

AN ORIGINAL SERIES PRODUCED BY MOVISTAR PLUS+
IN COLLABORATION WITH BUENDÍA ESTUDIOS.
CREATED BY PEPE COIRA AND FRAN ARAÚJO.
DIRECTED BY ALEJANDRO MARÍN.



# EUROVISION SONG CONTEST 1968



A POP-LITICAL ODYSSEY.









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## SYNOPSIS

The year is 1968. Esteban Guerra (Patrick Criado), a young executive at RTVE –the Spanish national TV broadcaster–, discovers that a clear order has come down from above: Spain must win the Eurovision Song Contest. With no musical experience, but eager to get ahead, Esteban takes charge of the project and convinces the eccentric Artur Kaps (Àlex Brendemühl), the man behind the great TV shows of the time, to join him on the adventure. Together they embark on 'Operation Eurovision', a plan to find both the ideal song and performer to project the image of a modern, open country in Europe, as the government wishes.

After months of overcoming obstacles, including the infamous episode with Serrat (Marcel Borràs), the operation is a resounding success: Massiel (Carolina Yuste) wins the festival with the song 'La, la, la'. A triumph built on a catchy chorus, a charismatic singer and an incredible series of unexpected events. This is the story of the eventful road to that victory.





### SCREENWRITERS' NOTES

La canción (The Song) is based on real events that are quite well known to its potential audience. This means that the writing process was marked by extensive documentary work. We gathered most of the available sources, consulted the rich newspaper archives of the time – which recorded the highs and lows of the 1968 Eurovision Song Contest day by day –, watched documentaries and archive footage, and interviewed key figures and witnesses who were willing to contribute.

With all this information, we were able to put together a narrative skeleton that contained the main events of a story that began with RTVE's bid to try to win the festival and ended with Massiel's refusal to accept an award from the dictator Franco for her surprising success. It was a story that unfolded over four months, between the end of 1967 and April 1968, marked by tensions between two visions of a country on the brink of change, full of twists and turns, populated by larger-than-life characters (Joan Manuel Serrat, Massiel, Lasso de la Vega, Kaps, etc.)

and adorned with an infinite number of details from which we had to decide what to sacrifice and what to include in the script..

We decided early on to combine all this material with a purely fictional plot that would allow the story to be structured effectively. We came up with Esteban Guerra, the protagonist of the series, a young and ambitious politician who sees the Eurovision Song Contest as an opportunity to get ahead in the power structure of the time. He has no interest in television or music until he becomes involved in the operation to win the contest and finds himself drawn to another possible life. Esteban's journey, accompanied by other fictional characters such as Lucía, his girlfriend, and Balmaseda, his boss, made it easier for us to give the plot a human dimension and to create a protagonist who could navigate a story so full of unexpected events.

From there, we outlined the broad structure of the dramatic plan and saw that three 50-minute episodes

would be the most appropriate format for the story. Clara Coira helped us organise all the documents we had collected. As this was a historical story involving real people, their contributions were even more relevant than usual.

Fran Araújo and Pepe Coira





### **DIRECTOR'S NOTES**

When Pepe and Fran asked me to direct this series, what interested me most was the possibility of delving into the B-side of a story that was seemingly known to everyone.

Personally, I was unaware of many of the events that unfolded and were reflected in the script: Franco's 'request', the scandal with Serrat, Massiel's arrival in extremis... A culmination of real events that enriched the story with many attractive elements: a fast pace, complex characters, and even some surreal sequences.

The biggest challenge we took on from the start was the decision to use real archive footage combined with our own footage. The set work already had to be very rigorous, but this heightened the need for precision and was reflected in all departments.

Many decisions were made to incorporate the archive footage as organically as possible: from the choice of format, to shooting parts of the story with TV cameras from the time or with Super 8 and 16 mm, to the exact reproduction of sets, clothes and hairstyles. Thanks

to the commitment of everyone involved, this is undoubtedly one of the greatest assets of the series.

La canción (The Song) is told from the point of view of Esteban, a fictional character who reflects Spain at that moment in history, full of contrasts and contradictions. He is accompanied by Artur Kaps, the real creative director behind 'Operation Eurovision'. The wonderful on-screen and off-screen duo of Patrick Criado and Alex Brendemühl made the tone of the series - balancing comedy and drama - one of the most enjoyable and interesting experiences for a filmmaker.

Having to portray the characters of Serrat and Massiel added an even greater responsibility. Marcel Borràs and Carolina Yuste, respectively, took on the challenge of playing two famous singers who are still very present in contemporary Spanish culture. From the beginning, we focused on conveying the energy that the real figures exuded at the time, without resorting to mere technical imitation. As for the physical aspect, we wanted to achieve a likeness without becoming obsessive.

All these choices came together in our approach to creating a picture of a very specific moment in Spanish history: Franco's most resounding attempt to salvage the last years of the dictatorship. This, I believe, is where the real appeal of the series lies.

La canción (The Song) embraces History with a capital 'H' to revisit that victory in the present (exemplified by Massiel's refusal to pose with Franco after her triumph and what that meant at the time), and to shed light on a society that longed for freedom and needed to prove to itself that true politics does not always lie in grand offices and strategic manoeuvres, but also in the courage of small gestures.

Alejandro Marín

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# THE CHALLENGE OF RECREATING A DECADE

The production design for La canción (The Song) was an exciting challenge. From the first time we spoke to Alejandro, we agreed on something very important: we didn't want to make a series that looked like an encyclopaedia. We were aware that we were portraying a very important period in Spain's recent history. On the one hand, we wanted to be as faithful as possible to the events that took place. On the other hand, we wanted to reach a diverse audience spanning different generations, both those who lived through that era and those who were going to discover the story for the first time.

Starting from this premise, and after talking to the creators, Fran Araújo and Pepe Coira, we also understood the importance of showing the contrasts and differences between Spain and the rest of Europe at that time. While our country was suffering the consequences of Franco's dictatorship, the rest of the continent was beginning to embrace social change and student revolts. So while our protagonists work in a rather oppressive, ministerial television station, designed by and for the regime, they discover new and much more modern stations in their foreign counterparts. The same goes for the streets, shops

and bars of the cities they visit. We chose all the locations with great care. In London, for example, we reproduced a Brutalist building, while in Germany, we depicted a minimalist office made of glass and metal. Therefore, in Spain, we couldn't shoot in a plain building with straight lines and white walls. We wanted to find buildings from that era that had at least some interesting shapes - perhaps less imposing than the others, but that would look good on camera. The same principle applied to the materials (glass and aluminium, as opposed to brick and wood), the colour palette or the patterns. While in Spain, earthy tones - such as browns, greys and ochres and more ornate prints predominated, in the rest of Europe, cooler tones (greens and blues) and more linear and geometric motifs were in vogue.

However, without a doubt, the biggest difficulty was recreating the Royal Albert Hall, the venue of the 1968 Eurovision final, in Spain. Since we needed a lot of time to shoot, we couldn't consider filming in an active theatre like the one in London. It was clear that we had to recreate it and, in the end, after countless ideas, research, and trial and error, we managed to create our own puzzle of the Albert Hall. The exterior

is the real thing, the access stairs are from a location in Madrid, the interior corridors and dressing rooms are from another venue in Madrid, but filmed from multiple angles to make them look longer and, finally, the stage for the performance is a purposebuilt set. The invaluable help of the VFX allowed us to seemingly integrate all these pieces. We hope that the final result will satisfy the nostalgia of those who lived through that moment and bring back the emotions they felt back then, while at the same time sparking the curiosity of younger audiences who may not even know what 'La, la, la' is.

José Tirado





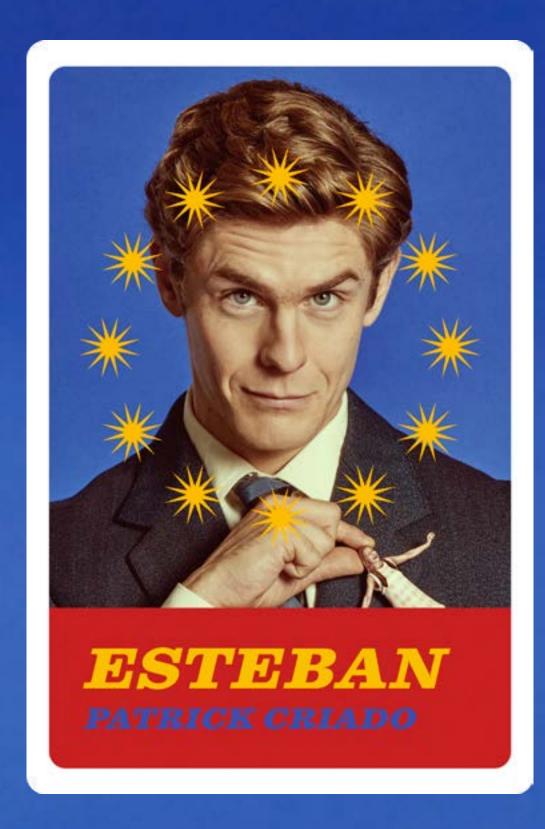


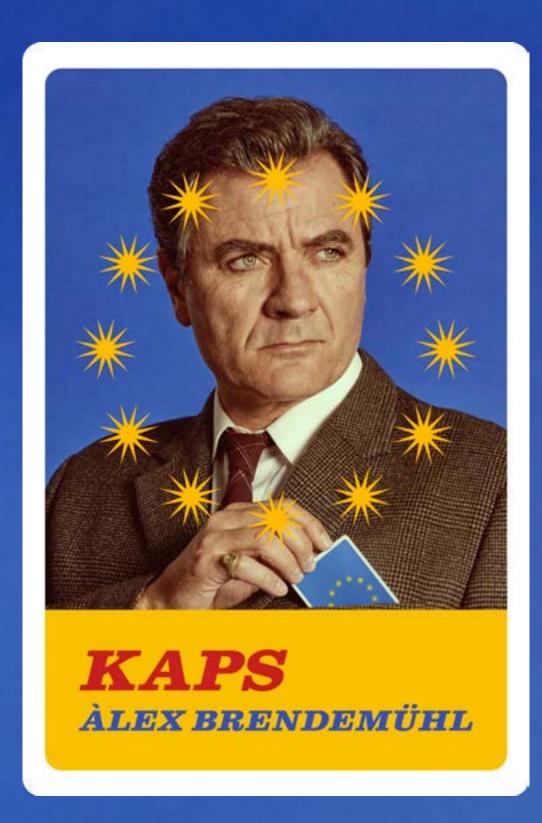


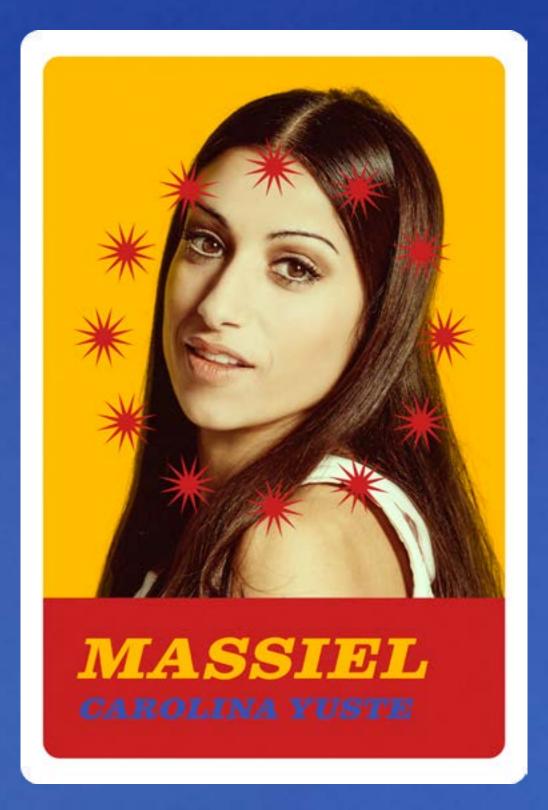


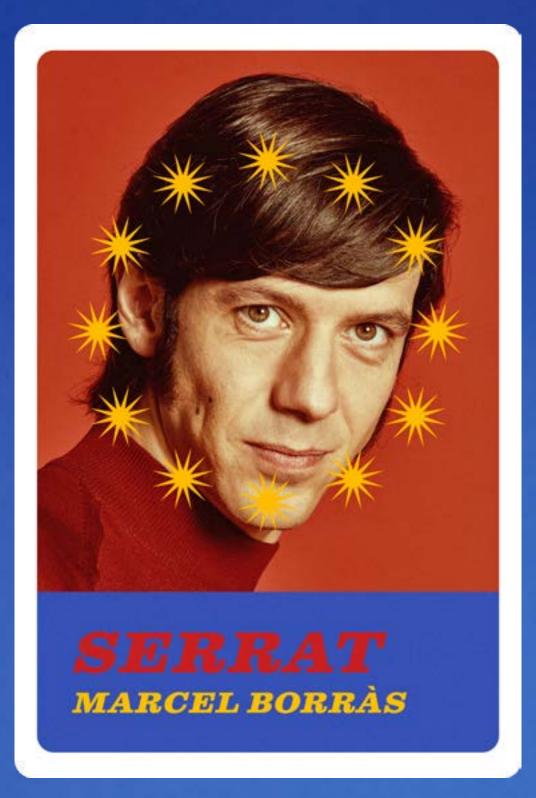


# MAIN CHARACTERS















Esteban is a methodical man. He has a steady girlfriend and works at RTVE, but he has bigger ambitions. He aspires to a better future and, to achieve this, he is trying to make his mark at the national public broadcaster and move up the power ladder, operating in the shadow of Minister Manuel Fraga. When Eurovision is launched, Esteban finds the perfect opportunity to shine and offers to accompany the producer Artur Kaps on his European tour to promote 'La, la, la' in an attempt to win the Eurovision Song Contest. Esteban is chosen for the job for several reasons: he has the patience to put up with Kaps' personality, he is loyal and unimaginative enough to be a useful and expendable pawn if things go wrong.













### ARTUR KAPS ÀLEX BRENDEMÜHL

An Austrian living in Spain, Kaps has become RTVE's most respected producer after a long career as a variety show director. His privileged position is due to his great commercial instinct and his contacts in show business throughout Europe, as well as his fluency in several languages. Kaps is the one who pulls the strings in the artistic television arena and the brains behind the operation to win the Eurovision Song Contest with 'La, la, la'. He is a resourceful, tough, serious man, yet a sentimentalist at heart.









### MASSIEL CABOLINA YUSTE

Massiel is rebellious, talented and determined. Raised in a Republican household, she is known as 'the protest singer'. After her time in Cuba, where she showed her enthusiasm for the Castro revolution, she is on tour in Mexico when she gets the call to replace Serrat at Eurovision. Far from being offended at playing second fiddle, she sees it as a great opportunity and doesn't think twice about it. With just nine days to go before a festival that everyone expects Cliff Richard to win, she returns to Europe to prepare the performance that will become Spain's first and only solo victory at Eurovision.











### SERRAT MARCEL BORRÀS

Joan Manuel Serrat is a Catalan singer-songwriter who symbolises the struggle for the Catalan language and freedom in the midst of Franco's regime. He projects the image of the perfect son-in-law and the ideal candidate to represent Spain in the 1968 Eurovision Song Contest. Esteban and Kaps see him as the perfect chance to present a modern and open image of Spain, but soon some difficulties arise. Joan Manuel faces a very personal dilemma: in Catalonia, he is branded a traitor, and many resent him for singing in Spanish, while other regions question his commitment to representing Spanish values.











### **SUPPORTING CHARACTERS**



### ANTONIO BALMASEDA CARLOS SANTOS

Esteban's boss. He is an important figure in RTVE, with a lot of power, but also an overwhelming fear of failure. When things start to go well, he decides to remove Esteban from overseeing the festival so that he can take charge himself and claim all the credit. He soon realises that it takes more than a position of power to carry out such a mission.



LUCÍA LAIA MANZANARES

Esteban's girlfriend. Her family is delighted that their future son-in-law is working in television. During her studies, Lucía works as a lab assistant at the Faculty of Pharmacy, where student revolts are brewing. She is a Eurovision fan and keeps tabs on all the hot Spanish singers and bands, making her the perfect musical advisor for Esteban.



CARLOS ENEKO SAGARDOY

Carlos is a photographer. He met Esteban at a boarding school when they were young, and he already showed an interest in photography back then. After losing touch over the years, he unexpectedly reunites with Esteban through his work documenting Massiel's performance at the festival.



### LASSO DE LA VEGA MARIANO PEÑA

A businessman and agent for bullfighters and artists, Lasso is very well-connected in powerful circles. He is Serrat's manager and encourages the iconic Dúo Dinámico to compose the song for the Eurovision Song Contest.









#### original M+

### TECHNICAL DETAILS

Executive Producers: Fran Araújo, Pepe Coira

Executive Producers Movistar Plus+ Susana Herreras

Executive Producers Buendía Estudios Ignacio Corrales, Pepe Ripoll

Directed by: Alejandro Marín

Written by: **Pepe Coira and Fran Araújo** 

Cast: Patrick Criado, Alex Brendemühl, Carolina Yuste,

Marcel Borràs, Mariano Peña, Carlos Santos,

Laia Manzanares, Carlos González, Rafael Ibarbia,

Eneko Sagardoy, Xose A. Touriñán, Luis G. Gámez,

Chloe Berman y Garmon Rhys

Production Design: José Tirado

Cinematographer: Andreu Ortoll

Sound: Jaime Llanos, Jordi Cirbian

Editing: Aina Calleja Cortés, Carlos Hernández,

**Javier Gil Alonso** 

Costume Design: Isis Velasco Vilanova
Hair and Make-up: Ana Urosa, Raúl Gallego

Format:  $3 \times 50$ 

Original release date in Spain: 8th May 2025



### **DOWNLOADABLE CONTENT**

#### **Key Art:**

https://comunicacion.movistarplus.es/imagen/la-cancion-carteles/

#### **Teaser trailer:**

https://comunicacion.movistarplus.es/video/la-cancion-teaser/

#### Stills:

https://comunicacion.movistarplus.es/imagen/la-cancion/

#### Behind the scenes photos:

https://comunicacion.movistarplus.es/imagen/la-cancion-making-of/

#### Trailer:

https://comunicacion.movistarplus.es/video/la-cancion-trailer/

#### **Episode clips:**

https://comunicacion.movistarplus.es/video/la-cancion-clips-episodios/











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(THE SONG)

THE STORY BEHIND A VICTORY

BASED ON A TRUE STORY