

Winter Live @ Guildford, Birmingham and London

All first-year students have been working on the same brief: write a song for the Eurovision contest. Here's our report by TILLY, RITA, and Rory Rocket. Libbie Price spent a day with the second years for their Winter Live featuring more established groups.

GUILDFORD, reporter and photographer TILLY



WinterLive-Eurovision was a great opportunity for first-year degree students to collaborate and perform in their groups.

With 10 diverse groups performing their project pieces, each act used this opportunity to create different genres within their bands and had a unique style; genres consisting of alternative rock, hybrid, (electronic and acoustic instruments), R'n'B, theatrical music and many more.

Standouts were Freefalling Troops with Try And Keep Your Faith (Group 2) and their fantastic customised T-shirts bearing the song name; Huw Lloyd and Kieran Francis (Group 6) with What's Wrong With The World Today and vocalist Eddie Jones alongside keyboardist Leon and Tait, drummer, in my group with Better Place.

Towards the end of the event, a few students decided to perform their music, and an open jam also took place with a Blues duo from LeLe and Erik Davis.

The afternoon was an amazing networking opportunity for groups, getting to know one another and gaining connections for possible future music projects.

Winter Live is a great opportunity for level 4 students to showcase their talents in a fresh, safe space, and easy-going atmosphere. I had an amazing time watching all the groups perform!

LONDON - reporters RITA and Rocket

ACM's Winter Live London was a full day's work. There were so many performances to catch, with groups of amazing creatives. I only joined in the second half of the day.

The first group I watched was group 10, Mystics. The name was quite intriguing, and it perfectly represented their craft. They performed their song Athena which was a nod to the goddess of wisdom and military victory. This was an angle I hadn't even considered taking for the brief, which helped show just how good the team was with out-of-the-box thinking.

From their stage name, I would've expected to see a full band in dark clothing and dark makeup delivering an indie rock track. To which they did not disappoint. They didn't seem to have coordinated outfits but had similar dark aesthetics. The track had a rock feel and it was fun, which helped bring back the Eurovision vision.

Given all this, their performance delivery felt discombobulated. The solo guitarist brought all their energy to the stage, whereas the other band members seemed unbothered. Shame. The only part I would say needed improvement was their stagecraft, as they didn't seem united as a band.

After this we had a drummer come up alone, playing to a track. The drummer and producer were the group. The backing was missing a click track for the drummer to follow causing him to fall out of time. This was a recurring issue with many of the bands throughout the afternoon. It's all about a safe space to make mistakes at ACM live events. Besides this, the drummer gave an amazing performance and the song written had a wholesome feel, fitting well with the brief.

Group 13 was overwhelming, visually. All team members were up on stage, except the business students. This seemed unnecessary as there weren't enough microphones or stage space for everyone. Apparently, they were aware of this fact from a previous trial run, yet they disregarded it; everyone wanted their moment. It was a great performance and good chemistry on stage, except for the rapper, hiding or chatting to the crowd instead. Different styles...

TBD15, I have to start by saying that anything I say about this group may be biased because I'm a team member, so I will try to stick to the feedback given by other students.

Nate gave the best rap performance of the day, he was enthusiastic and engaging with the crowd, keeping the vibe up even when he didn't have a main part. In the beginning, Rory gave a short yet concise speech to help introduce the team and asked the audience to join in when given the cue. This led to everyone in the room turning on their flashlights towards the song's end and waving them in the air, creating a feeling of unison. However, there were slight mixing issues that we can look at more closely next time. Also, the singer lacked stage presence, at times, due to looking at the floor rather than the audience. This step would've helped unite the group and performance that extra step forward.

Moving onto the last group of the night and the closing of Winter Live London was group four. They left no breadcrumbs! Although to begin with I felt overwhelmed by the amount of people on stage, in the end, I was grateful for it. The only instruments were drums, guitar, and five vocalists. They are very professional and self-aware, showing they know their stage space. And, not only did they create a catchy R&B track that fitted the brief, they put together a full choreography for their performance. They brought the show to an amazing close, lifting the room's energy even more.

BIRMINGHAM - reporter and photographer Libbie Price



The Birmingham event was held at the Midlands Art Centre on Friday. Ten acts ranged from rap to heavy metal scream rock, soul, R&B and reggae.

The night opened with Regular Faces (Group 1) and they were two best mates playing a mix of indie, rap and electronics - a 90s independent soft rock band with 21st-century rap. Altogether they produced three songs, all originals, all coated in reverb, which added a vibe I liked.

Stand-out groups were The Mix, a blend of rock and reggae (Group 2); Black And White (Group 3), a mixture of rock and rap. They were very good at getting the crowd involved, even singing along. **Rooted** (Group 6) were aces. They had a good connection between each other on stage and a theatrical element to their performance, as well as backstage visuals on a projector. They also promoted their album and had merch to sell. It was so interesting to take in the experience but I did not expect to cry. That's thanks to solo act, Nicole Blakk, who moved me to tears with her wide range and bilingual and mixed genre influences - ballads and Hip Hop included.

Cherrydead, is also worth a special mention: an all-female scream heavy metal rock band with a strong on-stage presence, even though they had to play a woman down - I don't know how she managed to get her voice to do that. OMG.

What did we miss? thebuzz@acm.ac.uk

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