singing *Divine* for France in 2008, Sébastien Tellier and his female back-up singers all sported matching beards!

6 BEST RISQUÉ ROUTINE

Dita Von Teese did what she does best for Germany in 2009... in a teeny-tiny black corset complete with whip.

7 BEST GLASSES

Norwegian Anne Karine Strøm wore a gold sequin jumpsuit and matching mega-glasses in 1976. Truly stylish.

8 BEST CHAT-UP LINE

Ulrika Jonsson was left blushing in 1998 when Hungary gave their votes: "Hello! You look very pretty... I give you 12 points."

9 BEST GENERATION GAME

Moldovan Zdob si Zdob's shirtless, Iggy Pop-lookalike singer surprised us all in 2005 when he rocked the stage with the help of a granny and her huge drum.

10 BEST FALL

Israeli transsexual Dana International stole the show with a dramatic topple when she handed over the award in 1999.

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