

DEADLINE

‘American Idol’: Bobby Bones Returns As In-House Mentor For Season 4 On ABC

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Eric McCandless/ABC

EXCLUSIVE: *American Idol*'s core on-screen team is staying intact for the upcoming fourth season. **Bobby Bones** has closed a deal to return as in-house mentor, joining previously announced judges Luke Bryan, Katy Perry, Lionel Richie and host Ryan Seacrest. Bones will once again offer industry expertise, helping hopefuls their performances to the next level. The **ABC** singing competition, which ranked as the top broadcast series on Sunday nights among adults 18-49, is set to return in 2021.

Bones raised questions over his future on *Idol* in August when he retweeted Deadline's story announcing Bryan, Perry, Richie and Seacrest's Season 4 return with the comment "tension...." He later explained to concerned fans that he had another show in the works. Bones is set to star in a new travel TV show titled "Breaking Bobby Bones," coming soon to National Geographic.

Radio and TV personality Bones is host of the nationally syndicated radio show "The Bobby Bones Show," which broadcasts to over 170 stations and recently garnered its second Country Music Association Award for National Broadcast Personality of the Year and fourth ACM Award for National On-Air Personality of the Year. The show also earned Bones the title of youngest-ever inductee into the prestigious National Radio Hall of Fame. Bones also launched his own podcast, "BobbyCast," which features candid

long-form interviews with top artists and industry figures and has been downloaded nearly 20 million times..

Additionally, Bones won season 27 of ABC's *Dancing with the Stars* and serves as host and executive producer of "Opry," a weekly TV program airing highlights from the Grand Ole Opry stage on Circle Network. Bones' musical comedy band, Bobby Bones & The Raging Idiots, recently released a new project, *Live in Little Rock*. Bones is also a bestselling author, touring stand-up comedian and philanthropist.

"I'm proud to be back with my friends and colleagues Luke, Lionel, Katy and Ryan. I respect them all and I'm excited to work with the new season of talent," Bones told Deadline.

The search for the next singing sensation is currently underway with "Idol Across America" virtual auditions taking place on Oct. 20, 23 and 28. "Idol Across America" will give hopefuls the chance to showcase their talents from anywhere in America, face-to-face with an "Idol" producer. Entrants must be 15 or older to be eligible for "American Idol." To sign up for "Idol Across America" and for full eligibility requirements, please visit <http://www.americanidol.com/auditions>.

American Idol is produced by Fremantle and Industrial Media's 19 Entertainment. Executive producers include Fremantle's Trish Kinane, also serving as showrunner, Jennifer Mullin and Megan Wolflick, with Eli Holzman and Aaron Saidman serving as executive producers for 19 Entertainment. Fremantle distributes the series worldwide.