



2004 Covers Competition – results, judged by Warren Cann

Hello, everyone.

I must first say how very impressed I was with all of the entries. I know that a lot of time and craft went into these tracks. You weren't doing it for money (none!) or recognition (except from those who visit Extreme Voice), you put in the effort because it was fun and you feel close to the music. You are all extremely good sports. It made me feel very proud.

The sound quality was good-to-exceptional, considering you had to work under domestic circumstances and not the luxury of a full-blown studio. If any of you did have access to such, those of you who didn't shouldn't feel at a disadvantage – I can assure you it only made it harder.

In many ways, it's much worse doing a cover - when you're writing the song in the first instance, you just have to worry about making it work and seeing it through to a satisfying conclusion. When you're recording a cover, you have to try to replicate every single intricate element and nuance... very difficult! I'm sure there was many a moment of "Just what the hell is going on in that bit, exactly?..." and, "...er... how do I get that sound???" If it's any consolation, we used to feel the same, too.

I took the judging very seriously and listened to the entries multiple times, considering many aspects before making my choices. My criteria were fairly constant. Sound quality and the degree of polish of the mix were not at all the ultimate deciding factors, though these were undeniably important in getting a song across. I looked for mood and overall feel. Plus, naturally, my own degree of whimsy... it's supposed to be fun! If I have any criticism at all, I have to say I was surprised by the restraint shown by the entries in the Re-Mix category. Far too polite! You should've really gone for broke and overhauled them top-to-bottom. Perhaps next time, yes?

You may all be very pleased with yourselves because you did not make it easy!

I'm adding something to the judging (my prerogative, remember) and that is an "Honourable Mention" for the entry that either almost made it, or just plain had a certain spark deserving of recognition.

The winners will receive a prize from my personal collection of Ultravox vinyl records, autographed by me.

Ready? Here we go...

In the category, "BEST COVER the winner is...

Reap The Wild Wind, by Nige

In this category, the idea – as I saw it – was to record a song which sounded as much like the original version as possible. Voice, drums, keyboards, everything. A tall order. I'd always thought that this category would be the toughest for anyone to crack and the easiest for me to critique. I was wrong. All of the entries were so good! Nige's RTWW is a ringer. Excellent vocals and synth work. Except for the fact that the vocals were just a wee touch too low (and that may just have been on my system), it was pretty spot on. Wow!

Honourable Mention goes to...

Lament, by Mrs. X

Mrs. X is at an obvious disadvantage in this category by way of her gender, but the mood was excellent. I listen to this version and I hear the song; not us, not Mrs. X, just the song...

In the category, "BEST REMIX", the winner is...

Mystere X, by Mehdi Touzani and Fleur Lairé

Great version. Fleur's diction is captivating. Is it only me that can't understand why no one has done this before? I have a personal affinity for this song and enjoyed this approach very much.

Honourable Mention goes to...

The Ascent, by Ari Leppä

This remix is in the spirit of what I was expecting and has much unrealised potential (but a little less of George's sample, ok?!). Nice one, Ari.

For the record, I'd just like to mention that The Messengers' original and inestimably cool Matt Munro version of *Dancing With Tears In My Eyes* could've been well in there to be a winner, but I disqualified it on imminent charges of nepotism and age-ism.

In the previous two categories, you either had to adhere strictly to the Ultravox sound, or feel free to disassemble it. I feel the final category deserves special merit in that it gave you the freedom to explore. These were your songs, as seen through an Ultravox lens.

In reverse order, for additional suspense, Honourable Mention in the "BEST ORIGINAL" category is...

Keep Turning, by Nils Günther

This reminds me very much of one of our rehearsal tapes. We would've condensed the elements and arranged the ideas a little tighter, and most probably put a vocal on this, but it very likely might've made it onto an album.

And so, finally, the winner for "BEST ORIGINAL" is...

Extreme Voice, by Mike Lyden

Scary... and I mean that as a compliment. This is a song we would've/could've written and its style is very much one of ours. Nice riff. I hear lots of bits we would've zero'd in on and developed. Excellent!

Thank you and congratulations to all of you! Well done. Very well done.

If you weren't mentioned here, take heart as it was all in fun. You were altogether fabulous and I enjoyed this immensely. I will be e-mailing everyone who entered to thank them personally. Perhaps we can do this again next year. It's up to you. Perhaps one of the other chaps would care to preside over the next competition, who knows?

love.
