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Michael Giltz

Freelance writer and raconteur
Posted: April 21, 2010 01:43 AM

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Idol Season 9: Top 7 -- Tim Smiles All The Way Home

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RESULTS AND RATINGS: I'm in Champaign, Illinois for Roger Ebert's film festival, so I didn't get to watch *Idol Gives Back*. But as I predicted, Tim Urban finally went home. And you know, voters aren't so wacky. He stayed on the last few weeks because he gave pretty good performances, despite his vocal limitations. This week he was bad and he went home. Aaron Kelly and Casey James were both in the bottom three, with Casey probably wondering why his much more confident and rock star-ish persona isn't connecting with fans the way Lee Dewyze's sad sack mumbling does. I'm surprised by Aaron, even though he's been in the bottom three before. But those who

commented below picked him as vulnerable.

But the big news for me as a TV buff was the fact that *Idol* has beaten back a threat from *Dancing With The Stars*. Briefly, with Kate Gosselin on *DWTS*, that show was beating *Idol*. This meant *Idol's* chance to make TV history and become the first show to ever rank #1 for six different seasons was in jeopardy. (Plus, *Idol* will be #1 for six seasons in a row!) But last week *Idol* beat *DWTS* and did it again this week. On Monday, *DWTS* scored 18.93 million viewers. But on Tuesday, *Idol* scored 19.14 million (down about 20% from last season, mind you). The *DWTS* results show scored 13.45 million while *Idol's* results show reached 18.4 million. More importantly, ratings magnet Kate was eliminated on *DWTS*. *Idol* has beaten the show two weeks in a row and is heading towards the finale so it should triumph again. And anyone who thinks reality shows are rigged is crazy: the producers would have LOVED Kate to stay on that show.

PERFORMANCE SHOW COVERAGE: *American Idol* gives back and Alicia Keys was the mentor. She generously showed what a good mentor Adam Lambert was by saying little more than that the singers should try to connect to the lyrics.

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CASEY JAMES -- Sang "Don't Stop" by Fleetwood Mac's Christine McVie (please, record with them, Christine; you don't have to go on tour!). [Thanks to reader dunedin for pointing out my error in crediting the song to Lindsey Buckingham.] James had some stinging guitar, which echoed note for note the original. Perfectly good cover but not special, which is what all the judges said. Simon pointed out it's not particularly tied into the theme of giving back (unless of course you're Bill Clinton). Did Lindsey loan Casey his guitar or was it donated for charity? I can't even imagine him watching the show. (Though I am delighted that super cool Tracey Thorn of Everything But The Girl is goofily devoted to Cowell's UK show The X Factor.)

LEE DEWYZE -- Sang Simon & Garfunkel's "The Boxer," which is a wonderful Paul Simon tune that's just on the edge of dated, but in an endearing, earnest, collegiate Sixties sort of way. It was no surprise he skipped the line about visiting the whores on Seventh Ave (a shame, since I grew up on Seventh Ave in Pompano Beach, Florida and my sisters and I always jokngly cheered at that part). Better than James, but it was a bit draggy (like the song, to be fair), though the judges raved.

TIM URBAN -- Sang "Better Days" by the Goo Goo Dolls. Finally, the wheels come off for cute as a button Tim. Painfully bad vocals but he's ready for the CW pilot season, isn't he?

AARON KELLY -- Sang "I Believe I Can Fly" by R. Kelly. Way too familiar a choice for a song overdone on the show. And yet in a complete reversal of Tim, Aaron got back on track and gave a very good performance after weeks of seeming lost -- and the country twang made the song actually sound fresh. Just in time to put him back in contention for the finale.

SIOBHAN MAGNUS -- Sang "When You Believe," a duet between Mariah Carey and Whitney Houston from the animated film *The Prince of Egypt*. It won the Oscar for Best Song, but like the film is thoroughly forgettable even as you're listening to it. Still, Siobhan hit a few notes in the way *Idol* viewers enjoy which might be enough to keep her from the bottom. Her post-song chat didn't help. When you don't seem to be having fun, people don't have fun watching you.

MICHAEL LYNCH -- Sang the Nickelback tune "Hero," which I don't know in the least so I have nothing to compare it to. (I'm traveling so I wasn't able to buy it and download it to hear the original.) Kind of anonymous but had some energy.

CRYSTAL BOWERSOX -- Sang "People Get Ready," by the Impressions and covered by just about everyone else since. Thank the Lord! After weeks of coasting, Crystal used no instrument, sang a cappella to start, looked supremely confident and knocked it out of the park. And then oh my god overwhelmed by emotion she broke down to show a little humanity! Perfect timing and no one else is even close. No idea what Simon said because my recording cut off but I'm sure he raved.

The bottom three: Casey James, Tim Urban and Siobhan Magnus, with Tim and Siobhan in the bottom two and Tim going home. What do you think?

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HUFFPOST SUPER USER

MaryscottOConnor 01:01 PM on 4/25/2010
470 Fans



I just don't know what to say about all these people claiming Siobhan is a great singer. She is a TERRIBLE singer -- if you're looking for a, you know, STAR. She doesn't connect to the song or the audience. Her head voice is CRAP -- that whole SONG was in her head voice, and it was incredibly painful to listen to. It was NASAL in the extreme.

I cannot wait till she goes home. She's simply dreadful.

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HUFFPOST BLOGGER

Don Parker 02:23 AM on 4/23/2010
52 Fans



I find myself wondering sometimes what would the judges have said about _____. And fill in the blank with some big names, like Bonnie Raitt

I thought, for instance, that some of the contestants were better a few weeks ago than Usher and Ruben and Who Diddy Dis Time?

And what would they say about Taylor Swift or Justine Bieber? (And yes, I put the "e" on there on purpose.) Kara probably would have said Christina and Madonna just don't know who they are. Or imagine Bob Dylan on Idol when he was 19. (or now)

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HUFFPOST BLOGGER

Michael Giltz 12:37 AM on 4/28/2010
59 Fans



I think Bob Dylan would have been great in a way. He was very handsome as a young guy, very quick with a quip, loved the camera and knew how to play to it. Plus he has a deep love of many genres but can't help but be himself. Taylor Swift of course would not have made it past Hollywood week. Thanks for reading.

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HUFFPOST SUPER USER

markatlargo 09:37 PM on 4/22/2010
12 Fans [Follow](#)



IDOL Experts are saying ratings PLUMMET now that TIM URBAN is gone. Check out the story its pretty compelling - LOOK at page too. ITS looks like IDOL makes out more then the charity

<http://bit.ly/chVsoe>

Looks like Crystal tears were crocodile too <http://bit.ly/dgLZ7h>

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HUFFPOST COMMUNITY MODERATOR

Bluesue 08:26 PM on 4/22/2010
200 Fans



Crystal has been my choice from the beginning. This is my kind of music.

Crystal is also a great songwriter. Check some of her original music on YouTube - Farmer's Daughter, Mama, Holy Toledo, Hellbent. This isn't bubblegum music. I just hope 19 Entertainment doesn't try to fit her into the pop music box. Wouldn't that be ironic after all the judges' comments about how she knows herself, is true to herself.



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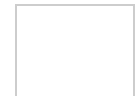
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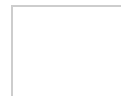
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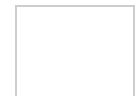
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See if you think Farmer's Daughter and Mama may be auto-biographical. If they are, this could account for her reserved demeanor and aura of sadness.

Here's an article from the Toledo Blade with a lot of background information about Crystal.

<http://www.toledoblade.com/article/20100321/ART10/3210307/-1/RSS05>

Last night my absolute favorite was Jeff Beck and Joss Stone - like I said, this is my kind of music. Check their version of People Get Ready - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P7ECdYboOVA>

And of course, there's always the Beck/Rod Stewart version from 1985.

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HUFFPOST BLOGGER

Don Parker 01:54 AM on 4/23/2010
52 Fans



Yes, Joss and Jeff were the best outside performance Idol has had in ages. Simply great.

As I said below, check out Eva Cassidy's version of People Get Ready:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WeU9MZc0dGw&feature=related>

Or Eva's incredible version of Somewhere Over the Rainbow:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ce-5OWBNGNw>

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HUFFPOST COMMUNITY MODERATOR

Bluesue 11:07 AM on 4/23/2010
200 Fans



I can't believe you mentioned the great Eva Cassidy. I have a couple of her CDs. One is Live at Blues Alley. People Get Ready is on it along with Stormy Monday, Bridge Over Troubled Water, Take me to the River. It's a great album.

Such a shame she died so young but it's a testament to how great she was that people are still discovering her and buying her music.

I think I'll be listening to some Eva Cassidy today.

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gavottes 02:55 PM on 4/22/2010

5 Fans

I must be among those with no musical taste because I cannot stand listening to Siobhan. I don't mean that I don't like her song choices, or that she doesn't connect, etc, I mean her voice bothers me.

She sings in her nose, and screeches at the end.
How is that a good voice?

As far as Crystal, I think she is fun to watch and listen to. She is comfortable performing, sounds good, and is cute. I own all of Raitt's albums, though, so that makes sense.

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Michael Giltz 05:52 PM on 4/22/2010

4 Fans

I agree about the nasal quality in her singing and thought she'd lose fans by her dull, very uncool and unquirky choice of such an anonymous, boring song as the (admittedly Oscar winning) tune from The Prince of Egypt. But the closer we get to the end, the more important it is to reach out to the casual viewer. Siobhan at the very least has to look like she's having fun and reveling in her quirkiness. That was one thing you never doubted about Adam. He was having a blast.

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HUFFPOST SUPER USER

MaryscottOConnor 01:06 PM on 4/25/2010
470 Fans



No, you're completely sane and you have fine taste. Siobhan is so unbearably nasal it actually hurts to listen to her. These people lauding her as a great singer simply haven't a freakin' clue.

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HUFFPOST BLOGGER

Don Parker 10:26 PM on 4/26/2010
52 Fans



Thank you for correcting us. In the future, we'll all check with you to find out who we're allowed to enjoy and who we must find unbearable. Please forgive us, Your Highness, for having our own opinions.

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dunedin 02:48 PM on 4/22/2010

9 Fans

I agree about Lindsey Buckingham, but "Don't Stop" is a Christine McVie song.

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Michael Giltz 05:48 PM on 4/22/2010

4 Fans

Yikes! Thanks for the correction.

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anonomost 01:00 PM on 4/22/2010

6 Fans

Casey let me down with another fluff performance after the fantastic Jealous Guy. I just re-watched Jealous Guy and it is stunningly good and heartfelt.

Agree with you Michael, Buckingham is an amazing fingerstyle guitarist. Just awesome. Casey did do a great cover but it was in no way original or special. I think LB has to sign off on the song so in that sense he gave his approval for it to be sung. Unlike many artists who refuse to let Idol sing their music (i.e. Madonna --- who allowed it for Glee -- but there you go).

As much as I appreciate Crystal I feel no connection to her as I have done in the past.

Carrie Underwood is just amazing. For me she was the biggest star there on Idol Gives Back.

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Pippen 01:25 PM on 4/22/2010

92 Fans [Follow](#)



I don't like Underwood, I think she's a result of lots of hype, white voting, and CMA support on the nashville circuit. If music was just about the people like in the old days, she'd be a third rate CM singer.

Blige singing Stairway was blasphemous. Its not artistry its like urinating on the American flag of rock fantasy. She sang it like it had more than a single note message which it doesnt. The beauty of that song isnt the message, its the unexplainable. The fantasy of fable rock anthems and she presupposed to capsulize the lyric and song with a gospel like soul rendition. Led Zepplin and gosbel are about as far apart as fire and ice. I almost vomited. It came up in my mouth. The same way it did when Taylor Swift sang her trite superficial song with Stevie Nicks.

Crystal cried at seeing her father in the audience and the song meant something to her personally and you said you didnt feel a connection ?.....what are you a robot.

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transparent 01:42 PM on 4/22/2010

21 Fans

We are on the same page on all of this. Underwood drives me nuts..her voice is like fingernails on a chalkboard to me, but last night she was better than usual. Compared to Annie Lennox, though....not even in the ball park.

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cherieamour 08:47 PM on 4/22/2010

80 Fans

...STH is nothing holy, it's just a song...

...and Mary sung it to perfection...

...truth hurts...

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Scottcluthe 11:47 AM on 4/22/2010

22 Fans [Follow](#)

Frankly, I feel they should end this farce, give Crystal the trophy,(sic), bring out Bonnie Raitt and do an hour long concert. Or at least tell us when we can see them in concert this year. I do not need to see or hear any of the others again. it is what it is. Siobhan should be really big on Broadway.

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Michael Giltz 12:15 PM on 4/22/2010

4 Fans

Unless her scheduling doesn't work out, I'm sure they're trying to book Bonnie Raitt for the finale.

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Pippen 11:23 AM on 4/22/2010

92 Fans [Follow](#)



Crystal is by far and away a huge artist and performer. I'd pay money to see her concert and buy her music. She's a breath of fresh air for music.

Lee is a close second but his stage presence and lack of performance will lock him into 2nd place. Either way I'd buy his music and pay to see him on stage.

Sioban is a dark horse imo. She CAN be the next "new" talent to hit the industry, like Pink or Alanis did it but with some work she could be the next Cindy Lauper meets Celine Dione.

Aaron will be a huge singing star but not for several years and probably on the CMA circuit.

Casey will be a star but whether or not he's going to "new" to rock will be up to him.

Mike has a narrow R&B sound and he'll be good at Gospel but he's not going to win Idol.

Tim - he knows he's lucky to be there and he's making the best of it with what he has to market. I wish him well and I look for his songs to hit the radio.

I'm pissed about my favorite being cut, Lilly. She was on fire. I'd buy tickets to see her live anytime.

If Crystal gets booted before the end, I'm done. I'll never watch Idol again.

I'm still pissed they let MJ Blige sing Led Zeppelin Stairway to Heaven with a soul styling. BLASPHEMY!

!! HO !!

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Michael Giltz 12:15 PM on 4/22/2010

4 Fans

Thanks for the rundown, but I'd be careful about name-calling Mary J. Blige. She's tough! :)

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cherieamour 08:45 PM on 4/22/2010

80 Fans

...Mary sung that song and WORKED IT!...

...are you just mad because and RnB singer covered a rock song...

...give credit where credit is due and deal with it...HO!!!

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HUFFPOST BLOGGER

Don Parker 02:03 AM on 4/23/2010

52 Fans



I agree with almost all of your assessments. Including Lilly, who should still be in the running. (I skipped MJ Blige and some others; sorry I missed Annie who I love. Joss and Jeff were great.)

But I don't think we'll hear Tim on the radio. He only lasted this long because the tweens and teeny boppers love his hair and smile. No talent.

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HUFFPOST SUPER USER

skipling 11:45 PM on 4/21/2010

443 Fans



I am really blown away from how lame the list of "Inspirational songs" were that the kids could choose from. Here are some that were not on the list:
Defying Gravity, In the Arms of the Angels, I Don't Want to Be, To Where You Are as sung by Josh Grobin, Joyful Joyful, the Pretender's Hymn to Her, Idina Menzel's I Stand, Dusty Springfield's Born That Way. ... the list goes on. Can you add more?

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Michael Giltz 12:16 PM on 4/22/2010

4 Fans

That's a great point. "Don't Stop?" GooGoo Dolls? An awful tune from The Prince Of Egypt? Not good song selections at all.

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transparent 01:31 PM on 4/22/2010

21 Fans

I agree. Song selections were horrible and what an opportunity missed...there are so many of them. They should all study the song and delivery of Annie Lennox.

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HUFFPOST SUPER USER

skipling 02:00 PM on 4/22/2010

443 Fans



Amen.

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HUFFPOST SUPER USER

greymom 11:38 PM on 4/21/2010
225 Fans



I taped the show and watched Crystal twice. She had no tears, or even moisture in her eyes so my take is that the "emotion" was fake. She is a great singer but sound the same on every song. When I compare her to Siobhan Magnus, the latter's tone and range is superior.

Why are they so down on Siobhan. She is great. I thought the arrangement was too shortened however. If she sang the full version of the song, it would have been better.

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filmex 12:48 AM on 4/22/2010

43 Fans

You need to get Hi-Def. Crystal was definitely crying. Maybe as much for the tune as the fact Ryan Seabiscuit sandbagged her this week and told the world he kept her from walking off the show, when apparently she just had a down day where she was missing her son.

And Siobhan was my #1 early on, but she has gone off the rails. Her style has become SO mannered with unnatural vibrato, her delivery completely uninspiring. I don't think taking a rocker-chick and forcing her to sing this kind of drivel is helping at all. I wasn't the biggest Lambert fan, but at least he knew who he is as an artist, as does Crystal. Siobhan doesn't have a clue.

Never has a group of songs been less inspirational. Why don't they have a "Be You" week where they can sing whatever they want, just like Hollywood week. That would give you a lot better reflection of what their records would sound like rather than making them sing genres they don't like, or sappy theme nights like "Inspirational".

Although watching Big Mike ignore 5 million inspirational R&B tunes, only to perform a goofy song from "Spiderman", and then defend it by saying it's about heroes, was almost worth the laugh.

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HUFFPOST SUPER USER

greymom 10:03 AM on 4/22/2010
225 Fans



You have a point about Siobhan running off the rails. She is trying to please the judges, not herself. I was hoping she would choose that song from the 80's made popular by Whitney, you know the one with the lyric "children are our future, teach them well and let them lead the way." Since she has so many young relatives, I thought that the song would be meaningful to her.

My favorite song and the one that brought her to my attention was the Chris Isaak son she sang early on. Even though she was fabulous, Simon didn't get that one either.

Big Mike doesn't have the range or tone of a truly great R and B singer. I like Casey, and he will be a remembered Idol. I think the final three will be Siobhan, Crystal and Casey.

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cherieamour 08:44 PM on 4/22/2010

80 Fans

...yeah, the fake crying was hilarious...

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Richbruin 10:32 PM on 4/21/2010

16 Fans

Crystal is by far the best.....but could you please take out the damn piercing? It is NOT attractive.

[Permalink](#) | [Share it](#)

Michael Giltz 12:25 PM on 4/22/2010

4 Fans

I agree, but what are ya gonna do? The kids love their piercings.

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LCDTV 08:49 PM on 4/21/2010

30 Fans

wow, interesting posts. i never thought about the christian angle keeping poor singers around way past their expiration date. that explains why tim urban is still on the show. i do not understand why Sioban is being pan by the judges. she is still the best singer on the show. Casey and Lee are are the same musical type, but the judges never criticizes Lee for standing and playing his guitar like they do Casey. Casey is being held back by the format of the show. i get the impression that he wants to let loss on his guitar, play a long solo, and jump around the stage. Lee butchered the lyrics for "the Boxer" and i did not really cared for it. I hope tim urban goes home tonight, because voice was not in tune.

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Michael Giltz 12:27 PM on 4/22/2010

4 Fans

Thanks for reading. There's a long history on reality shows of people getting a boost from different passionate fanbases, whether it's Idol or Nashville Star or any show where fans vote. getting a prayer chain going to help out a Christian contestant is fine just like it's natural for Mexican Americans to support one of their own or Koreans to get excited by one of theirs.

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CAMBEL 05:49 PM on 4/21/2010

336 Fans



I get tired of the judges trying to say "Do Something different!". They are the type of people who would have Stevie Nicks on there and tell her she needs to "Break out of that whole Stevie nicks thing yo, do some Mariah!" Or people who would have Lady Ga Ga on there and tell her to sing....well some Mariah. I'm not really a Casey James fan, but if playing the guitar and singing that type of song is what he does it would be stupid of him to get up there and do a song by Justin bieber. This season is beyond boring.

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Michael Giltz 12:28 PM on 4/22/2010

4 Fans

Ha! Funny post. I think "do something different" is their catch phrase this year as a substitute for "that wasn't good." Crystal does basically the same thing every week and they love her. It just has to be something they like.

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louisianalass 06:46 PM on 4/22/2010

0 Fans

I've been waiting for one of the singers to snap back at the judges when they say on one hand: 'omg you ruined a classic, why did you mess with a classic' and then on the other hand say: 'you didn't make it your own, you didn't add anything new' . WTH?

That's probably why I tape the show and fast forward thru EVERYTHING except the singing..everything. I don't want to see Ellen with the deer in the headlights

look, I don't want to hear Whatserface say 'you owned it' and don't even get me started on Simon who says, 'I'm not being rude' when he means he doesn't MEAN to be rude, but...he's rude. And Ryan..please...enough with the dramatic crap, and the posing in a different place in the audience every 14 seconds. JUst stand up there and be an emcee, the show isn't about you.

I think Idol jumped the proverbial shark for me two seasons ago and I still haven't gotten off it altogether. But I'm getting there!

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JohnKevari 05:05 PM on 4/21/2010

2 Fans

Sorry Mike,

Mr. Lynche will be going home tonight.

As far as Crystal is concerned I was wrong. This woman is good.

I still got my eye on Casey to win the whole thing.

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Blues02 07:01 PM on 4/21/2010

83 Fans

Yeah I agree about Mike going home. I couldn't believe they saved him

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Michael Giltz 12:29 PM on 4/22/2010

4 Fans

I wouldn't be surprised at all if Lynche went home (haven't watched yet). The only ones that would surprise me are Crystal Lee and Casey.

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