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 Freelance writer and raconteur
 Posted: January 19, 2010 11:49 PM

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Idol Season 9: Auditions -- Chicago

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One hour felt like two hours in Chicago where talent was thin on the ground. As a result, the judges were so relieved to hear people that didn't suck, they let some through that didn't deserve it. Humor and notable characters were also lacking, thank goodness. As *Idol* continues, I find I have less and less patience for bad auditions and NO patience for the show using clueless folks as fodder for fun. Luckily, the show seems to be avoiding cattiness this season as well. But there's not much you can do when the singing is bad. Here's a rundown of the people who auditioned that got

through.

KATELYN EPPERLY -- Her parents are splitting up so to placate her mom, Katelyn is finally auditioning. Sang "Syrup and Honey" by Duffy. Wore boots. Looked good and had presence, though not a big voice. Interesting.

CHARITY VANCE -- Sang "Summertime." Cute 16 year old girl whose parents are hairdressers. With eight gazillion songs to choose from, why do so many people choose songs the judges (and we) have heard a thousand times? She had way too many trills and runs in her vocal, a sure sign of inexperience. Maybe she'll surprise, but seems too young to me. And it's clear where the power still lies: she came out of the room and told her family, "Simon said yes!"

ANGELA MARTIN -- Sang "Just Fine" by Mary J. Blige. (Thank God she didn't audition in Atlanta in front of Blige or that might have thrown her off.) Martin has had enough drama to fuel three soap operas. She auditioned in season seven so she could help take care of her ailing baby girl. Luckily, Shriner's Hospital saw her and pledged free medical care until her daughter is 21. Then her father was killed right before she left for Hollywood and Martin was emotionally shattered. She auditioned in Season Eight but had to bow out of Hollywood because she had a traffic violation and had to go to court and apparently couldn't get them to change the court date. (Maybe it was Judge Judy.) Now she's back and in control, sounding good, looking good and singing with maturity. Excellent audition and clearly the best of the

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day. She's not messing around. Kara threw in a "Pay your tickets, girl." Ugh.

Oodles of bad auditions followed including a mock silent movie segment that managed to make light of the failure without picking on any contestants. Smart moment.

JOHN PARK -- Sang...see, I forgot to write down what he sang because it was boring and I didn't think he'd get through. OK male choir coice and he's definitely good-looking. But I think the judges were so beaten down by a day of bad auditions that they overreacted to his not sucking. Clean, straightforward, but not lots of character. Maybe he'll show a lot more in Hollywood, but kind of dull to me.

PAIGE DECHAUSSE -- Sang Sam Cooke's "A Change Is Gonna Come." This is asthma girl, a young woman who has been singing all her life but lives with asthma and had such a severe attack once she almost died. She seemed to lose her key when singing the song, threw in WAY too many riffs and trills and worst of all screwed up the lyrics, singing two lines from the first verse and one line from the second and changing a few words IN the lines, none of which was mentioned by the judges. Simon rightly said it was self-indulgent but Shania Twain and Kara liked her and cajoled Randy into giving her another shot. Maybe Simon's "no" will be a wake-up call?

So a very weak day with just one audition I wholly supported. By the way, if you find it hard to sit through a one hour show without a lot of talent, think of the hundreds if not thousands of auditions the judges endure.

At the end, they wisely showed 10-20 seconds or so of the rest of the winning auditions. Why they don't do this EVERY night of audition week is beyond me. And online they're finally showing memorable auditions and interviews with all (?) he golden ticket winners but still not every winning audition, which again puzzles me no end. Why not let us see EVERY winning audition in full? It can only increase our interest in Hollywood and expands the franchise beyond TV and to the website. You'd think it would be a no-brainer.

So who did you like and did you agree with the judges?

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jkath 02:07 PM on 1/21/2010

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I always assumed that they don't show at least some of the auditions because they sang a song that AI doesn't have rights to.

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sportsgamer 08:44 AM on 1/21/2010

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AI has a biased demographic and contestants who make it are often limited to four groups. They hardly ever seem to pick ethnics with voweled surnames. And when they do, they don't often make it very far.

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Michael Giltz 01:25 PM on 1/21/2010
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Not sure what your comment is about. Maybe you could be less vague and more specific? Certainly Idol has been pretty racially diverse, more so than most TV shows. But that's been par for the course in reality TV, which often reflects the diversity of America much better than sitcoms and dramas. Though apparently not as much as you'd like, I take it.

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67bug 08:10 PM on 1/20/2010

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Good to see you back for another round, Michael!

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Michael Giltz 02:08 AM on 1/21/2010
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Thanks for noticing!

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BunnyHrtz773 02:43 PM on 1/20/2010

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All I have to say is Idol in general is a waste. And I would like to know where pieces of the "chicago" auditions were filmed because chicago does not have palm trees. In the summer in planters at one beach? Yes. Outside on the streets and around venues?? No. Its the midwest, no palm trees people.

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Michael Giltz 02:07 AM on 1/21/2010
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I've seen palm trees by the lake, haven't I? They film people at their homes after the auditions when they want to tell a story and not everyone is FROM Chicago that auditions there, so perhaps that's the reason you saw a location that didn't look like Chicago. People fly from all over to audition, you know. The show's way too successful, I fear, to have to fake where they're shooting.

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BunnyHrtz773 04:13 PM on 1/22/2010

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Right, palm trees at one beach... But I will rewatch to see what parts all the palm trees were at. I don't believe (could be wrong) that the scences with palms were

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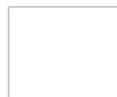
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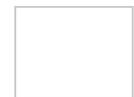
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when AI was following specific people... it was group shots. But I will check. :) Even though I am questioning shots in the chicago area, there is no mistaking the ghettofied chicago style cursing. (not proud of it) but it happens everywhere.

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jesselee26 12:31 PM on 1/20/2010
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i was bored to tears by chicago's auditions.

and i completely agree with you about showing us more of the people who pass onto hollywood. i always skip the part of the season between auditions and the top ten, because i'm sick of the show by the end of the auditions.... and have no vested interest in any of the contestants who actually pass on.

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HUFFPOST BLOGGER
Michael Giltz 02:16 PM on 1/20/2010
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Exactly. Hollywood would be a lot more interesting if we could actually watch the auditions of everyone who made it online. Since they're not showing them on-air, I literally have no idea why Idol doesn't drive traffic to their website by showing the complete auditions there. Like you, a lot of people tune out Hollywood and come back for the top ten. But this year I imagine Ellen's presence will bring in some new viewers wanting to see how she does. Thanks for reading.

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