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American Idol Top 11: The Results

Posted March 20, 2008 | 12:51 AM (EST)

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The Mentors -- The results show begins with a list of all the mentors who will appear this season. (The producers felt they spent too much time with the superstars and not enough time with the kids, so this season there will be fewer mentors and they'll be focused more on helping the singers get ready.) The list is weighed a little towards mom and pop type acts, I guess, but it's a fun group. Dolly Parton should be a blast and I'll bet she's a terrific mentor who really helps them with singing and arrangements and performance. Mariah Carey one assumes would be useless -- doesn't she need six assistants to get up in the morning? But you never know -- plus, it would be really fun if she pretends not to know who Randy is. Andrew Lloyd Webber has been a judge on a UK reality series and since he has Middle America tastes when it comes to big notes and big performances, he could be a real help. And finally Neil Diamond, who has a new album coming out in May to follow-up the best CD of his career.

The Song Contest -- They're going to try again with the song contest. They held it last season but spent so little time promoting it, the event might never have happened. Songwriters definitely have an edge this year: they KNOW they need to write a ballad that's in David Archuleta's wheelhouse.

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Group Sing-Along -- Another Up With People moment in which the camera got lost and most everyone sounded flat and off...except for Kristy Lee Cook of all people.

Carly Smithson/Bottom Three -- I've been so used to people loving her, that I didn't expect this at all.

Brooke White/Safe -- She told Ryan that "Here Comes The Sun" was out of her comfort zone. Why? Because she was standing up? The song is a singer-songwriter ballad perfect for her that she bungled. Is she clueless or just defensive? I'd say defensive since she can't shut up when the judges

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are critiquing her.

Ford Commercial -- Now we don't just watch the Ford commercial, we also watch a making-of short. Good god. And while I love *Idol*, hearing them chirp The Clash's "Should I Stay Or Should I Go" was a little soul-crushing. Unquestionably that's the least cool version of that song that we'll ever hear. (I'm including the future and other alternate universes in that statement).

Kristy Lee Cook/Bottom Three -- Duh. At least I got one right.

Live Phone Calls -- Oh Lord, this is an unforgivable time waster. The only saving grace was that Simon said he'd lock lips with Paula again because she's a very good kisser. When they cut away to the kids, we heard Simon say off camera, "Get your lip gloss out, baby."

Kellie Pickler -- Sang "Red High Heels" and wore a more demure dress this season. It was a formulaic tune, even by country music standards. (I love country music as much as any other genre, but they can really cobble together some anonymous tunes.)

Amanda Overmyer/Bottom Three -- And is America waking up to her narrow range, too?

All women in the bottom three and though I think Amanda deserves to go most, I'm hoping it's Kristy since she was the only person in my bottom three (along with Michael Johns and Ramiele Malubay). So of course I'm almost completely wrong and it's Amanda that says goodbye. To her credit, Amanda remains unflappable. Carly tears up at one moment, but weeping seems wrong for this biker chick. The group hug at the end looked as awkward as possible.

Top Ten -- So the top ten is David Archuleta, Michael Johns, Brooke White, Syesha Mercado, Ramiele Malubay, Carly Smithson, Kristy Lee Cook, David Cook, Chikezie, and Jason Castro. Five guys and five girls. The only ones I expect to give a good performance are David Archuleta, David Cook, Syesha Mercado and maybe Brooke White. Carly Smithson has tons of support and a solid voice. But the rest - Kristy Lee Cook, Chikezie, Jason Castro and Ramiele Malubay are just bidding their time until the tour begins. None of them will be in the finals. And my prediction right now (and please ignore it since I've been so wrong this season) is David Archuleta (of course) and David Cook.

Who's your pick to join Archuleta in the final? And who is going home next week?

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Do these contestants get any advice on their song choices? Either they were playing it very safe, or they were unfamiliar with the songs at their disposal.

Amanda O. could have raged through "Helter Skelter" like Godzilla. I would have enjoyed it, although I suppose Middle America would have freaked out over the Manson Family connection. Nevertheless, it would have been memorable.

Jason Castro could have done so much better with any number of songs. "Girl" from "Rubber Soul" would have been a swoonfest. He looked like a complete f*cktard singing "Michelle."

Either Kristy or Ramiele or Brooke could have done something with "Ob-La-Di, Ob-La-Da." I would love to hear that song reinterpreted with a Lily Allen-type arrangement (since it really is a ska song).

"Yesterday" was nice, but where was "Here There and Everywhere"? (Actually, I would have preferred that from David A., as I think "The Long and Winding Road" is the drippiest Beatles song in their catalog.) What about "Something" (hailed erroneously by Frank Sinatra as "the greatest song written by Lennon and McCartney")? "The Fool on the Hill"?

Even the Beatles lesser-known tracks are better than most artists' hits. I submit to you: "All I've Got to Do" from "With the Beatles", "For No One" (from "Revolver") and "Baby's In Black" ("Beatles for Sale") as three examples.

I also would have appreciated someone taking a stab at "Everybody's Got Something to Hide Except for Me and My Monkey." And if anyone could have reimaged "Please Please Me" as the Roy Orbison style number John Lennon originally intended it to be, I would have been over the moon.

Could they bring Paul McCartney on as a mentor next time they do this? He probably would, you know.

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rapini [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of rapini](#) [permalink](#)

I'm responding to the top 10 episode of Idol. And, may I say, it blew my mind. What the @#!@#!# was that? An insipid song from an insipid songstress drew rave reviews from the judges - for reasons I can only imagine to be cowardly. The fact that she sang a pro-American jingle seemed to lull the judges into submission. Is that all it takes? A few trite words about freedom (has no one been reading up on FISA?) gets the OK from the UK. Wow.

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I couldn't agree more that there are countless songs from the Beatles they could have tackled. As for Paul McCartney being a mentor, I'm sure they've asked. They've been asking

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for the Beatles catalog since day one and I'm sure they've tried to entice Paul to come on for a solo McCartney theme night and would love to have him as a judge.

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GAC1 [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of GAC1](#) [permalink](#)

He was busy in court.

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I would have kept Amanda over Kristy any day, but I guess she didn't look as good in plunging necklines. Really, Smithson in the bottom three? What are the voters smoking?

And please, please, don't let that little umphah loompah, Archuleta, win. He's so sweet he could give the other half of the country without diabetes....well, diabetes.

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Smithson in the bottom three was def a surprise. But Amanda going before Kristy is no scandal -- neither one of them was going to go far. And you don't want Archuleta to win? You hope in vain. It's even more inevitable than Carrie Underwood was. I'd spend your time hoping your favorite gets to the finals - that's the best launching pad outside of winning and probably the best you can hope for.

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I think American Idol could probably conduct the primary election for Michigan and Florida. It would probably be just as accurate as the real thing. Then the media could make a spectable of it for real.

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At least we'd have more voters participating.

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Can any of you Idol/Beatles experts clear up a question for me? I thought the last two weeks were the "Lennon/McCartney Songbook." How did White get to sing "Here Comes the Sun"? It's a Harrison song. Thanks.

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last week was Lennon/McCartney; this week was Beatles week.

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Spot-on analysis, as always, Mr. Glitz. I also noticed the swells of crowd noise during Carly's rendition of Blackbird. After a second viewing of the performance I am convinced AI producers added canned cheers while taping. The hoots and hollers sound unnatural.

Beatles notes from yesterday's blog:

Re Let It Be and The Long & Winding Road: Ryan stated Let It Be was the Beatles' last single release. It was in fact the last authorized 45 release from the Beatles in March 1970. The Long & Winding Road was released in May 1970, a month after Paul's announcement that he was leaving the group, but it was only released by EMI-Capitol (on the Apple label) as a 45 in America. And yes, it did go to #1 -- in this country. So, Ryan and David A were both right!

Day Tripper was of course the flipside of We Can Work It Out, but technically not its "B" side. We Can Work It Out has proven to be the more popular track but the single was actually a double A-side release.

And finally, admittedly nitpicky on my part, but stating Yesterday is from the "Help! soundtrack" is a bit

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misleading. It was issued as the penultimate cut on side 2 -- the non-soundtrack side of Help! -- with the seven selections on side 1 comprising the actual "soundtrack" to the movie.

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I must disagree about your suggestion the producers "sweetened" the applause noise. The simplest reason is that it just isn't necessary -- any glimpse of the audience shows they're all too willing to wave their arms back and forth in unison or squeal at the drop of a hat. Plus, if they were sweetening the applause with canned sounds, I don't think they'd do it in such a bizarre, awkward manner -- the crowd literally yelled at several points then quieted down in a really strange, unnatural manner. If they were sweetening, frankly, it would have sounded more "real."

As for the trivia notes, nothing I like more than parsing this sort of thing. I erased the episodes so I'll take your word Ryan said it was just their last official release instead of their last #1. However, I sincerely doubt Ryan had in mind "their 1st official release before the band announced they would be splitting up." Further, nothing is done without their approval even today so it's not like three months later they had no say in what went on as far as their albums and what songs were released. As for the US-Uk dichotomy, you're right about that but we could write a book about the differences between releases in the two countries and again, I imagine that was the last thing on Ryan's mind. The simple argument is that instead of the hair-splitting you so deftly raised that he just got it wrong. "Let It Be" just "feels" like the last song they'd release and that's why he thought so.

I've never understood how a single gets designated as a Double A-side rather than having an A side and a B side. Can you explain that to me? I'd love to know. But given that as true, then yes "Day Tripper" was the flipside but not the B side. Thanks for the clarification.

Finally, you are not being nitpicky -- and yet you are. I should have made clear I was referring to the official UK release of Help! (all CDs are currently based on the official UK versions of course). The song "Yesterday" appears on the album "Help!" both in the UK originally and today on CD. (It didn't appear on the orginal US version of the soundtrack.) But referring to the soundtrack side and non-soundtrack side is indeed nitpicky. The song is on the album. It's not performed in the actual film but that's a whole 'nother story.

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Glad you like parsing, as I do. Let's grind it out!

It is absolutely possible--even likely--that Ryan misspoke and got it "right" accidentally. But the fact is, especially when using UK releases as standard, Let It Be was their last single. And that's exactly how Ryan presented it. The Long & Winding Road was not released as a single in the UK. At least he was consistent throughout the show in referencing songs to UK releases (e.g., You Can't Do That from A Hard Day's Night as opposed to Capitol's slapdash Beatles 2nd Album).

You're right of course also that the Beatles would certainly sign off on releases outside the UK. In the case of The Long & Winding Road, ironically perhaps in the context of our discussion, they most certainly did NOT sign off on its release as a single. Paul McCartney has been on record since 1970 saying that he absolutely abhors the final version of TL&WR, with Phil Spector's syrupy overdubs and all, and lobbied heavily against its release.

Finally, on the Help! thing we are really quibbling here. My point is, the UK Help! album (like A Hard Day's Night) is not a true soundtrack, in that half the songs are not in the movie. The soundtrack SIDE--tracks 1 through 7--is side 1; while none of the side 2 tracks of Help! were ever considered for inclusion in the film. They are just side 2 material for the album.

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the funny thing is, just the other day I was thinking one of these kids should turn The Clash "Should I Stay or Should I Go" into a ballad.

I was hugely disappointed with the Ford version.

very much looking forward to Neil Diamond. The guy is one of the most amazing performers I have

ever seen live.

Gonna have to pass on the Mariah Carey deal. She couldn't even sing LIVE on SNL last week. Is she going to teach them how to lip-synch?

David Archuleta makes me really sad.

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Mariah's lip-synching on SNL was indeed very lame, especially for someone who technically has a big voice. Don't let Archuleta make you sad. Think of all the teenyboppers he makes happy. As I've said before, Archuleta is EXACTLY the sort of Idol winner the record labels and the Idol producers expected the show uncover every season. Instead they got the healthy looking (ie not wafer thin) Kelly Clarkson, a hugely obese guy (with a nerdy runner-up), an illiterate single mom and on and on. So after seven seasons we get tiger beat pin-up? Not so bad.

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hmm.. pretty surprised Carly was at the bottom 3. She sang quite well in my opinion, so not totally sure what happened there. I hope this is just an aberration, because I think she has the best voice of the bunch (better than even David A) and she can actually win if this was a pure talent contest (which of course it's not). I was not a fan of hers at the beginning but she's growing on me, so I'm kinda rooting for her, if anything to give David a run for his allowance money.

No surprise Kristy was at the bottom, but I was a bit surprised Amanda got the boot. She's not a great singer, or even for that matter a good singer, but she has that something a lot of the other singers don't have, Presence. You notice her on the stage, she may be a fright, but by golly you know it's her up there, belting out tunes in her limited range.

Kristy is barely hanging on and we all know it's mainly because she's pretty hot. She's got the babe vote from the guys.

I agree, David A is a sure lock on the finals, it's preordained since the beginning of the show. I'm sure the producers of AI are chomping at the bit to put out this kid's CD and make a quick buck before all the tweens get sick of him.

I also agree David Cook has a shot, but I'd also throw in Carly (if she can hang on to the end) and as a dark horse, Syesha. She's got the look, voice and tenacity to make it to the finals. Her "Yesterday" I thought was brilliant and if she can build on that she has a shot. But I would like to see David Cook duke it out with David A, it would be a great contrast in styles, looks, song choices, and age.

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Everyone else agrees w you about Carly of course. I've been a big fan of Syesha and hope "Yesterday" was a breakthrough for her and not a peak. She or Carly could certainly be there at the end. I chose Cook at the moment because he's been the most consistent of ANY contestant (including Archuleta) since breaking through with "Hello." Plus Michael Johns is no threat and Amanda is gone so he's the only rocker, which helps. I too think they'd be a good contrast in the finals.

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The Group sing a long is actually a good idea especially since the Beatles were known for their ability to harmonize. Unfortunately there wasn't that much effort put into this sing a long and so there was no three part harmony, too bad.

Kristy Lee should go home but it sounds like they are all going to tour first. E-gads!

What ? Mariah Carey ? Oh, I don't know, how about:

Vision of Love
Someday
Love takes time
emotions
I don't wanna cry

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I was sure someone, somewhere would pass the "rattle off 5 hot ones" test but I think the larger problem is that if someone attempts to sing these note for note, there will be injuries. Do we want that kind of carnage on the American Idol stage?

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mariah is going to be a mentor but I sincerely doubt the theme of the night will be Mariah carey songs -- more like 90s night, just as Dolly parton (who has written probably more than a thousand songs) will be helping them on country night or maybe movie songs night. They will not limit the kids to singing Mariah Carey tunes. That would be a horrific thought.

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I don't think the role of a coach or mentor is to teach someone note for note how to be me. A good coach will evaluate and recognize the strengths of an individual competitor and teach them how to improve.

Despite Mariah Carey's vocal gymnastics and ubra high pitch there remains a large and unnecessary amount of air escaping from her throat instead of music. It's a sound you either like or dislike but in elite music circles it is not desirable.

On balance what she offers is more good than bad in fact pretty great and thus her success.

I want to see the Mr. Dean Marin and Mr. Frank Sinatra impersonators be able to sing the Beatles straight and do it with feeling, emotion, and complicated emptiness.

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HuffPost's Pick

Carly Smithson in the bottom 3? Hmmmm, I'd have to say that I didn't see that one coming but, in the end we have been saved from the Amanda Overmeyer ballad you just knew had to be coming, thanks to Paula's misguided urging. Things relating to music such as melody was a mountain that Amanda just couldn't climb so, of course, "Back in the USSR" turned into a blues rocker (with fewer notes than I remembered) instead of the Beach Boys homage it was designed to be.

Kristy Lee Cook, with a good natured smile on her face took her usual place in the bottom 3 only to escape once again but, hey, there's always next week!

While the 'Live Phone Calls' segment should have been deep 6'd after the first time out, what remains stupefying to me is posting the question on the big board before the persons asks it and then all concerned having to feign some modicum of surprise like they didn't see that question coming. I don't get it whatsoever. You're right though, at least Simon's kissing response had some entertainment value.

Kellie Pickler...how I've missed that bumkin charm and while you're not the greatest voice on the block, at least you delivered some sass into a pretty banal song. That song should have a label warning that says 'don't try this unless you're as cute as Pickler and have a killer pair of red pumps'.

Mariah Carey? No, seriously, Mariah Carey? Quickly...rattle off 5 hot ones from the Carey catalog.

Why bother with the 'song contest'. The winning entry has been, and always will be, regardless of who's writing it, just another piece of disposable music destined for the landfill 15 minutes after you hear it. Can you imagine if Blake Lewis had won last year and had to muddle his way through that tripe? He was obviously relieved from the prospect of that.

Seriously, Mariah Carey?

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I'd had the same thought about the phone calls -- why is Simon looking confused about the question -- can't he read the giant monitor looming over Ryan with all the questions printed out? At this stage, Kristy would probably freak out if she weren't in the bottom three. I agree Blake Lewis was at some level relieved he didn't have to sing that song, though winning the entire show would have taken the sting out of it. And again, Carey is a mentor but that doesn't mean the theme will be Mariah Carey songs.

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Simon looked confused because they only showed the first of two questions that the caller had for them. The screen showed the kiss question. The other question was about what Simon thought of Paula's new single.

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