

Oops!

At the end of last issue, we promised that this issue would be out in time for voting season. And indeed it is, if you're planning to cast your vote at OVFF. Otherwise, voting season has entirely eluded us in a crush of real life.

This means that there are only three issues in the third volume of Wing Words. The editors have performed the appropriate self-flagellation and will attempt to do better next time.

Ask Peggy!

It's time once again for us to dip into our burgeoning mailbag and pull out another question from our readers. This question comes from I.M. Olde in Colorado Springs, who asks "What makes a filk song classic anyway?"

That's a good question, I.M. If you turn the page, you'll find that Pegasus Evangelista Erica Neely has some thoughts on the subject, but we may as well share our own.

By the definition of the award, a classic filk song must be at least ten years old. This means that someone has to actually **remember** the song ten years after it was written. Fortunately, filk fans have long memories. And we would hate to count the number of songs that are still requested regularly where the author says, "I thought that was just going to be a funny once." Apparently, the joke was on them.

To a first approximation, classic filk songs can be divided into two groups: those that are so wonderful that **everyone** covers



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wingwords@ovff.org

them and songs that are so wonderful that **no one** dares try to cover them. The latter category is smaller than the first, no doubt in part due to the tendency of filkers to glean material to fill out their repertoire. To pick from previous winners, everyone covers "Banned From Argo"; virtually no one tries to cover "I Want to Be Peter Lorre".

Personally, we have some fondness for songs that stood out from the pack when they were introduced, that were somehow different from the rest of the songs that we heard around the filk circle – but in a **good** way! It might be a uniquely catchy chorus that you had to sing along with, or an unusual idea presented well, or something that was musically challenging.

Ultimately though, we think that a classic filk song will stand on its own, whether it's performed by a single singer with a guitar, or a capella, or by the filkish equivalent of the London Symphony Orchestra. The words, the melody, and the way they fit together make a filk song a classic.

While We Were Away...

In the meantime, Pegasus Evangelista Erica Neely has weighed in with some thoughts on:

Voting for the Pegasus Awards by Erica Neely

It's award season again, and that time always gets me thinking about how to decide who I'm going to vote for. One of the difficulties is that, with the exception of the Best Performer category, the Pegasus awards are not performance awards. So whether I'm listening to a clip online or watching people perform at the concert, I try hard not to be too influenced by the performance aspect; Pegasus awards are, overall, songwriting awards.

Some of the categories I find easier to judge than others. For instance, I try to vote for the song that I think best fits the themes for the floating categories. In this case, I would be thinking about what constitutes Mad Science or Magic, and then I would be looking at the nominated songs and thinking about which I think expresses those ideas best. For the Classic Filk Song category, I tend to look for songs with staying power. What are the songs I'm hearing over and over again? Or was the song significant for some reason – did it generate a lot of similar songs? Was it groundbreaking in some way? Those are the sorts of questions I ask.

Best Performer and Best Writer/Composer are trickier because I see both of them as involving multiple instances. If I'm judging a writer/composer, I'm looking at the body of their work. So I'm looking generally for

someone who has been creative consistently. I won't generally nominate or vote for someone based on a single song (although I may make a mental note to think about them again down the road.) For performer, again I tend to look for someone who is consistently good. Lately this category has been very heavily oriented towards bands and groups, but I think you can have excellent single performers as well. I think about people's preparation, their rapport with the audience, whether they seem to be having a good time – all of these are factors for me.

The hardest category I find to make a decision about is Best Filk Song. What constitutes the best filk song? Is it the one I like most? The one that is most representative of filk as a whole, somehow? The most filk-like song? I don't have a clue. Generally, I go for the one that most speaks to me. This is the category with songs where I go "I wish I'd written that!" These are the songs that take my breath away – the ones that I expect to see in the Best Classic Filk Song category down the road, if they don't win now. They are songs that grab me now, but which I also believe I will want to hear ten years from now.

So that's how I decide what to vote for. What about the rest of you? What criteria do you use?

Next Issue

We'll start examining this year's floating categories. In the meantime, you can always write us at:

wingwords@ovff.org