

Singer-songwriter leaves UK contest in Haze for second year running

By Brock Weir

Justin Bieber might have the 'Beliebers' and Demi Lovato her 'Lovatics' but Aurora singer-songwriter Lauren Haze promised that 2016 would be the 'year of the Hazer.'

And she was as good as her word as her words and music landed her top honours for the second straight year in the 2016 UK Song Writing Contest.

The long-running music professional music competition recently awarded Ms. Haze, 23, the top prize in their Singer/Songwriter category with her song Flatline.

'It was shocking I wasn't expecting to win again,' says Lauren Haze, the professional name of Lauren Hoyles. 'When the winners were announced I was so proud of myself.'

And with good reason it's rare to be a back-to-back winner in this competition, which has been in full swing since 2002 but Ms. Haze was determined not to rest on her laurels.

'I definitely knew I had to enter Flatline,' she says. 'It is a very different song [than last year's entry]. It was a natural choice for me because it is very emotional and people do have to have a strong reaction when they hear it.'

Flatline explores the aftermath of a breakup. All too often songwriters tug on the motional heartstrings by drawing on the immediate emotional turmoil of a split, but what's not fully explored, she says, are the lingering feelings.

'Oftentimes in movies you see a girl upset, she'll be eating a tub of ice cream while crying and watching a romantic movie,' says Ms. Haze. 'In our day and age, with so many people struggling with anxiety and depression, the more serious side of that is not really explored, where people are devastated after a breakup, are truly depressed, not knowing how to move on. I wanted to write it from the point of view of a girl or guy feeling helpless and make it.'

'It's a hard process to break up with somebody and I wanted to explore that.'

To compliment the emotional rollercoaster of Flatline, Ms. Haze also submitted more uplifting fare with 'Broken Record' to show the resilience that emerges on the other side.

A natural observer of the human behaviour, Ms. Haze always knew she had something to say but always felt in need of an outlet. She found that outlet through singing and song writing as a tween but didn't seriously pursue it as a career until she was 19, not confident enough that people would actually want to hear her husky singing voice. How wrong they were.

With a second victory in the bag, Ms. Haze is excited to enter the contest once again. She is working hard on completing as many songs as she can to unleash upon the judges by the end of this year.

'I am trying to get out of my comfort zone and stay on the creative route of lyrics and not be so typical,' she says. 'Flatline is a very unique song and I want to stick with that but get as much inspiration from different things in the world.'

So, what's next? 'A ballad,' she teases.

'It is definitely in the darker pop country range but I think it is going to make people want to get up and dance while, at the same time, being a fun and meaningful song. I am really excited about it and it will probably be released in the next few months.'

It is one of two songs that will be the capstone on her first EP, set for release later this year.