

THE VOICE

SERIES 11 PRESS PACK

ALL CONTENT IS STRICTLY EMBARGOED UNTIL SATURDAY 27TH AUGUST



The Voice UK is back for its eleventh series set to air on Saturday 3rd September at 8pm on ITV

**The timings of transmission are subject to change and will be fully confirmed in Wednesday's final exchange so please refer to that for full confirmation on the time of TX*

In the search for the next singing sensation Anne-Marie, Olly Murs, Sir Tom Jones and will.i.am have once again assumed their roles as the superstar Coaches and returned to their seats in the most iconic chairs on television.

Much-loved television presenter Emma Willis also returns as host and will once again preside over all of the action.

Hopefuls looking for a shot at stardom will take to the stage in a bid to be crowned this series' winner, securing a recording contract with Universal's label UMOD.

This series will also see a fresh new addition to the format - The Callbacks - where hopeful contestants that made it through the Blind Auditions will battle it out to earn their place in the Semi-Final.

Credit: The Voice UK is set to return to ITV on Saturday 3rd September at 8pm

Anne-Marie said: "It feels so good to be back! I had the most amazing time last series, and I am so excited to be returning to my big red chair. Winning with Craig last series was a special moment and I am determined to keep a hold of my crown!"

Olly Murs said: "I cannot wait to be reunited with The Voice UK family! We always have so much fun making the show and I'm sure this series will be no exception. Anne-Marie needs to watch out because this series I'm taking back the title!"

Sir Tom Jones said: "Whenever I'm back in The Voice UK studio, my expectations are exceeded. I love the anticipation of hearing unknown singers and I can't wait to see what's in store this time around!"

will.i.am said: "I'm excited to be returning to the UK, my second home, as we start filming the next series of The Voice UK. Discovering fresh and unique voices is what this show is all about, so I am looking forward to meeting Britain's next wave of talent."

In episode 1 the coaches undertake the very first round of the blind auditions and things quickly turn competitive as Olly reminds the other coaches of the power of the block button as he says: "we actually have got the block buttons back again so that's going to be fun, which means if I like a contestant and I don't want any of these coaches to have one of them, I've only got one pick."

Not long after, Olly can't resist blocking Tom as they are both blown away by a spellbinding performance from 20 year old Student David from London.

We also meet couple Emily and Tom who met whilst studying music at university, before taking to the stage Emily admits, "I fell in love with Tom for his voice". The couple's chemistry comes through in their performance as all four coaches turn around but Tom decides to give Olly some payback pressing the block button on his way around but which coach will Emily and Tom choose?

The return of the live audience keeps our coaches on their toes as they all chant and cheer in the hope that Tom will sing for them, happy to oblige before singing his track 'Crumble' he says: "this is a very important song, I try to pick songs that mean a lot to me." There isn't a dry eye in the house when Tom finishes his performance before opening up about the meaning of the song.

The Voice UK is produced by Lifted Entertainment, part of ITV Studios. The Voice is an ITV Studios format

THE COACHES PRESS PACK INTERVIEWS

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will.i.am



How does it feel to be back on The Voice?

It feels great to be back on the UK Voice, and with a live audience once again. This is so important, and so great to have our audience back.

How does it feel to be back in the UK specifically?

I love being here, I like to go out for long walks and layer up to fit the weather. The UK has a great sense of style – every layer adds to it. I've been coming here off and on since 1998, since the 90's, now it's the 2000's. I don't have my roll necks, usually I have my turtle necks.

What is the talent level like this year, can we expect kind of bigger things this time around?

There are some pretty awesome singers this year so far. Anne-Marie's well in form and not feeling as nervous as she was last season which was her first season. She was victorious her first season so she's super dialled in. It's great to see Anne-Marie, a thousand percent confident and she won feeling 300% confident out of a thousand so she's a thousand percent confident, who knows what's going to happen.

Is there anything you are looking for specifically?

I'm looking for someone I can coach, not necessarily to 100% perfection. Someone that I can really help craft their talent and build their confidence. You know I've been here for ten years,

this is our 11th season and this time I want to try something different and that is to turn around for people that aren't obvious. It's amazing to see singers that were once shy and then gain confidence and what was it that sparked the confidence, so to be a part of that spark is what I want to do this year.

Who would you say is your biggest competitor?

I don't really look at it as competition because the people that are competing are the singers and the ones that win are the contestants. So I'm here to encourage and give some nuggets of knowledge so that if they don't win they have tools to go on and have a career like Becky Hill. Becky Hill didn't win the voice but out of all the contestants that have been on The Voice in the UK, Becky Hill has a serious career. I'm proud of her.

Why do you think there's so much undiscovered talent?

Because every year millions of people around the world, they get an 'Aha moment' when they realise singing is therapeutic for them and something spawns within people. You know maybe they had the talent, they had a hunch and then something happened. Some spark happened to where they are like do you know what? I can do that too! Or do you know what? I am going to get back on this Horse again! Or do you know what I believe in myself, fuck what everyone else thinks.

What kind of music and singer do you think is on the rise at the moment and on your radar?

Latin music on a whole is what's happening. Latin is still the most explosive, most streamed, most shared form of music and genre on earth.

What is one piece of advice you would give to someone who is trying to make it in the music industry?

Learn Spanish. Just kidding. Patience, hunger, find it and once you get hungry, hunt. Eat what you kill, don't go killing anything though, that's just a play on words.

Specific to this competition. Is there one piece of advice you always find yourself giving that you tell each and every one of your acts?

Take yourself seriously but don't take it seriously. It's a balance between the two, you know a lot of times when people take themselves too seriously, they put too much effort in and people don't like that. The audience likes it to seem effortless so it's a balancing act between taking yourself too seriously and not taking what you are doing too seriously where you put yourself above people.

Who are your favourite music group or artists at the moment and why?

At the moment, it's a group called Fleet Foxes. So calming, this song is what I cycle to. You can go cycling and ride your bike to a traditional energy song but that means the song is doing a lot of the work. So if you have a song, that's like anti energy in a traditional sense and you still find the oomph, then you are doing all the work. You go! And then it puts this counter emotion to your energy and then you are really swimming in something beautiful.

Now it takes that cycle and that ride and it makes it emotional. It's nice. It's great. The other day I rode around LA for five hours with that song on loop. Five hours listening to that song on loop on loop, on repeat. It's empty enough for you to have thoughts, for you to like to complete whatever it is your thinking and work out your problems. There's not a lot of sonic bombardment that steals your thoughts or takes you to a place that doesn't allow you to complete your thoughts. It's like atmospheric still. You can go into mental study mode, you can go into like analysing your introspect of yourself. I like doing that. I like driving my car. But right now, I like riding a bike through the city and just thinking.

Is that your way of taking time out to relax?

Either walks, four hour walks or three to five hour bike rides. I walk somewhere for two and a half hours, just aimlessly nowhere to only have to walk back home and I can do that now. It's kind of cool that you're masked up and people don't recognise anyone and it gives you some personal space and freedom, And it's cool to just walk and see the world and see people living, I like that. Hikes are cool, but you can't really venture off and away from the trail too much on a hike or else you'll get lost. And who wants to be lost and who wants to get lost in the woods? But you can get lost in the city and then find your way back and then when you are lost in the city, you're like oh wow I've never seen this part of the town and I like that. That's my new favourite to get lost in the city.

London is good for hidden spots, do you find that?

It's kind of romantic, especially if you can go out and walk and get lost with someone out in the city walking, that to me is like that's dope.

How would you say this series compares to when you had a virtual audience before?

Well for me it feels like home. For Anne-Marie it must feel magical because this is her first time doing The Voice with a live audience and that's great but for me it feels ah, the way it's supposed to.

Does the audience influence your decisions at all?

Yeah, it's even that way for the contestants, because the audience helps the contestants be selected., There's been several times where you know the contestant had someone in mind and the audience persuaded them to go a different path and the same for the coaches. We are kind of overthinking it, over-analysing and the audience shakes us up and says what are you doing? You should turn around for this person and sometimes we are so thick headed and we don't listen to the audience and then the audience is angry. They need to have a new layer where the audience can throw soft projectiles our way to wake us up!

Imitates : 'We've just added a new format to The Voice, the audience is armed with Potatoes no Tomatoes. They are armed with soft Tomatoes.'

ANNE-MARIE



Is it nice to be back for the second time?

It feels natural to be back, I enjoyed it so much and didn't want the last one to end so waiting for this one felt like a long wait, I couldn't wait to come back. It feels right, it feels like it's meant to be.

Do you think you will do anything different this year?

It's hard to say that because I won so I almost don't want to do anything different, if I didn't win maybe I would think, should I change this or that but it seems like the people that I heard at the Blinds were really good. I'm just trying to keep that same feeling of trusting your gut and go with that inner voice and also to just be a friend to these people and be with them on this journey because I know that it must be overwhelming so I am just going to keep doing that.

What can singers expect from Team Anne-Marie if they join your team?

I think it's a lot of fun, I try and give them a lot of insight to the industry, I am very honest, I think what they think they know of me, is exactly what they are going to get because I feel like people just know me from social media and everything that I post that's what they get.

Is there any particular kind of voice or style that you have been looking for this year?

Well I've been saying that I want to go outside of what I normally go for, my comfort zone are very current voices and more of that radio style, I am trying to obviously get a few of those still but I want to reach out to different genres like rock and different languages. I just want to give everyone the opportunity to be seen.

Do you think you have what it takes to beat the boys again?

I hope so, all I am going to do is try and go with my gut and hear that tone of voice that I think everyone will like. I am trying to do that but Tom has got some amazing people so I'm a bit nervous about his people.

Who is the most competitive in the panel?

I think Olly but then every time I walk in and say 'oh I won last year remember' Tom is quick to shut me down so actually I think Tom. I think he is secretly like nah it's not happening again Anne-Marie, I'm going to win this year so watch out, Tom.

Has the live audience changed anything for you?

Yes, I didn't know really what to expect because obviously before it was silent and you can hear everything and having the audience is actually difficult because they are shouting so there must be loads of shots of me trying to hear the singers. It's also really nice because I have missed human energy, so I've craved that over lockdown and having people in front of me is really nice to feel. It's equally confusing because sometimes when I think I'm not sure they are like turn round now, sometimes they help and sometimes they don't. It's difficult.

What in your opinion is the hardest thing about being a coach?

I'd say last year, it was probably my own issues of feeling not worthy of it. When I got it, when I was called and they said we would like you to do it, I was like what, really, me? So I had like a doubt the whole time, like am I worthy of this, have I got stuff to give to people that they can learn from? So for the whole of last year I was going through the process when most questions I'd get asked I had something to say and something to give and it was almost like this experience was helping me as well as the people on the competition so I think by the end of the competition and the end of the show. I was like oh wow, I do have knowledge, I do have stuff to give to people, so coming back that's what I have changed about myself, I know that I deserve to be here so having that confidence actually makes me a better coach. So I am hoping that I can be better than last year really.

What was your number one standout moment from last series?

Obviously winning! I think that's obvious, but I also think the first day when I stepped out and met the other coaches and sat in that chair, was a really big moment for me because I pride myself on being a good person and in the music industry, sometimes you don't really get seen as a person, I think you just get seen for your voice and I try and put my personality out there as much as I can and I'm trying to do good all the time. When we started the show and people online and in the audience and at home started saying 'oh Anne-Marie is so nice', I think that was a really happy moment for me because people started seeing me for me and not just singing on the radio. So that was a really big thing for me to experience.

OLLY MURS



How does it feel to be back?

It feels amazing! It feels so good. I can't believe it's my fifth season. On my phone it came up with it being five years ago in 2017, me on set for the first time doing all the promo. It's just like wow! I can't believe it's been this long but still the same excitement, still the same feeling. I still love it, I love being here, it's great.

What specifically are you looking for this year?

You know what, this year I want fun characters, people that have great fun personalities, I don't want anything too serious and I just want to feel good, I want to feel happy, I want something that is going to entertain the people at home watching. I want them to be laughing and having a good time, I think that's really important, so that's what I am looking for.

Anne-Marie is back for her second series, what does she bring to the panel?

It's so lovely to have her back because I think some people come and do one year and have work commitments and leave. It's great that Anne-Marie decided to come back again because she really does bring spontaneity I think. She's really spontaneous on the chair and I love that about her, you never quite know what she is going to do next. She's very unpredictable. She's also a really cool fresh artist so it's nice to have her opinion and have a fellow Essex person on the panel.

What do you think your chances of winning this year are?

I think it's a really even playing field, we have four coaches on the show that have all won individually at some point. We've all won the show, so now everyone knows what it takes to do it. I think this year because of the new format, the new changes, it's a lot sleeker and a lot quicker to get to that final now. So we've got to think fast, we've got to coach fast and we are going to have to pick the right people and hopefully the public will see that and love it. I think it's a real race this year. It's all against all.

Who is the most competitive?

I would have to say myself, I mean I'm competitive with myself. I genuinely think I'm the most competitive and I know when you speak to other coaches, they'll probably say the same. Just because I'm not afraid to show it, I think they're all competitive but they don't want to show it. Apart from me, I definitely think Anne-Marie, she has the same fire that I have. She has the same desire in everything she does. She's a karate world champion, you know she wants to win everything and I can see that. She won The Voice last year, she's going to want to win again, me and her are probably the most competitive.

Has having the audience there made a difference to the performers and their nerves and also your experience?

There is nothing small about that audience, they are loud. They are behind the contestants and if it's getting hostile, you know they are having a go at us for not pressing our buttons. They are brilliant. It's so lovely to have that again, that unpredictability of an audience. Where you're not sure what's gonna happen. How are they going to react to someone? And you know they are helping the contestants, they are their sort of.. that's their coach, their mentor, pushing the contestants over the line, sometimes some of these contestants might have come last year and it might have been a completely different experience and we might have not turned for them. But having a crowd here just gives that extra push that they need.

Do you think the performers are more nervous now there is an audience?

So much more nervous, they really are, you can see and hear when they actually come out that slight breath. They know it's a bigger deal now because the crowd is back and you've got to remember all of us are also singers. They haven't been on stage probably for a long time in front of a live audience so it's the added 'oh my God, I am actually here' so you know, really exciting and really amazing to have everyone here and so far, the contestants have all smashed it so it's been great.

Has anything funny happened on set, you can tell us about?

Nothing just yet, no but obviously the Block Button has come into play because all the other coaches do is block me, Tom and I had a great block battle so I got him and he got me and then Anne-Marie's got me for a second year running and most likely will get me again so in two years since the block button was introduced, i've basically been blocked six times it looks like. But I take that as a compliment.

Describe each coach in three words?

Tom - Gentleman, hilarious, God.

Anne Marie - Spontaneous, unpredictable, sassy,

Will I Am - Crazy, genius, funny

SIR TOM JONES



How does it feel to be back?

It feels great, I look forward to it every year. Every time it's getting closer, we are all friends and it is great to see my other coaches again and chat about what we have been doing and what's happening. It's exciting.

What's the one thing that you look for in each series?

I like natural singers. I like singers that sound like they really mean it and it's something that is a natural thing for them to do. They are not trying, I don't want people that just want to be famous. But you don't know that until you start talking to them, when you hear them first of all it has to be a natural way of singing and not forced. You don't know it until you hear it really. That's the truth. But that's the kind of singers that I like. Now that could be a big voice or a small voice, It doesn't matter, there's a spark that I can't explain until I hear it. The song is also very important, if you pick a wrong song and you might not come across as well as you should. So all those things, it should sound natural.

What can singers expect if they are on Team Tom?

I will find out what kind of songs they like to sing, what things they sound better at singing than others. I like to suggest things sometimes that maybe they wouldn't expect that they haven't tried before. Because I think that it's good especially for younger singers to experience different types of songs. But I can generally tell what they are capable of singing. What their style is and where their passions lie. I want to know what they want first of all, I want to find out from them what they are looking for.

What's the dynamics between all of the coaches?

We all really want the same thing, we want to give new singers a chance to try if previously they haven't made it. Some of them are older, retired and they've come back or people have gotten married and had children and then want to pick up where they left off. We all want to help them reach their goal really and we all feel that. But we are all different in what we are listening to. I can tell sometimes if somebody comes on whether he or she would be better suited to Olly or Anne-Marie or will.i.am.

How have you found having the live audience back?

You can get feedback from the audience that are in the studio, because you can't see. Especially in the Blind Auditions, you can't see the people and they can. Sometimes you can listen to what they are experiencing, you can sort of get a little gage from it, if they are getting excited and they are up and they are enjoying it. You know that the person is delivering visually as well as vocally. We are only interested really in what they sound like before we know what they look like but the audience does help. Anything live is always more exciting I think, when you do live shows with an audience people bring something special that you can only get from people.

What would you say makes the Voice so popular?

First of all, it's because there's new singers every season you know you are not getting the same thing, the format basically is the same but you get new singers so you are seeing and hearing new talent all the time and that keeps going on and on so it's always fresh in that respect. The singers are new and the songs are different from what you've heard before and you get a chance to find out about the singers, you know where they are from and what they want. It's an exciting thing I think.

How does it feel to be back on the road after the tour was cancelled last year?

It was wonderful, it was a thing that you can't experience anywhere else. Recording is great because you are making new things when you make records and you do TV shows which is great as well but there's nothing quite like being in front of a live audience. It changes nightly and that's because the people are different you see.

Did you get a chance to celebrate your birthday this year as you couldn't celebrate your 80th last year?

I just celebrate life! That's the thing like every birthday is like another tick to me, it's like wow, I'm a new year older and I'm still here and still enjoying what I do. That's the great thing for me, is still being in the business at eighty one years old, I am still having as much fun and excitement as I did when I started. I'm making new records, doing new things, and carrying on.

What is your secret to being eighty one, looking great and being in shape?

I'm lucky I'm in good health, I've got nothing wrong with me, I've got no debilitating illnesses that bother me, it's just wear and tear, that's about the only thing that has happened to me. So I've been lucky, I've tried to look after myself, I've tried to be aware that you need rest but you need exercise as well.

You know you need to do certain things that the body and the mind need to survive and I think the better care you take of yourself, the longer you'll live but there's going to be a certain amount of luck involved as well because some people do everything right and they still get some terrible disease or something that they can't control so I've been lucky. I think it's luck but I do work out, I see a personal trainer and I try to keep as fit as I can. My voice is still in great shape, everything is ticking away nicely.

PRESENTER PRESS PACK INTERVIEW

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EMMA WILLIS



How does it feel to be back presenting The Voice for series 11?

I'm just so chuffed that it's still going! I've obviously done nine out of the eleven series as I didn't do the first two but even that is essentially a decade of doing it. When you've been doing something for that long, it's always lovely to go back because it's everyone you know, and it feels like it's your holiday time with your mates. It's not really work because it's so much fun.

Having been the show's anchor for all these years, what do you think The Voice has that has enabled it to stand the test of time?

Because it has pure talent on it. No matter what happens after the show finishes, you are guaranteed every week to see a member of the public with a phenomenal talent. People who you probably can encounter in everyday life, such as nurses, healthcare assistants, lorry drivers - they are the Great British public just coming in and blowing our socks off with these voices that you would never know they had. I'd also say our coaches too because they love it so much and I think you can see that, it's all just really genuine.

What's your favourite thing about presenting The Voice?

The people - whether that's the coaches in the chairs, the crew that work behind the scenes or the contestants that you meet, I just love people - I'd be really good at Neighbourhood Watch! I really enjoy chatting to the contestants and hearing about their lives but I also love listening to the coaches have a natter, especially when Tom is regaling another phenomenal story or singing the most beautiful song which often makes me cry. That man is incredibly special. He is an absolute icon and commands respect without actually commanding anything. He's a genuinely wonderful man who is possibly one of the most talented people I've ever had the privilege to watch perform.

How do you feel the show has changed and evolved in the many years that you've been presenting it?

I think it's embraced itself for how lovely it is. It was very serious and dramatic in the beginning. For the contestants it is that, but it's also a singing talent show. There is enough doom and gloom in the world so on a Saturday night, when you're sitting down with your family, you need to see something that's uplifting, fun and enjoyable to watch. Even though it still has its very serious, sincere and touching moments, it also brings a lot of fun and light.

How have you found it being back to presenting to a live audience?

It's been amazing to have an audience again. Gradually, each year, we're getting something else back. There is nothing like a live audience - the coaches feed off it, I feed off it, the contestants feed off it. They're an integral part to the show so it's brilliant to have them back. The only thing missing now is we need to get rid of the distance. I need to hug again. I need to jump on people and hug them and pick up kids and spin them around. I've literally got a two-metre mark on the floor which I can't cross and I cannot tell you how hard it is.

In terms of the contest contestants, do you feel like they thrive off the live audience or do you feel like it creates extra nerves?

I think it does both to be honest. It's terrifying walking out there with nobody in the room because it's such a massive space that you're walking into. And then you've got four coaches and roughly four hundred other people just staring at you so it's really daunting. But the audience give so much and the contestant performs to that audience so they have this amazing 90 seconds on stage together. But those nerves are needed as well because if you go out there all confident, sometimes that's the thing that trips you up. So, the nerves kind of keep you on your toes a little bit and keep you conscious in that moment.

What are the dynamics like between all of the coaches?

Will is the King of one-liners and quite naughty. Then Anne-Marie joined and she's the Queen of one-liners and is also quite naughty. So together at the end, there's a lot of giggling, they're a bit like the fun, cheeky kids in class. Tom is the mature, naughty one. He has a lot of experience but is still super playful. Then Olly is the cheeky chappy so really, they're all just quite naughty and that works brilliantly. Olly and Tom have a fantastic relationship as well. They're always pulling each other's legs and poking fun at each other. They absolutely adore one another but are massively competitive as well in the nicest possible way.

Would you say that there's been a standout moment you have from filming this year?

We always love it when a coach sings. They are begged constantly to do it and they don't always but in the first episode, you just know when Tom takes that microphone, that it's always going to be effortless and perfect. Then he tells you about the song and why he wrote it and there is not a dry eye in the house. You can see how much respect everybody has for him.

The way all the other coaches look at him, even though they're at the top of their game as well, you can see in their eyes that pure admiration for him. For me, that has to be my stand-out moment because I was quite literally a mess on the floor when it happened.

From a contestant point of view, I don't think we've ever had anybody quite like Mark Howard, It really got to him. He was crying before he walked on stage and even before he'd finished the song. That really stood out because he had no self-belief whatsoever and you always wonder, why don't they have that confidence? It's humbling when somebody who is so sweet and talented just has no idea how great they are. But at the same time, you want to go 'dude, run with it, you're bloody brilliant'.

The shows that you front and host are so wide ranging from the big shiny floor entertainment shows to more serious factual documentaries. Do you feel like you have to wear different hats when you're taking on those projects?

Although they're different projects, I navigate them all the same way because at the centre of everything that I do is people, real people that do real things. Your subject matter might be different, whether it's singing or babies, but it's people-centred care. That's what you do in a hospital and that's what I do on The Voice.

You've been at the centre of UK television for almost two decades have there been any standout career defining moments?

I think my most pinch-me, how the hell am I stood here moment was presenting The Brits with Dermot because I've watched that my whole life. It's an appointment to view every single year and I never missed it without fail. I love music, I love telly and I love Dermot and all of a sudden we were hosting it. That was a massive highlight. I'd also have to say hosting Big Brother because I'd watched it since day dot, was a huge fan and that show really changed my career.

What other projects are you presenting at the moment that you can tell us about?

We've just filmed a new series of Delivering Babies. We are back on the ward at the Princess Alexandra and are going back post-pandemic, finding out what life has been like for them over the past three years. But we're also making sure that the ladies and their babies are front and centre. I'm also training more so I'm moving up a level from an MCA to a Maternity Support Worker, which is incredible. A new level of training and a new set of skills.

Please credit: The Voice UK is set to return to ITV on Saturday 3rd September at 8pm

Press contacts:

callum.bracken@itv.com

Pictures:

james.hilder@itv.com