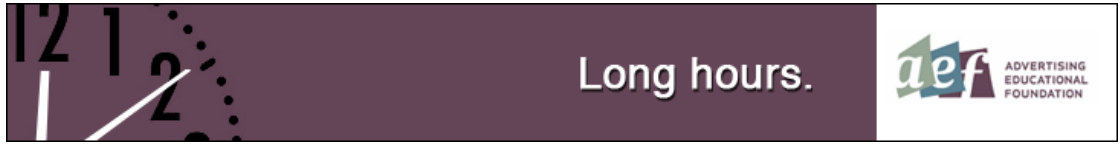




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# American Idol -- Week Two, Pt 2

Posted January 24, 2008 | 11:01 AM (EST)

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Another slightly off kilter show from *Idol*. We saw about 10 people or duos make full blown auditions and only three times did they hear "You're going to Hollywood." And in a truly bizarre bit of editing, we saw three "yes's" in a row followed by five "no's" to end the night. When it comes to pacing, that's pretty poor planning. The *Idol* producers are focused on telling stories this season. Great. But since we saw plenty of people getting the exciting news in montages, we can't help wondering why we didn't get to see more potentially good acts. They've forgotten the main purpose of the show: not to tell a story, but to find a great singer. People watch the auditions looking for someone that blows them away, someone they can "discover" along with the judges and feel like that person has a shot at the final 12 or winning it all. Last night we only saw four people (including two siblings) go through and frankly none of them was instantly thrilling. Sure, the judges have bad days like that, but with the magic of editing, we shouldn't.

**Raysharde Henderson** -- the guy with the big Afro. He set the stage for the night by bringing a lot of volume if not a lot of skill. Apparently, these days when a CD is mastered, the labels insist the recording levels be pushed up to "11," out of fear that their CD might sound quieter than the one next to it. Even quiet passages are pushed to be as loud as possible. Nuance has gone out the window. This might just be influencing the way kids sing, since so many tonight thought "loud" equalled "good."

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**DeAnna Prevatte** -- a sullen waitress who doesn't get good tips from the Sunday buffet crowd. It might be your personality, sweetheart. *Idol* tries to weed out the people who know they can't sing and just want to get on TV and Prevatte proves they usually get it right. Her subtle moment of disbelief when Simon

says she doesn't have a great voice was priceless.

**Randy Stark and Crystal Ortiz** -- a couple that met on an *Idol* message board do a duet, with Randy in particular trilling away like Tiny Tim. He doesn't even remember the words. A waste of our time that seems self-promoting of the show, somehow.

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**Michelle and Jeffrey Lampkin** -- this plus-sized brother and sister act had exuberant personalities. No wait, actually only Jeffrey had an exuberant personality a la Luther Vandross crossed with Mo'Nique. But they could both sing. No, actually only Jeffrey could sing. But soft-hearted Simon said, "I can't split you two up" and sent them both to Hollywood. Another gold ticket that seems designed for television fun rather than actual talent, since Michelle clearly was weak.

**Amy Flynn** -- one of the recurring routines this year seems to be Simon's puzzled reaction to America. A guy walks in and says he hasn't even kissed a girl yet and Simon looks astonished. When friends let out whoops of excitement over someone making it, Simon can't understand why anyone would get excited over the success of someone else. And Amy walks in brandishing an incoherent but sincere plea that people wait until they're married before having sex (whether you are dating a boy or a girl, she offers gamely) and Simon again can't believe his ears. I couldn't believe my ears when she sang "Reflections" by Christina Aguilera. Amy was okay -- if this were a high school talent show, she'd get big applause. But she was awkward throughout and just disastrous when she got breathy and "subtle" towards the end. But Paula insisted she had a sweetness about her, especially towards the end, Randy said she had "mad potential" and Simon was right when he said many would find her annoying but said "yes" as well. Huh? I played back her audition a few times and I still don't know what they were hearing.

**London Weidberg** -- she sang Billie Holiday's "Good Morning, Heartache" but -- just as *Idol* intended -- what I really remember is that her dad died. London was good, though the judges seemed less than thrilled with her and I thought for a moment she wouldn't get through. But they like her "tone," which is definitely the word of the day, the way "pitchy" used to reign supreme.

Then in a break from the action, Randy was hopeful South Carolina would produce some better acts because he's always heard the South will rise again. Uh, Randy, you do NOT want that to happen in the way that's meant.

**Lyndsey Goodman** -- an attractive Air Force pilot who looked a lot more nervous when she was auditioning than when she was piloting a plane the size of a football field. Maybe she should have just pictured Simon as a B-52 bomber. Maybe if she hadn't sung "Black Velvet." Seriously, don't these auditioners know the judges must be sick of the same ten songs people sing over and over.

**Aretha Codner** -- Simon smiles immediately when the big-breasted Aretha shows up. But none are smiling after she belts out Whitney Houston's "I Have Nothing." This was a rather strange rejection. All three of the judges were brutal and treated Aretha as if she were the most talentless, horrible singer of the day. No, she shouldn't have been sent through. But it wasn't hard to hear why family and friends might urge her on. Maybe if they'd acknowledged she had an okay voice and can and should enjoy singing at church or on her own, but just made clear she'd never have a professional career, Aretha might not have been so adamant. She wasn't William Hung for goodness sake and that's how they acted towards her.

**Joshua Boson** -- he sang "(And I Am Telling You) I'm Not Going" from *Dreamgirls* and was a total disaster. But at least his angry response and tirades to the camera while walking out seemed genuine. Joshua was not pleased and that's a lot more fun than someone who is just begging for airtime.

In a clever use of music, *Idol* showed a montage of rejections set to the tune of They Might Be Giants singing "No!" one of their witty songs from a trio of albums geared to kids. Well done, whoever thought of that.

**Oliver Highman** -- new dad Oliver ended the night with a lot of vibrato and a friendly "no." I do fear/believe his newly born daughter might very well audition for *Idol* 16 years from now and we'll be seeing footage from this episode when she does.

So, bad pacing, lots of "no's," not a single person I'm ready to gamble on as a major talent and two out of the four people who are going to Hollywood are questionable. Was South Carolina that bad or has *Idol* placed telling a story ahead of showing us talented singers? Is there anyone here you think will get to the final 12? Is this season more or less or the same amount of fun as previous years? Tell me what you think.

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