

Ex-Napier student in running to be Eurovision voice for San Marino

A Scottish musician who studied in Edinburgh is “within touching distance” of Eurovision to represent the microstate of San Marino at this year’s Eurovision song contest.

Venn Smyth, a former Bachelor’s student at Edinburgh Napier University, has made it to the semi-finals of the micronation on the Italian peninsula’s own song contest, *Una Voce per San Marino* (A Voice for San Marino), which has set out to choose their next Eurovision entry.

The LGBTQ+ artist, originally from Stirlingshire and who lived for a number of years in the Scottish capital, was whittled down from hundreds for a place in the semi-finals and is now the only UK musician at this stage of the competition.

Venn, who describes his music as “unashamedly pop” said he was beyond thrilled to be in the contest. “It’s amazing – it’s just so wild. I’m really touched and excited to be in this contest. I’m very much now within touching distance of Eurovision,” he said.

'It feels amazing and very surreal'

Venn, whose music has topped the LGBTQ charts several times, released his first album, *Master of Disguise*, in 2023, which he then toured around the UK, including performances in Edinburgh and Glasgow.

For this phase of the competition in San Marino, population 33,000, he's had to prepare an original, unreleased song which he'll be performing in front of a panel of industry experts in an auditorium in the capital city on 15 February to vie for a place in the finals.

"The song I'm putting forward is actually inspired after performing at the Green Man Festival in Wales last summer, and then from watching the series *Heartstopper*," Venn Said.

"It's an ode to love and specifically queer love that might not have happened but still could," he added.

On being the only UK artist remaining in the contest, Venn said: "It feels amazing and very surreal. Beyond San Marino, the nation I would ultimately represent if I got through, I would obviously be representing the UK, and of course Scotland.



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Una Voce per San Marino, aired by local public broadcaster San Marino RTV, is now into its third edition and seeks talent from around the globe to compete for a place in Eurovision bearing the nation’s flag.

The final, where eight artists will be selected to compete, is to take place on 24 February and will be hosted by celebrated Italian television and radio presenter, Ilenia De Sena.

This year’s Eurovision song contest will be held in May in Malmö, Sweden. The UK’s entry is singer-songwriter Olly Alexander with his song *Dizzy*.

There may now possibly be another UK artist on stage to accompany him.