

# Russia's Answer to Eurovision Courts Global South Allies Without the Camp

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Members of Venezuela's delegation to the Intervision 2025 International Song Contest are on a tour around Zaryadye Park. **Sofya Sandurskaya / TASS**

Twenty-three musical acts from Russia's allies in Latin America, Africa and Asia are set to take the stage in Moscow this Saturday night for Intervision, Russia's rival to Eurovision that revives the Soviet-era contest of the same name.

Billed as a “depoliticized” celebration of music, the event nonetheless comes in response to Russia's exclusion from Eurovision after the invasion of Ukraine. And with Moscow doubling down on its campaign for “traditional values,” the spectacle promises to be a far cry from the camp, diversity and inclusion that Eurovision fans have come to expect.

Russia's entry will be Shaman, a pro-war pop star whose patriotic anthems like “Ya Russky” (“I'm Russian”) and “Moi Boy” (“My Fight”) have made him one of wartime Russia's most visible celebrities.

He represents a stark contrast from Russia's last Eurovision appearance in 2021, when Tajik-born singer Manizha performed "[Russian Woman](#)," a song that preached an inclusive and feminist idea of what it means to be a woman in Russia. The song was [heavily criticized](#) by the government at the time. Manizha, who later [denounced](#) the invasion of Ukraine, has since been [barred](#) from performing in Russia.

### **What is Intervision and why revive it now?**

Intervision was first staged in Czechoslovakia from 1965 to 1968 as a festival "explicitly designed to bring east and west together," [according](#) to historian Dean Vuletic. Poland briefly revived it between 1977 and 1980, drawing performers from as far afield as the United States, Canada and Japan.

"They wanted to attract the interest of Western commercial record companies. It's not like they were communists who wanted nothing to do with capitalism," Vuletic told The Guardian.

Russia's first modern-day effort to revive the competition came in 2009, when then-Prime Minister Vladimir Putin [proposed](#) a version involving members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

Another [attempt](#) came in 2014, soon after Eurovision crowned [Conchita Wurst](#), the Austrian drag queen whose victory [enraged](#) Russian lawmakers amid Moscow's [crackdown](#) on LGBTQ+ rights. Plans to hold Intervision in Sochi with China and several Central Asian states fizzled.

Eurovision again managed to [get under](#) Moscow's skin in 2016, when Ukraine's Jamala won with "1944," a song about the Soviet deportation of Crimean Tatars.

Moscow was [barred](#) from the competition in 2022, days after launching its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, and Russian broadcasters [withdrew](#) from the European Broadcasting Union soon after.

In February of this year, Putin [signed](#) a decree to revive Intervision, tasking high-ranking officials like Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Chernyshenko and domestic policy chief Sergei Kiriyenko with overseeing it.

### **What to expect**

The competition's [website](#) currently lists 23 countries that are expected to participate, including the U.S., Cuba, China, India, Belarus, South Africa, Saudi Arabia, Madagascar and more.

Unlike Eurovision, which markets itself as a celebration of European unity and integration, Intervision appears to be Russia's latest effort to strengthen ties with BRICS countries and the Global South as part of Putin's vision for a "multipolar world order."

Speaking to The Guardian, media scholar Stephen Hutchings described Intervision as an effort to build "alternative cultural structures" similar to the repositioning of Kremlin-backed broadcaster RT after it was blocked across much of the West.

As for the contest itself, it's hard to know what to expect. Many of the acts will be unfamiliar

to Western audiences, and the lineup has changed several times. On Wednesday, the U.S. contestant B. Howard [pulled out](#) of the competition and was replaced by Australian-born singer Vassy.

But although the contest has ramped up its PR efforts considerably in recent days — publishing pictures and videos of contestants touring Moscow sites like the [VDNKh exhibition center](#), the [WWII Victory Museum](#) and [Zaryadye Park](#) — its reach appears limited.

Its [Telegram](#) account has 36,000 subscribers, while its [Instagram](#) page has just over 7,300. Its page on Russian social network [VK](#) has just 23,000 subscribers. Eurovision, meanwhile, boasts more than [2 million](#) Instagram followers.

Still, in the absence of Western platforms, Intervision gives the Kremlin a stage on which to showcase its vision of cultural independence.

As Hutchings put it, it may be “more domestic theater than international outreach” — a spectacle meant as much for audiences at home as abroad.

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