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QX HAS BROUGHT TOGETHER THE HOTTEST TALENT FROM THIS YEAR'S MELODIFESTIVAL FOR THE SIXTH ANNUAL SCHLAGER SPECIAL. THIS TIME, THEY'RE APPEARING AS YOU'VE NEVER SEEN THEM BEFORE - IN FRONT OF THE TV...

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English translation: David Jørgensen

Thanks to Independent Kostym, Diamond Dogs, Linda Wiklund, Alexander Wiklund, Simon Wiklund, Ida Wiklund, Miranda Söjbjerg, Susanne Nylén, Daisy Andreasson, Johanna Boström Stone, Sara Thorstensson, Helene Wigren, Anna Sporrang, Emilie Rosenblad, Joakim Jordansson, Petra Åkesson, Niklas Torsell, Nina Thorsell, Camilla Bjerling, Katinka Hollenberg, Hedda Båverud Olsson, Christina Bredberg, Caroline Axelius, Paul Lang och Dallas.

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MARIE SERNEHOLT

"Salt & Pepper" Heat 1, Växjö

How do you usually watch Melodifestivalen?

- I'm one of those people who insists that everyone sits there with a pen and paper to score each song and try to guess who's going to go through!

What's your favourite memory of Melodifestivalen?

- Carola's Fångad av en stormvind. I played that song all the time at home.

What's the performance going to be like?

- Up-tempo, swinging and peppery!

Hur ser det ut på scenen?

- There'll be loads of girls on stage this year...

Who's doing your outfit?

- I've got the same dressmaker who did Agnes' outfit for Love Love Love in 2009, so she'll turn my ideas into reality.

Why did you choose Salt & Pepper?

- It felt right from the first moment. I really wanted to be in the show this year, but I didn't have a song. It was approaching the deadline for submissions, so I'd kind of given up hope until it arrived. The song is very me.

Will you be releasing an album as well?

- I'll be in the studio working on new material first, then we'll see how it goes at Melodifestivalen before thinking about an album...

ANDREAS LUNDSTEDT

"Aldrig aldrig" Heat 2, Göteborg

Describe your song in three words...

- Heart, pain and dance.

Can you give us any hints about what you'll be doing on stage?

- I'll be showing a new side to me - my watchwords are 'sober' and 'dignified'.

Who's dressing you?

- **Margretha Julle**, my fantastic friend and wonderful couturier. If you need a suit, she's always the right woman for the job.

What did you think when you heard Aldrig aldrig for the first time?

- This is what I want! I'd been thinking that I wanted to sing in Swedish when I went solo, so this was exactly the right direction.

Who was your favourite last year?

- Danny was really good. And, of course, I loved Loreen's song - it's absolutely fantastic.

Who's your biggest competition in your heat?

- That's a question for everyone, but how can you answer it without having heard any of the songs? But OK, without having heard anything else, I'll say Ulrik Munther. He sings really well, and is a talented artist.





SONJA ALDÉN

"I din himmel" Heat 2, Göteborg

Do you watch Melodifestivalen?

- Yes, wherever I can. If I can't watch when it's on, then I go online later.

Describe your song in three words...

- Pulsating, hopeful and bright. I'm singing about someone who has moved on to another place, somewhere we'll all find when we're ready for it.

Can you tell us anything about the performance?

- We're working on it at the moment. The lyrics are the most important thing for me, so I want them to be as prominent as possible. It'll be very symbolic - the scenery will be bright and airy.

Will you be wearing white again?

- No, I won't - it'll be something that blends harmoniously with the setting.

Who's your designer?

- Thomas Malmros - and I've added a little bit to the outfit myself.

Are you releasing an album?

- Yes. My last solo album came out in autumn 2008, so it's time for a new one. It'll be called 'I gränslandet' ('Borderline'). All the songs are about being 'on the verge' of something. Being on the verge of parenthood, on the verge of being left by someone, or being on the verge of departing for somewhere else at the end..

AFRO DITE

"The Boy Can Dance" Heat 1, Växjö

Tittade ni ifjol?

All three: Yes! We were in an airport in New York trying to watch Loreen, because Blossom's son is the boyfriend of Loreen's sister. It didn't go too well, though - we had a picture, but the sound was delayed..

Is it ever OK to talk during the songs when you watch Melodifestivalen?

Kayo: Yes, I think so...

Blossom: No, it annoys me! I want to hear the songs, not someone moaning about them!

Gladys: You should shut up when the songs are on.

Describe your song in three words...

All three: All three: Happiness, energy and love.

Why did you decide to return?

Blossom: We actually wanted to come back sooner, but now we've been chosen, here we are. Our song is new for this year, it isn't something we've sent in again and again.

Gladys: It's also fitting to be back now, because it's ten years since we won.

Christer Björkman saw you performing at Stockholm Pride last summer, and supposedly wanted you back then?

Blossom: Yes. He came to see us, all cool-like, and said that we should maybe try to return for this year. We were rather cool back to him, of course...

Describe the song...

All three: It's fast - and swinging.

And no wardrobe malfunctions this time round?

Blossom: We won't have time, the song is so fast!



SEAN BANAN

"Sean den förste banan" Heat 1, Växjö

Describe your song in three words?

- Entertaining. Enlightening. Fruitful..

Which designer is styling you??

- My darling designer and director for this colourful show is none other than Rickard Engfors. He's gay and has DAMP (deficits in attention, motor control and perception), so together with him and Sean Banan, only the bum gods know what will happen on stage and what we'll be wearing....

Who was your favourite in Melodifestivalen last year?

- I don't really follow it. I wanted to have a look last year, but when I flicked on to SVT, I thought I was watching some show about building houses when I saw that young twink breaking glass on stage during the final..

Who do you see as your biggest competition in your heat?

- The Swedish people! It's their hearts & minds that I'm competing against!

Is it a good thing that you're performing first?

- Brother, it's just as well to set the bar from the outset...

LOVE GENERATION

"Just A Little Bit" Heat 3, Leksand

Describe your song in three words!

- Pop-rock-explosion!

Can you give us any hints about your performance?

- Black PVC, glitter and fierceness!

What did you think when you first heard Just A Little Bit?

- The first time we heard the song we were sitting with RedOne in the studio and listening to it on the biggest speakers in the world - the floor was shaking each time the bass kicked in! The intro killed us - it was EPIC!

Who do you think is your biggest competition in your heat?

- Our biggest competition? We're trying not to think too much about that because it would drive us mad otherwise. If we HAD to choose someone, then maybe Andreas Johnson is dangerous, because everyone loves him. But Molly [Sandén] is also loved - she's really pretty and talented.



YOUNGBLOOD

"Youngblood" Heat 3, Leksand

Describe your song in three words!

– Up-tempo, energetic and amazing!

Can you give any hints about your performance?

– One word: cool!

What did you think when you heard Youngblood for the first time?

– When the song ended we just looked at each other and were cheering! We couldn't even speak, but it was an amazing feeling to get such a great track that everyone thought was perfect – for both the group and all of us as individuals.

Who's the toughest competition in your heat?

– Because there are so many experienced and talented artists in our group, a lot of them pose a threat to us. But the one we've talked about more than anyone else as our biggest competition is Molly Sandén – she's a fantastic artist and singer.

ANDREAS JOHNSON

"Lovelight" Heat 3, Leksand

Describe your song in three words...

– Glam, sexy and happy.

What can we expect from your performance?

– It'll be a full-on show with a band. Four girls and four guys all doing a big stadium song.

How did Lovelight come about?

– Peter Kvint and I were working on the song, and when my six-year-old daughter heard it, out of the blue she said, "Pappa, you could win Melodifestivalen with that!". Only the young and the foolish tell the truth, so we sent it in!

Who do you see as your biggest competition?

– In terms of coverage, [Björn] Ranelid. And five Eric Saades with a Kempe song [Youngblood] sound very dangerous on paper...





MIMI OH

"Det går för långsamt" Heat 2, Göteborg

Have you entered songs for Melodifestivalen before?

– Yes, I sent in a song last year, but it wasn't Det går för långsamt. We haven't decided whether the other song will ever be released.

What's your earliest Melodifestivalen memory?

– I loved Jan Johansen's Se på mig and Cecilia Wennersten's Det vackraste.

Describe your song in three words...

– Energetic, colourful and sticks-in-your-head!

Could it win in Baku?

– It could - the chorus is catchy and you get it quite fast. So yeah, it could win.

Tell us a bit about your performance...

– Colourful - that word again!

What are you thinking about clothes-wise?

– I won't have anything made, I'll wear something off the peg. It'll be street, with some accessories. But I won't be in heels, I don't want to be uncomfortable.

How did you come up with the song?

– I was looking for tracks and really wanted to send something in [to Melodifestivalen]. I met with Anton and Niclas, and thought we could create something together. We were recording right up until the submission deadline, but I loved it.

Why do you call yourself Mimi Oh?

– My real name is Mimmi Olsen, so I've just pimped it a bit!

TIMOTEIJ

"Stormande Hav" Heat 2, Göteborg

What made you take part in Melodifestivalen this year?

Bodil: We've wanted to come back since we competed in 2010, so here we are! We're really happy with our song.

Describe the song in three words!

All four: Energy, folky and happy!

Can you give us any hints about the performance?

Elina: Stylish! We're still the Timoteij you know, but we're two years older now, so we're showing off a new side.

Will you have instruments?

Johanna: Yes, we'll have them for the whole song.

Who's styling you this year?

Bodil: Theresia Parsby. She's got pieces from a few places, and we'll have some things made as well. We're going for something a bit silvery - cooler than last time!

Are you working on a new record?

Cissi: Yes, we've got much of it done already, as it's coming out in spring. We've been working with the people who wrote Stormande hav, and the boys who wrote Kom, of course. Kristian Weishag and Dille have written some of it as well.

Does Stormande hav sound the same as the first time you heard it?

Elina: We've made it more Timoteij, more Eurovision and more modern. It was a bit fusty at first!



LOREEN

"Euphoria" Heat 1, Växjö

Do you watch Melodifestivalen?

- I don't, because I don't own a TV! I don't have time for that. If anyone wants to take me to the cinema, they have to drag me there!

Describe your song in three words...

- Terminator, uplifting and dramatic.

What can you tell us about the performance?

- I've removed all my comfort zones. I want to grow as an artist and do something that isn't really me - but still is, if you get that.

Who's dressing you?

- Tommy Granfors, who's made outfits for me before. I'm involved in all aspects of the creative process, though. I like to work with up-and-coming designers.

Does Euphoria sound very different from the first time you heard it?

- Yes, definitely. I've made it my own, and it's brilliant.

MOLLY SANDÉN

"Why Am I Crying" Heat 3, Leksand

How do you normally watch Melodifestivalen?

- With a party! I gather loads of friends together and we have scoreboards, sweets and pretend microphones so we can sing along if we get the urge to!

What's your first memory of the contest?

- Roger Pontare. I was totally in love with him! My parents were surprised about that, because before that I loved Carola and Disney songs. I sang to the trees and pine cones because I thought that's what you did!

Describe your song in three words...

- True, personal and emotional.

Can you give us any clues about the performance?

- It's pared back.

Do you have any worries before Leksand?

- My main concern was my heels, so I've got rid of those! Other than that, it's fine. It needs to be, or else it would get too emotional...

Do you think people will read in too much in the lyrics because they are personal?

- Well, I hope everyone just listens to the whole song. They shouldn't sit there with a pen and paper analysing every word - I certainly didn't!

The last time you competed in Leksand you went "direct to Globen"...

- That was the best week of my life, so it's hard to carry the burden of that. The most important thing is to sing a song that I like very much.



CHARLOTTE PERRELLI

"The Girl" Heat 4, Malmö

What made you return this year?

- The song. I would never have thrown my hat in the ring if the song hadn't been great. That doesn't mean to say it'll do well in the contest, but I personally think that The Girl is stronger than Hero. I also think it'll stick around after MF - that's the whole point for me, as I'm coming back with a new album and style.

How did you find The Girl?

- I met [Fredrik] Kempe at Peter Jöback's 40th birthday party, and he said to me: "Charlotte, I've cracked it - I've got the perfect song for your comeback." So I went home with him and listened to the track. Straight away I knew [Fredrik] was right, yet again! When my son, Angelo, could sing the song after hearing it just once, then I knew it was the right choice.

Are you in it to win it, or just hoping for a new song to add to your collection?

- You shouldn't enter if you don't think you've got a chance of winning. But victory isn't really what's pushing me. Having the chance to showcase my new album is an important opportunity - you don't get three minutes' worth of TV with such a big audience anywhere else.

Describe your song in three words...

- Clubby, energetic and positive.

Can you give us any hints about the staging?

- The image is girly and youthful - my look will be more edgy than before.

Any hints about your outfit?

- I've got a designer in Gothenburg and a couturier in Stockholm. The outfit looks great - even if it's going to cost a fortune!



DANNY

"Amazing" Heat 4, Malmö

Do you mind people talking during the songs if you watch Melodifestivalen?

– If the song is a bit rubbish, then you have to say something. Like when Next 3 were on a couple of years ago. And when Markoolio did Kärlekssång till dig. I love Marko, but what the fuck was that about?

Describe your song in three words...

– Uplifting, dance-friendly and amazing!

What can you say about the performance?

– I'll be playing with the lighting a lot, and have been fighting with SVT to be able to switch them off as much as possible...

Who's doing your outfit?

– Margaretha Julle. It'll be a very different outfit from last year.

Did you ever feel that it was a case of 'now or never' for participating again?

– That was exactly the case. But there's nowhere better to be seen than Melodifestivalen. Here in Sweden, people just stand there with a tambourine looking severe, so I want to outdo myself visually with the performance.

Would you have done better than Eric Saade at Eurovision?

– I'd like to think so, but I'm glad it went well for him and that Sweden is in the spotlight once again. It's important to think about how we want to be perceived as a country from a musical point of view.

DEAD BY APRIL

"Mystery" Heat 1, Växjö

I read an interview from a couple of years ago where one of you said that Dead By April would never participate in melodifestivalen...

Marcus: The guy who said that has left the band. The rest of us have never said never. And we enjoyed performing with Lena Ph during the interval last year.

Beskriv er låt med tre ord!

The band: Hit, catchy, and epic.

Do you watch Melodifestivalen?

Zandro: I've checked in with it every year - I liked Danny the most last time. I really like Loreen, too, she's a top singer.

This will be the debut of 'death growl' in the contest...

Alexander: It'll be fun to do something new - and maybe scare a few people at home!

What will you be wearing?

Zandro: We'll be sorting all that out ourselves. We wish we could say that someone was doing it all for us, but we can't.

MATTIAS ANDRÉASSON

"Förlåt mig" Heat 3, Leksand

You've written this song yourself...

- Yes. The sound is influenced by American R&B, and I sing in Swedish.

Describe it in three words...

- Revealing, new and hit!

Any hints about the performance?

- There won't be dancers, but we will be doing things with the lighting...

Who's dressing you?

- Margaretha Julle - she styled Alcazar for Stay The Night.

Is EMD still going?

- I'm not sure. We haven't split, but we haven't decided whether we'll work together in the future yet. Right now we're all focusing on our solo careers - that's why we all entered Idol when we were first starting out.

Any plans to release a record?

- Yes. I love to sit in the studio. The process isn't like EMD, where you go into the studio, put down the song and then hear the final version when you're sitting in a shopping centre signing CDs.

ULRIK MUNTER

"Soldiers" Heat 2, Göteborg

Who was your favourite in Melodifestivalen 2011?

- Christian Walz's Like Suicide. It didn't go far, sadly.

Describe your song in three words...

- Forgiving, pop-rock and 'new-thinking'.

Can you give us any clues about the performance?

- It'll be clean.

Was it a given that you'd be in this year's contest?

- We'd considered doing it because Christer Björkman wanted me to participate last year. It looked like it wasn't going to happen this time, though, but then we wrote a couple of new songs and one of them was ideal for Melodifestivalen.

Do you want to win?

- Well, it's not the reason I'm doing it. But sure, it'd be cool to do well.




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