



NICOLINE REFSING, ROCKART DESIGN  
(Ireland) Brendan Murray - Dying To Try,  
(Switzerland) Timebelle - Apollo

“With Ireland we wanted a simple, audience-orientated B stage performance in the round, but it was ultimately decided that it would be better for the cameras if we had it on the main stage. We reworked performance and I think the height we have with the riser and the lighting is really helpful to create the illusion of flight that we were after.

“The song is all about taking off on a journey into the unknown and we thought that the hot air balloon, manufactured by ABC Inflatables, really matched the symbolism of the lyrics and airy music. We refined a few of the finer points during the second rehearsal and when we saw the shot over the balloon with Gravity’s LED floor content travelling and the fog above we couldn’t believe it. The use of negative space helped us to break out of confines of the stage - we didn’t use the proscenium at all, which set us apart from the rest of the countries.

“The creative process for Switzerland started in summer 2016 through the country’s selection process. Timebelle are really dynamic musically and have a fun-loving personality that I wanted to shine through. They had gone for a femme fatale theme with roses and a red dress during selection so we wanted to do something surprising for Kyiv.

“We wanted to avoid the clichéd depictions of Apollo as a Greek god and go with a more surreal, pop art representation. It was also a case of the singer, Miruna, working with the space by moving from the central pedestal that she starts on, to the piano, before finishing downstage in a classic rock ‘n’ roll performance section. The central lighting grid and blinders behind the screen were really useful for those intense moments.

“We decided quite late in the day to scrap our original video content and have Hello Charlie create something new for us, which I’m sure was the right decision overall. Blackfriars Scenery in London again helped us by manufacturing the set pieces for both acts, as well as organised trucks and dealing with any potential hassle at the borders. The truck left on 7 April to account for delays so I had to have everything designed, built and costed in time - only three weeks after the delegation meeting.

“The production team here has been working overtime and the whole crew has been terrific. Everything out here comes down to communication, preparation and working together, and to pull this off yet again in these circumstances is a great achievement.”