

American Sings His Way to Prize of a Million Pelmeni

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Edward Pimentel performing his version of Usher's "There Goes My Baby." **Mikhail Metzel**

The karaoke world's newest star is about to find out if pelmeni are good for the throat — as he won a million of them at the Karaoke World Championships.

Edward Pimentel, a telephone company technician from Albuquerque, New Mexico, got the unusual prize as an audience award at the competition in a Moscow banquet hall voted early Sunday.

Pimentel won the prize for his dapper and assured R&B performances. He chose Usher's "DJ's Got Us Fallin' In Love" for his final-round song.

Organizers said the dumplings, provided by one of the sponsors, are enough to last 27 years if he eats 100 of them a day.

When asked ahead of the audience vote what he would do if he won the pelmeni, Pimentel was lost for words.

A panel of judges chose two Finns, Sam Moudden and Maria Saarimaa-Ylitalo, as the male and female champions. Both were awarded karaoke machines. Moudden, sharply dressed in Rat Pack style, performed "Je Suis Malade" and the purple-gowned Saarimaa-Ylitalo sang Celine Dion's "I Surrender."

Two singers who stretched karaoke's boundaries beyond the usual pop favorites placed second. Fedor Rytikov, a gastroenterologist by day, advanced to the finals with the "Nessun Dorma" aria from "Turandot," then stayed with Italian music for the final with "L'Immensita."

The other runner-up, Yulia Kurileva, also a Russian, scored with the most adventurous choice of the night — the wordless and eerie wailing rendition of Pink Floyd's "Great Gig In The Sky."

Tami Marie, also of Albuquerque, placed third among the women and Austria's Georg Duschlbauer was third among the men.

Amateur singers from 16 countries took part in the three-day competition, the eighth world championships for the art form that has risen from a barroom recreation to a worldwide phenomenon.

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