Last week we watched as *American Idol* contestants sang songs released in the past two years. The brilliant performances of Joshua Ledet and Jessica Sanchez backfired as the two both found themselves in the bottom three.

The judges' save was put into play for Jessica and last week showed us what sounds we can expect from whomever goes on to win. Tonight, the theme is "Now and Then." Contestants will each sing two numbers; one from "now" meaning any song released since 2000, and one from "then," a soul song. I'll rate each performance out of 5 and then add the contestants' performances together for a final tally on the night.

Round one of the night is "Now."

Hollie Cavanagh's up first with her song from "now" singing Adele's "Rolling In The Deep." Jimmy says the audience can tell from the first note whether Hollie's nervous. From the first note, I'm excited that she picked 1) a song with a little tempo to it and 2) a song big enough for her big voice. Steven said she "finally came out of her shell" and called the performance "perfect." J.Lo said this is what we've all been waiting for from Hollie. Randy said it wasn't perfect, but it was close and "very well done." The arrangement was a little lounge-singer, but it was Hollie's best of the competition so far. **4/5**

Sporting a shock of red hair to match his red leather pants, **Colton Dixon**'s tackling Lady Gaga's "Bad Romance." Jimmy tells Colton to look into the camera because when he looks into the camera, people vote. Seems like Jimmy's caught a glimpse of Mr. Eye Sex, too. Colton channels his inner Robert Palmer with an all-girl band on the stage. I think parts of the song are almost too low for Colton. Randy says we were at a Colton Dixon concert and then says he thinks the key might've been too low. (Yes! I wasn't imagining it!) J.Lo said the same thing about the low parts of the song but said he has so much character it didn't matter. Steven said "you gotta get low to get high" and he loved it.
3.5/5

Elise Testone, who has been on a roller coaster week after week, is singing "No One" from Alicia Keys. Jimmy says he's not exactly sure why people aren't voting for her and says she's a really talented singer. My opinion? Elise is the oldest contestant in the competition by six years and the heavy voters are way younger than she is. Elise proves her talent with this number. It's soulful and simple. J.Lo says Elise should smile more when she sings because it brings her performances to life. Steven loved the performance but wishes she'd chosen a song with a better chorus. Randy thinks it's great that Elise stuck to the melody this week. I think this was a good first performance of the night for Elise. **4/5**

Phillip Phillips is taking on the vocal stylings of another Georgia artist--Usher. He's singing "You've Got It Bad." With an acoustic guitar. Phillip's performance was so captivating I wanted to give him a standing ovation in my living room. Steven said a bunch of things and settled on "it was great tonight, man." J.Lo called the performance "sexy." Randy called Phillip "a true artist," saying that Phillip not only tries to do new things but he also stays true to himself. Y'all, I think I might have to go download that song. **5/5**

Fresh off her save, **Jessica Sanchez** is singing "Falling" by Alicia Keys. Jimmy said she needs a big moment to save herself this week. It was, like last week, the perfect kind of song for her because it showcases what kind of artist she'd be on a modern landscape. Steven said she released some passion on that song. J.Lo said she's glad they used the save for Jessica. Randy called Jessica's talent "other-wordly." Only Steven really critiqued her performance tonight instead of just waxing on about her talent at large. Her performance was solid, but it didn't wow me. I don't know if she had the "big moment" Jimmy wanted.
4/5

Skylar Laine's also going Gaga tonight with the country version of "Born This Way." What I've never noticed in the pop radio version of this song is that there's a lot of range in this song. Skylar hits all the notes perfectly and looks great doing it. It's a really great performance. J.Lo

said a more perfect song for Skylar than this one doesn't exist. Steven and Randy both say Skylar has major crossover appeal which is helping her tremendously in this competition. Skylar brings a lot of spunk to her performances, that's for sure. This one's got loads of spunk.
5/5

Mantasia, **Joshua Ledet**, has chosen Fantastia's "I Believe" for his first number. While this isn't as great a song choice as last week's in terms of showing what kind of artist he'll be, this could be Joshua's winner's song the same way it was his Idol's. Randy loved that Joshua pulled back in that song and showed emotion. J.Lo said she loves the way Joshua gives everything to his songs. Steven said this song was another stepping stone on Joshua's way to winning this whole thing. My major complaint is that they didn't give him longer to sing. Just as he was building to something really great, the song cut off. I wanted more. **5/5**

And that's the end of round one. On to the "Then" portion of the evening.

Hollie Cavanagh's singing "Son Of A Preacher Man." She's saved some of the confidence from her earlier performance, and while this performance isn't as good as her first, it's still good. Randy said he liked it better than her round one song, and so did J.Lo. J.Lo said she's showing a different kind of composure tonight. Steven said she did great, but she can push it even more. I feel like someone handed the judges a card that said "Don't bash on Hollie tonight. The poor girl's had enough." **3/5**

With Earth, Wind, and Fire's "September," **Colton Dixon**'s behind the piano again. I think I like him best when he's behind the piano. And this performance is better than his first. The key is right. The song is right. The staging is perfect. None of the judges liked the song choice. J.Lo said she couldn't understand what he was saying. Randy didn't like the arrangement. I think the judges need to get their ears checked. For the second time tonight, I feel compelled to go download a song. **5/5**

Elise Testone is singing Marvin Gaye's "Let's Get It On." She's the only contestant in this competition who could pull this song off. J.Lo says she has a lot of respect for Elise's voice and once again says she wants to see more emotion from Elise. Steven said the song showed Elise's versatility, but she needs to find better songs. Randy said this song wasn't right for Elise's voice and she over sang it. Elise thinks the minute and a half time limit is hampering her ability to connect with the audience. **3/5**

Phillip Phillips is on stage without his guitar singing Wilson Picket's "Midnight Hour." It's clear he's more comfortable with the guitar than without it, but I'm glad he's changing it up a little bit. Randy says what Phillip needs is what Phillip has and again compliments him on being who he is. J.Lo says Phillip makes her want to get up and dance with him. She likes that he just feels his performances. Steven calls him "brilliantly awkward." I don't want to go download this one, but it wasn't terrible. **3.5/5**

Singing Otis Redding's "Try A Little Tenderness," **Jessica Sanchez** is on the stage again. I can't understand a word she's saying. She yelled and growled her way through that whole performance. Steven said he appreciates that she's stepping out to win people's hearts. J.Lo said we saw a little "BBChez," Jessica's alter-ego, in this performance, and that now they have to start connecting to the audiences' heart. Randy echoed everything J.Lo and Steven said. I can't wait to hear what Jimmy had to say about this one.
3/5

Skylar Laine's singing "I Heard It Through The Grapevine." I'm not impressed. There are so many other songs she could've chosen to take country. Randy said she, like Phillip, has no problem coming out on the stage and just doing what she does. J.Lo said this performance was good while her first song was great. Steven said Skylar's a wild horse who refuses to be tamed. I'm going with J.Lo on this one. It was good, but not great. **3/5**

Closing out the night, **Joshua Ledet** is singing the Sam Cooke classic "A Change is Gonna Come." If there's a contestant in this competition suited for Soul, it's Joshua. This week was practically made for him. After giving him a standing ovation, Steven complimented Joshua on his restraint at the beginning of the song. J.Lo said it's not that Joshua can sing it's how he sings them that makes America love him and leaves her wanting more from each of his performances. Randy said this song was perfect for Joshua. I wish he'd been given more than just a minute and a half to sing because I wanted to hear more. It was such a slow build I feel like he didn't get to the best parts of the song. **4/5**

Here are the totals for the night:

Hollie--7/10
Colton--8.5/10
Elise--7/10
Phillip 8.5/10

Jessica--7/10
Skylar--8/10
Joshua--9/10

Based solely off the numbers, **Joshua Ledet, Phillip Phillips,** and **Colton Dixon** won the night. I'd say that's about accurate. The three remaining guys in the competition are consistent week after week.

Hollie Cavanagh, Elise Testone, and **Jessica Sanchez**, could find themselves in trouble tomorrow night based solely on the ratings given here. However, I suspect Jessica will be safe this week and probably not in the bottom three because of last week's shocking turn of events. I've been wrong before though, so we'll see.

I really enjoyed most of tonight's performances. We're at the point in the competition where, save one or two contestants, anyone could win this. It'll be hard to watch some of these contestants leave.

What did you think of tonight's performances? Which contestant do you think had the best combined performances of the night?

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Source: TV Fanatic

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