Jamar Rogers Is Living Proof

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By Lauren Tuck (Editorial Assistant, POZ)

Jamar Rogers returned to *The Voice* last night to compete in the Battle Rounds for Team Cee Lo Green.

Following the first round of the show, called the Blind Auditions (contestants sing to the backs of the four celebrity coaches--Christina Aguilera, Adam Levine, Cee Lo Green and Blake Shelton--so they can hear but not see the singer), we move onto the Battle Rounds. In this section of the competition, each coach pairs up two teammates (there are 12 members on every team) to duel in a duet. After the performance, their coach chooses which singer is victorious therefore securing a spot in the next segment. Battles continue until each coach has cut his or her team in half and 24 contenders move onto the Live Shows.

Cee Lo pairs Jamar up against Jamie Lono, a scraggly blond hipster who takes breaks from his job working at a deli to sing for unsuspecting patrons chomping on their sandwiches. Cee Lo chose Jamie for his team by declaring, "You make sandwiches, I *eat* sandwiches.“ Match made in heaven. Jamie and Jamar are assigned to sing Foreigner’s ”I Wanna Know What Love Is."

Before performing in a wrestling ring (yes, you read that right) the aspiring artists stop by the homes of their celebrity coaches for some prep time--at least I think it’s Cee Lo’s home; otherwise the show set him up in a loft decorated with Warhol inspired-art of his cat, Purrfect. (Cee Lo strokes Purrfect intermittently throughout the show. The feline also has a Twitter account.) The contestants get extra help from, you guessed it, another celebrity, or as The Voice call its, a mentor. While music producer Baby Face advises Jamie, R&B star Ne-Yo gives pointers to Jamar.

Watch Jamie and Jamar receive advice from their mentors:
video not available

Ne-Yo tells Jamar that it’s important to convey the correct emotion while belting out the cheesy but poignant lyrics of the anthem. Jamar counters, saying, “I can do that after everything I’ve been through. I can draw on being HIV positive. I can draw on all of these things to sing my heart out. And I’m going to do it. I love Jamie Lono and I wish him the best, but I’m about to sing my ass off.”

Sing his ass off he did indeed. Maroon 5’s leading man Adam Levine (who rocked multiple grandpa sweaters in this episode) even said that Jamar owned it and that Levine and the other coaches are

the losers for not picking him in the Blind Auditions. The man who has the “Moves Like Jagger’s” predictions rang true, and Cee Lo crowned Jamar the winner in the battle of the ballad.

Watch Jamie and Jamar battle:

When I first learned of Jamar’s moving story--how he overcame a crystal meth addiction, contracted HIV and was eliminated on American Idol--I was moved to tears. But this time it was Jamie’s declaration after his loss that had me reaching for the tissues. He said, “Of course, I would like to go on, but I feel like there’s a reason for me being here, and maybe that was to let Jamar go on.... [He breaks down in tears.] He’s an awesome person.”

And then, just to make sure that I was sufficiently dehydrated and heartbroken before I went to bed, Jamar adds, “I am living proof that there is no pit too deep that you can’t climb through. You don’t have to lay down and die. You can decide to live. You can decide to get better. You can decide to do better. I got to prove that tonight.”

If Jamar doesn’t win, he can certainly have a career as a motivational speaker. But, while he still has a shot at become a singing sensation, follow The Voice and be sure to vote for Jamar in the coming weeks!

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