



**BIG**  
**EUROVISION**  
**— READ —**

**Activity Toolkit**

- Get involved in the Big Eurovision Read
  - The booklist
  - How to celebrate
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This year, the UK is hosting this year's Eurovision Song Contest on behalf of last year's winner, Ukraine. The Contest will be held in Liverpool on Saturday, 13 May. Partnering with BBC Arts, The Reading Agency is joining the party and celebrating the proven power of reading and music, in a campaign called the Big Eurovision Read. The campaign expresses the Eurovision Song Contest's commitment to its values of universality and inclusivity, by celebrating diversity.

### What is the Big Eurovision Read?

As part of EuroFestival, a Eurovision celebration in Liverpool, The Reading Agency and BBC Arts are sharing an inspiring booklist full of brilliant suggestions of great reads on the theme of the Power of Music. From fiction to autobiographies, the list of twelve – or 'douze' – titles has been crowdsourced from the library sector and curated by librarians from across the UK and features something for everyone.



### The booklist

We have worked closely with the library sector to create a strong and inspiring list of titles celebrating the transformative power of music. Submissions were crowdsourced and read by a panel of librarians to be curated into the Big Eurovision Read's booklist of twelve.

Books on this list cover a variety of genres, for a variety of audiences and will allow readers to be inspired by the unifying power of music and reading and get everyone in the mood to celebrate the Eurovision Song Contest returning to the UK for the first time in 25 years.

The Big Eurovision Read booklist is not a definitive collection of titles celebrating the power of music but an inspirational look at how reading and music are intertwined. Readers are encouraged to share their great reads featuring the power of music [here](#).

All titles are in print and available to borrow from public libraries or buy from retailers. Most titles are also available in digital formats, such as eBooks and/or audiobooks.

Find out more at [readingagency.org.uk](http://readingagency.org.uk)

# The Big Eurovision Read



**UNITED  
BY  
MUSIC**

Title	Author	Publication year
Musical Truth	Jeffrey Boakye	2021
The Madonna of Bolton	Matt Cain	2018
High Fidelity	Nick Hornby	1995
The Songs You've Never Heard	Becky Jerams & Ellie Wyatt	2022
The Music Shop	Rachel Joyce	2017
Greetings from Bury Park	Sarfraz Manzoor	2007
Utopia Avenue	David Mitchell	2020
Broken Greek: A Story of Chip Shops and Pop Songs	Pete Paphides	2020
Ellie Pillai Is Brown	Christine Pillainayagam	2022
Soul Music	Terry Pratchett	1994
Rise Up: The #Merky Story So Far	Stormzy, edited and co-written by Jude Yawson	2019
Space Opera	Catherynne M. Valente	2018

### **EuroFestival**

As part of the celebrations in Liverpool for this year's Eurovision Song Contest, The Reading Agency and BBC Arts will be creating a reading den outside of Liverpool Central Library. Running from 1 May – 14 May, the space will offer an opportunity for people to come and read any of the twelve books on the list, as well as a chance to engage in a number of activities to be announced in due course. We will also have some books at the den for children so there is something for the whole family to enjoy.

The reading den is part of the wider EuroFestival celebrations taking place across the city of Liverpool in the run up to the Eurovision Song Contest. [EuroFestival](#), taking place from 1 May - 14 May, is a first for a Eurovision host city, as it presents 24 commissions – 19 of which are collaborative projects between UK and Ukrainian artists – to showcase the uniting power of music and art.

An overview of some of the exciting projects popping up at EuroFestival and ideas of how libraries across the UK can get involved in the festival activity:

#### **Soloveiko Songbird**

The Soloveiko Songbird – nightingale in English – is the national bird of Ukraine and a symbol of song and happiness. 12 Soloveiko from different Ukrainian regions have travelled to Liverpool, bringing their songs and stories to EuroFestival.

You could run a session creating bird origami or get families to draw and paint their own birds by either drawing what makes them happy or writing their favourite song lyrics and make an exhibition in the library with these beautiful symbols of music and happiness.

#### **Land & Sky, Home & Dreams**

This atmospheric performance sees children from Ukraine and Liverpool united by art in a simultaneous kite flying finale, representing their soaring dreams and shared aspirations.

Get your community to create their own flag based on themes of belonging, home and dreams and fly them together on Eurovision outside the library.

#### **Sounds of Freedom**

Sound of Freedom focuses on cooperation between Ukraine and the world at all levels: political, social, and cultural. The artwork explores the cultural identity of the nations through music. It examines the musical background of each country and finds common ground, celebrating diversity, talent, and creativity.

Organise a songwriting workshop developing songs around the themes of freedom or use the theme in this piece as a conversation starter, discussing the music that reminds people of their identity, culture and history.

#### **People's Flag**

We're welcoming visitors to Liverpool with The People's Flag, a brand new, mass participation film, designed to create a unique, warm welcome to all Eurovision-comers.

Create your own library flag asking community members to draw what belonging, community and home means to them. You can hang this flag in the library for all to enjoy.



Find out more about what's happening for the Big Eurovision Read in Liverpool at [readingagency.org.uk](http://readingagency.org.uk), and more about EuroFestival at [visitliverpool.com](http://visitliverpool.com). [EuroLearn](#) also provides a unique opportunity for schools, and non-school educational settings, to celebrate all things Eurovision by taking part and delivering their own events. Find out how your organisation can get involved today.

## Create a display

Use the booklist to create a display in your library to promote the selected titles. [Download posters and our communications toolkit](#) to get your creative juices flowing to decorate your display. Go all out, it's Eurovision after all!

The booklist is a starting point, and we'd love to see what other books on the power of music theme you display alongside them.

## Let us know your recommendations

We were overwhelmed by the amount of fantastic books that were suggested for the list and there are many more that could have featured. The Big Eurovision Read focuses on the twelve titles that our panel chose to shine a light on, but you can take this opportunity to discuss and promote other great reads on the theme of the power of music.

If you're running activity in a library, create a recommendation wall or board and invite people to add other books on the theme. Share these with us on social media or by email to [campaigns@readingagency.org.uk](mailto:campaigns@readingagency.org.uk).

Or share our online link to invite people to recommend books [here](#).

## Host a Eurovision reading group

Think your reading group can read and judge these titles? Why not create your own contest from our book list?

Select some of the titles on the list and choose which books gets your "douze" points! As we all know, plenty of great entries end up with "nil point" in the Eurovision Song Contest so don't feel like you have to include all twelve titles.

Choose which titles get 12 points, 10 points, 8 points etc. and once the totals have tallied up, see which books will become your Big Eurovision Read Winner.

Feel free to use the below table in your groups.



Title and Author	Points
Musical Truth by Jeffrey Boakye	
The Madonna of Bolton by Matt Cain	
High Fidelity by Nick Hornby	
The Songs You've Never Heard by Becky Jerams & Ellie Wyatt	
The Music Shop by Rachel Joyce	
Greetings from Bury Park by Sarfraz Manzoor	
Utopia Avenue by David Mitchell	
Broken Greek: A Story of Chip Shops and Pop Songs by Pete Paphides	
Ellie Pillai Is Brown by Christine Pillainayagam	
Soul Music by Terry Pratchett	
Rise Up: The #Merky Story So Far by Stormzy, edited and co-written by Jude Yawson	
Space Opera by Catherynne M. Valente	

## Create and share your Big Eurovision Read playlist



When you're reading these books do you hear the music you love? Do the books take you to a different time in your life through the music on the page? Are there real songs referenced in the title that you're reading?

This list invites readers to engage with the joy and power of music through the inspiring titles on the list, and what better way of doing that than sharing that power? Some of these titles already have playlists or original albums that are tied to the stories, but we also want to know what artists these books make readers want to listen to.

Decide on your top fives after reading *High Fidelity*, relax and float downstream to the sounds of the late sixties of *Utopia Avenue*, or share the artist that has stood by you throughout your life as in *The Madonna of Bolton*. Encourage readers to create a playlist, share them across your networks and host a listening party to open minds to new sounds inspired by the Big Eurovision Read.



## Time to party!

The Eurovision Song Contest brings people from all around the world together to celebrate the unifying power of music. Get together with your reading group on the night of the final and discuss your choice from the Big Eurovision Read booklist before settling in together to watch the Contest live on BBC One.

There are loads of ways you can get in the mood on the night:

- \* Have a themed fancy dress dressing up as your favourite musical literary characters, or your favourite Eurovision acts
- \* Try making Eurovision inspired food and drink from participating countries!
- \* Everyone loves a music quiz, so host a quiz night, with some special rounds looking at the books on the Big Eurovision Read list.
- \* Pick a winner each and whoever picks the highest placing act gets to pick which of the Big Eurovision Read titles you read as a group next!

There is also a wonderful opportunity for libraries to hold their own Eurovision screenings, inviting communities to engage as one with the final on 13 May. Follow [the BBC guidance](#) on this and have fun.

We think that joining the Eurovision party through the Big Eurovision Read is the best way to get involved with this once-in-a-generation event.

## Organisational information

### About The Reading Agency

The Reading Agency is a national charity that tackles life's big challenges through the proven power of reading. We work closely with partners to develop and deliver programmes for people of all ages and backgrounds; our vision is for a world where everyone is reading their way to a better life. We help 2 million people benefit from reading every year, through our programmes, our tireless campaigning, our excellent networks and our power to influence, challenge and make change happen. [www.readingagency.org.uk](http://www.readingagency.org.uk)

### About BBC Arts

BBC Arts is the home of creative inspiration and a place to broaden your horizons. We make programmes that celebrate the things our audiences love - from books, visual art, photography, film and gaming to dance, design, theatre, fashion and architecture - showcasing the very best in culture. [www.bbc.co.uk/arts](http://www.bbc.co.uk/arts)

**The UK's creative home:** we are the UK's most ambitious creators of original arts programmes because we believe in the transformational power of creativity. As the leading force in cultural programme-making since 1922, our archive is the envy of the world.

**Supporting homegrown talent:** BBC Arts champions the best filmmakers to bring audiences the next generation of premium series and singles about arts and culture with all the complexity, challenge and depth that only the BBC can bring. We invite some of the UK's leading artists and experts onto the screen to share their knowledge and passion. At the same time, we are passionate about



supporting new and emerging talent in front of, and behind, the camera, leading the way in telling diverse stories that reflect the richness of Britain today.

**Deepening our commitment:** We have doubled our investment in Arts on BBC Two to bring audiences even more thought-provoking, world-class documentaries, box sets and series. On BBC Four, we present the very best performances from across the country, ranging from classical music to ballet to theatre to opera, as well as screening some of the treasures from our rich archive.

**Broadening our range:** We've listened to what audiences want and are expanding and enriching the programmes we make – widening our scope across multiple artforms and genres, but infusing everything we make with the high quality and depth, passion and joy that have always defined BBC Arts.

