



**DEAN VULETIC**

# **Postwar Europe**

**and the Eurovision Song Contest**

B L O O M S B U R Y



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Dean Vuletic

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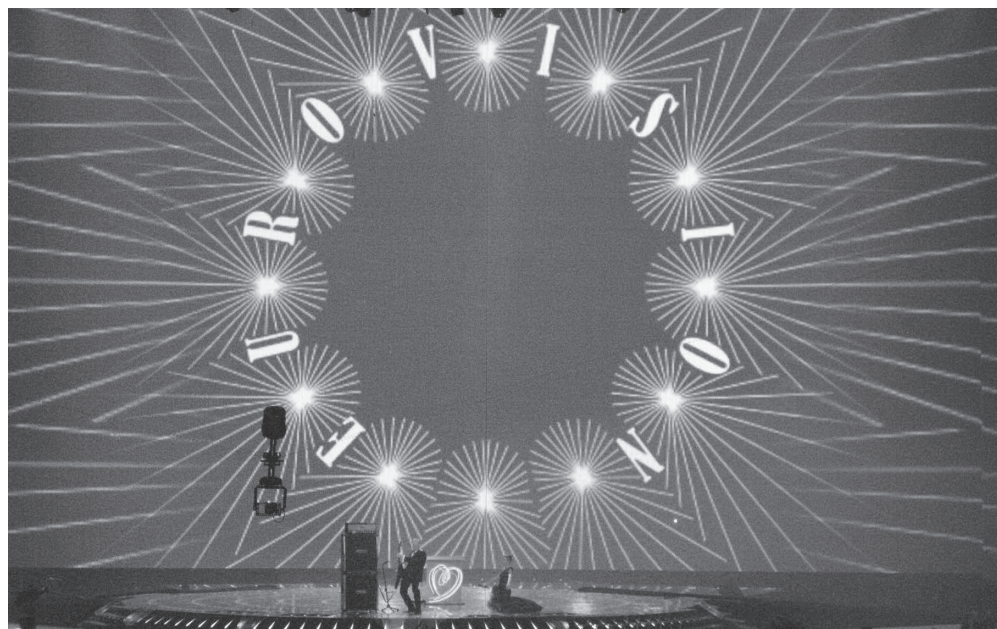
# Abbreviations

ABC	Australian Broadcasting Commission
ABU	Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union
ACT	Archives of Czech Television
APT	Archives of Polish Television
ARD	Arbeitsgemeinschaft der öffentlich-rechtlichen Rundfunkanstalten der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (Consortium of the Public Service Broadcasting Corporations of the Federal Republic of Germany)
ARMTV	Public Television Company of Armenia
AzTV	Azərbaycan Televiziyası (Azerbaijan Television)
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BHRT	Radio-televizija Bosne i Hercegovine (Radio and Television of Bosnia-Herzegovina)
BTRC	Belaruskaja Tele-Radio Campanija (Belarusian Television and Radio Company)
CBU	Caribbean Broadcasting Union
CET	Central European Time
CoE	Council of Europe
CoEA	Council of Europe Archives
COMECON	Council for Mutual Economic Assistance
ČST	Československá televize/Československá televízia (Czechoslovak Television)
ČT	Česká televize (Czech Television)
CyBC	Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation
DDR-FS	Fernsehen der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik (Television of the German Democratic Republic)
DR	Danmarks Radio (Danish Broadcasting Corporation)
EBA	European Broadcasting Area
EBU	European Broadcasting Union

EBUA	European Broadcasting Union Archives
EC	European Community
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
EEA	European Economic Area
EEC	European Economic Community
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
EIRT	Ethniko Idrima Radiofonias Tileoraseos (National Radio Television Foundation)
EP	European Parliament
ERT	Ellinikí Radiofonía Tileórasi (Hellenic Broadcasting Corporation)
ERTU	Egyptian Radio and Television Union
ESC	Eurovision Song Contest
EU	European Union
FYROM	Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
GPB	Georgian Public Broadcasting
HTV	Hrvatska televizija (Croatian Television)
IBA	Israel Broadcasting Authority
IBU	International Broadcasting Union
ICTY	International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia
ISC	Intervision Song Contest
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
ITUA	International Telecommunication Union Archives
İTV	İctimai Televiziya (Public Television)
JRT	Jugoslavenska radiotelevizija/Jugoslovenska radiotelevizija/ Jugoslovenska radio-televizija/Jugoslovenska radiotelevizija (Yugoslav Radio and Television)
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
MKRTV, MRT	Makedonska radio televizija (Macedonian Radio and Television)
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NRK	Norsk rikskringkasting (Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation)
NTS	Nederlandse Televisie Stichting (Dutch Television Foundation)

OGAE	Organisation générale des amateurs de l'Eurovision (General Organization of Eurovision Fans)
OIR	Organisation internationale de radiodiffusion (International Broadcasting Organization)
OIRT	Organisation internationale de radiodiffusion et de télévision (International Radio and Television Organization)
ORF	Österreichischer Rundfunk (Austrian Broadcasting Corporation)
OTI	Organización de Televisión Iberoamericana/Organização da Televisão Ibero-Americana (Organization of Ibero-American Television)
RAI	Radiotelevisione italiana (Italian Radio and Television)
RTCG	Radio i televizija Crne Gore (Radio and Television of Montenegro)
RTÉ	Raidió Teilifís Éireann (Radio and Television of Ireland)
RTF	Radiodiffusion-télévision française (French Radio and Television)
RTK	Radio Televizioni i Kosovës/Radio televizija Kosova (Radio and Television of Kosovo)
RTP	Radiotelevisão Portuguesa (Portuguese Radio and Television)/Rádio e Televisão de Portugal (Radio and Television of Portugal)
RTS	Radio-televizija Srbije (Radio and Television of Serbia)
SBS	Special Broadcasting Service
SR	Sveriges Radio (Radio Sweden)
SRG SSR	Schweizerische Radio- und Fernsehgesellschaft/Société suisse de radiodiffusion et télévision/Società svizzera di radiotelevisione (Swiss Broadcasting Corporation)
STV	Slovenská televízia (Slovak Television)
SVT	Sveriges Television (Sweden's Television)
TL	Télé Liban (Lebanon Television)
TRNC	Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus
TRT	Türkiye Radyo Televizyon Kurumu (Turkish Radio and Television Corporation)
TSC	Turkvision Song Contest

TVE	Televisión Española (Spanish Television)
TVR	Televiziunea Română (Romanian Television)
UEFA	Union of European Football Associations
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
YLE	Yleisradio Oy/Rundradion Ab (Finnish Broadcasting Company)



**Figure 1** The logo of the Eurovision Network, 1954–1993



# Introduction: Europe's Greatest Television Show

It is Europe's biggest election, a platform from which the aspirations of dictators and drag queens have been projected, and upon which battles between capitalists and communists, Europeanists and Eurosceptics, and reactionaries and revolutionaries have been played out. Since its inception in 1956, the annual Eurovision Song Contest (ESC) has always reflected political changes in postwar Europe alongside cultural, economic, social and technological developments, with almost all European states having been represented in the contest at some point in its first sixty years. While it is globally one of the longest-running and most popular television shows, having traditionally reached hundreds of millions of viewers through television and even more now through the internet, the ESC has always been quintessentially European and has forged common cultural references among Europeans. The contest has involved national broadcasting organizations sending artists with original songs to represent their states, with the winning state traditionally hosting the contest the next year under the auspices of its national broadcasting organization. Apart from earning the right for a state to host the contest, no material award – except for the bouquets, medals and trophies that have been presented to the composers, lyricists and singers of the victorious entries – has ever been attached to winning the contest. There has always been the hope that the winner could achieve commercial success, and of the 1,438 songs that were performed in the ESC from 1956 to 2016, some went on to become international hits that are still heard all over Europe. That the ESC has had a huge impact on European popular culture is also heard in the contest's characteristic phrases that have infiltrated everyday speech across Europe, such as 'good evening, Europe', 'twelve points go to ...' or 'zero points' (as well as their variations in French, the other official language of the contest), with the latter two respectively expressing acclamation or disapproval.

The ESC has itself been commonly derided for promoting déclassé popular music, having excessive costs and pandering to national stereotypes. The scoffing criticisms that have been made about the cultural kitschiness of the ESC are generally unfair considering that it has launched some popular music superstars, showcased a variety of popular music genres and had songs that have been politically and socially critical. Such judgements have also belittled the ESC's success as a technological feat achieved through international cooperation. The contest was conceived by the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) in the mid-1950s as a venture in developing Western Europe's emerging television services through the programme exchange and technical cooperation that was being fostered by the organization's Eurovision Network, from which the ESC got its name. The ESC is one of the leading examples of a television show that has connected Europeans via a simultaneous, transnational broadcast, especially as the EBU and other European organizations have made other, often fleeting, attempts to achieve the same. Yet, that impact has itself often been exaggerated by the contest's advocates, who have liked to emphasize how the contest brings together Europeans, yet who have also often underestimated how much this unification is based on an international competition that has arguably done more to underline national divisions than forge a European whole. Like the European Union (EU), as much as the ESC might – or, as this book also considers, might not – have aspired to contribute to the creation of a European identity, its national basis has continued to demonstrate that postwar European integration is not a teleological process. The history of the ESC and its organizer, the EBU, is also about national broadcasting organizations hoping to enter, opting into or out of or threatening to leave them, much like states have behaved towards the EU.

The EBU, however, had a temporal head start in facilitating postwar European cooperation. Set up in 1950, it emerged just after the Council of Europe (CoE) had been created in 1949, but it preceded the founding of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1951 and the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community, or Euratom, in 1957, all three of which merged to form the European Community (EC) in 1967. The EBU also predated the alternative organization for economic integration in Western Europe, the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), which was established in 1960. The EBU was independent

of all of these organizations and, together with the CoE, it was at the forefront of the promotion of European cultural cooperation well before the EC began to develop its own cultural policy. The EBU did, however, cooperate with EC institutions from the 1970s on the media coverage of their activities, as well as clash with them as the EC sought to regulate television broadcasting from the 1980s. The Eurovision Network's early success in forging a common market for radio and television programmes was arguably due to the EBU distancing itself from the politics of other Western European organizations, especially those with supranationalist aims. The relationship between the EBU and the EU has historically been fraught with tensions that are usually obscured by Europeanist portrayals of the ESC as an enduring symbol of a teleological history of postwar European integration.

The ESC has often been viewed by journalists and politicians as a harbinger of developments in international relations, a waiting room for aspiring candidates for other, grander European political organizations, especially the EU. Due to the geographical spread of the EBU's members and the organization's apolitical membership criteria, the ESC has offered the broadest number of people in the most states in Europe the opportunity to vote in a common event since its introduction in the late 1990s. The results of Europe's biggest election allow us to analyse interactions and sympathies in an international context of diasporic, post-colonial, regional, religious and sexual identities. Still, the ESC has always been presented as an 'apolitical' event by the EBU, which has insisted that all of the national broadcasting organizations participating in the contest must broadcast all of the competing entries, including those from states with which the state of the national broadcasting organization might not have diplomatic relations or be involved in a military conflict. Political statements in entries have, however, only been implicitly or explicitly banned in the contest's rules since 2000, a stipulation which the EBU has nonetheless inconsistently applied. The EBU has otherwise had no political standards for its members that are national, public service radio and television broadcasters. The criteria for EBU membership stipulate that a national broadcasting organization need only come from a state that is a member of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), a United Nations (UN) agency, and located within the European Broadcasting Area (EBA), a technical region defined by the ITU that includes states from Europe

and the Mediterranean rim. However, exactly because of the ESC's wearing of the emperor's apolitical new clothes, the political aims, attitudes and opinions of activists, governments and parties have been more liberally expressed in the contest than they could have been in other international organizations that are more constrained by diplomatic norms. As the journalist Jean Coucrand put it in the Belgian newspaper *Le Soir* (The Evening) in 1979: 'If the Eurovision Song Contest does not deal with politics, politics deals with it.'<sup>1</sup>

That there is no other international song contest in the world matching the longevity or popularity of the ESC demonstrates, however, that there is something peculiarly European about the ESC that transcends national identifications. The intrinsic Europeanness of the ESC is also underlined by the common etymology of 'Europe' and 'Eurovision', which can be read as the Greek and Latin versions of the same concept. One explanation of the etymology of 'Europe' is that it is derived from the Greek *eurys*, meaning 'broad', and *óps*, meaning 'eye'.<sup>2</sup> 'Vision' is also derived from the Latin word for 'seeing'. Both 'Europe' and 'Eurovision' are therefore about viewing things broadly, even diversely. The myth of 'Europa', who in Greek mythology was seduced by Zeus and taken to the island of Crete, also embodies staple themes of ESC entries: love, the sea and travel. However, postwar European integration projects, especially that of the EU, have hijacked the terms 'Europe' and 'Euro' to the extent that it is a symptom of contemporary conditioning to conflate anything bearing these appellations with European political organizations and their aims. These days, 'euro' is also most commonly associated with the EU's currency, giving this term an economic dimension that was not attached to it previously. The EU has come to overshadow the diversity of Europeanism, which has been promoted in the postwar era by various international organizations with different goals. Even though they are both 'unions', the EBU's internationalist aims should thus not be conflated with the EU's supranationalist ones.

Indeed, as the members of the EBU themselves typify, television in Europe still remains a very national affair, as does popular music. Even though the ESC has unified Europeans by creating shared cultural references, it has arguably been more successful in forging national icons and refashioning national identities rather than transnational ones. The patriotism expressed in the barracking for national entries at the ESC reflects the resilience of national identities despite – or because of – processes of European integration.

Yet, the ESC also demonstrates that those national identities have not been pure or unique phenomena, but have rather been refashioned through cultural transfers. One of the striking features of ESC entries is, in fact, that they have always expressed social diversity through the biographies of their artists, which usually have an element of international migration based on whatever combination of economic, educational, intimate, political or professional reasons. The national label that these artists have appeared under at the ESC has often been deceiving, especially as, in some cases, the artists themselves have not even been citizens of the states that they have represented. However, even a win by a non-national has been greeted with patriotic fervour, as the example of Canada's Celine Dion, who won the 1988 ESC for Switzerland, demonstrated. So, while the extent to which the ESC has shaped a European identity is arguable, it is more obvious that it has refashioned national identities and made them appear more attractive and modern through new media, technologies and, of course, fashions. I often prefer the term 'nation fashioning' over 'nation building' or 'nation branding' as 'fashion' invokes the interdependent recognition of the aesthetic and the temporal as well as the appropriation of successful models, considerations which are also crucial for the production of ESC entries.

As it has never adopted political criteria for its membership, the EBU's remit has always been greater than that of other postwar European organizations. During the Cold War, the perception that the ESC developed harmoniously parallel to Western European integration was magnified by the contest's exclusion of Eastern European national broadcasting organizations. These had their own equivalent of the EBU, the International Radio and Television Organization (OIRT), whose Intervision Network organized the fleeting Intervision Song Contest (ISC). However, the participation of national broadcasting organizations in the ESC also did not strictly mirror their states' involvement in other Western European organizations. The EBU has included as active members – which have voting rights in the organization and can participate fully in the Eurovision Network – national broadcasting organizations from authoritarian and liberal democratic states, as well as from states that are members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) or neutral. Neutrality made Switzerland, for example, willing to host international organizations yet suspicious of entering them: although it joined the CoE in 1963 and the UN in 2002, Switzerland has

never entered the EU. Yet, Switzerland was a founding member of the EBU and is the site of its headquarters, and the state hosted the first ESC in 1956, which it also won with Lys Assia singing 'Refrain'. The EBU has also admitted as associate members, which are not part of the Eurovision Network, national broadcasting organizations from states outside of the EBA with various political systems, including Australia, China and Iran.<sup>3</sup>

The ESC has from its very beginning been appropriated in the cultural diplomacies of states with varying foreign policies and political systems as cultural propaganda, nation branding or soft power. For the active members of the EBU, as well as an Australian one, which have participated in the ESC, the potential innocuousness of the popular music typically performed there has made the ESC appropriable for the cultural diplomacies of governments of various political shades. As the writer Milan Kundera puts it, '[k]itsch is the aesthetic ideal of all politicians and all political parties and movements.'<sup>4</sup> Sometimes just participating in the contest has been a reflection of a state's aspirations for European integration, from the case of Spain in the 1960s and 1970s when it was ruled by the rightist dictatorship of Francisco Franco, to the examples of Central and East European states that joined the ESC after the Cold War. For authoritarian states that have been represented in the ESC, such as Greece, Portugal and Spain in the 1960s and 1970s and Azerbaijan, Belarus and Russia after the Cold War, participation in the contest has been used by their governments to whitewash their suppression of media freedom and political opposition and make their international images more palatable to a European audience. In authoritarian states in which governments have exercised direct control over the national broadcasting organizations, the connection between foreign policies and the appropriation of the ESC in cultural diplomacies has been clearer than in liberal democracies in which the national broadcasting organizations are ideally meant to be free of government interference. However, the ESC has even in liberal democracies had a political symbolism in the context of domestic conflicts between political parties, and the accountability and transparency of their national broadcasting organizations has been questioned when their officials have decided not to choose entries through a national selection based on a public vote. In liberal democracies, artists, music industry representatives and officials from national broadcasting organizations have also used the contest as a vehicle not

only to achieve commercial aims but also to make political statements – and despite not always having a democratic mandate to do so. Domestic political battles have been waged through the ESC as national broadcasting organizations have entered artists who have been politically symbolic because of their ethnicity, gender, nationality, race, religion or sexuality.

The ESC has thus been a highly flexible tool of cultural diplomacy that has had different meanings for different states at different times, which can also be read from the affiliations and rankings of the politicians who have attended the contest when it has been held in their state. The contest has varyingly been used to express Europeanism or Euroscepticism, or neither. In the United Kingdom (UK), for example, which has had postwar Europe's biggest popular music industry, the ESC was during the Cold War approached principally as a commercial endeavour, much as the policies of British governments favoured Western European integration more for its economic benefits than as a cultural or political project. And some of the most Eurosceptic states have in fact had some of the most fervent national audiences for the ESC: an Iceland that has withdrawn its application for EU membership; a Norway that won the contest just after it rejected EU membership; and a Sweden that has one of the biggest national audiences for – and whose popular music industry has profited immensely from – the ESC, but which nonetheless has not adopted the euro. Voting in the ESC has infamously reflected regional blocs – Balkan, Nordic, former Soviet and Western – yet the contest's organization has been dominated by the commercial ambitions and technological superiority of Europe's north. In states that have variously been on a geocultural, geoeconomic or geopolitical periphery at a certain historical point, journalists and politicians have interpreted poor scores in the contest to explain their states' cultural, economic and political marginalization in European affairs. In all states, public reactions to national results in the contest have generally viewed failure at the ESC in terms of a cultural and political distancing from 'Europe', while success has been perceived as acceptance by it. Still, while the enthusiasm of national audiences for the contest has ebbed and risen in accordance with the success of their national entries, the ESC remains Europe's greatest television show. That this was neither the expectation nor the intention of its founders reflects how national sentiments and public desires have often been misjudged or undervalued by the technocratic establishments that have been at the vanguard of postwar European integration.

This book examines the relationship between postwar European politics and the ESC, from the soft-power use of the ESC in cultural diplomacies to refashion the images of states, to how the contest has been a subject in political battles within states. Although the ESC has been such a massive cultural phenomenon lasting some six decades so far, there has not yet been a systematic scholarly attempt to research the history of the ESC. The articles, books and websites on the history of the ESC that have been produced by the EBU, fans and journalists have tended to focus on the content of the contest itself – such as the entries, hosting and voting – rather than address the ESC in the broader context of cultural, economic and political international relations. They have sometimes also perpetuated clichés, exaggerations or unsubstantiated facts about the history of the ESC – or expressed fantasies about a unified Europe imagined through the contest.<sup>5</sup> As a result, a hagiographic, popular history of the ESC has emerged which overemphasizes the contest's positive function for European integration without considering the EBU's complex relations with international organizations and national governments that are explained through archival sources, especially those from the CoE, EBU, ITU and OIRT that this book pioneeringly draws on. The popular historiography of the ESC has also underplayed the role that the contest has had in the less positive aspects of postwar European history, such as in the cultural diplomacies of authoritarian states or how it has been used as a symbolic battlefield for actual wars that have taken place in Europe or elsewhere in the world. Regarding academic literature, there has been a growing scholarly interest in the ESC in the past decade, but the research has focused overwhelmingly on the post-1989 period. The Cold War era has consequently received little attention: there is hardly any literature, for example, on the ISC, the Eastern European attempt to create a global and communist alternative to the ESC. Based on the aforementioned archival sources together with an analysis of the recordings of all of the editions of the ESC from 1956 to 2016 and every artist and entry in them, this book builds on the extant scholarship and connects the Cold War era with the ESC's history from 1990 to 2016. It argues that the cultural, economic, political and social issues that were highlighted at the ESC from 1990 to 2016, such as cultural diplomacy, economic disparity, European integration, military conflict and social diversity, have historically been constant features of the contest.

The financial cost of the contest has always been criticized, the voting system has always been debated and reformed, and national societies have always argued about the merits of the songs that have represented their states.

With an emphasis on the diplomatic history of the ESC, the first part of this book, 'The Cold War, 1945–1989', focuses on the role that the ESC played in relations between states in both Eastern and Western Europe during that period. The first chapter, 'The Western European Arrangement', begins with the section 'Organizations', which discusses the international organizations whose policies and regulations have defined the remit of the ESC. Following the Congress of Vienna in 1815, the first international telecommunications organizations were established in the nineteenth century. The International Broadcasting Union (IBU), the direct predecessor of the EBU, was formed in 1925. The EBU was thus not an entirely new phenomenon in terms of promoting cooperation among national broadcasting organizations, and the ESC also had its roots in earlier transnational radio programmes. During the interwar era and in the first postwar decade, new political arrangements and telecommunications technologies required new forms of international cooperation, and this mantra also defined the development of separate international broadcasting organizations for Eastern and Western Europe. The second section, 'Integration', looks at the relationship between the ESC and Western European organizations, namely the CoE and the EC. While the CoE was important for facilitating the cultural cooperation that the ESC epitomized, the EC only began to develop a cultural policy from the 1970s and it briefly appropriated the ESC in this in the late 1980s. Considering that the ESC had by then already established itself as Europe's most popular television show, the EBU was during the Cold War earlier at the forefront of the production of shared cultural references among Western Europeans than the EC was. The third section, 'Anglo-Americanization', argues that the ESC needs to be considered in a global context as well, and not just as a European phenomenon as its name suggests. From its very beginning, the ESC reflected American cultural influences which arguably united Western Europeans more than any other cultural trends. Although the contest was not regularly broadcast in the United States, it did help to launch the careers of artists who would become successful in North America. Yet, the ESC's global influence from 1956 to 1989 was not limited by Anglo-Americanization: for example,

Portuguese and Spanish artists had, for linguistic reasons, markets in Latin America. The ESC was even broadcast to South American states that together with Australia – which was also connected to Europe through immigrant and imperial ties – were the main non-European areas to experience the ESC during the Cold War.

The second chapter, ‘The Show of Nations’, looks at the role that the ESC had in national politics during the Cold War. The first section, ‘Fashioning’, examines how the ESC refashioned national identities through the media of popular music and television. As ESC entries were usually more successful nationally than internationally, this section argues that the contest has been more effective in fashioning national identities rather than shaping a European one. The next section, ‘Mapping’, considers how national audiences viewed other European states through the ESC. This section demonstrates that cultural affiliations have defined the phenomenon of bloc voting throughout the contest’s history, although not in all geographical or linguistic regions; it also shows that political ties have not played such a decisive role in the voting, with the major exceptions being those between Greece, Cyprus and Turkey. The section ‘Revolutions’ examines how national political conflicts were played out in the ESC. In many states there was an identification of the contest as something that belonged more to the left or right wings of national politics. Leftist protests in Sweden, for example, opposed the Anglicization and commercialization of the ESC in the late 1970s. The rightist dictatorships of Portugal and Spain, meanwhile, appropriated the contest in their cultural diplomacies in the 1960s and 1970s to whitewash their international images, although there were also attempts by political dissidents in these states to use the ESC as a platform to criticize these authoritarian governments. The rise of new social movements in Western Europe from the mid-1960s also saw more varied political and social issues being articulated at the ESC, although gender and sexuality issues were apparent in the contest in the late 1950s even before the greater sexual liberalization in Western European societies in the 1960s.

The third chapter, ‘A Contest for Communism’, discusses the experiences of Eastern European states with the ESC. It begins with the section ‘Appropriation’, which examines how communist governments in Eastern Europe went from a policy of censoring Western popular music to appropriating it in their cultural policies, including through the staging of international song contests.

Already in the late 1950s, as the section 'Intervision' highlights, the OIRT was interested in its members participating in the ESC as the organization began cooperating with the EBU in the context of an easing of East-West tensions. The EBU rebuffed the OIRT's proposal for a joint international song contest but allowed Eastern European national broadcasting organizations to broadcast the ESC from 1965. The OIRT twice set up an equivalent contest, the ISC, from 1965 to 1968 in Czechoslovakia and from 1977 to 1980 in Poland, and this also sought to include Western European national broadcasting organizations and record companies. However, both of these series of the ISC were suppressed because of political upheavals in Czechoslovakia and Poland. Due to the political oppression by communist governments, some Eastern European artists emigrated to Western Europe and went on to perform in the ESC, and their cases are examined in the section 'Dissent'. Although Yugoslavia represented an exceptional case in the ESC as the only communist state to participate in the contest during the Cold War, reflecting its nonalignment and openness to Western cultural influences, censorship was also a phenomenon there until 1989, the same year that Yugoslavia won the ESC as the only communist state ever to do so. This was a harbinger for the entry of Central and East European states into the ESC after the end of communism in 1989, although when the ESC was staged in May of that year, the extent of the geopolitical changes that would befall Europe before the 1990 ESC could not have been anticipated.

The second part of the book, 'European Unification, 1990–2016', focuses on the relationship between the ESC and European politics since the end of the Cold War. The fourth chapter, 'A Concert of Europe', describes how the 1990 ESC in Zagreb reflected hopes for European unification in the wake of the Cold War, but these were soon quickly tested by the wars in the former Yugoslavia. As the section 'Wars' explains, military conflicts, from those in the former Yugoslavia to the ones between Armenia and Azerbaijan, Israel and its Arab neighbours, Russia and Georgia, and Russia and Ukraine, were a constant backdrop to the ESC after 1989. The impact of these wars on the ESC demonstrated how the contest has not just been a forum for cultural cooperation but also one through which military conflicts have been symbolically waged. Some Central and East European states, as the section 'Europeanism' shows,

considered joining the ESC to be important for their cultural diplomacies as an expression of their aims for integration into other European organizations, especially the CoE and the EU. Yet, while the contest can be viewed as a stage for the articulation of Europeanist aspirations, it has also reflected criticism of European integration in states across Europe, as is discussed in the section 'Euroscepticism'. In West European states, for example, media, political and public reactions to the successes of Central and East European states in the contest were tied to anxieties over the enlargement of the EU. However, for one Central and East European state, the Czech Republic, not participating in the contest also reflected Eurosceptic sentiments in its national politics. In Iceland and Norway, though, their rejection of EU membership did not correlate with a public disinterest in the ESC, with Iceland proportionately having the largest national televiewing audience for it.

The final chapter, 'The Values of Eurovision', considers how the ESC has shaped values that have been perceived as integral to a European identity. The first is that of 'Diversity', and this section examines how the contest reflected ethnic, racial, religious and sexual diversity in Europe from 1990 to 2016. Ethnic, racial and religious minorities have a history of being represented in the contest since its early years. Sexual minorities, however, were only visibly represented in the ESC from the late 1990s, and their appearance in the contest became a point of contention between conservatives and liberals across Europe. Changes to the voting system in the contest also continued to be controversial and even prompted the withdrawal of Turkey from the ESC. One such change allowed the 'Big Five' – France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the UK – direct entry into the final without having to participate in the semi-finals that were introduced in 2004 to accommodate more participants. The Big Five were privileged because of their financial contributions to the contest and their population sizes, which also demonstrates the power of commercial considerations in the ESC, an issue that is addressed in the section 'Commercialism'. In light of the economic crisis that the EU experienced from 2009, the financial cost of just participating in the ESC became daunting for some national broadcasting organizations, while others, particularly non-EU member states like Azerbaijan and Russia, invested record amounts into hosting the contest. Although the ESC has always been controversial for its cost, it has also highlighted the economic disparities that exist in Europe