

'Idol' successfully reinvented itself with season 10

As I watched the confetti fall on our newest "American Idol" Scotty McCreery, one thought kept running through my head. What a difference a year makes.

At the end of last season, I wasn't sure I could do this anymore. Season 9 had been pretty rough with mediocre talent and judges that were more annoying than entertaining. There were many weeks I found myself staring at a blank computer screen wondering what in the world I was going to write about this week. For the first time, I viewed cover-



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ing "Idol" as a chore instead of something I enjoyed.

That attitude stayed with me through the entire off-season. I actually started to think I was over my beloved "American Idol."

But then the season premiered and the breath of fresh

air hit me right in the face and knocked me out of my funk. The show's audition rounds concentrated on the good, rather than the bad. And the judges complimented the new mindset by bringing an energy we had never seen before. Steven Tyler, Jennifer Lopez and Randy Jackson actually liked each other. But more importantly, they wanted to be there watching those contestants. That's something we hadn't felt from Simon Cowell in quite a while.

Because the judges cared and

Please see **IDOL/4C**



Scotty McCreery (left) learns that he is the next American Idol during the finale of "American Idol" season 10.

Courtesy of Michael Becker/FOX

Idol

■ Continued from 3C

gave that extra time and those second chances to contestants, we ended up with the most talented group we've ever seen on the show. And that is why this season was such a success. The judges can be the best ever seen on TV, but if there is not enough talent, the season will be a flop.

I think Scotty McCreery can end the winner's slump and

become the success that the show hopes he will be. Lauren Alaina also has a great future ahead of her. And they're not the only ones. In fact, I think we'll see albums from everyone in the Top 11. Some will just come sooner than others. And I think they'll be better albums than we've seen in the past, because the man who will be behind many of them - Jimmy Iovine - was involved in the process and knows what these contestants can do.

Season 10 truly was a remix.

But unlike a lot of remixes that sound like the producer put very little effort into what he or she was doing, "Idol" truly reinvented itself. I think it's possible that years from now, TV experts will look back on this season and study it as the perfect example of how a show can reinvent itself successfully.

During her conference call with reporters last week, Lauren said that she and Scotty were both winners. But I think the biggest winners were the fans.

"Idol" got its mojo back this season and because of that, I did too.

Thanks to WKEE's Dave and Tia, the great team here at the paper, and all of you for taking the ride with me this season. I'm not ashamed to admit I'm more than a little sad to see it come to an end.

Angela Henderson-Bentley writes about "American Idol" in her "Idol Chit-Chat" blog at www.herald-dispatch.com.

The Herald-Dispatch, May 31, 2011