

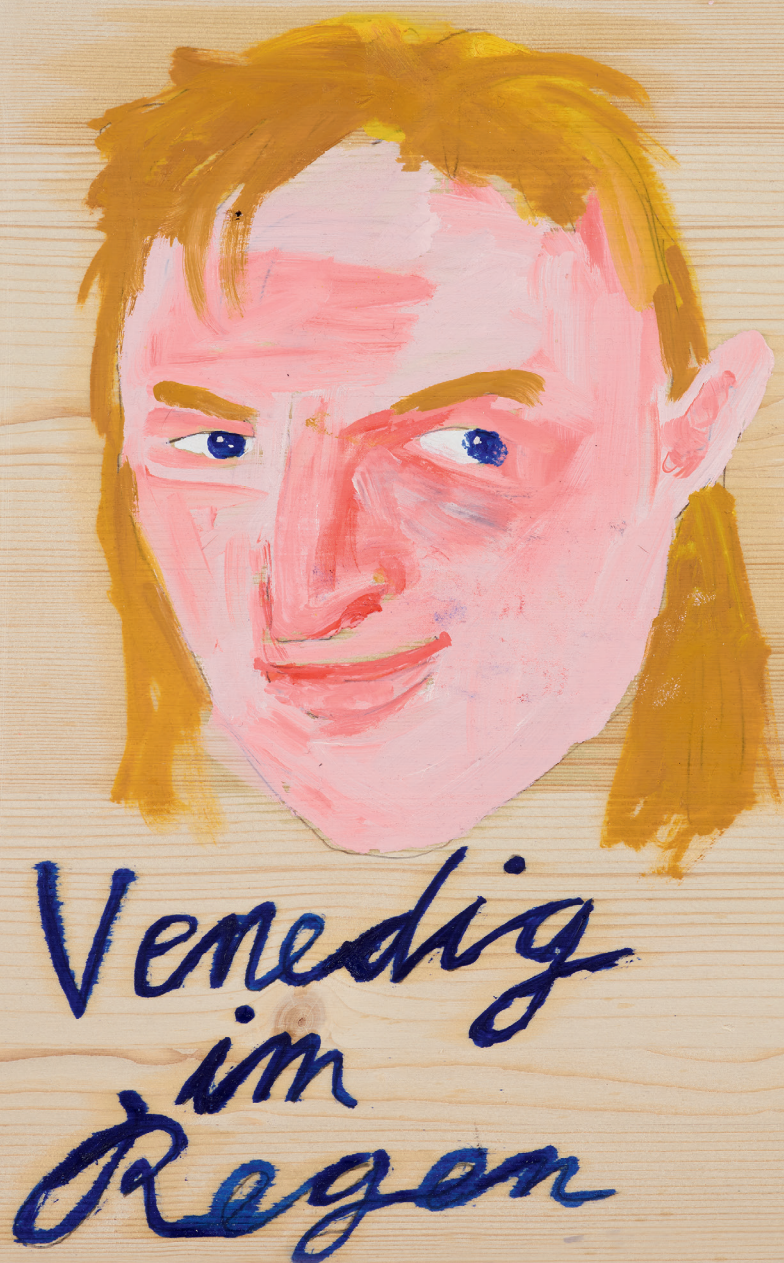
The Nul-Pointers



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**Tex Rubinowitz**

**The Nul-Pointers**





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### FUD LECLERC (1924–2012)

representing Belgium with »Ton Nom« in Luxembourg, 1962

Fud Leclerc was once the pianist of the famous chanteuse Juliette Greco and competed in the contest four times. His last appearance in 1962 saw him go out with the dubious honour of having become the first »nul-pointer« ever (the entries from Spain, the Netherlands and Austria would follow him the very same evening). After travelling around the world he returned to Belgium and began a new career as a building contractor.

### VICTOR BALAGUER (1921–1984)

representing Spain with »Llámame« in Luxembourg, 1962

The namesake of a 19th century Catalan folk hero, Victor was known as an adaptable singer who moved between popular music and zarzuela, singing in Spanish as well as Catalan. Following his Eurovision appearance, Balaguer returned to performing mainly in his native Catalan, a language not especially liked by Dictator Franco, who died in 1975.

### ELEONORE SCHWARZ (\*1936)

representing Austria with »Nur in der Wiener Luft« in Luxembourg, 1962

Eleonore was a famous light opera singer in Austria through the sixties and seventies, but at Eurovision her song, right after Fud and Victor, hit »nul points«, the only time in contest history that three consecutive songs zeroed out. Her song was about the beauty of Vienna, mentioning the State Opera, City Hall and St. Stephen's Cathedral. Schwarz released the song as a single and had moderate success with it.

### DE SPELBREKERS

representing the Netherlands with »Katinka« in Luxembourg, 1962

The Dutch duo Theo Rekkers (1923–2012) and Huug Kok (1918–2011) met during World War II in a forced labour camp in Germany. After the War they started their singing career that brought them to the Eurovision in 1962. Unfortunately this was the first year in which the term »nul pointer« appeared. Nevertheless, »Katinka« proved a success within the Netherlands. After years of releasing further singles to declining interest, they decided in the mid-1970s to move into music management.

### ANNIE PALMEN (1926–2000)

representing the Netherlands with »Een speeldos« in London, 1963

Annie was already a successful singer when she presented her song »Een Speeldos« in London, one of four songs which failed to score that year. It was the Netherlands' second successive »nul pointer«. Between 1967 and 1972 Palmén became a singer on the monthly television programme »Mik«. When the show was cancelled she dropped out of sight.

### ANITA THALLAUG (\*1938)

representing Norway with »Solhverv« in London, 1963

As a child Anita had already performed in various children's programs of the Norwegian TV station NRK. After the Song Contest she refused to record the song that brought Norway its first acquaintance with »nul points«. She was the first of four Norwegian entrants to score no points in the history of the Song Contest so far.

## LAILA HALME (\*1934)

representing Finland with »Muistojeni laulu« in London, 1963

1963 was a strange year for Scandinavia: Denmark walked off with the Grand Prix, but the other three countries failed to score. Finland even had to wait for over 40 years for a top five result. Laila's son Jussi Halme (\*1961) is a well-known musician in his home country.

## MONICA ZETTERLUND (1937–2005)

representing Sweden with »En gång i Stockholm« in London, 1963

One of the most accomplished of the »nul pointers«, Monica was the face of »Scandinavian Jazz« and worked with the likes of Louis Armstrong, Bill Evans, Stan Getz and Quincy Jones. Yet songs about home towns have never done that well at the contest. Nevertheless she still managed to remain successful in Sweden and appeared in more than 20 films and television series throughout her life.

## NORA NOVA (\*1928)

representing Germany with »Man gewöhnt sich so schnell an das Schöne« in Denmark, 1964

Nora (real name Ahinora Kumanova) fled her native Bulgaria by marrying a West German. In 1960 she won the singing contest »Die große Chance« and had some hits in the charts. After her singing career, and the later fall of the Iron Curtain, she returned to her homeland where she is now in politics. While her Song Contest contribution earned her no points, it went down as the longest song title in ESC history.

## ANTONIO CALVARIO (\*1938)

representing Portugal with »Oração« in Denmark, 1964

Portugal was given the coldest welcome as it became the first and up to now only country to score »nul points« on its Eurovision debut. Still, Mozambique-born Antonio had a long and fruitful career in his native country, in Portugal and also in North America. The relationship between Portugal and the Song Contest has to this day never quite warmed up: after 47 participations, Portugal's best ranking was a sixth place in 1996.

## SABAHUDIN KURT (\*1935)

representing Yugoslavia with »Život je sklopio krug« in Denmark, 1964

Kurt, who recorded his first song in 1954, achieved former Yugoslavia's only zero. Given tele voting patterns today, it seems hard to believe any part of old Yugoslavia wouldn't score. In 2003 he was part of the expert jury that selected the entry from his native Bosnia-Herzegovina (which came in 16th with 27 points).

## ANITA TRAVERSI (1937–1991)

representing Switzerland with »I miei pensieri« in Denmark, 1964

The arguable home of Eurovision (Switzerland hosted the first contest and is the headquarters of the organisers) scored its first zero with a song in Italian, in a year Italy won. Anita had finished eighth in 1960 but could not harvest a single point this time. After Anita Thallaug in 1963, she was the second Anita to become a »nul pointer«. Traversi retired from show business in the early 1970s to devote herself to family life.

## CONCHITA BAUTISTA (\*1936)

representing Spain with »Qué bueno, qué bueno« in Naples, 1965

Bautista moved from her native Andalusia to Madrid in her teens and quickly established herself as an actress and singer of Andalusian music. After a 9th place at the Eurovision Song Contest in 1961, the jury disagreed in 1965 with her song that translates as »So Good, So Good«. In later years she managed to get some small roles and appearances as a singer in Spanish TV.

## ULLA WIESNER (\*1941)

representing Germany with »Paradies, wo bist du?« in Naples, 1965

Ulla was looking for paradise but in the end Germany joined the Netherlands in scoring a consecutive pair of zeroes. Her solo career was over before it even fully began, but as a chorister Ulla Wiesner became successful and sang for 30 years notably for the German TV show »Musik ist Trumpf«. Beyond that she was assigned for many popular artists as a backing vocalist.

## LIZE MARKE (\*1936)

representing Belgium with »Als het weer lente is« in Naples, 1965

Belgium has always alternated between French and Flemish songs, the latter generally doing much worse. In the interests of national unity Lize recorded also a French version. Despite her nul points Marke got her own television show on Belgian TV. Thereafter her career went quieter, although she continued to perform and release records until the mid-1970s.

## VIKTOR KLIMENKO (\*1942)

representing Finland with » Aurinko laskee länteen« in Naples, 1965

Viktor was born in a Russian prisoner of war camp. When his family moved to Finland he started a long and successful career, although his first appearance outside of Finland brought him only »nul points«. Known as »The Singing Cossack« he had a religious revelation in the 1980s and rebranded himself as a Gospel singer.

## TEREZA KESVIJA (\*1938)

representing Monaco with »Bien plus fort« in Luxembourg, 1966

Monaco, like Luxembourg, regularly imported foreign singers to perform for them. The Croatian singer Tereza was chosen by Grace Kelly to represent the principality. After the »nul points« as a legionnaire she sang for her native Yugoslavia in 1972 and got ninth. Until today she is one of the most recognizable figures on the Balkan music scene, and had also a successful career in France.

## DOMENICO MODUGNO (1928–1994)

representing Italy with »Dio come ti amo« in Luxembourg, 1966

In 1958 Domenico Modugno came in third with one of the most successful songs ever presented at the ESC »Nel Blu, dipinto di blu«. Under the title »Volare« it has sold 25 million copies worldwide. But 1966 this fact couldn't buy him a single point. Despite of this his career went on as nothing had happened and even »Dio come ti amo« was covered by stars like Jack Jones and Tereza, who had joined him at the end of the field of the Song Contest in Luxembourg.

## GÉRALDINE GAULIER (\*1947)

representing Switzerland with »Quel coeur vas-tu briser?« in Vienna, 1967

A poor vocal performance which ended up breaking Swiss hearts. The first of only two ever »nul points« under the ten votes per country system (1967–1975), which meant that not one of the other foreign jurors placed it their favourite. In 1968, she released her second and last EP »Les Chattes«.

## DAVID ALEXANDRE WINTER (\*1943)

representing Luxembourg with »Je Suis tombe du ciel« in Amsterdam, 1970

The second and last »nul pointer« under new voting system. Only twelve entries performed 1970 and the Dutch singer David managed not a single point for Luxembourg, that was to win two of the next three contests. Nevertheless he went on to sell over 3,5 million records of his single »Oh Lady Mary«. He is still very successfully touring the world.

## JAHN TEIGEN (\*1949)

representing Norway with »Mil etter mil« in Paris, 1978

This was the first occurrence of zero points with the new, and current, voting system of the Eurovision Song Contest. Despite the obvious lack of international recognition, the song gained a huge audience back in Norway where the single dominated the national charts for more than four months. Still, having been in the nation's spotlight for more than 30 years now, this remains his most successful hit.

## FINN KALVIK (\*1947)

representing Norway with »Aldri i livet« in Dublin, 1981

Finn Kalvik was already a big star in Norway, when he represented his home country in the ESC. Although his performance ended with zero points, the song was still very successful at home. Its English version featured backing vocals by Agnetha and Frida of ABBA.

## **TIMO KOJO (\*1953)**

representing Finland with »Nuku Pommiin« in Harrogate (UK), 1982

In the era of cold war nuclear hysteria Nicole's »Ein bisschen Frieden« brought a little peace to Europe and the big prize to Germany. Timo Kojo's message »Nuku Pommiin« (Ban the Bomb) meanwhile was not understood. But like many nul pointers he managed to maintain a viable career in his homeland.

## **ÇETIN ALP (1947–2004)**

representing Turkey with »Opera« in Munich, 1983

One of the most bizarre Euro songs of all time that included lyrics like »Opera, Opera, Carmen, Aida, Opera, Opera, Tosca, Figaro, Fidelio...«. In the days when irony was never met at Eurovision this meant nul points. Çetin Alp died three days after the Eurovision Song Contest 2004 final was held in his hometown Istanbul.

## **REMEDIOS AMAYA (\*1962)**

representing Spain with »Quien maneja mi barca« in Munich, 1983

Sometimes being true to your national musical roots bears no fruit at all at Eurovision and such was the case in Munich. Remedios wailed her song with a flamenco passion that got her one of the biggest ovations of the evening but no points. She is a class act though and still big in Spain and Latin America.

## **SEYYAL TANER (\*1952)**

representing Turkey with »Şarkım Sevgi Üstüne« in Brussels, 1987

Since the mid 70s Seyyal is a big star in her homeland and is considered the artist that brought liveliness and innovation to Turkish music. She stands out not only for her voice and songs but also her extraordinary clothes. But none of that helped her in Brussels, where she had to leave with no points. Seyyal Taner is considered Turkey's greatest gay icon.

## **WILFRIED SCHEUTZ (\*1950)**

representing Austria with »Lisa, Mona Lisa« in Dublin, 1988

Wilfried's entry got not only »nul points« but was also elected the worse song ever represented at the ESC in an online poll. In Dublin he was presented as »the grand old man of popular music in Austria« and a »multitalented artist«. In the 90s he was often seen as an actor in TV productions. Nowadays he is still touring Austria with various bands.

## **DANÍEL AUGÚST HARALDSSON (\*1969)**

representing Iceland with »Það sem enginn sér« in Lausanne (Switzerland), 1989

Like Wilfried, Daníel Augúst was a bit clumsy in appearance and his atmospheric low key song was destined for the very same result. 1989 was a schmaltz fest and Daniel's song was too downbeat to fit in. He is still going very strong in his native Iceland.

## **THOMAS FORSTNER (\*1969)**

representing Austria with »Venedig im Regen« in Rome, 1991

In 1989 Austrian teen idol Thomas came in fifth giving Austria its best result since Udo Jürgen's victory in 1966. Two years later he went to Rome to sing about Venice in the rain and got soaked. His pop idol career sadly never took off again. Today Thomas Forstner is working in the IT branch but every now and then he is producing songs and enjoying it.

## **OVIDIJUS VYŠNIAUSKAS (\*1957)**

representing Lithuania with »Lopšinė mylimai« in Dublin, 1994

Seven countries from Eastern Europe debuted in 1994. Poland and Hungary came in second and fourth while the Baltics filled the last two slots. Ovidijus' black pvc jeans and sad »Sweetheart's Lullaby« didn't pull in the votes in a year in that Ireland won the third time in a row with »Rock'n'Roll Kids«.

**Tex Rubinowitz**

Nur in der Wiener Luft | Eleonore  
Schwarz (Austria)  
Luxembourg/1962 (Detail) | 2015  
Courtesy the artist

**TOR ENDRESEN (\*1959)**

representing Norway with »San Francisco« in Dublin, 1997

Tor tried many times to sing for Norway, where he is very popular, but the rocky »San Francisco« achieved Norway's fourth zero. In 1997 televoting was debuted in some countries, but as free language was two years away the song about hippie music in the US sung in Norwegian might have been a bad combination.

**CÉLIA LAWSON (\*1974)**

representing Portugal with »Antes de adeus« in Dublin, 1997

Angolan born Célia brought the worst result since the Carnation Revolution 1974 to Portugal. Despite this, the song has since been acknowledged to have been one of those least deserving »nul points« in a recent poll. Today Célia is performing harder Rock songs under the name of Ira.

**GUNVOR GUGGISBERG (\*1974)**

representing Switzerland with »Lass ihn« in Birmingham, 1998

Gunvor was seven times Swiss Champion in tap dancing and the winner of some talent shows. This didn't help her in Birmingham where she couldn't harvest a single point. Sadly her career never recovered, after a tabloid scandal about some nude pictures she returned to regular day work.

**JEMINI**

representing the UK with »Cry Baby« in Riga, 2003

Chris Cromby and Gemma Abbey (both \*1982) met at school and soon started touring pubs and clubs. The duo admitted that their performance in Riga was off-key, because they were unable to hear the backing track. Apparently they had been warned before the contest that they would not get any points due to the Iraq War. Their »nul points« got much press coverage in the UK, but soon afterwards the duo broke up.

