

Celebrity Interview: 'American Idol' Winner Trent Harmon Is the First Contestant to Sing Justin Timberlake



By [Katie Gray](#)

Last Thursday night, April 7th, Trent Harmon, who chose the Harold Melvin and the Blue Notes classic “If You Don’t Know Me By Now” and Sia’s hit “Chandelier” for his final performances, was crowned the winner of the 15th and final season of *American Idol*. That’s right – Harmon is the final American Idol! He now has a record deal with Big Machine Records, and his first single “Falling” – which was co-written by *American Idol* judge and country superstar Keith Urban – will be on country radio.

Harmon, a 25-year-old former waiter from Mississippi, auditioned for the reality TV show in Little Rock, Arkansas. The country boy grew up on his family farm and would perform at his family’s restaurant. During his time on *American Idol*, he wowed the crowd with a Lynyrd Skynyrd cover and a rendition of Chris Stapleton’s “Tennessee Whiskey.” He’s the third winner to pursue a career in country music, following in the footsteps of Carrie Underwood and Scotty McCreery. In our exclusive [celebrity interview](#), Harmon discusses his relationship with God, his love for country music, and his journey on *American Idol*.

Celebrity Interview with the Final *American Idol*

After he won, the singer thanked his mother, family, and God. He's a man of faith, and it's easy to see that being a Christian is a big part of his life. When he had mono during the reality TV show and was essentially quarantined and isolated from the rest of the cast, he would pray, "It's just me and you. It's just you and me, God." He didn't have his parents with him and relied heavily on his faith. "If you can make it through this competition without believing in something, I wouldn't say that's impressive," he shares. "Instead, it's kind of scary."

His relationship with God has been a part of his singing for as long as he can remember. He recalls his mom teaching him "Amazing Grace" at the age of 5. Of his deep connection to the song, he says, "That song means something. There's a reason it's considered a classic." It was while singing "Amazing Grace" that he realized he could sing harmony.

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As important as his faith is, when it comes to his music, the country classics really have his heart. "Whenever I got the opportunity to pick the song myself, I was singing country," he shares. It's no surprise, then, that Harmon's musical influences are country singers. "I've always enjoyed the classics," he says. "I love Conway Twitty. I'm a big Elvis fan – you know, Elvis did country. I'm a Ray Charles fan, and he did a country album."

Of his future fans, he explains, "Country music supporters – they go to the shows; they go to the festivals; and they buy the songs. If you can make it in country, you can have a career." Willing to move anywhere, he may even relocate to

Nashville.

Trent Harmon Opens Up About His Reality TV Journey

Given the intense schedule of *American Idol*, Harmon hasn't had time for a break. "I have sleep scheduled for next Friday," he says with a laugh. Being the Final Idol is still completely surreal to him. "It hasn't really sunk in. I jumped in the shower and started doing my warm-ups and practicing my songs, and then, I realized I don't have to do that anymore," he reveals in our celebrity interview.

Perhaps the most special moment of his journey was getting to perform a song by Justin Timberlake, who had never granted anyone permission to use his music on the show. Earlier this season, Harmon performed the hit "Drink You Away," which Timberlake released to country radio after a performance with Stapleton at the Country Music Academy Awards in November 2015.

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He also had the opportunity to speak with some of the people on his bucket list, including Jordin Sparks and David Archuleta. Of the advice that he received from former contestants, he says, "They told me, 'Don't ever, ever, quit being genuine. Don't ever get out of that head.'" He was lucky enough to exchange numbers with some of them and looks forward to networking and applying their tips to his future endeavors.

Harmon never wanted "to coast along" and wasn't going to give anything less than his best. Ultimately, he credits this mentality and a lot of hard work with winning *American Idol*. "I knew that if I pushed myself and worked really, really hard, I could be more than just a pretty voice. I practiced

every day," he says. "I practiced every different angle to be good, to be better, to be the best."

You can keep up with the American Idol winner on Twitter [@TrentWHarmon!](#)