

= The X Factor (UK series 7) =

The X Factor is a British television music competition to find new singing talent . The seventh series started on ITV on 21 August 2010 and ended on 12 December 2010 . The winner was Matt Cardle and his debut single " When We Collide " was released after the final . Cardle was mentored throughout by Dannii Minogue , who won as mentor for the second time . A total of 15 @, @ 448 @, @ 019 votes were cast throughout the series . It was presented by Dermot O 'Leary , with spin @-@ off show The Xtra Factor presented by Konnie Huq on ITV2 , who took over from Holly Willoughby .

The competition was split into several stages : auditions , bootcamp , judges ' houses and live shows . Auditions took place throughout June and July 2010 , with Simon Cowell , Louis Walsh and Cheryl Cole returning as judges . Minogue missed the auditions and bootcamp due to being on maternity leave , so Geri Halliwell , Natalie Imbruglia , Katy Perry , Pixie Lott and Nicole Scherzinger were brought in as guest judges . Cole missed the auditions in Manchester and bootcamp because she had malaria . Following bootcamp , successful acts were split into four categories : Boys (male soloists aged 16 to 28) , Girls (female soloists aged 16 to 28) , Over 28s (soloists aged 29 and over) and Groups . Minogue and Cole returned for the judges ' houses stage , and each judge mentored eight acts through judges ' houses . The live shows started on 9 October 2010 . Four acts eliminated at judges ' houses were brought back as wildcards , making this the first series to have 16 acts perform in the live shows .

This was the first series of the show to be filmed in high definition , and was simulcast on ITV1 HD and STV HD . From October , The Xtra Factor was also shown in high definition , simulcast on the new channel ITV2 HD . It was sponsored by TalkTalk in the United Kingdom and Dominos Pizza in Ireland .

This series proved to be highly controversial , with many people complaining about the use of pitch correction software on the broadcast of contestants ' auditions , the decision to form two groups out of rejected soloists , the rejection of popular contestant Gamu Nhengu at judges ' houses and Cole 's failure to vote to eliminate an act in week 5 of the live shows . Controversy also surrounded contestants Shirlena Johnson , who was axed over fears for her mental health , and Treyc Cohen , who was reported to already have a record deal when the live shows started . There were also accusations of fixing , which were denied by the show 's producers . It was the most watched series to date , with an average of 14 @. @ 13 million viewers per episode . The final was watched by 17 @. @ 71 million people , making it the highest rated television episode of 2010 in the UK .

= = Judges , presenters and other personnel = =

In February 2010 , Dannii Minogue confirmed that she would not attend the auditions for series 7 due to being pregnant . It was confirmed that guest judges would take Minogue 's place alongside Simon Cowell , Louis Walsh and Cheryl Cole during the auditions . The guest judges were Geri Halliwell , Natalie Imbruglia , Katy Perry , Pixie Lott and Nicole Scherzinger . On 11 June , Minogue was confirmed by ITV to return for the judges ' houses stage . Cole missed the Manchester auditions and bootcamp due to having malaria , so Scherzinger returned as a guest judge for bootcamp . Cole then returned for the judges ' houses stage .

Dermot O 'Leary returned for his fourth series as presenter of the main show on ITV , but Holly Willoughby did not return for her third series as presenter on The Xtra Factor on ITV2 and was replaced by Konnie Huq . Brian Friedman returned as creative director , while Ali Tennant and Savan Kotecha were hired as vocal coaches . However , Tennant 's contract was ended before the live shows and was replaced by Yvie Burnett , who worked as vocal coach from series 2 ? 6 . Richard " Biff " Stannard began working as show song producer for Minogue 's contestant , and Grace Woodward began working on the show as fashion director .

= = Selection process = =

= = = Applications and auditions = = =

The first appeal for applicants for series 7 was broadcast during series 6 on 5 December 2009 . Applicants for the seventh series were given the opportunity to apply by uploading a video audition to the Internet . Auditions began in June 2010 in six cities : Glasgow (SECC , 9 June) , Birmingham (LG Arena , 13 ? 14 June) , London (ExCeL London , 21 ? 24 June) , Dublin (Convention Centre Dublin , 28 June) , Cardiff (International Arena , 2 July) , and Manchester (Manchester Central , 9 ? 11 July) . Dublin returned as an audition city for the first time since the third series in 2006 .

Halliwell was the first guest judge , and attended the Glasgow auditions . Imbruglia was the second guest judge , appearing for the Birmingham auditions . The guest judge slot was axed for the London auditions , but continued with Perry judging in Dublin , Lott in Cardiff and Scherzinger at the auditions in Manchester . Cole was unable to attend the Manchester auditions because she had contracted malaria and was not replaced for them .

The first episode , broadcast on 21 August 2010 , featured auditions from Glasgow and London , while episode two , on 28 August , showcased Dublin 's auditions and more from London . More London auditions were shown on 4 September , along with those from Birmingham , and Cardiff was featured in the 11 September broadcast along with the final set of London auditions . Finally , the Manchester auditions were shown in the 18 and 19 September episodes .

= = = Bootcamp = = =

The bootcamp stage of the competition began on 22 July 2010 at Wembley Arena , London and was broadcast on 25 ? 26 September . Minogue continued her maternity leave and Cole did not attend because she was still in recovery . As Cole and Minogue were absent , producers of the show decided to axe bootcamp 's live audience . The bootcamp stage was broadcast in two episodes on 25 and 26 September . The first day of bootcamp saw Cowell and Walsh split the 211 acts into their four categories : Boys , Girls , Over 25s and Groups . They received vocal coaching and each category later performed one song : the Boys sang " Man in the Mirror " , the Girls sang " If I Were a Boy " , the Over 25s sang " Poker Face " and the Groups sang " Nothing 's Gonna Stop Us Now " . At the end of the day , the number of acts was cut to 108 . On the second day , acts were given dance lessons by creative director Brian Friedman but they were not judged on their performances .

Scherzinger then returned as a guest judge on the third day , where each act performed one song from a list of 40 . On the fifth day , Scherzinger suggested that the Over @-@ 25s category be changed to Over 28s , as the quality of older singers was high . The Boys and Girls categories then comprised singers aged 16 to 28 , rather than 16 to 25 . As the groups category was the weakest , five rejected soloists from the Boys category and four from the Girls category were asked to form two groups , Belle Amie and One Direction . After bootcamp , each judge was assigned a category : Cowell was given the Groups , Walsh had the Over @-@ 28s , Minogue was asked to look after the Boys and Cole was assigned the Girls .

= = = Judges ' houses and wildcards = = =

Minogue and Cole returned to the judging panel for the judges ' houses stage of the competition , where each judge mentored eight acts , increased from six in previous series . Each judge had help from a guest judge to choose their final acts . Original judge Sharon Osbourne returned to assist Walsh at Adare Manor in Adare , County Limerick , Ireland , Cole was assisted by will.i.am in Coworth Park , Ascot , Berkshire , England , Cowell by Sinitta in Marbella , Spain , and Natalie Imbruglia returned to assist Minogue in Melbourne , Australia . Contestants spent a week at judges ' houses and performed two songs for their respective judge . Each judge and their guest eliminated five acts , leaving twelve remaining . The judges ' houses stage was broadcast in two episodes on 2 and 3 October 2010 .

In the first live show on 9 October , Paije Richardson , Treyc Cohen , Wagner and Diva Fever were brought back as wildcards .

= = Finalists = =

After the wildcards were revealed in the first live show , the final sixteen acts were confirmed as follows :

Key :

? Winner

? Runner @-@ up

? Third place

= = Live shows = =

= = = Format = = =

The live shows took place at The Fountain Studios in Wembley , north @-@ west London . They started on 9 October 2010 , with contestants performing on the Saturday night shows and the results being announced on the Sunday night shows . As previously , each week had a different song theme . The two acts with the fewest public votes were in the bottom two and sang again in the " final showdown " . The songs they performed in the bottom two were of their own choice and did not necessarily follow that week 's theme . The four judges then each chose one act from the bottom two that they wanted to be eliminated from the show . If each act received an equal number of judges ' votes , the result was deadlocked and the act with the fewest public votes was eliminated . The first live show was extended to two and a half hours to include a surprise twist , namely that each judge was given a wildcard , allowing them to bring back one rejected act from judges ' houses , thus bringing the number of finalists up from twelve to sixteen . Owing to the addition of the wildcards , the first two results were double eliminations . The eighth result was also a double elimination . In the case of a double elimination , instead of the bottom two , the bottom three were announced and the act with the fewest votes was automatically eliminated . The two remaining acts from the bottom three then performed in the final showdown . Starting from the eighth week of live shows , contestants performed two songs each on the Saturday night .

At the start of each results show , the remaining finalists performed a song as a group . However , the song was pre @-@ recorded and the contestants mimed , because of technical issues with mixing the number of microphones . Starting this series , the contestants ' live performances were made available to download from iTunes . However , the songs are not eligible to chart to protect the integrity of the contest . Viewers in Ireland were allowed vote again , having been unable to for four years .

Each results show featured a number of guest performers . Joe McElderry and Usher performed on the first live results show , and Diana Vickers and Katy Perry performed in the second week . The third results show featured performances from judge Cole and Michael Bublé . Rihanna , Bon Jovi and Jamiroquai performed in the fourth results show , and Shayne Ward and Kylie Minogue performed in the fifth week . Take That , Westlife and JLS all performed on the sixth results show , and Olly Murs performed on the seventh . Week eight featured performances from Justin Bieber , The Wanted and Nicole Scherzinger . The cast of Glee performed on the semi @-@ final on 5 December , along with Alexandra Burke and The Black Eyed Peas . Rihanna performed again in the first show of the final , and Christina Aguilera also performed . Take That performed again in the second show of the final .

The final took place on 11 and 12 December , with each episode lasting two hours . During the first show , the voting lines were frozen and the fourth placed contestant was eliminated . The votes carried over and the third placed contestant left on the second show following another freeze . The final two performed the potential winner 's singles before the winner was announced .

== Results summary ==

Colour key

^ 1 Cowell was not required to vote as there was already a majority .

^ 2 The voting percentages in week 10 for Sunday rounds 1 and 2 do not add up to 100 % , owing to the freezing of votes . Cher Lloyd received 6 @. @ 65 % of the vote at the second freeze , and 4 @. @ 07 % of the final vote . One Direction received 12 @. @ 69 % of the final vote .

== Live show details ==

==== Week 1 (9 / 10 October) ====

Theme : Number @-@ one singles

Group performance : " The Rhythm of the Night "

Musical guests : Usher (" DJ Got Us Fallin ' in Love " / " OMG ") and Joe McElderry (" Ambitions ")

Owing to the addition of four wildcard contestants , two acts were eliminated from the series ' first results show . The three acts with the fewest votes were announced as the bottom three and the act with the fewest public votes was then automatically eliminated . The remaining two acts then performed in the final showdown for the judges ' votes .

Judges ' votes to eliminate

Cowell : Katie Waissel ? backed his own act , F.Y.D.

Cole : F.Y.D. ? based on the final showdown performance , effectively backing her own act , Katie Waissel

Minogue : F.Y.D. ? based on the final showdown performance

Walsh : F.Y.D. ? stated that he had to choose the act with more potential , as well as " the right act "

==== Week 2 (16 / 17 October) ====

Theme : Heroes

Group performance : " Telephone "

Musical guests : Diana Vickers (" My Wicked Heart ") and Katy Perry (" Firework ")

Owing to the addition of the wildcard contestants , two acts were eliminated from the series ' second results show . The three acts with the fewest public votes were announced as the bottom three and then the act with the fewest votes was automatically eliminated . The remaining two acts then performed in the final showdown for the judges ' votes .

Judges ' votes to eliminate

Walsh : Diva Fever ? thought Belle Amie would get better in the competition

Minogue : Diva Fever ? based on final showdown performances

Cole : Diva Fever ? gave no reason

Cowell was not required to vote as there was already a majority and refused to say how he would have voted as both his acts were in the sing @-@ off .

==== Week 3 (23 / 24 October) ====

Theme : Guilty pleasures

Group performance : " Forget You "

Musical guests : Michael Bublé (" Hollywood ") and Cheryl Cole (" Promise This ")

Judges ' votes to eliminate

Walsh : Treyc Cohen ? said Adele had more potential , effectively backing his own act , John

Adele

Minogue : John Adele ? based on the final showdown performances

Cole : John Adele ? backed her own act , Treyc Cohen

Cowell : John Adele ? based on the final showdown performances

===== Week 4 (30 / 31 October) =====

Theme : Halloween

Group performance : " Livin ' on a Prayer " (with Bon Jovi)

Musical guests : Bon Jovi with finalists (" Livin ' on a Prayer ") , Jamiroquai (" White Knuckle Ride ") and Rihanna (" Only Girl (In the World) ")

Judges ' votes to eliminate

Cowell : Katie Waissel ? backed his own act , Belle Amie

Cole : Belle Amie ? gave no reason , though effectively backed her own act , Katie Waissel

Minogue : Belle Amie ? based on the final showdown performance

Walsh : Katie Waissel ? gave no reason

With the acts in the bottom two receiving two votes each , the result was deadlocked and reverted to the earlier public vote . Belle Amie were eliminated as the act with the fewest public votes .

===== Week 5 (6 / 7 November) =====

Theme : American anthems

Group performance : " So What "

Musical guests : Shayne Ward (" Gotta Be Somebody ") and Kylie Minogue (" Better than Today ")

Judges ' votes to eliminate

Cowell : Treyc Cohen ? based on who he would prefer to see again the following week

Cole refused to vote off either of her acts and offered to vote last to force a deadlock , but O 'Leary then announced it would go to a majority vote

Minogue : Katie Waissel ? gave no reason

Walsh : Treyc Cohen ? stated that he would follow his heart and save Katie Waissel

===== Week 6 (13 / 14 November) =====

Theme : Songs by Elton John

Group performance : " Can 't Stop Moving "

Musical guests : JLS (" Love You More ") , Westlife (" Safe ") and Take That (" The Flood ")

Judges ' votes to eliminate

Cowell : Aiden Grimshaw ? gave no reason

Cole : Aiden Grimshaw ? backed her own act , Katie Waissel

Minogue : Katie Waissel ? gave no reason , though effectively backed her own act , Aiden Grimshaw

Walsh : Katie Waissel ? felt Grimshaw had more potential

With the acts in the bottom two receiving two votes each , the result was deadlocked and reverted to the earlier public vote . Grimshaw was eliminated as the act with the fewest public votes .

===== Week 7 (20 / 21 November) =====

Theme : Songs by The Beatles

Group performance : " Heroes " (all finalists)

Musical guest : Olly Murs (" Thinking of Me ")

Judges ' votes to eliminate

Cowell : Pajie Richardson ? said he would want to back Lloyd whom he had continually supported

Cole : Paije Richardson ? backed her own act , Cher Lloyd
Minogue : Cher Lloyd ? backed her own act , Paije Richardson
Walsh : Paije Richardson ? gave no reason

= = = = Week 8 (27 / 28 November) = = = =

Theme : Rock

Musical guests : The Wanted (" Lose My Mind ") , Justin Bieber (" Somebody to Love " / " Baby ")
and Nicole Scherzinger (" Poison ")

For the first time this series , each contestant performed two songs .

Two acts were eliminated from the series ' eighth results show . The three acts with the fewest votes were announced as the bottom three and then the act with the fewest votes was automatically eliminated . The remaining two acts then performed in the final showdown for the judges ' votes .

Judges ' votes to eliminate

Walsh : Wagner ? based on the final showdown performances

Minogue : Wagner ? backed Byrne whom she thought was the better singer

Cole : Wagner ? gave no reason

Cowell was not required to vote as there was already a majority , but stated that he would have voted for Wagner as he wanted to return the show to being a talent competition

= = = = Week 9 : Semi @-@ final (4 / 5 December) = = = =

Themes : Club classics ; " songs to get you to the final " (no theme)

Musical guests : Alexandra Burke (" The Silence ") , Glee Cast (" Don 't Stop Believin ' ") and The Black Eyed Peas (" The Time (Dirty Bit) ")

For the first time in The X Factor history , the judges chose which act they wanted to see progress to the final .

Judges ' votes to send through to the final

Walsh : Mary Byrne ? backed his own act , Mary Byrne

Minogue : Cher Lloyd ? said she felt the emotion in Lloyd 's performance

Cole : Cher Lloyd ? backed her own act , Cher Lloyd

Cowell : Cher Lloyd ? gave no reason

= = = = Week 10 : Final (11 / 12 December) = = = =

11 December

Themes : No theme ; celebrity duets

Group performance : " Flashdance ... What a Feeling " (all finalists)

Musical guests : Rihanna (" What 's My Name ? ") and Christina Aguilera (" Express ")

12 December

Themes : No theme ; winner 's single

Group performances : " Never Forget " (performed with Take That) and " Bad Romance " (auditionees)

Musical guest : Take That (" Never Forget " with finalists) and (" The Flood ")

= = Charity single = =

The series 7 finalists recorded a cover of David Bowie 's 1977 song " Heroes " as a charity single in aid of Help for Heroes , a charity which supports injured servicemen and women . The song was recorded in the week beginning 18 October 2010 . The video for the single was filmed on 2 November at Three Mills Studios . All sixteen finalists performed the song on 20 November 's results show . It was the third year in a row that finalists have released a charity record . The single entered both the Irish Singles Chart on 25 November 2010 and the UK Singles Chart on 28 November 2010

at number 1 .

= = Winner 's single = =

It was reported on 2 December 2010 by the Daily Mirror that the final five contestants , Mary Byrne , Matt Cardle , Cher Lloyd , One Direction and Rebecca Ferguson , would each record a different song , rather than the same song as in previous series , for their potential debut single . The change was made after Cowell reportedly increased the budget as he wanted songs to suit each act . It was reported on 10 December that Cardle 's song would be " Many of Horror " , Lloyd 's would be " Impossible " , Ferguson 's would be " Distant Dreamer " and One Direction 's song would be " Forever Young " . Cardle and Ferguson performed their songs in the final as the last two remaining acts and upon Cardle 's winning the contest , his version of " Many of Horror " , renamed to " When We Collide " , was released . It entered both the UK and Ireland Singles Charts at number 1 .

= = Voting , revenue and sponsorship = =

Over the course of the live shows , 15 @, @ 488 @, @ 019 votes were cast . Votes made via landline telephones or from the Red Button service cost 35 pence each , with calls made from mobile telephones expected to be more expensive . The votes brought in revenue of more than £ 5 @. @ 4 million , though it was expected to be a lot higher because of the unknown cost of mobile phone votes . Proceeds were split between production company Syco , co @- @ producer FremantleMedia , broadcaster ITV and phone vote operator Harvest Media . Advertising slots during the final were sold for up to £ 250 @, @ 000 , which expected to bring in a further £ 25 million in advertising revenues , with the number of commercial breaks increased from five to six .

For the second year in a row , The X Factor was sponsored by TalkTalk , as part of a three @- @ year sponsorship deal thought to be worth £ 20 million , including sponsorship of the show , the 2011 live tour and rights to online clips . TalkTalk enlisted series 6 contestants Jedward to launch its interactive initiative on 17 August 2010 . Viewers were invited to record a video of themselves performing karaoke in front of a TalkTalk bright lights backdrop , and clips were screened as part of TalkTalk 's sponsorship break bumpers . In Ireland , where the series was broadcast on TV3 , The X Factor was sponsored by Dominos Pizza .

= = Reception = =

= = = Ratings = = =

The first episode on 21 August attracted 11 @. @ 88 million viewers on ITV1 , the highest ever ratings for a series premiere of The X Factor . It was watched by 46 @. @ 5 % of television viewers during its original broadcast . The episode also received ratings of 568 @, @ 000 on ITV1 HD . The first live performance show on 9 October 2010 gained 12 @. @ 62 million viewers , attaining a 48 @. @ 5 % share of the audience during broadcast . The final result on 12 December was the highest rated episode with 16 @. @ 55 million viewers on ITV1 , a 51 @. @ 5 % audience share and 1 @. @ 16 million viewers on ITV1 HD . It peaked at 19 @. @ 4 million (18 @. @ 14 million on ITV1 and 1 @. @ 3 million on ITV1 HD) and was the highest rated television episode of 2010 in the UK . Official ratings concluded that the series averaged 14 @. @ 13 million (including HD) , making it the most watched series to date . The series dominated the weekly rankings , taking up the top position for the first four weeks , then the top two positions until the final . The first part of the final was beaten into fourth rank by two episodes of Coronation Street .

= = = Controversy and criticism = = =

The seventh series of The X Factor sparked several heated controversies , with over 5 @, @ 000

complaints registered with Ofcom throughout the series . A spokesperson told the Daily Mirror newspaper that ITV bosses were worried about the number of complaints as claims that the show had become " seedy and oversexed " and accusations of fixing would tarnish the image of the show and ITV .

= = = = Contestants = = = =

On 25 August , it was announced that contestant Shirlena Johnson had been asked to leave the show because of concerns over her mental health , that she had apparently kept hidden from the producers . Johnson 's successful audition was broadcast on 21 August . Johnson 's mother claimed that producers knew of Johnson 's medical history as they requested her general practitioner 's details at bootcamp , but producers said the medical report arrived late . A spokesperson said , " The welfare of contestants is of paramount importance , and for this reason it has been agreed that Shirlena Johnson should not continue in the competition . "

The decision to form two groups , Belle Amie and One Direction , from soloists at the end of the bootcamp stage was branded unfair by some of the other groups , as neither had entered the competition as groups . The controversy deepened after Cowell put through both Belle Amie and One Direction and picked just one of the original applicants . Cowell defended the decision , saying that the existing groups were not good enough and other groups such as The Wanted and the Spice Girls were created similarly .

More controversy erupted after the News of the World reported that after failing to qualify in 2009 , Treyc Cohen signed a management deal with Artimis Music Management Ltd that landed her a recording contract in October that year with Birmingham @-@ based Ajoupa Records and she released a single entitled " A Time to Be Heard " . The rules of The X Factor strictly forbid record deals while a contestant is on the show . According to the newspaper , The X Factor was attempting to release Cohen from her management deal and remove the single from sale . Katie Waissel also had to be released from a contract in the United States after her audition .

= = = = Judges ' actions = = = =

Controversy was caused when Cole chose not to send popular contestant Gamu Nhengu through to the live shows . Nhengu was an early favourite to win and many viewers were angry that Waissel and Cher Lloyd were put through despite failing to complete their performances at judges ' houses . Around 1 @,@ 000 people complained to ITV and by 7 October 220 @,@ 000 had joined a Facebook page called " Gamu Should Have Got Through " . Cole reportedly became the target of death threats , and took extra security precautions in her home as well as at The X Factor . Bookmaker Paddy Power were forced to give odds on Nhengu winning the show after a large number of bets were placed , and made her the favourite to win , but all punters had their losing bets refunded when Nhengu was not chosen as Cole 's wildcard . There was speculation that Cole was pressured by producers to axe Nhengu over issues with her visa , but Cheryl denied those claims , saying it was entirely down to her " gut instinct " and that she believed Lloyd , Waissel and Rebecca Ferguson were the best singers in her category . Later in her 2012 autobiography Cheryl : My Story , Cheryl confessed that she had chosen Waissel for the live shows because she was more entertaining , claiming ... " [Cowell] had spent the past two years drumming into me that we needed acts who would be ' good TV . ' ... she had the character and drive it took to withstand the pressure of the show , and so I put her through , even though she messed up when she sang in front of Will.i.am. "

More than 1 @,@ 000 viewers complained to ITV and more than 2 @,@ 000 to Ofcom when , in week 5 of the live shows , Cole refused to vote off either act in the bottom two (Cohen and Waissel) and was not allowed to vote last and force a deadlock . A spokesperson for The X Factor explained : " A judge can abstain from placing a vote . [Cole] made it clear that she would not send anyone home and therefore abstained from voting . [O 'Leary] went back to her to clarify that it was going to go to a majority vote if she did that . [Cole] was unable to take the vote to deadlock as

deadlock requires a valid active vote . " However , a Daily Mail poll of 6 @, @ 890 people showed that 4 @, @ 795 of them wanted Cole to be sacked for refusing to vote . O 'Leary revealed that during the previous commercial break , when the bottom two was known to the producers , they realized that Cole might abstain and decided in that if she did , they would go to a majority vote . After the series ended , voting statistics showed that Waissel received fewer votes than Cohen , meaning that if the result had gone to deadlock , Waissel would have been eliminated instead of Cohen .

= = = = Accusations of fixing = = = =

After O 'Leary 's revelation that producers had rehearsed what would happen if Cole abstained in week 5 , allegations were made that the result was rigged for Waissel to stay , given that her outlandish performances and growing unpopularity with the public resulted in better ratings and sensational press for the show . Cowell denied this claim , saying he would never want to defraud viewers and said the situation had " been blown out of proportion " . O 'Leary defended himself and the show on Twitter , saying " We never know which way the judges are going to vote . Ever . The only thing I know is who 's in the bottom two when I 'm given the card . I don 't know which judge to go to until I 'm called and the judges , including [Cowell] , don 't know the vote or who we 're coming to next . It 's that simple . " The following week , Heat magazine printed a report claiming that Cowell was aware of the public votes before the judges make their votes , and several other media reports contained rumours of the show being fixed . The X Factor 's bosses instructed their lawyers to file a formal complaint to the Press Complaints Commission against Heat , saying that the article was a lie , that very few people know the actual public voting results and conspiracy theories being printed in the media are " total and utter rubbish " . Heat printed an apology in their 1 January 2011 issue and accepted that Cowell was unaware of the votes cast until after the final .

There were accusations from viewers of fixing during the semi @-@ final when O 'Leary announced that only the public 's votes would decide which contestants would make it through to the final , but the next day this was changed and there was a final showdown . The show 's official website also stated that it would be decided by public vote , and Walsh confirmed it on a radio show earlier in the week . It was the first time in the show 's history that the judges were given a vote in a semi @-@ final . A spokesperson insisted the change was decided weeks in advance . Cowell (incorrectly) stated that " There has always been a sing @-@ off when there are five people left in the competition . This is a lot of nonsense about nothing . " However , eliminated contestant Mary Byrne said she believed the decision would be solely down to the public until the day of the semi @-@ final performances and even claimed that Cowell did not want her in the final . Following Byrne 's comments , Cowell wrote an open letter to the viewers in the Daily Mirror , saying :

" It 's always our sole intention to try and make the show as entertaining and hopefully exciting every week . Our main focus is to ensure that the contestants are given every opportunity to benefit from being on the show and show their talent . Throughout the series I have met with fans of the show on a regular basis and have listened and acted on their feedback . I believe they have enjoyed the changes in the show this year and I feel it 's been a better series as it hasn 't followed the same pattern as before . This year we decided to give four contestants a second chance and introduce them as wild card entrants on the first live show . And having 16 finalists rather than just 12 meant that we introduced both single and double eliminations . We decided for the first time some weeks ago to put four people into the final and this meant having five semi @-@ finalists . We also felt it would be fairer that there would be a sing @-@ off rather than automatic elimination as there were more contestants . I understand new decisions are seen as controversial by our viewers but it stops the show becoming boring . As the excitement heats up , debates begin but I do want to assure people that the show is definitely not fixed . The sing @-@ off on Sunday was something that was always going to happen regardless of who was in the bottom two . The contestants all prepared their save @-@ me songs on Monday last week . It was always going to be sad for whoever left . [...] I have always listened to and respected our viewers and have always believed viewers ultimately make the right decision . I hope the viewers trust the show that this is a fair competition . "

Voting statistics revealed that Lloyd would have been eliminated had there been no judges' vote .

===== Pitch @-@ correction use =====

Following the first episode , viewers complained on social networking websites after it appeared that pitch correction (which has been seen as controversial in the music industry) was used to improve the quality of some singers' voices , and forty @-@ five viewers complained to Ofcom . Series producers claimed post @-@ production work was necessary on the show because of the number of microphones used during filming : " The judges make their decisions at the auditions stage based on what they hear on the day , live in the arena . The footage and sound is then edited and dubbed into a finished programme , to deliver the most entertaining experience possible for viewers . When it gets to the live shows , it will be all live . " It was reported on 26 August that Cowell had ordered a ban on pitch correction in future episodes , asking for them to be re @-@ edited . In October 2010 , Ofcom ruled that viewers had not been " materially misled " as pitch correction was only used during auditions and not when viewers were paying to vote for the contestants .

===== ' Raunchy ' final =====

In December 2010 , it emerged that Ofcom were investigating the show after claims that viewers were being encouraged to purchase songs recorded by guest performers Michael Bublé and Diana Vickers . Ofcom also received over 2 @, @ 868 complaints from viewers about " raunchy " dance routines from Rihanna and Christina Aguilera during the final . Although an ITV spokesperson denied the routines were inappropriate , Cowell was warned by ITV to " cut the sleaze " . In April 2011 , Ofcom ruled that there had been no breach of guidelines over the performances , and highlighted that " approximately 2 @, @ 000 " of the complaints were received after the routines were covered by the Daily Mail , and said the newspaper 's report featured a number of stills that were " significantly more graphic and close @-@ up " than material broadcast , and that were " taken from a different angle to the television cameras " .

===== Praise and awards =====

In its 7 December 2010 issue , Heat magazine said series 7 of The X Factor had been the best series to date , citing many of the controversies , plus events such as Lloyd singing on a spiral staircase , Wagner 's " ludicrous " performances and Walsh likening Richardson to " a little Lenny Henry " , as moments that helped make it " the most deliriously , thrilling , controversial and demented yet . [...] This was the year the biggest and best show on TV somehow got bigger and better . " Before the final , Digital Spy 's reality television editor Alex Fletcher listed his five favourite moments from the series . His favourite moment was Nhengu 's elimination , on which he said " No other show can make people so passionate , angry and feel like they really know the programme 's stars . With only approximately 30 minutes of screentime , Gamu had managed to capture the hearts of millions . Whatever you think of Simon Cowell 's programmes , you have to give them credit for achieving that . "

The series won in the Most Popular Talent Show category at the 16th National Television Awards in 2011 , beating series 4 of Britain 's Got Talent , series 6 of Dancing on Ice and series 8 of Strictly Come Dancing . It was also nominated in the TV Reality Programme category at the 2011 TRIC awards , the Entertainment Programme category at the 2011 British Academy Television Awards , and the Best Talent Show category at the 2011 TV Choice Awards .