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American Idol -- Top 10: Motown



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Hey, aren't young people supposed to know how to handle technology? So how come my nieces and nephews checked not once but twice to make sure they were DVRing Idol for me (I'm on the road this week) and yet STILL failed to catch the show? Then I called my friend Aaron just one minute AFTER he erased the show on his DVR so I couldn't slingbox it. Didn't find video illegally posted last night on the web. This morning I get all legal and go to iTunes. Early this morning,

only TWO videos were available for sale: of all people, Megan Joy and Scott, two of the most panned performances of the night. Now they're all up, but really -- \$1.50 for each and every video (and no judges critique)? How about \$2 for the entire show, just like *24* and *Secret Life* and every other TV show on TV? \$15 just for the performance videos from the Top 10?

But do I need to actually watch the show in order to know who is going home?

Ken Levine praised Adam Lambert -- who reportedly finally gave a restrained performance -- and said Michael Sarver would get the boot.

Entertainment Weekly's Michael Slezak also panned Michael Sarver, Scott MacIntyre and Megan Joy (the consensus worst-three of the night, clearly). He thinks Sarver's cranky attitude will get him the boot and had a shout out for Kris Allen.

Vote For The Worst has its heart set on keeping Megan Joy going: they think she's the worst and so they urge you to vote for her.

Dial Idol -- which ranks contestants based on how many busy signals they get when dialing in -- also says the bottom three is Scott, Megan Joy and Michael Sarver, with Sarver at the very bottom.

My friend Aaron grumbles every week that he's sick of the show and doesn't like anyone but always has a detailed critique and is afraid his favorite -- based on, ahem, her talents -- will be sent packing. (I mean you, Megan Joy.)

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Marc Berman of Mediaweek also sees Megan and Scott and Michael in the bottom three, with Michael going home.

And talk about anonymous: the [Associated Press recap](#) didn't even mention Anoop or Scott!

It sounds like Scott had a good post-performance chat with the judges making fun of his pink pants. So sight unseen, I'd say the bottom three is Megan Joy and Scott MacIntyre and Michael Sarver with Sarver going home. Megan Joy makes it another week thanks to being cute, one of the few remaining women, the support of Vote For The Worst and the fact that she's funny and a goof while Sarver was defensive.

But now I've found illegal postings online (no, I am NOT going to spend \$15 to watch the performance videos; Idol REALLY needs to post the entire show for \$2) so let's see if the online appraisals gibe with what I see now. (I skipped Smokey's sessions for time reasons.)

MATT GIRAUD -- Sings "Let's Get It On." With a killer falsetto, Matt delivers an excellent performance of the song, just nailing it in every way. All four judges praise him with Randy and Simon -- who were just on Jay Leno announcing the final three would be Lil Rounds Adam Lambert and Danny Gokey -- admitting that Matt was vying for the finals. Kara -- and really, I'm just jealous that I'm not the fourth judge instead of her -- bizarrely said Matt should have done MORE riffing and straying away from the song. She must really love Mariah Carey. Paula slaps her down subtly by praising the fact that Matt respected the melody. Paula's right; something I've been saying all season and more than ever before.

KRIS ALLEN -- Sings "How Sweet It Is (To Be Loved By You)." Another smashing performance by someone who hasn't come close to peaking yet. Kris owned the stage, was flawless on vocals, gave a good spin to the James Taylor arrangement and to my mind was just terrific. Also looked great, of course, though I'm worried the stubble could become too studied. If I saw him performing on the Grammys or at the Beacon in NYC, that performance would prove he belongs there. And of course he's the most Tiger Beat-ish of the season. I don't know if he'll win and I don't know if he has any originals in him, but I'd sign him right now as being the most obviously commercial of the Top 10. Bizarrely, Kara insisted Kris DIDN'T do James Taylor. Well, he gave the song an original spin but he was clearly doing the James Taylor arrangement. Otherwise, all four judges praised him with Simon calling for more swagger. The others insist conceit has nothing to do with it, but there are very few (if no) superstars in music (or movies or theater or TV) who aren't bursting with self-regard and an unshakable belief in their own fabulousness.

SCOTT MACINTYRE -- Sings "You Can't Hurry Love." I've felt Scott was out of his league throughout the Top 36 and nothing he did tonight has changed my mind. The quiet intro was actually not bad but then the song speeded up -- and thank goodness for him. The backup singers arrayed around the piano a la the Rae-lettes of Ray Charles -- and the upbeat melody masked very weak vocals. Scott actually came across better than he has in a while -- at least his vocal limitations were masked -- but he still wasn't any good, running out of breath repeatedly, flat at times and so on. The male judges were very negative, and the women were only polite at best. Kara -- who a minute ago insisted Matt should take more vocal liberties -- now chided Scott for taking any at all. She also got ghetto again, saying "Gimme some rhythm, Scott. Yo, I like that" which I found unbearable. Paula had the best moment of the night by surprising Simon with crayons and coloring book when she felt he was misbehaving. He laughed so much you know it was a surprise.

MEGAN JOY -- Sang "For Once In My Life." She looked adorable and sang with gusto. Megan Joy was never going to go all the way, but actually for the first time in a while I felt Megan at least lived up to her own potential. She was shouty at times and couldn't hit the high notes, but it had a ton of personality. No, it wasn't actually good but I can see how in the studio she could hit a Madeleine Peyroux sort of vein. All the judges were negative. And Kara again got ghetto by saying, "Tell 'er to come back because we lookin' for her." What is up with that? Unlike what I've heard about Michael Sarver, she handled their comments politely. Simon's comment about how she should fire whomever is advising her was a rare admittance of all the serious backstage teams behind these people.

ANOOP DESAI - Sang "Ooh, Baby, Baby." Technically very proficient and certainly good enough to get through. But sometimes you feel someone is singing for the audience (or for the song) and

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sometimes they're singing for themselves. When Anoop looked into the camera I didn't feel like he was looking at us; I thought he was looking in a mirror. Totally unfair and subjective, but there you are. All the judges liked it though Simon thought it was a bit boring on the showmanship side.

MICHAEL SARVER -- Sang "Ain't To Proud To Beg." Like Scott and Megan Joy, Michael is one of the people who makes the Top 10 and then has people wondering how they got there. But also like Megan Joy and Scott, I thought Michael lived up to his potential. He's not that good of a singer, so exactly how good do they expect him to be? I thought he did a credible job giving his skills on the tune, working the crowd, having fun and so on. It wasn't good. I'm not trying to pay a backhanded compliment. Instead of falling flat on his face, Michael did the best he could. He did drop the ball with the comments by saying he could "turn it around and SANG." Uh, shouldn't you be doing that all the time? And why did he know when he walked out on stage that it would be subpar? As good as it gets for him, but not good enough.

LIL ROUNDS -- Sang "Heatwave" and had the perfect look for Motown week -- not dress-up retro but a great nod to the past. Was fine, but this is a classic example of a great single but not a great song to cover. There just isn't that much you can do with this tune. Michael Slezak of *EW* interestingly points out how this tune has been a curse in past seasons. The judges were mostly negative except for Paula, who praised her. But they gave Lil so many props she should be back.

ADAM LAMBERT -- In the past, I've felt that Adam was "playing" a rock star on stage, as if he were in another musical. Tonight, when he seemed to be wearing more of a costume than ever with the Elvis hair and cleaned-up look, ironically I thought Adam actually was just singing the song. Almost everyone has been calling for him to tone down the theatrics (they don't belong on every song and certainly not on Johnny Cash's "Ring Of Fire") and he delivered with a simple, straightforward "Tracks Of My Tears" with an acoustic backing and some killer falsetto. I don't think he's pulling away, thanks to steadily improving Matt, Kris and (hopefully, I haven't watched her yet -- Allison), not to mention Lil and Danny. But finally, I can join Adam's fans and genuinely applaud his performance. Now next week do Meatloaf and wig out as much as you want.

DANNY GOKEY -- Sang "Get Ready." It's never a good idea to ignore direct advice from a guest artist, especially when you say on video that you will listen to them. Nonetheless, Danny gave certain lines to the backup singers. Not that anyone seemed to notice or care. Danny was fine, but I wrote "peaked?" while he was singing. Yes, he is solid and dependable like Paula said. But it felt familiar. Good, not great. All the judges agreed, except for Simon who came down hard. Not a lock for the finals anymore, by a long stretch, especially since he seems too similar to recent winner Taylor Hicks.

ALLISON IRAHETA -- Sang "(Papa Was A) Rolling Stone." Most everyone is talking about Adam Lambert online, and all props to him for delivering on his promise. But Matt Giraud was very strong. Kris looked like a pro, Danny and Lil are ready to bounce back and then there's Allison. Maybe the judges were rushed, but they weren't strong enough in their praise. You only mention someone's age when their skills are limited. "She can run really fast...for a 63 year old." "He's very good at math...for a five year old." Allison is not a good singer...for a 16 year old. She's a good singer, period. Make that a great singer. She was tremendous on this tune, and the final "alone, alone, alone...ALONE" sent chills down my spine. The comparisons to Kelly Clarkson are inevitable and earned: a dark horse who keeps getting better and better and peaks when she should: the last three weeks. Terrific.

OK, so I spent an hour watching clips and came to the same conclusion I did after reading all the online chatter. That's depressing :) The bottom three are Scott MacIntyre and Megan Joy and Michael Sarver. The bottom two are Megan Joy and Michael Sarver. And going home is...Michael Sarver. What do you think?

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Great thoughts, Michael. The AI website does offer up the performance videos pretty soon, so you can always catch the show - albeit edited - there. After being largely against Adam, this week he won me over. He sang with such honesty and vulnerability, it was the best case of "singing for the audience" instead of himself as you mentioned.

Matt is growing on me. I think the problem is that life is a beauty contest in some respects and I think Matt needs a makeover ala Elliot Yamin. The people I talk to think Matt has a good voice but the current looks are not drawing them in i.e. needs hair a bit longer, cleaner face, smoothed out complexion and I think the wart in the middle of his head might need to go... stuff like that. Call me superficial..

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Thanks for the comments. I agree about Matt. As for the AI site, they didn't have the performances as of that night or the next morning. Maybe they wait a few days? And they don't include judge's comments. And if they're gonna post them for free, why sell each video for the obscenely high \$1.50 on iTunes instead of the entire show for \$2 like every other network show on TV? Can't be music rights or they wouldn't have the individual clips available.

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