

## European after all? Israel in the Eurovision Song Contest

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Long before Netta Barzilai's victory in 2018, Israelis have been fans of the Eurovision. Although located outside of the borders of Europe, Israel has taken part in the song contest since 1973 and in this period won the contest four times. Israelis are proud of their artists' performance, politicians laud their country's achievements, and for the musicians themselves, presenting their country on the European stage is a highly prestigious undertaking.

Yet Israel's integration into European framework, even on the level of pop culture, can be an ambivalent endeavor. Although the Zionist movement originated in Europe and many Israelis have their family roots there, the Jewish State's relations to the continent are highly ambiguous. Like no other place, Europe came to stand for Jewish exclusion, persecution, and mass murder. To Israelis, Europe is both glorious and accursed, as Jehuda Reinharz and Yaacov Shavit put it.

The paper examines these tensions by analyzing Israel's participation in the European Song Contest. Looking at the media coverage about the contest, it asks what these depictions of the Eurovision can tell us about Israeli conceptions of Europe as well as the cultural and geographical self-understanding of Israelis.