



DECEMBER 21, 2010

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Michael Giltz

Freelance writer and raconteur
Posted: February 3, 2010 10:32 AM

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Idol Season 9: Auditions -- Denver

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Twenty-six hopefuls received a golden ticket to Hollywood during two days of auditions in Denver. So how come none of the people we heard impressed me? Blame it on the backstory: from a premature birth to a motorcycle accident to...a really long plane ride, they've endured it all. Victoria Beckham was the guest judge again and either she loosened up or the lack of a hi-def plasma TV simply softened her, but Beckham didn't look nearly as encased as she did last time, thank goodness for her.

MARK LABRIOLA -- Sang "Tempted" by Squeeze. This is the guy who was abducted by his mother (who didn't have custody) and lived on the lam from age 4 to age 10. His vocals were fine, though I could have done without the hand gesture of calling someone on the phone during the line, "Memories of it still keep calling and calling." Smooth but not especially memorable, which set the stage for the day.

KIMBERLEY KERBOW -- Sang "The Way I Am" by Ingrid Michaelson. She's a single mom, which hardly bears worth mentioning at this stage. Saucy and more of a flirt than a singer, when she sang "I'd buy you Rogaine when you start losing all your hair," they acted as if she'd rewritten the line to make fun of Simon. Randy was the only one not to notice she was wearing a wig, an odd little note I can't remember the judges commenting on before, though surely they have.

DANELLE HAYES -- Sang "I'm The Only One" by Melissa Etheridge. Single mom who works a karaoke night and sings in cover bands and realizes it ain't easy trying to become a pop star. She sang most every line the same way: very raspy and then ending on a smooth soft note, raspy then smooth, raspy then smooth. But they liked her tears and sent her through.

CASEY JAMES -- Sang...oh, what does it matter. He was in a motorcycle accident at 21 and nearly died and now it causes pain for him to play his guitar but that won't stop him. He was fine looking, but the ladies acted as if he were Jim Morrison, getting him to take down his hair and take off his shirt. Simon -- who loved bikini girl -- thought it was terribly embarrassing. Apparently, he hasn't seen any photo shoots

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Amanda Knox Court Makes

of rock stars with their shirt off in the last 30 years right up to John Mayer on Rolling Stone last issue. Everyone agreed he had no pizzazz ("Find some star persona pills!" suggested Randy) and his vocals were so brief I have no idea if he can sing. But he did have a flat stomach.

TORI KELLY -- Sang "Gravity" by John Mayer. Simon said no but I agree with the other three. Her voice was at least distinctive and she sang it well.

NICCI NIX -- This is the girl with the Minnie Mouse speaking voice. (It was so soft I played her back three times but couldn't hear what song she was singing. They should list the person and the song and the artist the way MTV does when they play a music video. Just another helpful suggestion; I can't be the only one who doesn't always hear or recognize the artist and would appreciate this.) Her singing voice was lower and much better (I expected a train wreck) so perhaps she got through just on the contrast, but she was quirky and appealing.

HAELEY VAUGHN -- She sang a Carrie Underwood song, while hoping to become a female Charley Pride. Haeley was a premature birth and her dad died when she was ten. Fine, but as Randy said, too much of a copycat of Carrie's version. No idea if she can sing or just imitate.

So, a brisk, well-edited show with 26 winners heard or glimpsed but not one that excited me. Did you think any of the people headed to Hollywood had what it takes to go all the way? Or did you agree with me that they didn't all deserve to get through?

Follow Michael Giltz on Twitter: www.twitter.com/michaelgiltz

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CAMBEL 01:40 PM on 2/04/2010

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They've pretty much lost me. When they are having people drag up stories from 20 years ago about some asthma attack, or the fact that it's a "Miracle" that they are here because they were a preemie it's time to shut the TV off. Give me a break. It's just pathetic TV...here is an idea, less time on phony human interest story and more time spent with people that can actually sing well.

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markatlarge 12:23 PM on 2/04/2010

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It was more like Project Runway last night. Check this out Victoria Beckham gets slammed for her appearance. <http://bit.ly/alDqUQ>

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fashion friend 09:41 AM on 2/04/2010

0 Fans

Not many of the contestants have excited us yet either. There are some good singers, but I am still waiting to hear someone who knocks my socks off. Here are my favourites from Denver: <http://realstylenetwork.com/index.php/celebrities/2010/02/american-idol-recap-denver-auditions/>

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cherieamour 06:14 PM on 2/03/2010

77 Fans

...i think that Haeley Vaughn shows lots of promise, and i hope that she goes far...wanting to a mainstream black country is indeed a bold move and i applaud her for not wanting to be the next Fantasia or Mary J. Blige...

...and for you to say that she was 'imitating' Carrie Underwood was pretty low...she has great singing voice and she knows what wants...would you say that about the other auditioners singing songs by black artists?...

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Burnsey 06:44 PM on 2/03/2010

14 Fans

I am glad you mentioned that she is black, as it makes a difference in the fact that her goal is to become the first major black Country Western/Pop singer. It might have had some bearing on the judges letting her through. She was pretty good. I am surprised that Michael didn't mention that. It was a big part of her "backstory".

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cherieamour 09:16 PM on 2/03/2010

77 Fans

...i'm glad that you saw that because i am a fan of country and singers like Charlie Pride and Reesie (sp?) Palmer fly under the radar all the time, so i am very excited for this young lady...

...and speaking as a fellow preemie, she is very inspiring and i wish her the best of luck on AL...

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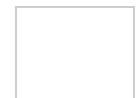
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