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**Michael Giltz**

Freelance writer and raconteur  
Posted: April 14, 2010 10:45 AM

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# Idol Season 9: Top 9...Again

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It's Elvis Week and Adam Lambert is the first contestant to come back as a mentor -- and turns out to be one of the best mentors ever. But what was up with Ryan Seacrest's mocking reference to Brian Dunkleman? That was cruel. In general, the typically smooth Seacrest was goofy and distracting.

**CRYSTAL BOWERSOX** --Sang "Saved" with backup singers and a glittery electric guitar. Elvis did some of the greatest southern gospel ever -- but this is more of a fun roof-raiser. Kara called the lyrics controversial for their time. I'm not quite sure why they would be. Great and appropriate use of backup

singers (with an assist from the camerawork). Fine and strong.

**ANDREW GARCIA** -- Sang "Hound Dog." Adam was straightforward about Andrew's rehearsal: "that was boring." Yep, and so was his pre-song interview. Started strolling back to the stage before the music was even over. Maybe better than the rehearsal but not that good.

**TIM URBAN** -- Sang "Can't Help Falling In Love." More precise advice from Adam about singing in a higher register at the finale, which he sort of used. Again, it was as good as Tim can do. Smart song choice, smart arrangement, full *Tiger Beat* mode. (With Ryan dancing in the background, I believe.) Good God, could he make the Top 4?

**LEE DEWYZE** -- Sang "A Little Less Conversation." Adam tried to break through Lee's poker face and get him to show some expression while performing. You could almost see Lee thinking when he began to sing, "Oh yeah, smile." He was so focused on the crowd, he even got away from the mike for a moment...and then climaxed with his back to the crowd. Weak ending but a lot of fun. And his best moment was the jokey thumbs up and smile at the end.

**AARON KELLY** -- Sang "Blue Suede Shoes." Aaron was right: the song was totally wrong for him, but not because of the lyric about drinking. He's just not a swaggerer. And where were his blue suede shoes?

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BECK IN TROUBLE?

But it was so-so, including the forced intro where he looked at one camera then another...then another. Karaoke.

**SIOBHAN MAGNUS** -- Sang "Suspicious Minds," which I first heard via Fine Young Cannibals. Adam got her to speed it up; another good call since she's pretty indistinct and unmemorable on ballads. Oddly, she delivered the song in a sleepy, laidback manner when the tune is all about urgency, ignoring his advice. She only woke up when she got to wail. Even her look seemed tame, though a close-up showed some crazy shoes and quirky detail. Polite comeback from Siobhan to Simon but the problem is not the label; the problem is the performance. She can do anything she wants as long as it's good.

**MICHAEL LYNCH** -- Sang "In The Ghetto," which Siobhan suggested to him. Lynche finally understands the difference between performing and being "theatrical," which is over-performing. Quite good, especially since that song can encourage being overly dramatic.

**KATIE STEVENS** -- Sang "Baby, What You Want Me To Do," an Elvis song I didn't even know. "You just showed us, girl," said Kara. Not quite. Fine, but competent doesn't cut it at this stage.

**CASEY JAMES** -- Sang "Lawdy Miss Clawdy." Yet more specific, good advice from Adam about the arrangement and letting it build more. Casey seemed to take the advice but couldn't shake the song out of just being a groove number. With the entire Elvis catalog to choose from, he couldn't choose a more compulsive number? Bad bad song choice.

Only four good performances and none of them were great: Crystal, Tim, Lee and Michael. If there's a bottom four, I'd say it should be Andrew Garcia, Aaron Kelly, Siobhan Magnus, and Katie Stevens. The two going home? Andrew and Katie. What do you think?

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HUFFPOST SUPER USER

**mlrlmsw** 07:31 PM on 4/15/2010  
24 Fans



I was glad to see Adam remind people why he was so appealing on AI - that amazing voice and more ambiguous sexuality. If he'd done that performance of "what do you want from me?" on the AMAs, he would have wowed people that were on the fence about him. Instead, he gave that garrish performance that was off-putting to women, homophobes, and most people outside his rabid fan base. I want to see him do well; keep up the image you put forth on AI this week, Adam: less lipstick, cool clothes, and those goose bump vocals.

Crystal is the only performer that I look forward to. Shioban has been turned into a stepford contestant. She should have lost the up do hair style and picked up the energy and intensity of that song. The first half was like she was in a beauty pageant or something.

Ryan does seem like he's in need of some lithium or something.

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**BillAnthony** 11:26 PM on 4/14/2010

8 Fans

At +3000 Vegas odds, Katie is an intriguing darkhorse bet to win the whole thing. Tim is the longest of longshots at +4000, in either case I could see teenage voters deciding it this year. Crystal is the betting favorite at -150. Based on his performance last night, Casey is a mediocre singer at best, and has zero charisma. Lee has a limited style, as in this year's Taylor Hicks, just can't see something like that happening again. Siobhan is talented, but just doesn't seem to wear well within the show's format.

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HUFFPOST SUPER USER

**libwingoflibwing** 10:20 PM on 4/14/2010  
176 Fans



Through my extensive internet research I've discovered the truth behind Ryan Seacrest's joke about Brian Dunkleman. It turns out that Brian is starting a new show about his big mistake to leave Idol and what it's like to be reminded every day about it. Brian needed a little publicity. Right at the right time Ryan makes a big joke about Brian coming back to host the special NOT, right on Idol. What happens? Brian gets hordes of publicity, hordes of internet searches, and he gets to promote his show.

Hmmmm. Maybe Ryan isn't mean. Maybe he's looking out for his old co-host? Oh well.

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HUFFPOST BLOGGER

**Michael Giltz** 01:29 AM on 4/15/2010  
59 Fans



Wasn't that a year ago for Dunkelman when he pitched that project? If Ryan was being nice by throwing a little publicity his way, he should have made the comment in Jan of 2009. Unless it's come to fruition? I'm just surprised to hear Dunkelman say he chose to leave the show. I'd always assumed they just let him go.

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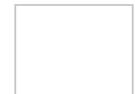
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**libwingoflibwing** 12:57 PM on 4/16/2010  
176 Fans



Yes, it's coming to fruition soon and needs all the publicity it can get.

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**JohnKevari** 05:36 PM on 4/14/2010

2 Fans

Tonight Andrew and Katey will leave the show.

Also, we have found a replacement for Simon Cowell..... His name is Adam Lambert!

By this time next year Adam will be he 4th judge on Idol.

Did you know you can bet on-line as to who will win "American Idol?"..... I got my money on Casey..... Not too sure now after last night.

Judges said last night that Crystal reminded them of Bonnie Raitt..... EXACTLY!!!!..... And how many million of albums has Bonnie sold?..... How many stadiums has she sold out?..... Crystal will make the Top Three at best!

THIS JUST IN..... Brian Dunkleman has found one more reason NOT to give up drinking!

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HUFFPOST BLOGGER

**Michael Giltz** 01:26 AM on 4/15/2010  
59 Fans



I'm sure Adam Lambert wouldn't give up on his career yet by being an Idol judge (which is how it would be seen). And being a good mentor isn't the same as being a good judge -- but since he was great at one, he might well be good at the other.

Uh, Bonnie Raitt isn't a big artist? She's won nine Grammys, sold at least 20 million albums around the world (that's 17 million for certain in the US and Canada so probably a LOT more than that) is in the rock and roll hall of fame and has guested on 100+ albums as well as 30 hit singles in various formats. Comparing Crystal to her is both obvious and a huge compliment. Raitt's three decades of success is a great accomplishment.

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**JohnKevari** 04:17 PM on 4/15/2010

2 Fans

Michael,

You dare disagree with the man who predicted that Andrew and Katey would go home last night?

I think Lambert would take the gig as Judge if offered to him..... The exposure alone would be hard to refuse.

Yes, Bonnie Raitt is talented and has sold a lot of records to guys like you and me who watch PBS and read Kerouac because we think that's what intellectuals do.

But do teenage girls have her poster on their walls? Has she sold 20 million records on just one record alone?

You have to distinguish between being and "artist" and being a "performer."

For my money Harry Chapin is THE greatest recording artist of the last fifty years..... But is he a Sinatra? Is he a Michael Jackson? An Elvis? A Taylor Hicks? Of course not.

THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH BEING A GREAT PERFORMER!

In fact seeing a great performer is often more fun than seeing some sour looking female guitarist with no makeup who sings about her uterus and eating danish with her friends.

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**HUFFPOST SUPER USER**

**RhiannonRings** 03:59 PM on 4/14/2010  
51 Fans



I'm ready to say adios to the two prettyboys, Aaron and Tim...Hasta!

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**anonimost** 01:58 PM on 4/14/2010

6 Fans

Agree with Michael. None were great or memorable. I also did not like the street clothes look that most of them wore. There was no pizzazz or spark with any of them. Casey returned to his shallow goofy grin smile performance.

Lee looked like he was watching a tennis match with his head going from side to side. He doesn't get it how to play to the audience.

Crystal looks terrible in those red lights.

But still these are my top three.

Siobhan sounded like she was singing two different songs. She is lost somewhere in the mix unfortunately stung by the judges putting down her scream signature. Let the audience decide she is screaming too much. After all Adam screamed a lot.

Yes, this night was forgettable. Ryan is getting too obnoxious. The performance were just lazy. Well, tonight might make them to things a whole lot more seriously.

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**filmex** 12:45 PM on 4/14/2010

43 Fans

You're spot on regarding Seacrest's totally unnecessary snark at Dunkleman. Anyone who watched Season One of "Idol" probably figured Brian would be the breakout host, not Seacrest. So while Brian is living in a studio apt in North Hollywood and Seacrest is counting his millions, why go there? Just mean spirited for no particular reason. But, I'm like catcancook, Ryan has seemed off his meds for weeks now.

I can't quite believe this season. Tim and Katie seemed also rans early on, but now they seem to be getting better every week. They both shined, incredibly enough. Meanwhile, I thought Siobhan would be a finalist but she has become so mannered along the way in her vocal style, it's as if she is pod-Siobhan.

Big Mike sings "In The Ghetto"...Seriously? And does a rather maudlin job at that, while the judges gush to rationalize their having saved him (after being pilloried online for it all week). All the great Elvis R&B tunes and he has to sing about the ghetto?

And Casey, if ever there was a week he should've knocked it out of the park, he popped out behind home plate. What a wasted opportunity.

Crystal is still the best, but it's starting to look like she's gonna win by default, because Siobhan and Casey, who should have given her a run for the money, have run out of gas. Goodbye Michael and Andrew.

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**catcancook** 12:06 PM on 4/14/2010

151 Fans



Ryan seemed drunk or stoned. No doubt about it, he was on something and acted bazaar and disrespectful more than on one occasion.

Adam was fabulous as usual. He was really engaged and was bopping along to the contestants as they sand their chosen selection. His advice was dead on but too bad he wasn't there to help them choose songs that fit them better. He apparently did that for the season 8 contestants and was responsible for a lot of creative suggestions that worked.

I have only seen a couple of shows this season but I do like Siobhan's raw talent. She could use some vocal coaching as well as polishing up on wardrobe,presentation,etc. But the girl has a powerful voice which is original--yet very untrained and she doesn't seem to know how to use her gift.

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**HUFFPOST BLOGGER**

**Michael Giltz** 01:18 AM on 4/15/2010  
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Thanks for commenting. I hadn't heard that about Adam Lambert last season. Interesting -- and spotlights a generous, nice personality.

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