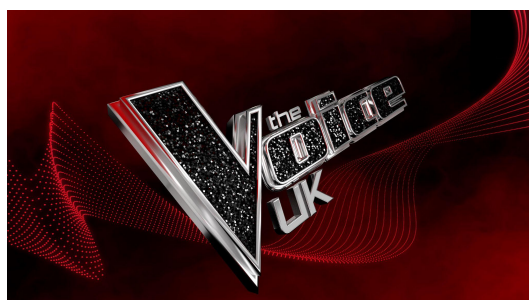


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THE VOICE UK 2023

PRESS PACK



Press Information

The Voice UK

Series 12

Episode 1

The Voice UK is back for its twelfth series set to air on Saturday 4th November at 8.25pm on ITV1, ITVX and STV.

In the search for the next singing sensation Anne-Marie, Olly Murs, Sir Tom Jones and Will.i.am have once again assumed their roles as the superstar Coaches and returned to their seats in the most iconic chairs on television.

Much-loved television presenter Emma Willis also returns as host and will once again preside over all of the action.

For the first time in The Voice's history, groups have been allowed to audition for their chance to be crowned champion.

In the first show of the Series it's the return of the Blind Auditions as the coaches are on the hunt for a vocal sensation.

Hopefuls looking for a shot at stardom will take to the stage in a bid to be crowned this series' winner, securing a recording contract with Universal Records as well as winning a massive 50k cash prize and a luxury holiday.

The Voice UK starts on Saturday 4th November at 8.25pm on ITV1, ITVX and STV

EMMA WILLIS
HOST



How does it feel to be back?

It feels lovely to be back. We are one big family so it's nice to get going again. Everyone is really settled as we all know what we are doing and I think everyone is ready for some nice healthy competition.

What can viewers expect to see from this series?

They can expect, as always, amazing talent and lots of fun from the coaches. They are so good together those four, they just gel brilliantly and there are some really lovely relationships. There's a surprise involving me as well that I don't want to spoil, but I had loads of fun! There are also some surprising choices when the competition gets further down the line. I always think I can guess who they are going to choose but that just wasn't the case this series.

What's the level of talent this year?

This series everyone who got up on stage was just incredible. With each person, it seemed like the talent just got better and better so before you knew it the teams were filled up with the most amazing people. That's a testament to the show as you have to be good to take part, which makes it nearly impossible to whittle it down at the end.

This is the first time in The Voice's UK history we've had groups, has that changed the dynamics?

Yes. It's always nice to add something you've never done before. There are loads of groups out there who've never had the chance to come and audition and now they can. We've had some great groups but for me there was an absolute corker of a group, they had the whole package - it was like watching Little Mix.

Who do you think is the most competitive coach?

I'd say Olly and Anne-Marie. Olly is really competitive but then I feel like Anne-Marie really wants to win so has been getting a bit more competitive. Those two like to playfully wind each other up as well.

Has there been a moment in this series that you feel somebody should have made it in or made it to the next round?

Yes, definitely. There are always moments like that and I think the coaches know that as well. As soon as the coaches haven't turned for somebody, they say 'this is the one we are going to watch back and be like we made a big mistake there'. But there are so many brilliant singers, it must be so hard to pick.

What's your favourite thing about The Voice?

The people who work on it and the talent that we get. If we didn't have all these brilliant people taking part then we wouldn't have a show. The nature of it as well, it's a really easy watch and is great Saturday night family viewing. I love it when you get programmes like that that you can sit and watch with your kids.

Describe each of the coaches and what you think they bring to the panel

Tom is a gentleman and a legend and he brings decades worth of experience. Will brings that all-encompassing experience because he writes, he produces, he sings, he collaborates. Olly knows what it's like to be a contestant as well as working in the industry for as long as he has. It's the same with Anne-Marie, you know she was at musical theatre school so it's all she has done forever. All the coaches have that wealth of experience and knowledge in different areas of the entertainment and music industry so each brings something different.

Are any of your children wanting to follow in Matt's footsteps?

All of them. Trixie is desperate to audition for The Voice kids, Isabelle does lots of drama and music and Ace loves it too. Ace has just learnt how to play the drums as well, so they are all into that, but Trixie is the one with her eye on the show - she's six.

What kind of songs does she like to sing?

She doesn't know the words to any song in full so she makes her own songs up. She wrote her first song two weeks ago with her dad.

WILL.I.AM
COACH



How does it feel to be back on The Voice?

Amazing. It feels amazing.

What do you love most about the UK and why?

The culture, the people, the vibes, the clubs. The UK's a pretty awesome place.

What do you think the level of talent is like this year?

The level of talent is a little bit more electric than last year because of the groups. Groups can join the show now. I think it's upped the ante a little bit.

What are you looking for this year and does it change every year?

It changes every year. I mostly look for uniqueness, fearlessness, passion but more uniqueness than anything.

How has the introduction of group contestants changed the dynamics?

The dynamics have changed because of groups. It now reflects real life, in real life it's not just a good singer versus a good singer. It's a good singer vs a poet vs a rapper vs a group vs a duo vs a guitarist vs instrumentalist. Music is the entire imagination of folks that are passionate about making sense out of noise. So now that we have groups in the mix, it's more reflective of real life.

What kind of qualities does each coach look for?

I'll turn around for opera people, classical folks, grime, rappers, MCs, poets, soul, pop. I'm the most 'anything goes' type. Olly goes for cute and pop type stuff and Tom goes for a classic voice. Anne-Marie and I have the most similar taste.

What are you listening to at the moment?

I still listen to me the most. It's like asking a chef - what are you eating? You'd be like what I make. So I just pretty much listen to stuff I make.

For anybody thinking about coming on the show but may be nervous, what would you say to them?

Start to love your nerves because eventually they won't be as important and then you're going to wish you carried as much as you did at the beginning. Nerves means you love it. The moment you're used to it, you don't have those butterflies anymore, it becomes like 'oh'. Enjoy your nerves and when you enjoy them, you won't be scared of them.

What is the one piece of advice you would give to any singer looking to break into the industry?

Figure out what things you like outside of music and what you're passionate about. Become an entrepreneur in that field because that's how you actually make money. Ask Rihanna, she'll tell you. Ask P Diddy, ask 50 cent. Ask anybody who has built an industry, they'll tell you that. Ask Dr Dre. Ask Pharell, ask Kanye. Before you get to that point, learn from the folks that have giant careers and see what mountain they're standing on. Are they standing on a bunch of hits, are they standing on an industry that they've pioneered? It's usually other things in music that they're promoting and selling.

What is the best piece of advice that someone has given you that's stuck with you?

Be an entrepreneur. Use your music to sell the things that you're passionate about or else someone is going to use your music to sell something they're passionate about!

Who has been the biggest influence over the years for you?

Jimmy Lovine, the head of Interscope. The guy who signed us to Interscope, the guy that listened to my wild crazy ideas, one of the founders of Beats. I participated in Beats because of Jimmy's open mind and his loyalty all the way from the beginning of beats until we sold Beats to Apple.

Can you describe the feeling of when you get that Eureka moment, or when you hear someone sing and you know that you wanna swivel your chair around?

The only word I can think of is urgent.

Who do you think is most competitive out of the coaches?

Olly because he entered his career as a competitor, you know he was a contestant. Out of all of us, out of the coaches, he's the only one that knows what it feels like to be a contestant. In reality we all compete, we just never competed on show. We just competed

in reality and reality is a different competitive mode. So, in that Olly has a bigger understanding of competing in a show. He relates to them more so than us.

What do you do to relax?

I don't understand relax- what does that mean? I relax when I'm creating, creating you know having an idea, it's really like a meditation letting that idea out.

SIR TOM JONES
COACH



How does it feel to be back?

Wonderful! It's always wonderful, I love doing this (The Voice).

What makes being a coach so special?

Listening to new voices and hearing what's out there. I've been doing it for so long but I've always been interested in the way people sound, the voices. So, this is a perfect thing for me as I've always loved listening to singers.

What do you look for in a singer?

Truth, that's what I look for, honesty and truth. Something that comes out from the singer rather than copying or training just to put into the phrasing. Whichever song they perform I want to hear the person come through it.

Does that change every series? What do you look for in a singer?

I'm always wide open to sounds of voices. It doesn't have to be a certain sound but it needs to be soulful, if you will. There are all types of soul but it needs to come from within and I need to hear it come through.

Do you listen to a wide variety of music?

Yes, I do always. I was a teenager in the fifty's when Rock n Roll first kicked in, so I grew up with those beginnings along with Rhythm and Blues, Gospel, that kind of stuff. All of those elements are still there, no matter the style or genre, there are soulful performances that come through. Technology and the sounds have changed, and so they should, as it shouldn't stay the same, but the essence must still come through.

What genres and artists do you love at the moment?

There's a bunch of them, Tom Grennan and Sam Fender I like, they've got some spark to them and Jorja Smith, she's great, soulful.

This is the first time in The Voice's history we've had groups, has that changed the dynamics?

I think it's a great idea because often individuals work best as a group and are more powerful together than as solo singers. I just love voices and sometimes the interplay between voices and players is completely right and necessary to get what they want to say across.

You are the reigning champion, do you feel pressure to win again?

No, as it all depends on the person, but we have some powerful singers. You put your singer forward and present them the best way you can and hopefully you have the right songs for them. Whoever is representing Team Tom, as long as they do the best they can that's all I can ask for and then it's up to the studio audience whether they should win or not.

What have the voices been like this series?

I think we've had some of the best singers we've ever had. I think it's got stronger and stronger and it's been more difficult in the Blind Auditions this time to turn people away as they've been so good.

How does it feel when you get that Eureka moment and you hear that voice you've been looking for?

I just want to hit the button. It can sometimes take me a while as people can sometimes start off strong and then they crumble somewhere as the song goes on. I like to hear as much of it (the singing) as I can before I make a decision. I feel this year we've all got the best of the bunch.

Who is the most competitive on the panel?

I think Olly, I think he really wants to win.

What is the one piece of advice that you give to anybody you coach?

Be yourself, listen and try to take on board what the coach is telling you as we've got the experience, but in the end you've got to make up your own mind and be yourself.

Has anybody given you any advice that has really stuck with you?

Yes, basically the same, be yourself and don't blow it – your voice, that is, you don't have to push as hard all the time. The vocal cords will not be able to put up with that amount of pressure for a long time, so don't overdo it. When you are young and just starting out touring and recording you think you know what you are doing but really, you don't.

What do you think is the hardest thing about being in the music industry now?

Now it's different because of streaming and the way music is distributed, and you've got to fully engage. If you want to get your product out there you've got to find a way to focus the public's attention on your work, which can be very difficult in an extremely crowded marketplace. If you want to be in the business then get good, solid professional advice and be committed but still flexible, so you are prepared to go with the flow of changes.

For myself, I want to make music and I want to make records and how they're distributed is the record company's job. So, you are still in their hands unless you want to do the whole thing yourself independently, which is a huge effort. What happens to the product after it's finished is different to what it used to be, but the recording of it is still the same - the mic is still there, you step into a booth and you are a singer, you've still got to find that essence, you've still got to perform.

You keep in such great shape, what's your secret?

I work out, I walk, I used to run but I can't run like I used to. You've got to keep active and the older you get the easier it is to get lazy!

**ANNE-MARIE
COACH**



How does it feel to be back on The Voice?

It feels good. I love it, it's so much fun. Listening to people sing all the time is like a dream.

What is the level of talent this year?

I personally think that it's been the best voices I've heard since I've started. The first season I did was really cool as that was my first time, and then the second time it was hard as it was Covid and it was all weird but still amazing and then this time I feel like the standard between everyone is equally good. It's been hard to make decisions.

Has there been a particular type of voice that you've been looking for this year?

I always say I'm looking for a tone of voice. So, for me it's not about if they can do all these high notes and even though that's amazing, for me it's about their tone. If the tone isn't there then it doesn't excite me. So straight away I'm just listening for that. It doesn't have to be a particular tone, so I'm not saying I just want husky voices, it's just a tone I'm looking for that if you heard it on the radio, you'd know who it is.

How quickly do you decide that that's the voice you've been waiting for?

It's easy, when you hear it, it's an easy decision to press the button. I think most of the time I press my button really quick because I can hear it straight away. Most of the time I don't hold out until the end.

Who is the most competitive on the panel?

I think Olly is to be honest. I am a competitive person but Olly is more vocally competitive so he'll just say whatever he is thinking. Tom is quite competitive and Will is the most silent competitive person ever so you will not know what he is thinking, but underneath he will be making all the plans in his head. So, we are all competitive in different ways but vocally it's Olly.

What is the hardest thing about being a coach?

Probably letting people go. I think for me turning for someone isn't the hard bit because the good thing about this show is if that voice isn't what you are looking for you don't turn round so, I'm sweet with that bit. It's taking the ten contestants from the blind auctions to just bringing back three in the call-backs. You have to let go of seven people quickly and that's hard for me because I feel you haven't got enough time to actually understand them as an artist, so that's difficult.

Have you had any funny memories or moments that have happened so far?

Tom always has funny stories to tell and Will just makes me laugh all the time. Amazing moments are like when Tom sings, when he sings, I'm just in awe, his voice is just mad. Whenever anyone sings, I mean what more could you ask for. I always say it's like a real life TikTok because you are scrolling through people singing.

In the music industry who has been your biggest influence over the years?

Music when I was younger was probably Alanis Morissette and Christina Aguilera and people like that, Eminem, Lauryn Hill so many people really. Now I guess an inspiration for me is Ed Sheeran because he is always there for me if I need help or if I need to chat about something he kind of has the answer to everything, so he's been amazing.

What's the best of piece of advice that someone has given you?

So many, I mean again Ed (Sheeran) he has said a couple of things right at the start. I think when you get wrapped up in it and you are on social media you kind of forget you're not telling people directly from home what you are doing. You send out a tweet to everyone saying 'I'm off to Argentina' and your mum and dad don't know so he said just remember to call your mum all the time and let her know what's going on, so that was great advice. Another one he said, sometimes in the industry, especially me I kind of get really caught up in things because I'm a perfectionist and a control freak so I get wrapped up in it. I can get down sometimes and you end up not enjoying it so he said you need to have fun because what's the point otherwise. So, I think remembering to have fun that's a big bit of advice for this industry.

What kind of advice do you give your contestants?

I feel like my role as a coach is to boost their confidence as a human being. I think for me the people I choose their voices are already there, so I don't have to do much with their voice. I can help them in tiny little specific areas but I'm not like saying 'sing like this' or 'use your voice like that'. For me they are jumping into this situation from being in their bedrooms singing and they are now on stage singing to millions of people. It's such a big shock to people they sometimes find it hard to adjust or even believe they are good enough. I think my role is to keep pushing that into their brain, that they are meant to be here.

**OLLY MURRS
COACH**



This is your last Series, how do you feel?

I feel so proud of this show. When I started I never imagined I would be here for 6 or 7 years.

I'm sad to be leaving but so happy to have been a part of the show. I'm hoping this series will be the best one yet!

What specifically are you looking for this year?

I want characters and entertainers, I want people that are going to get the crowd moving and happy and dancing. I achieved that this year across the board, I got some really amazing people. I think I have the nicest team I've ever had, they were all just great people and then obviously there's some real characters. I wanted people that had good energy, positivity and were really happy to be here and be a part of this. They are obviously talented and have a great vice too so I ticked all the boxes that I wanted.

Does what you're looking for change every year?

Definitely! I think you come in slightly different but I felt like this year I wanted a bit of everything and I got it. Sometimes you get stuck in the mud, picking the same type of singers all the time and as coaches, you need to stand out. Sometimes there's people that just need a chance, for example this year there's a singer that's in his late seventies and I gave him the chance.

Sometimes it doesn't always have to be a distinctive voice or thinking that's really good and that'll fit on the radio - if you're good you're good. If you've got people on their feet having the best time then I'll press my button every time. If the energy of the room is incredible I'll turn.

What's the level of talent been like this year?

I feel like every year people come out of the woodwork and surprise you. We pull the curtain back and there's all these incredible singers. Some of these singers have had knock backs, some are just discovering their voices for the first time, some have got loads of experience but they want to see if they've still got it - so when you have all those types of people it adds to the show.

People from overseas come to this country hoping for a break - we've got a bit of everything it's great and it adds a bit of diversity to the show and we've been lucky that we've had people from lots of backgrounds - Latino, Asian - I had someone on my team from Kenya and another from Ukraine so the show is being seen around the world - the talent has been insane. I think people are finding that confidence again and fighting through things - giving the show a try to see what happens and they're now getting the rewards for it. My finalist - I think this will really change their life, they've got their confidence back and their doubts gone, it's great.

Tell us about the new addition of having groups.

When I started on the show we had duos, and then trio's and now we've got groups! It's been so cool, we all had a group this year and it adds another dynamic to the show. Some people are better in groups than they are as a solo artist, other shows have been able to unearth big bands, maybe it's time for The Voice to unearth the next big group. It's been wicked to see dancing, rapping, singing and harmonies - when there's more people on stage it can go in any direction, it's quite exciting!

Who's the most competitive? Sir Tom and Anne-Marie have said you...

I knew they would! The reason they've said me is because I'm so open about it! I'll say I want to win - yet actually underneath it all they're just as competitive as me, they just don't want to show it. They all want to win! They're more tactical than me, but it means a lot to me because that was once me. When I watch the contestants I know what that feeling is like. I'm someone that came from a show too so this is my environment and it's where it started for me.

The other judges are right, I take it more to heart and personally because that was once me. I really want them to win, but it's not about me, if I'm the coach that gave them that chance then great. I'm happy for anyone who enters the show, as long as they show us all respect, I want them to go on to do amazing things and have great careers and excel.

We all have the same common interest in music and singing. I am very lucky to be in the position I'm in to be able to give people advice and coach them. I think there's only been one year that I got really upset I didn't win and that's because I knew how much it meant to the contestant, I felt like I let them down and picked the wrong song.

Sometimes we all coach in different ways. I coach very personal, we speak all the time and I try to take some of that pressure away from them, so when it doesn't work out it's heartbreaking. This year is no different. I have to give it 100% that's what you get in that chair. - passion, energy, motivation, enthusiasm. I want us all to have the best time.

It must be really hard for the contestants to make a decision between the coaches, it's an amazing part of the show really, they get to pick what team they want to be on. For them to get one chair turn is huge so to get four chair turns is on another level. We've had eleven four chair turns this series, which is the most of any we've ever had. We usually have around six to eight.

What is the best piece of advice someone has given you?

This sounds really corny, but if you believe in yourself, you can. I think that sometimes people can say to you, you can't do it. People say no it's not a reality. I think many people including friends or family, have turned around and said you need to stop thinking you are going to be a Popstar. That doesn't happen to people like us but actually it does and that's what this show creates. That chance to believe in yourself because who knows, you might just be able to achieve that impossible dream. Nothing will ever happen by the click of fingers, you have to work hard.

How do you encourage anyone in your team to handle moments of doubt?

When I was doing this at the very start, it was my belief and me believing in myself that allowed me to make it! You have to be able to back yourself.

There will always be moments of doubt, but I think this is what this show is good at. We as coaches are there to get rid of that doubt and hopefully give them that moment of oh my God, I doubted myself but I came out on the stage and I got four turns. That's gotta mean something right? It means you are good.

Any surprises on the show in this series?

A big secret is that although there's four coaches on the show, there is someone else that presses the button this year and it's not a coach!

What do you think is the hardest thing about being in the music industry?

For me, it's having moments of doubt sometimes and we all get them. For example, not knowing if you are doing the right thing or if the fans will love it. The music industry is a roller coaster of emotions. There are some days where you release a song and you get the success and everything is popping and everyone loves it and then, you might release a song six months later and people aren't as into it. But then two months later, you do a tour and everyone comes and you've sold a hundred thousand tickets and it's mind blowing, so I think the hardest thing is you! Don't doubt yourself.

It can be tough, especially when you are first getting into it because you just want people to believe in you. Then you get that belief and you think wow someone believes in me and it's great!

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