

Russian Singer Makes Eurovision Finals (Video)

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Dina Garipova performing "What If" at the Eurovision semi-finals on Tuesday night.

Russia's entry to Eurovision, Dina Garipova, will take part in the weekend finals of Europe's most popular song contest after clearing the semi-finals with a solid performance of her "What If" ballad.

Garipova, 22, competed with musicians from 15 countries — Austria, Estonia, Slovenia, Croatia, Denmark, Ukraine, the Netherlands, Montenegro, Lithuania, Belarus, Moldova, Ireland, Cyprus, Belgium and Serbia — at the first semi-finals at Sweden's Malmo Arena late Tuesday.

The second semi-finals will be held Thursday to determine another 10 Eurovision title contestants.

The grand finale on Saturday will feature 26 performers — 20 winners of the two semi-finals, as well as representatives of the host country, Sweden, and the "Big Five," the founders and the main sponsors of the contest — France, Germany, Italy, Spain and Britain.

Garipova, who was picked as Russia's entry at Eurovision after winning the popular "Golos" (Voice) television show on Channel One last year, is considered by bookmakers as one of the favorites at the contest, although Denmark's Emmelie de Forest with "Only Teardrops" is still on top of the most-likely winner list.

Garipova, who was born to a family of physicians in Zelnodolsk, Tatarstan, started studying singing at the age of 6 at the Zolotoi Mikrofon Theater in Kazan.

In 2008, pop star Dima Bilan brought Russia the country's only victory at Eurovision with "Believe."

His success was heralded by Russia's state-run media as a sign the country was finally making a return to Europe and reclaiming its superpower status in politics and culture, including popular music.

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