



Top Stories

Eurovision '73 winner Anne Marie David discusses her four-decade career and the Contest, past and present

The winner of the Eurovision Song Contest 1973, Anne Marie David, talks to Wikinews about her long career in music, and how it almost ended for good. She also discusses the path Eurovision has taken today.

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US military says 'fireballs' spotted over Texas are not related to satellite collision

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Wikipedia Current Events

Sweden.

- Japan's gross domestic product contracted by 12.7 percent in the fourth fiscal quarter of 2008.
- BMW cuts 850 jobs at its Mini factory in Cowley, Oxfordshire, England.
- The United Kingdom's economy is expected to contract by 3.3 percent throughout 2009.
- The British Royal Navy's nuclear submarine HMS Vanguard and the French Navy's Le Triomphant collided in the Atlantic Ocean on February 3 or 4.

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The bill was passed by a vote of 60-38, barely reaching the minimum number of 60 votes needed to make the bill a law. Only three Republican senators voted for the measure. Shortly before the Senate vote, the US House of Representatives approved of the stimulus by a margin of 246-183, with all 176 Republicans and seven Democrats voting against the bill.

The Senate vote was delayed until night so that Democratic Senator Sherrod Brown could fly back from Ohio, where his mother had recently died. He cast the final and

decisive sixtieth vote in favor of the stimulus bill.

President Barack Obama is expected to sign the bill into law in Denver, Colorado on Tuesday, February 17.

"This is a major milestone on our road to recovery, and I want to thank the members of Congress who came together in common purpose to make it happen," Obama said in his weekly address. "I will sign this legislation into law shortly, and we'll begin making the immediate investments necessary to put people back to work doing the work America needs done. This historic step won't be the end of what we do to turn our economy around, but the beginning."

64% of the stimulus package is intended for spending and money for social programmes, while another 34% is devoted to tax cuts. The plan also limits cash bonuses and incentive compensations for Wall Street executives. Over \$48 billion of the stimulus has been reserved for transportation projects, such as high-speed rail, road, and bridge construction. Tens of billions more will be used for funding states to prevent any cuts that they would otherwise be forced to make to aid local governments and schools.

Democrats say that the plan will help create three and a half million jobs, and that the plan's tax cuts will help 95% of all US residents, mainly with the use of \$800 breaks for couples and \$400 for

Wikipedia Current Events

An Israeli lawyer convicted of defrauding Holocaust survivors is arrested for planning to flee the country.

- File-sharing network The Pirate Bay's trial begins in Stockholm,

individuals. Those who do not earn enough money to pay income taxes will also be eligible for the breaks. Additionally, breaks will be given to first-time homebuyers and car buyers, in an effort to give a boost to two industries badly affected by the recession.

Senate Majority leader Harry Reid said that the stimulus package was the most important legislation that he had ever worked on. "The country is in trouble and we're so fortunate we were able to get it passed. It's going to give this country a shot in the arm."

Others, however, such as Senate Minority leader Mitch McConnell, are highly critical of the plan. "This isn't Monopoly money. It's real. It adds up, and it has to be paid back, by our children and by their children," he said, adding that it "is unlikely to have much stimulative effect."

"The bill that was about jobs, jobs, jobs has turned into a bill that's about spending, spending, spending," said House Republican leader John Boehner from Ohio, throwing a copy of the bill on the floor in protest.

Last week, the House of Representatives passed a stimulus package worth \$825 billion with no support from Republicans. Shortly thereafter, the Senate passed a slightly different version of the bill worth \$838 billion. The differences between the two bills had to be bridged in a Senate-House committee before it was voted upon in both houses.

North Korea says its preparing to launch space program, denies preparations to test missile

North Korea has denied in a statement that the nation's

military is preparing to test-fire a long range ballistic missile. The country instead says that they are preparing to launch a space program.

"One will come to know later what will be launched in the DPRK. Space development is the independent right of the DPRK and the requirement of the developing reality," said the statement according to the Korean Central News Agency.

The statement also went on to accuse the United States and other nations of "viciously tricking [the country into putting] a brake on the wheel of not only the DPRK's building of military capability for self-defense but also scientific researches for peaceful purpose under the pretext of missile," added the statement.

Earlier reports from the U.S. and South Korean government had said that N. Korea was planning a test launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile, the Taepodong-2. In 2006 the country test launched the same kind of missile, but military officials in the U.S. said the missile failed.

Previous reports say that N. Korea was trying to gain the attention of the new U.S. president Barack Obama, but the country denies those claims, saying, "the DPRK has no need to draw anyone's attention and does not want anybody to interfere or meddle in the issue of the Korean peninsula."

US military says 'fireballs' spotted over Texas are not related to satellite collision

The United States military Strategic Command (STRATCOM) has said that the 'fireballs' spotted over areas of Texas in the United States on Sunday February 15, are

not related to the collision of a U.S. and Russian satellite in space. According to spaceweather.com, NASA says the object was a meteor.

"There is no correlation between the debris from that collision and those reports of re-entry," said STRATCOM military spokeswoman Major Maj. Regina.

"It's a natural meteor, definitely," said Bill Cooke, an astronomer at NASA's Meteoroid Environment Office.

On Tuesday, February 10, the American civilian communications satellite Iridium 33, launched in 1997, and the defunct Russian military communications satellite Kosmos-2251, launched in 1993, collided over Siberia. On Friday February 13, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) issued an alert for falling debris from the satellites, following reports of "explosions and earthquakes" along with "flashes in the sky" in Jackson and Louisville, Kentucky.

Then again on Sunday, calls to 9-1-1 began to come in to Williamson County, Texas sheriff's office around 12:30 p.m. (Central time) that burning debris and fireballs were seen falling from the sky onto parts of Austin, Houston, Waco and San Antonio.

"The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) reported to local law enforcement on Friday that these events are being caused by falling satellite debris. These pieces of debris have been causing sonic booms, resulting in vibrations felt by some residents, as well as flashes of light across the sky," said the NOAA on Friday in a public information alert posted on their website. The FAA

says the burning material over Texas is not related to this alert.

"We don't know what it was [over Texas]," said Roland Herwig, a spokesman for the FAA on Monday. The alerts still remain in effect in Kentucky until further notice.

Residents in Texas reported their homes and windows shaking and large explosions on Sunday morning. After a search of several areas, the Williamson county sheriff's office reported that no debris or impact sites were found. Earlier unconfirmed reports had said the debris could have been the result of a small plane exploding.

There was previous speculation was that the object in Texas could have been a meteor. Doctor Marco Ciocca, a professor at Eastern Kentucky University told WKYT on Sunday that it's too early for the debris from the satellites to be reentering the planet's atmosphere. "[It could] be months" before any of the satellite wreckage enters the earth's atmosphere. "The debris doesn't simply fall out of its orbit. It will either vaporize or stay in orbit for some time before falling into earth's atmosphere."

However, the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) said on February 12 that the debris could have taken 10 days or less to reenter over portions of the planet.

"Within 24 hours of the collision, the U.S. space tracking system had identified 600 pieces of debris. This large number suggests that the collision must have been relatively head-on. If the two satellites hit head-on, rather than a glancing blow, the energy of the collision would completely

disintegrate both satellites into clouds of debris," said the UCS in a statement on their website who also added that the collision took place in "the same region of space where China destroyed a defunct Chinese weather satellite with an anti-satellite (ASAT) weapon" in 2007. "That January 2007 test created a massive amount of debris." There have been at least eight major satellite collisions since 1991.

The satellites, both of had a mass in excess of 450 kilograms, and traveling at approximately 17,500 miles per hour (28,150 km/hour), collided 491 miles (790 km) above the earth. Scientists say the explosion caused by the collision was massive. They are still trying to determine just how large the crash was and how the earth will be affected. STRATCOM continues to track the debris. The result of plotting analysis will be posted to a public website.

Japan's economy sees biggest decline since 1974

Official figures show that Japan's economy has shrunk by 3.3% in the last quarter of 2008—or an annualized 12.7%, the fastest decline since 1974, when the economy contracted by 3.4% in a quarter. The decline in Japan has been sharper than in either Europe or North America, mostly because global demand for the country's products, such as automobiles and electronics, has fallen.

The contraction was also larger than the 3.1% decline that was predicted by economists, the worst decline of any major economic power in the same quarter.

In comparison, the eurozone GDP contracted 1.5% in the same quarter, and the United States GDP shrank by an annualized

3.8%.

"The data showed a severe picture of the Japanese economy and highlighted the weakness in exports. The January-March quarter is likely to show another minus figure [annualised] in double digits or something close to double digits," said the chief economist at Norinchukin Research Institute, Takeshi Minami.

There have been reports that Japanese prime minister Taro Aso is considering launching a 20 trillion yen (approximately US\$218 billion) stimulus plan in response to the recession, but he is hindered by a divided parliament, and an approval rating which concurrently fell below ten percent.

Airplane that crashed near Buffalo, New York 'was on autopilot'

Investigators have stated that Continental Connection Flight 3407, which crashed in icy weather near Buffalo, New York on February 12, was on autopilot when it went down, and that the pilot flying the aircraft might have violated the airline's policy and federal safety recommendations.

The plane involved in the incident was a Bombardier Dash 8, which crashed into a home located at 6038 Long Street in Clarence Center, a suburb of Buffalo. It went down at approximately 10:17 p.m. EST (03:20 UTC), February 12. 44 passengers, an off-duty pilot, and four crew members died in the accident, as well as one person on the ground.

When the plane crashed, it was carrying over 2.5 tonnes (5,000 pounds) of fuel. Amid rain and sleet, the aircraft exploded into a huge orange fireball, sparking a

large fire which emergency crews had to contain. Twelve houses near the crash site were evacuated.

Steve Chealander, an investigator for the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), said that the company which operated the flight suggests the pilot to fly manually when conditions are icy, saying that "you may be able in a manual mode to sense something sooner than the autopilot can sense it."

"If the autopilot is left on while the ice is building up, the pilot may suddenly be confronted with a very difficult situation," said William Voss, president of the Flight Safety Foundation, speaking to the Toronto Star. "Ice actually changes the shape of the wing. If you don't keep the wings clean you could find yourself in a situation where [...] suddenly the aircraft decides to quit flying."

The airplane's data recorders suggest that there was a significant accumulation of ice on the aircraft's wings and windshield before it crashed. Shortly before the crash, according to the flight voice recorder, the pilots were talking about the poor weather and ask the traffic controller for permission to descend. The airplane's de-icing system had been turned on before the crew had discussed the ice. Recordings of communications seemed to be normal until soon before impact, and the flight crew did not notify air traffic control of any problems.

Investigations have suggested that the aircraft was headed away from its destination airport when it went down.

Eurovision '73 winner Anne Marie David discusses her four-decade career and the Contest,

past and present

In the 1970s, she was one of the most popular female vocalists in France, and became well-known internationally. Anne Marie David, from Arles in the south of France, parlayed her initial success from playing Mary Magdalene in the French production of Jesus Christ Superstar into taking home the "grand prix" at the Eurovision Song Contest in 1973. Her winning song, "Tu te reconnaîtras" (You will recognize yourself), became a Europe-wide hit that spring.

At the height of her popularity, David performed world tours, and even lived abroad in Turkey for a time. In 1979, she tried once again to win the Eurovision, and placed a respectable third. Her song "Je suis l'enfant soleil" (I'm a child of the sun) became similarly popular across France and in the Francophone nations.

As time went on, however, her place in the French music scene became less certain. Touring the world had taken a personal toll, and David decided to retire from music completely in 1987. However, with the help of her fan base, she was coaxed out of retirement in 2003 and is returning to a part of her life that she tried to leave, but never left her. Celebrating four decades in the music scene, David is looking forward to adventurous new projects and a newfound zest for life.

Anne Marie David corresponded with Wikinews' Mike Halterman about her eventful career, her personal anecdotes regarding living abroad, her successes in past Eurovision contests and her grievances with the way the show is produced today. This is the second in a series of interviews with past Eurovision contestants,

which will be published sporadically in the lead-up to mid-May's next contest in Moscow.

Early career

Mike Halterman: I saw the photos on your website, and I must say, you hardly look older than when you did Eurovision 30 years ago. Has anyone told you that back then, you looked a lot like Marie Osmond?

Anne Marie David: Thank you for the compliment, but I don't recall anyone alluding to a resemblance with Marie Osmond. I would have taken that as a compliment, no?

MH: When did you first start singing? Who were your musical inspirations while you were growing up?

AMD: I was already singing as a young child; my mother said that when she was pregnant with me, she sang lullabies to me... My [own] musical culture is very large. At home we listened to a lot of opera and operettas, but also French variété or the accordion. But my big revelation was my discovery of Barbra Streisand in *Funny Girl*. That changed everything for me... I absolutely wanted to approach [the level of] this great artist, the greatest in my opinion, and try to pull myself to the heights of her talent. Not by imitating her, but by succeeding in acquiring this vocal perfection she possesses, and by orienting all my efforts towards the acting that I could present by interpreting my songs whenever the [lyrics] allowed me to.

MH: You became very well-known in 1972 when you played Mary Magdalene in *Jesus Christ Superstar*. How did you get the part? If you had to audition, what were the auditions like, and were

you nervous?

AMD: At the time I played in the musical comedy "The Me Nobody Knows," originating from the United States. Unfortunately the promotion for this presentation was not excellent and it remained confidential. My artistic director at the time, Pierre Hebrard, knew that the casting of Jesus Christ Superstar was finished but that the role of Mary Magdalene had not yet been definitively [cast]. He asked the production [company] to audition me. I practiced the beginning of the song for a quarter of an hour with Anthony Bowles, the musical director, then I sang the song. They asked me to learn the entire song for the next morning, and to come back to sing it. I did so... I sang the song the next day and in the end, they said OK, we'll take you... I learned that for this role the production auditioned 600 girls! I was stressed out after the audition... when I realized the challenge. Before I had not been very relaxed [or] comfortable, but I mostly wanted to [sell the song]... The show must go on, no?

MH: You're from the south of France, and some of the French Wikipedians remarked, "But she doesn't have any accent when she's singing!" Did you have to take vocal classes or was it natural for you to sing without an accent?

AMD: I'm a big fan of accent imitations... accents are also music, and in private I often tell jokes with accents. It's the actress in me... but in fact singing in French for me is singing without an accent; it's a natural thing... I make no particular effort [to remove an accent].

MH: After your success in the theatre, you were victorious at

Eurovision in 1973. Luxembourg usually selected their entrants internally, so how did RTL [Editor's note: The state broadcaster of Luxembourg] become aware of you? How were you approached by them, and did you ever consider not participating in the Contest?

AMD: I had the opportunity to have the director of programs and the director of special programming for RTL [watching me] the night of the premiere of Jesus Christ Superstar. They saw me and were enthused by my performance. When they asked me that night if I would accept to represent Luxembourg in 1973, I only asked if it wasn't a problem [for them because] they'd won with Vicky Léandros that year (1972). They told me no, that for them winning several times in a row was not a problem... so I said yes with pleasure!

Eurovision '73 and initial mainstream success

MH: When you competed for Luxembourg, one country winning twice in a row was still rare. Was there a lot of pressure for you to win the grand prize for Luxembourg? Did you also feel pressure to succeed from yourself?

AMD: There was no need to win the grand prize except in my head. I felt sure that an opportunity like that one was unique and that I would not have it a second time... I was incorrect... I got it twice! What I mean to say is that Eurovision remains for me a musical contest before all else, although of course a good song is worth nothing without a good [singer]. Thus the need to have both!

I've always had a taste for challenges... Eurovision is one.

And among the challenges I like the competition, so when challenge and competition are combined, I think only of victory. I think it would be ridiculous and useless to go to Eurovision without wanting to win! I never participate in a contest, or anywhere for that matter, when it consists of singing with a tourist view of it. I prioritize my work and the result of my work. This has not allowed me to visit many things in all the countries where I have been in competition, but this allowed me to never find myself poorly ranked or last. One must know whether one wants victory or tourism...and I think it's a lack of respect to all those who count on us, and all those who spend a lot [of time] (production, television, etc...) to not take every chance to rank better or not put every chance of winning on our side.

MH: You ended up in a three-way dead heat between Mecedades from Spain and Cliff Richard from the United Kingdom, who both performed songs some fans also consider worthy of the grand prize. What were your opinions of those songs? If, hypothetically, your song didn't win, do you think either of them were strong enough to be winner material?

AMD: 1973 was a year very rich in quality candidates... the proof: victory came to me with just a very few points ahead. The ranking of that year's other candidates was what I dreaded most. Mecedades was a pure moment of happiness and of a formidable effectiveness; Cliff Richard benefited from an exceptional notoriety and a mastery of the scene that I was far from having; so I needed to play everything I had... but I told you that I'd chosen victory, not tourism!

MH: During the mid-1970s, you did many tours of Turkey and the Middle East, and won reporters' music awards there. What was the best thing you liked about being in Turkey? What experiences did you have that really stand out in your mind even today?

AMD: I had the immense joy of working a lot of time and also living over there, and for me it was the discovery of an immense culture, well beyond what I could have imagined. It was an encounter with a people, the Turkish people, whom we don't make the effort to know in depth. Most of the time there are too many clichés that are in no way reflections of what these people truly are... I am not talking about the leaders, I'm talking about the citizens of a country. I learned about them, to understand them, to exchange with them, in all their diversity, and God knows that in matters of diversity Turkey knows what it's talking about. I spent rare moments there surrounded by Turks, Armenians, Greeks, and Jews sitting at the same table and speaking the same language, the language of love and friendship... In all the whole world it's the same thing. All is well except when politics or religion intervene.

Eurovision '79

MH: In 1979, you decided to compete for a spot at the Eurovision final again, this time for France. Why did you want to go back a second time? Considering your past success, were you fairly confident that you would end up being the French representative that year?

AMD: It was a taste for risk that guided me, but a measured risk, because 'Winner of the Grand Eurovision Prize 1973' is a lifetime title that one does not risk losing if

one takes another chance. The place [you received] remains [that] place. When I accepted [the opportunity] to try representing France in 1979, I knew that the rules of the game were different than the ones in Luxembourg. Winner [from] 1973 or not, it didn't change [things] much since one needed to pass through a selection process. I played the game like everyone else and it was the public who voted for the 12 semi-finalists. Unfortunately television was on strike, and the finale could not be held as planned. The 12 semi-finalists were therefore viewed by a jury of professionals, and I was retained. But I respected the rule all the way to the end, and above all French television never modified the rule until the final candidate selection. I would have appreciated that France 3 [Editor's note: The current television station broadcasting Eurovision in France] respects the rule of the game the same way this year... and that all the candidates win or lose in loyal fashion, by respecting the rule. This will not be the case and I regret that... [Editor's note: After decades of public voting to select France's finalist, France 3 selected their artist internally this year despite originally calling for finalists.]

MH: Competing at the Eurovision in 1979, you ended the voting on the wrong end of a close three-way finish, being beaten by the songs from Israel and Spain. Considering your victory helped Luxembourg win twice in a row, were you happy for Israel as they also achieved the same feat?

AMD: Of course! It's once again a rule fixed ahead of time, and which does not prohibit a country from winning several times in a row.

MH: Many Eurovision fans on sites like YouTube feel the 1979 Contest was one of the strongest years ever for Eurovision. Apart from your own song, were there any songs you remember that you really liked? Also, which song do you feel was a stronger entry, "Je suis l'enfant soleil" or "Tu te reconnaîtras"?

AMD: I have indeed seen how much Internet users appreciate "Je suis l'enfant soleil"... let them be reassured, so do I! That year, in 1979, I particularly liked Milk and Honey and Gali Atari who won, and the German group who sang "Dschinghis Khan", which was a very strong title and sold well. With time, singing my songs from Eurovision continue to give me pleasure. "Je suis l'enfant soleil" tells a very beautiful tale and allows me to play comedy [Editor's note: "Comedy" in the theatrical sense, aiming to denounce the faults and vices of society using humor] a lot. But I adore "Tu te reconnaîtras" for what it has in singing, pulling in, being direct with the audience. In fact, each [song] brings me something different and to the public as well.

1980s: Retirement

MH: During the 1980s, you competed in some more song festivals, including one in Norway and one in Chile. Anabela, the 1993 entrant from Portugal, felt she was eventually typecast as being "the song festival girl." Did you ever feel restricted in the same way? Were there ever any other facets to your musical repertoire that you would have liked to explore?

AMD: I always assumed the image of a competitor, maybe because I grew up in a place where I was very happy, but where we were not very rich; so I always had to

make choices and needed to earn each thing that life gave me. Also, it's great to know that others count on you and think that you can bring them a victory; it's not given to everyone. As for the facets of my personality, for a long time I had to struggle (again!) against a face which refused to age, and which thus prevented me from being credible in certain repertoires.

Today time has passed, I am totally free in my choices, my voice has ripened well, and my silhouette too, my mastery of the scene is much more elaborated and thus I take on all the styles if the song touches or pleases me. And also I take on challenges like the song which I recorded with Jean Renard, [called] "Federico" which is totally "gypsy" and totally unlike my usual image. I am currently preparing a song for my English[-language] dance floor album (yep!) which is being [released] by Energise Records. [Dance music] is totally the opposite of what I do... but that amuses me and also the producers convinced me that I'd be great in it... so I hope not to disappoint them. [Here's a] scoop: it's called "You Came to Me."

MH: In the late 1980s, you retired from music completely. Was this a difficult decision for you to make? What things did you want out of your life which required you to leave music? Where did you go, and what did you do in retirement?

AMD: Nothing is ever difficult when we accept to assume our choice. Those years were very disco, we were entering terrains I wasn't ready to tread, and I had been spoiled by my artist's life by going ever farther and farther from home. The French media ignored me after my victory for

Luxembourg. Everyone wanted a second "Tu te reconnaîtras" and that is impossible.

And so I went where the public awaited me, by changing countries nearly daily, and this tired me. I told myself that my life was not made only of songs and glory, and that I was passionate [about] many other things. I would have had to sacrifice far too many things and people to recover a place in France, like going to live in France, living a life of popularity, etc... I told myself that I had already been spoiled, so I said stop! in 1987 after the [Song] Festival in Chile. I participated in [many] great projects [revolving] around the Lusitanian horses and the fighting bulls which I raised with passion and love, but [my] life [eventually] did not follow those paths... maybe because my life is the stage and life took charge [and reminded] me of that...

Return to music

MH: You came out of retirement five years ago. How often did you think about returning to music while in retirement? Was music something you felt you couldn't just "let go"?

AMD: When I decide to do something, I do it. When I decide to stop something, I do that too. But that isn't taking into account that there are things which we want to do, and those which life decides for us! In 1987, I vowed never to return to the stage, but as I said, life sometimes serves you dishes that you didn't choose, and in 2003 it's chance that made me return to the stage, and it's my fans whom I never imagined [I had] in such numbers and whom, so many years later, had conserved their love, which made me stay. I owe them a lot and will

never forget that.

MH: Tell us about the CDs you have released since coming out of retirement. Are you experimenting with any new musical styles? I read you had a lot of input into your CD "Federico"; describe the direction you wanted to pursue with that disc.

AMD: It's thanks to the fans from my fan club that I could create a live CD, which I titled "Live à Charleroi" (Live at Charleroi). They sent me money via my fan club to allow me to be at the concert, and they bought my CD in advance even before it existed. [All of this was] just to help me, just to show me how much they wanted to find me [on stage] again [for that moment], in the space of 14 songs with a simple piano.

For "Federico" it's Jean Renard who had the idea. [It was] a task which was totally unlike [anything in] my experience, but he trusted me and I trusted him. I don't regret it. There is a little bit of me in "Federico." I have Iberian origins from my mother, and furthermore this allowed me to write two songs in Spanish. Nothing but happiness!

MH: What new projects will you be doing in 2009? Are you doing any concerts?

AMD: Yes, I will be in some concerts but this time as an artisan. I will co-produce a large portion of them; I'm preparing an album of twelve new songs for 2010... and after if God wills it I'll celebrate my 40 years in [music] at Olympia if it's possible. I also continue [on] as a coach and the artistic director of the group "Caprice" ([who are] three of my students), who had hoped to represent France at Eurovision

2009, but whom France 3 discarded from the game in a pretty dishonest way (along with all the others, for that matter). They will record other songs this year and I'm sure they'll do great. I like talent and they have it. I already partially explained my point of view on the subject in my response to [an earlier question regarding the representative at Eurovision 2009].

Views about Eurovision today

MH: In the past ten years or so, public interest in Eurovision has dwindled somewhat in France, a trend that has already been seen in countries like the Netherlands and Germany. Why do you feel that is? Is there anything France, or perhaps France Télévisions, can do to get French people watching the Contest again, especially in a television landscape populated by reality television?

AMD: The only solution would be to stop changing a game rule that has proven itself for years, not [to] mix the genres, [to] return to the fundamentals. Eurovision is a contest of songs, not of stars, or [a] dance floor, or Top Model... If this type of manifestation, which pleases the [current viewing] base had not been derived, all those who loved Eurovision would watch it still.

But the system of votes by SMS developed the youths' votes, against whom I bear no ill but few adults play that game (my grandmother or mother will never vote that way). To put the spotlight favourably on the operators who that night will swipe the wealth [Editor's note: A reference to Pactolus, in which King Midas washed his hands of the golden touch in the river there], they prefer to take from it an evening which was an

international family party... And tell yourself that any economic power who wants to make his candidate win can afford the luxury of buying millions of portable cell phones, distribute them with unlimited plans for a night to kids who could not afford them and win! Anyway, when I say "win", [it nowadays] implies not really winning!

As for the jury, it must stay visible. Previously, each country sent its two judges and during the contest were kept apart from everyone... Tricking votes would be seen on the screens the night of the Contest and thus it almost never happened. What a strange idea also to distinguish between countries which are qualified for [the final] and the others! It's a total injustice.

You see [Eurovision today] is not neutral, and don't [anyone] tell me that it's reasoning from a different age... It's just a series of observations... Nobody can contest the fact that certain generations who were the success of Eurovision no longer find their satisfaction in it and are therefore disinterested. Nobody can contest, also, that for decades the great Eurovision [winners] were international hits that everyone still sings today. Who today is capable of singing the titles which win? And what will remain of [the contest] in the future?

MH: Some viewers were not happy about last year's entrant, Sébastien Tellier. Singing his entry in essentially "franglais," [Editor's note: A mix of words and sentences interchanged between French and English] even a member of Parliament demanded that the next entry be purely in French. How did you feel about Tellier's performance, and do you

feel every French entry must be sung in French? Do you feel not singing in English hinders France as an entrant in today's contest?

AMD: Once again, I think we must return to the fundamentals. Turn the problem however you'd like but in the end you will arrive at the same conclusions. Germany won in German, Spain won in Spanish, Holland won in Dutch, Norway won in Norwegian, etc... What else?

I see no reason to abandon everything to English; anyway I will fight that it not be the case with French! I sing in English, I speak English, I love the language of Shakespeare, but if I must represent my country in an international contest, I want to do it in French, and I also want it to be done in French. It's not an issue of chauvinism, it's an issue of respect with regards to all those who paid with their blood so that France is a full nation. It's the same for the national anthem of my country. And I would have the same reasoning whatever my nationality. I was born under the sun of France, it's normal that I love that sun.

MH: In our first Eurovision interview, we asked the 1982 winner, Nicole, how she felt about the alleged "bloc voting" taking place between the nations of eastern Europe. She replied, "The eastern European countries obviously support each other with the so-called 'bloc voting.' It's now a political affair and no longer a 'song contest.'" Do you feel that way as well? What exactly are your feelings about the results from the past few years, which place countries like France, the United Kingdom and Germany at the bottom nearly every time?

AMD: You already have my analysis of the problem in my responses to [the last two questions]; but Nicole is right, she is defending her country and I find that very respectable. It's what is lacking today: people who have nothing to sell and who say what they think without being part of a political machine. Thank you, Nicole.

MH: Do you ever see yourself returning to the Eurovision stage as the representative from France or any of the francophone nations?

AMD: I've been asked several times, including in 2009, to represent my country once more at Eurovision. But I've said and I repeat, it's not the place of confirmed artists to take that of young artists who need this springboard to be known by more people. And it is not the fear of losing my title of winner. I acquired it definitively for 1973, and I ranked third in 1979. Never can anything nor anyone change that. I prefer my position as coach, adviser... it's magnificent to rediscover one's twenties through someone who is 20, no? My emotions are unchanged... [I still get] the fear and stage fright as well, so can I ask for anything else [at this point]?

MH: Will you be a part of the French delegation going to Moscow this year? If no decision has been made yet, would you like to go?

AMD: Too many things separate me from the French selection for 2009, which the essential [grievance] rests on the contempt of respect for the given word, contempt for the respect of the written word, transgressed precisely by those who have a duty and mission to ensure that [such rules] are not

[transgressed]. Moreover I think that all the places in the delegation are reserved and distributed in advance based on a procedure that escapes me... I have nothing to add.

MH: In closing, what would you like to say to all of your fans who have followed your career these past four decades?

AMD: Yes, I would like to simply say thank you and see you very soon to continue our beautiful love story.

Today in History

1600 – Italian philosopher Giordano Bruno, best-known as a proponent of heliocentrism and the infinity of the universe, was burned at the stake as a heretic by the Roman Inquisition.

1801 – The U.S. House of Representatives elected Thomas Jefferson as President and Aaron Burr as Vice President, resolving an electoral tie in the 1800 U.S. presidential election.

1904 – Italian composer Giacomo Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* premiered at La Scala in Milan, generating negative reviews that forced him to rewrite the opera.

1936 – *The Phantom*, one of the first modern comic book superheroes with the hallmark skintight costume and a mask with no visible pupils, made his first appearance in a daily newspaper comic strip.

2003 – The London congestion charge, a fee that is levied on motorists travelling within designated parts of London, came into operation.

February 17 is Independence Day in Kosovo (2008)

Quote of the Day

All things are in the Universe, and the universe is in all things: we in it, and it in us; in

this way everything concurs in a perfect unity. ~ Giordano Bruno

Word of the Day

Ishikawa diagram n

1. A diagram used in quality management to display a detailed list of causes and effects of a problem and thus to decipher the root cause of a problem.

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