



UNCANNY VALLEY

Uncanny Valley are a team of local music producers, data scientists and academics and have won the AI Song Contest. The team, all members of music-tech collective Uncanny Valley, competed against other teams from across Europe for the best new Eurovision-like hit created with AI. The winning Australian entry, 'Beautiful the World', was inspired by recent bushfires that devastated the country earlier this year, taking the lives of many native animals. The song uses audio samples of koalas, kookaburras and Tasmanian devils, and its message is one of hope – that nature will not only recover but triumph, the team said.

While an artificial intelligence algorithm was trained on past Eurovision songs – responsible for the melody and lyrics – a producer and vocalists also contributed to the recording. The competition, organised by Dutch public broadcaster VPRO, was judged by a panel of experts, with the global public encouraged to vote online to influence the winning AI song.

"We are elated to have won the inaugural AI Song Contest," said Caroline Pegram, producer and strategist at Uncanny Valley, after learning of the team's victory.

"The competition brought together the top minds in this field to explore the idea of what can be achieved when musicians rage with the machines.

"The fact that we were able to use technology to blend in the message of the devastation of the bushfires in Australia early this year, clearly struck a chord."

The competition also encouraged knowledge exchange, says Australian team member Dr Oliver Bown, who specialises in creative applications of artificial intelligence at UNSW Art & Design. The AI Song Contest was organised by VPRO in collaboration with NPO 3FM and NPO Innovation.

Winning song: <https://youtu.be/sAzULywAHUM>