

16. BIG INTERVIEW

● YOU'RE BACK! HOW DOES IT FEEL?

It feels great to be back. I really feel part of it now. Even though last year everyone made me feel so welcome, when you come back a second year it's nice. Everyone's on top form.

● THE COACHES ALL SEEM TO GET ON REALLY WELL...

Yes. I was really scared when I walked in the first day. I know I'm a little bit confident and I'm a bit like an excited puppy and I can annoy people. I'm actually neighbours with Tom now! I'm like: "Hi Tom! Morning!" Ha! Genuinely, after the first couple of hours, the connection with all of the coaches was amazing. We just got on really well. When you get that connection, you don't want to let it go.

● DOES IT EVER GET COMPETITIVE?

Yes! Me and Jen [Hudson] have a shoe-off this series! We had a real battle and Jen was really upset with me. She was like: "I can't look at you right now, Olly". Jennifer threw her shoe but I threw mine at the same time. The act chose me! It was the first time Jennifer and me went toe to toe. She wanted to fight me. I did actually feel bad, though. It was our first row!

● WHAT'S IT LIKE WHEN NOBODY TURNS THEIR CHAIR FOR AN ACT?

It's heartbreaking for them. We know what it's like for the contestants. It's not nice, but we really hope they come back. You can see from our reactions on the show that we genuinely care. There was obviously a reason on the day that we didn't turn. We don't get to see the backstory like the viewers do. It's hard to watch it back and see the story, because you do feel bad. When you feel it, you turn. With certain singers they just hit you and you just feel like you have to turn.



OLLY MURS:
"BE WHO YOU ARE, NOT WHAT OTHER PEOPLE WANT YOU TO BE"

IT'S back to business for Olly and his celebrity coaching pals, as hit TV talent show *The Voice* returns with an epic new series! We caught up with the star to get all the inside gossip.



● THIS YEAR'S SHOW FEATURES TRIOS FOR THE FIRST TIME. WHAT'S THAT BEEN LIKE?

Trios have been good. I think all four of us have got a trio each, which was great in the end. There've been some very successful trios in the music industry over the years. There's Destiny's Child, Take That now are a three piece. Trios certainly work, so I think we'll see if they work on *The Voice*. In a trio you've got to really try and find your moments to shine and be in harmony.

● SO YOU'VE ALREADY CHOSEN YOUR TEAMS, THEN?

We're already at the knockouts, so we've already gone past the battles. We had some proper battles; I'm talking serious battles! I've got six contestants who are really strong. We don't know who's going to win. The one thing I'd say about this year is that last year we always felt that Donel stood out, and we didn't then expect to Ruti to come from nowhere and just go bang and win it. I think that happens with lots of shows. There's always one who goes out as the favourite. This year I don't think we have just one; there are loads of different people.

● WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE BIT OF THE COMPETITION?

My favourite bit is the knockouts, actually, and bringing in a mentor. Last year as the guest mentor I had Craig David and this year there's someone up my sleeve that I'll hopefully get! Knockouts for me is the best time because you get to spend more time with the contestants and really establish who they are as artists. You get to know more about their personalities.

● YOU HOSTED X FACTOR BACK IN 2015. WAS IT VERY DIFFERENT TO BEING A COACH ON THE VOICE?

When I was doing *X Factor* as a host, I wasn't happy because I wasn't able to be me. I was restricted. It was like: "You can't say this, you can't say that, you can't move there." That wasn't me. For me now, I can be me. We're in a society now and a world now where you can just be yourself. Be who you are, not what other people want you to be. That's what we are on the show.

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The Voice,
Saturdays at
8pm on ITV