

# Meet the 4 Contestants Bringing God Glory Tonight on American Idol

It's Hollywood week on the 15th and final season of *American Idol*, and once again Christian singers will vie for the title. Mandisa, Jordin Sparks, Colton Dixon, Chris Daughtry and other Christians have launched their singing careers on the show. And in 2015, Lee University alum Clark Beckham made the finals—while tweeting Bible verses and A. W. Tozer quotes along the way. Will it happen again?

Tonight and tomorrow night (*American Idol* airs twice this week) at least three worship leaders will be among nearly 100 contestants seeking to survive the next cut to the top 52. Jordan Sasser, Josh Wicker, Jessica Cabral and Melanie Tierce advanced from auditions held last fall in San Francisco, Denver, Little Rock, Savannah and Philadelphia. Each one received a "Golden Ticket" to be part of what *American Idol* calls Hollywood week.

Sasser has led worship at Andy Stanley's North Point Community Church and other houses of worship in the Atlanta area, and has served as a missionary in Costa Rica. He wowed the *American Idol* judges (Harry Connick, Jr., Jennifer Lopez and Keith Urban) with a rendition of Celine Dion's "It's All Coming Back to Me Now." Sasser's wife, Alex, also auditioned and played the ukulele, but she didn't make it to Hollywood.

Wicker says he has music in his bones. As a child he was part of his family's gospel band and today he serves as worship and creative director at The District Church in Jacksonville, Florida. For his *American Idol* audition, Wicker played guitar and sang Rihanna's "Stay."

A fan of the show since childhood, Cabral faithfully watched

each season drawn to the talented performers who shared her God-given gift for singing. For Cabral, music is woven into the fabric of her DNA passed down through generations of professional, classically trained vocalists. Her large family moved from Brazil to America when Cabral's mother was five months pregnant with her, and like a Brazilian version of the von Trapps, their a cappella choral group, comprised of her parents, siblings, grandparents, great grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins, performed at churches across the United States.

Tierce is majoring in music and biblical studies at Azusa Pacific University, a Christian school in Southern California.

She spent the summer of 2015 as part of the worship team at the Pasadena House of Prayer, has led worship at Centerpoint Church in Murrieta, California, and is a featured member of worship-centric People and Songs Community (Jennie Lee Riddle, Micah Tyler, etc.). Judge Harry Connick, Jr., called Tierce's performance of "Rise Up" the best audition he had heard on *American Idol*. After seeing Tierce on *Idol*, Christian singer Jamie Grace tweeted, "I knew u were singin from a soul that chases Jesus."

The *American Idol* spoilers website reveals that only one of the three—Sasser, Wicker or Tierce—makes it to the top 24. Once again, at least one Christian artist will be featured in this most unlikely showcase.