

# FAME AND FORTUNE...ALMOST

JOSH JOHANSSON

▶ This Georgia native made it to the top few out of thousands on *American Idol*

WORDS: KELSEY TUCKER / PHOTO: CEDRIC SMITH

**SOUTH: WHEN DID YOU START SINGING?**

**Josh:** I started singing when I was little kid—I liked to pretend I was Elvis. I didn't get that serious about singing until college when one of my fraternity brothers started playing "Collide" by Howie Day, so I sang along. Everyone thought I had a good voice and convinced me to do open mic nights at bars.

**SOUTH: WHAT WAS THE EXPERIENCE LIKE?**

**J:** Altogether, it was amazing. I met a lot of great people—most of whom I still stay in touch with. I also never thought I'd get to visit Hollywood, so that opportunity was one I will never forget. Meeting the judges was an incredible experience, too. The only bummer was that my time on the show wasn't shown on TV.

**SOUTH: THAT'S AN AWESOME STORY! WHAT MADE YOU WANT TO GO ON AMERICAN IDOL?**

**J:** I actually auditioned for *American Idol* for the first time in 2011, the year **Phillip Phillips** won. It was right after I started singing again, so my mom and I drove to Charleston to give the audition a shot. At this time, I had braces and didn't dress the part—I'm pretty sure I wasn't taking it seriously at all, to be completely honest. I think I was actually wearing Old Navy flip-flops. In 2015, I auditioned

for the second time, but this round, my cousin auditioned too. I figured if she was going to do it, I would too. I made it through to Hollywood but unfortunately, she didn't. It's like a cattle call—there are about 10,000 people there and basically a lottery to get picked. I'm glad I went though, and I have my cousin to thank for that.

**SOUTH: HOW IS LIFE AFTER AMERICAN IDOL?**

**J:** It's been fantastic. I am now a professional musician and travel all over the southeast, especially between Savannah, Charleston and Atlanta. Every time I book a show, I talk about the fact that I was on *American Idol* last season—it's a great icebreaker and chance to get my foot in the door. Being on *American Idol* has given me a lot of confidence, as well.

**SOUTH: THAT'S GREAT TO HEAR. DO YOU PLAN TO RELEASE AN ALBUM? ALSO, WHO HAS BEEN YOUR VOCAL INSPIRATION?**

**J:** It's an eight-song LP called *Over This Mountain*. I'm recording with Hybrid Audio in Charleston and it's been such a cool project. As for vocal inspiration, I love **Ray Charles**, **Sam Cook** and **Gregg Allman**—anything soulful, really. I plan to release it around the end of the year, so look out for it! *Hear Josh sing at [joshjohanssonmusic.com](http://joshjohanssonmusic.com)*



Josh Johansson auditioned twice for *American Idol* and the second time he made it through to the top 75.

## THE GOLDEN TICKET

What viewers don't see on TV is how many auditions take place on *American Idol*. Josh had to make it through several rounds before he even got to face the celebrity judges and several rounds after that to make it to the top 75. He and four other people sang for a producer and he made it through, so he came back the next day to sing for all of the producers, then again for the executive producer. After he went through all of these audition rounds and several interview sessions, he was finally able to sing for the judges, who sent him to **Hollywood**. Once there, he went through several more rounds of auditions with various groups. In his final round, Josh threw away the nerves, stayed in the moment and just had a good time. It was the best his family had ever heard him sing. (And singing for J-Lo was the highlight of his experience).



## JOSH'S FIVE FAVS

**Favorite Southern Food:** My Grandma's shrimp & grits. (She adds French fries!)

**Favorite Southern Restaurant:** Treylor Park

**Celebrity Crush:** Sofia Vergara

**Favorite Southern Pastime:** Fishing

