



Idolized: Music, Media, and Identity in American Idol (Ethnomusicology Multimedia)

Katherine L. Meizel

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The hit television program American Idol provides a stage where the politics of national, regional, ethnic, and religious identity are performed for millions of viewers. Diversity is carefully highlighted and coached into a viable commodity by judges, argues Katherine Meizel, with contestants packaged into familiar portraits of American identities. Consumer choice, as expressed by audience voting, also shapes the course of the show?negotiating ideas of democracy and opportunity closely associated with the American Dream. Through interviews with audience members and participants, and careful analyses of television broadcasts, commercial recordings, and print and online media, Meizel demonstrates that commercial music and the music industry are not simply forces to be criticized or resisted, but critical sites for redefining American culture.

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