

The Story of Ross Carter

I discovered EM when this crazy Romanian guy called Florin messaged me, after see me commenting on an ESC forum. I loved the idea of being in a virtual ESC contest. I debuted in EM01, representing the Czech Republic with 'Dlouha Noc' – amazingly it finished 5th. I then tried with Slovakia in EM02. From EM03 I represented my home country, the United Kingdom. I feel it is my responsibility to represent the unknown music of the UK and spread the news about these artists that don't get the same marketing as the X-Factor singers. I have so far introduced people to incredible (but internationally unknown) singers and bands like Beverley Knight, Charlie Winston, Laura Mvula, Biffy Clyro, One Eskimo, Graffiti6, Lemar, Miles Kane and Dionne Bromfield. I will continue to do this with many other artists, such as; Kirsty Maccoll, Autoheart, CURXES, Rhianna, Jodie Harsh, Willy Moon, Denise Pearson, Patrick Wolf, Nina Nesbitt and Lianne La Havas.

My proudest moment in EM was probably seeing Paloma Faith score a huge victory with 'Agony'. Having been a fan of her for a long time, it was so nice to see so many people appreciate her incredible voice and music. Even though songs like Sam & the Womp's 'Bom Bom' or Supersister's 'Coffee' might have finished low in the rankings, seeing at least one person give them 12 points is like having someone say to you, 'I understand you' – it's a great feeling. So far in my EM journey (34 contests) every song I have sent has made the final, 24 have finished in the top 10, 15 have scored over 100 points! But my involvement in EM comes at a terrible price! When I started to represent the UK I contracted a curse, nearly all the countries I have given my 12 points to, are doomed to failure! Just look what happened to Turkey in EM28! Nobody knows this more than Denmark, I have given Denmark 12/10 points on 6 occasions, only one of these was a victory!

The Netherlands and Italy have also been regularly cursed by me! From EM03 – EM34 I gave 12 points to just 4 songs that went on to win! I gave my 10 points to only 4 winning songs too. So everyone in EM knows 12 points from me is something to fear, not hope for! Beware! EM has been medicine for my music addiction. I just love finding new music and new singers that I can become obsessed with. Thanks to this contest I have new obsessions; Chisu (Finland), Emma Marrone (Italy), Yasemin Mori (Turkey), Moda (Italy), Gabi Toth (Hungary) – I wouldn't have

discovered most of these artists without EM. Now they are a huge part of my life and are connected to so many memories. For example, seeing your best friend dancing to one of Croatia's EM entries on her wedding day, or how a Italian entry helped you deal with a difficult time in your life. The reality of EM is that people share songs that have strong memories and feelings attached to them and those songs become part of your own life. The songs become friends as much as the other people playing in the contest.

EM is more than just a simple song contest. In EM we are a community that supports each other. In EM31 I created a theme in conjunction with the players from Ireland, France, Belgium, Netherlands, Portugal and Italy. We decided we would all send an openly lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans artist from our country as a message of solidarity to the EM players who are living in countries where the attitudes toward LGBT people is intolerable. What was meant to be a few countries showing support, ended up in a mass of support, nearly everyone tried their best to send an LGBT singer. What was most important for me, was to send the message 'It Does Get Better', which was the title of the song by the UK artist, The L Project. The ladies from the L Project sent me a personal message thanking me for sending their song to EM! :D As part of EM, I have been involved in co-running the Special contests (summer, oldies) with Marcio. Presenting with contests and making silly videos with Dago and Radu. As well as being part of the Fairness Committee. My future goal in EM is to finally meet Florin, as well as Dago, Marcio, Flavio, Razvan, Tom, Natasha, Morten, Lee, Sasa and others.