



# Friday Easy Jam Joe Cribbin Handout No.6 - 08-05-2020 Writing and performing cover versions

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The History of Rock'n'roll is littered with cover versions, some great and some not so great. The great ones add something new to the song, they give the song a new meaning. For example, Elvis Presley the king of Rock'n'Roll's first ever record was a cover version of 'That's alright Mama' by blues singer Arthur Crudup. It helped give birth to Rock'n'roll. The not so great ones can have you reaching for the sick bag and a desire to wash your ears out, for example Emma Bunton and Tin Tin Out, 'What I Am'. A song that would have Eddie Brickell turning in her grave if she were not yet dead but perhaps she wishes she was having heard Baby Spice trash her best song.



**Elvis Presley**

Often on talent shows, condescending celebrity judges will say things like 'You totally owned it!' whenever a fledgling contestant sings a cover of something like Robbie Williams 'Angels' a Karaoke sing along classic if ever there was one.



'Angels' is a great song and Robbie Williams sings it really well, too well in fact. That is the problem for anyone doing a cover version of the song, in its original form the song is a showstopper so as an original artist what can you add to it? This is why I believe if you cover something like 'Angels' or anything else, you need to present something different, sing or play it in a way unheard before. If you are going to 'totally own it' put yourself into the song, you don't have to doggishly try and replicate the original.

**Susan Boyle**



Remember If you perform a cover version please always credit the original artist, don't be Jimmy Page who Homer Simpson once described as 'One of the biggest thieves of American black music whoever walked the earth' Page didn't write when the Levee breaks that was Kansas Joe Mcoy and Memphis Minnie. The rest of his writing is also questionable, see you in court Jimmy.

**Homer Simpson**

Another word of warning if you are not too careful it can all go horribly wrong. Gal Gadot and her celebrity friends recent cover of John Lennon's 'Imagine' is one of the worst pieces of music you will ever witness, it is so bad it should come with a health warning, if you are ever feeling brave, look it up sometime but you might need a lie down afterwards, I watched about a minute of it and the horror is still ringing in my ears. If you haven't had the chance to witness it, lucky you, you've been spared, if you are unfortunate enough to have heard it, don't worry I feel your pain too.



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I've presented a short list of great cover versions in the table below. If you want to hear some other good examples of cover versions I suggest the American recordings by Jonny Cash. These stripped-down recordings present a range of songs in a fresh and beautiful way. Jonny Cash's version of Hurt by Nine inch Nails transforms a dark electronic song into a near religious epitaph.



Song	Cover Artist	Original Recording Artist
Tainted Love	Soft Cell	Gloria Jones
Gloria	Patti Smith	Them, Van Morrison
Police and thieves	The Clash	Junior Murvin
All along the Watchtower	Jimi Hendrix	Bob Dylan
I Wanna be adored	Ese and The Voodoo people	The Stone Roses
Hallelujah	Jeff Buckley/ Alexandra Burke	Leonard Cohen
The man who sold the world	Nirvana MTV unplugged	David Bowie
Hey Joe	Jimi Hendrix	Tim rose, Billy Roberts, Niela Miller
A message to you Rudy	The Specials	Dandy Livingstone
Favourite things	John Coltrane	Julie Andrews
The guns of Navarone theme	The Skatalites	Dimitri Tiomkin
Valerie	Amy Winehouse	The Zutons

## Tasks

Re write a lyric from an existing song you know, change the story a little, be creative let your imagination run wild. You can alter a single line, one word or a whole new version. In his version of Hurt Jonny cash changes some lyrics to give it a religious dimension.

Add your own lyric and improvise over an original song of your choice, let anything go. For an example listen to Patti Smith cover 'Gloria' by Them with Van Morrison. Patti Smith transforms Gloria from a blues rock song into an epic poetic stream of consciousness.

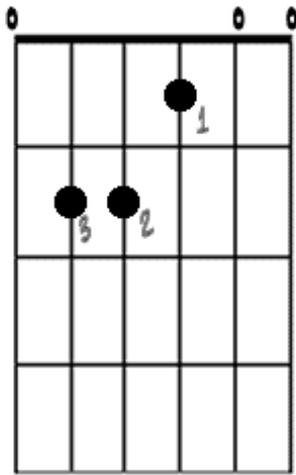
Gender swap: Find a song sung or written from a woman's point of view and re-imagine it sung by a man. Try the same with a song sung by a Man and recast the protagonist as a woman. Listen to 'Ese and the Voodoo People' cover of 'I wanna be adored' by the Stone Roses. Remove gender from the song completely, any references to he or she try 'they' for example see if it still works.

Try and play any of the songs from the list above and play it in a different genre, punk, folk, Jazz blues, Electro Pop, Metal, Rap, Reggae. Could it still work, if not why, not?

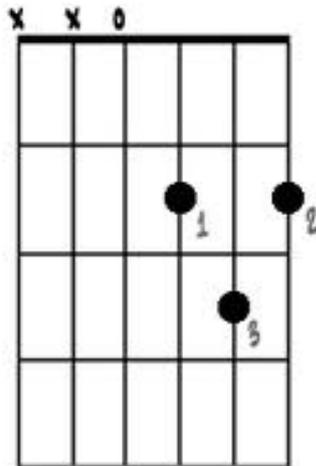
Below is the song 'Gloria' by Van Morrison its very simple just 3 chords. Try to play the song and add your own lyrics, you can change the style as much as you like, make it yours and do it with passion.

Have fun, Stay safe and Keep on Keeping on.

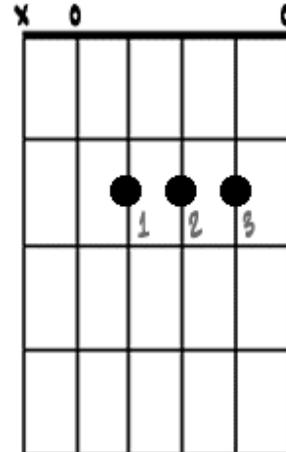
# Gloria – Them



**E MAJOR**



**D MAJOR**



**A MAJOR**

## Verse

E D A | E D A | E D A | E D A |

Let me tell you about my baby

E D A | E D A | E D A | E D A |

## Chorus

E D A | E D A | E D A | E D A |

Gl----- or ia

Gl----- or ia

Like to tell ya about my baby  
 You know she comes around  
 She about five feet four  
 From her head to the ground  
 You know she comes around here  
 At just about midnight  
 She make ya feel so good, Lord  
 She make ya feel all right  
 And her name is G-L-O-R-I  
 G-L-O-R-I-A (GLORIA)  
 G-L-O-R-I-A (GLORIA)  
 I'm gonna shout it all night (GLORIA)  
 I'm gonna shout it everyday (GLORIA)  
 Yeah-yeah-yeah-yeah-yeah-yeah