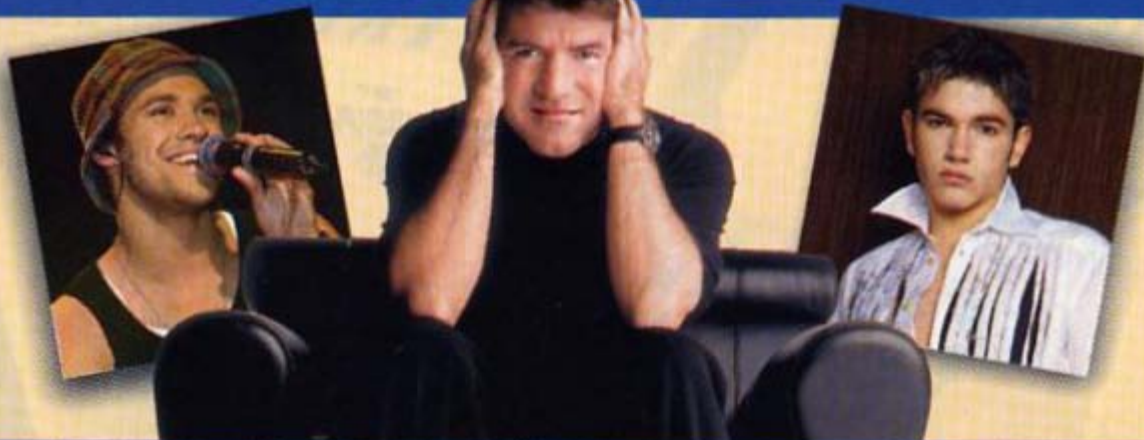


the Buzz



Idol maker: Tart-tongued Simon Cowell (center) dishes the dirt on openly gay popsters Will Young (left) and Jim Verraros.

Simon and the gay Idols

WILL YOUNG—WHO WON THE U.K. *Pop Idol* contest and then promptly came out—is finally hitting America! Sort of. The tall, lanky, good-looking Young is featured in a music video on the *101 Dalmatians II: Patch's London Adventure* DVD, swinging the big band number "Try Again."

Unfortunately, Young's other attempts to gain a toehold in the U.S.

market are failing. When impresario Simon Cowell—Mr. Nasty in the smash hit spin-off *American Idol*—was asked about Young's debut album ever getting released in the States, he said, "Unlikely. Unlikely. I'm being honest with you." But Cowell says the same for runner-up Gareth Gates, so it's probably more about lack of name recognition than Young's being out.

Meanwhile, Cowell expressed mock surprise over the coming out of *American Idol*'s Jim Verraros. "Oh, well, you know we were really shocked about that," says Cowell. "We had *no idea* he was gay. Jim Verraros actually came up to me at a show and said, 'Simon, I've got something to tell you.' I said, 'What?' He said, 'I'm gay.' I said, 'Yeah?' He went, 'Well, I've come out.' I said, 'Jim, you came out the second you appeared on this bloody show.'"