Adam Lambert and Kris Allen go to 'American Idol' finale; Danny Gokey Returns Home

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danny gokey adam lambert kris allen

After 88 million votes, Danny Gokey's "tragedy to triumph" ride ended on "American Idol," leaving Kris Allen and Adam Lambert to vie for next week's "Idol" crown

by Lorilee Craker

Ten months ago, before Sophia Gokey died, she encouraged her husband Danny to try out for "American Idol." On Wednesday night, Gokey, a 28-year-old church worship leader from Milwaukee, Wisc., graciously accepted defeat and reflected on his "Idol" voyage.

"Ten months ago, what I've come from...it's such a bittersweet homecoming," he said, referring to his visit to Milwaukee and the over-the-moon throngs who greeted him there. A usually stoic Gokey was brought to tears by the response of his city.

As his swan song, Gokey performed "You Are So Beautiful," which he had sung on Tuesday night's show as his personal tune selection. One gem he didn't get to sing? "Never Would Have Made It" by Grand Rapids' own Marvin Sapp, which Gokey cited on the "Idol" website as being the tune at the top of his wish list to sing on the show.

Besides Gokey's visit to Wisconsin, Kris Allen and Adam Lambert also made triumphant returns to their old stomping grounds, Allen to Little Rock and then much smaller Conway, Ark., where he's from, and Lambert to San Diego, Calif., his hometown.

Previous "Idol" winner Jordin Sparks sang, as did pop star Katy Perry.

But it was only in the waning minutes of the show that viewers got any clue as to who was safe and who would be cut out of the finale.

The first singer deemed safe was Allen, who looked almost as shocked as judge Simon Cowell, who had been prognosticating in the media that Allen wasn't good enough to be in the finale.

Still, Cowell and his cohorts on the judging panel gave Allen a standing ovation.

Lambert seemed like more of a shoe-in, but according to host Ryan Seacrest, a mere one million votes separated the top two. As Cowell noted, "None of us expected this (outcome). (The finale) could be what we call a big ding dong."

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