

Fantasia's trek to 'Idol' finals

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Since "American Idol 3" started airing, some people have seen 19-year-old High Point native Fantasia Barrino as the singer to beat. After Wednesday night's vote, Diana DeGarmo from Snellville, Ga., is the only one still with a chance to do it.

But even Clay Aiken had his off nights in last season's competition — "Grease" anyone? Here's a critical look at the performances that have taken Fantasia to the final round, which begins Tuesday at 8 p.m. with performances, followed by four hours of voting. The results show airs Wednesday from 8 to 10 p.m.



JAN. 20: Aces Atlanta audition. Simon calls her "Proud Mary" one of the best ever. **Score: 7**

FEB. 7: Makes it through Pasadena round with "Think." Delivers memorable "My lips are big, but my talent is bigger" line. **Score: 6**

FEB. 10-11: Snags slot in the finals with "Something to Talk About," highest viewer vote. Simon tells her she doesn't need "Idol" to become a star. **Score: 9**

MARCH 17-18: Scores with "Signed, Sealed, Delivered" during Soul Week. Shocking. Randy calls her "a young Aretha." Fashion highlight: Sharp pinstriped pantsuit. **Score: 8**

MARCH 24-25: Impresses with classy rendition of "Always on My Mind." Until Simon critiques her dress and she shoots back with, "Simon, you don't know class." **Score: 6**

MARCH 30-31: Flirts with famed Motown backing band during spot-on "I Heard It Through the Grapevine." Fashion disaster: Bulky cream knit bolero with denim miniskirt. **Score: 7**

APRIL 7-8: Subdued "Something About the Way You Look Tonight" makes Elton John want to sign her. If only he could. Randy calls her "a young Aretha." Simon says it's her weakest performance. **Score: 5**

APRIL 15-16: Career-making "Summertime" called "the best single Idol performance ever" by Randy. Simon winks at her. Ew. Fashion highlight: Mauve and rhinestone peek-a-boo gown with chandelier earrings. **Score: 10**

APRIL 21-22: Churchy arrangement of "It's a Miracle" nearly sinks her. Barry Manilow night — why? Lands in bottom two, sparking cries of racism, vote-rigging. **Score: 1**

APRIL 28-29: Bouncy "Get On Your Feet" during Latin night shows off personality but not voice. "Donald Duck on helium" is how Simon put it. But avoids the bottom three. **Score: 3**

MAY 5-6: Soars on Big Band night with "Crazy Little Thing Called Love" and "What Are You Doing The Rest of Your Life." Paula cries. **Score: 8**

MAY 12-13: Mixed results on Disco night. Wows with "Knock on Wood," but "Holding Out for a Hero" judged bad song choice. Ends up in bottom two. Guest Clay Aiken boos vote. **Score: 5**

MAY 19-20: Does Aretha, Tina and Whitney proud with covers of their classics. Paula says she doesn't need this competition anymore. Randy summons Aretha again. Simons winks. Ew again. Makes the finals. **Score: 9**