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SURFING THE WAVES OF POPULAR CULTURE
BY MICHAEL GILTZ & FRIENDS

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Jennifer Hudson Is Not Showing Up "Idol"

Despite the fact that Jennifer Hudson wisely, politely (and correctly) says "American Idol" was a huge boost to her, [the media now wants to say that Hudson's triumph in "Dreamgirls" shows up "Idol" for getting it wrong](#). That's ridiculous. (Though in fairness to them, Hudson sometimes says her rejection by Simon spurred her on to have more hunger and drive, which is not the same point that I'm making.) In fact, Hudson is the latest example of how stunningly effective "Idol" has been at uncovering real, lasting talent. Kelly Clarkson, Carrie Underwood, Clay Aiken, Fantasia, Ruben Studdard and Kellie Pickler (who may have her biggest success with a sitcom) are just the first names that come to mind. Every season has spawned a NUMBER of artists who have received a chance to record albums, have hit singles and get a better shot at glory than 99.9% of the people who sign a record deal. And an astonishing number of them are proving to be more than flashes in the pan. But even if they fail, "Idol" is getting them a shot. And even if they don't win their particular season (like Clay and Jennifer Hudson), that doesn't mean the show "failed." Hudson reached the Top 10 after auditioning along with tens if not hundreds of thousands of people. The judges winnowed that massive group down to 10 or so people and one of them was Hudson. Then America takes over. Hudson didn't win but "Idol" deserves all the credit in the world for picking her out of the lineup, along with Fantasia, who has a second album just out that got better reviews than the first and indicates she too might very well be an artist in it for the long haul. Hudson isn't proof "Idol" got it wrong because she wasn't the final winner. Hudson is proof "Idol" got it right because they plucked her out of obscurity. Talent will out? Not always; you need a lucky break sometimes. And Hudson would not be the star of "Dreamgirls" today if the "Idol" judges hadn't spotted her talent first.

POSTED BY MICHAEL IN NEW YORK AT 1:52 AM



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