

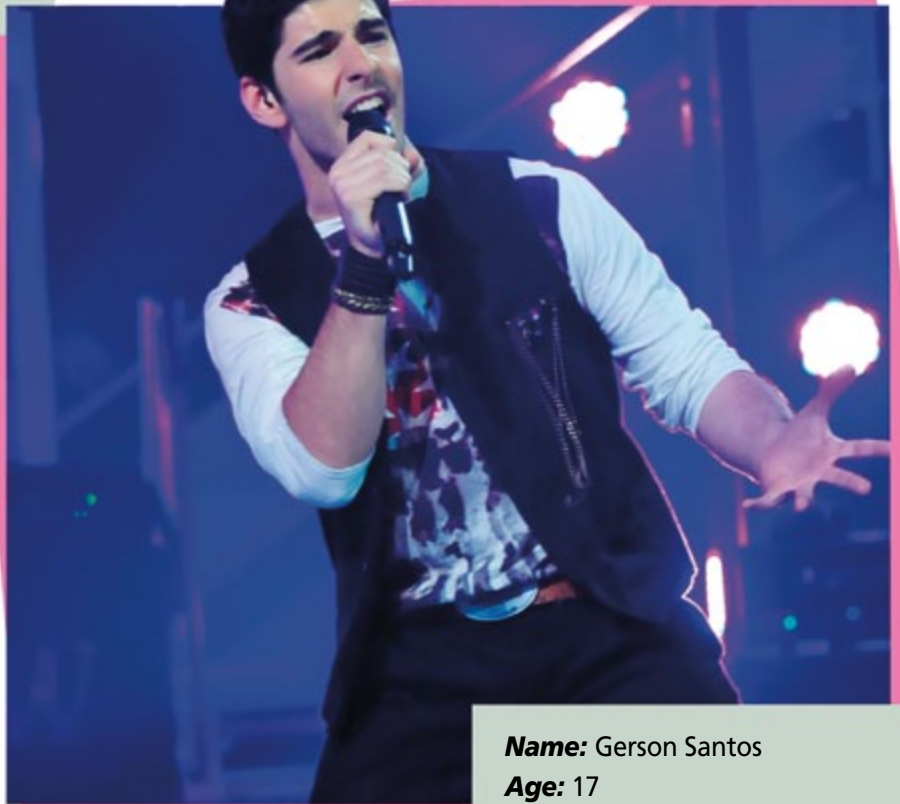
A Voice for High Standards

As told to Hilary Watkins Lemon

Bright lights. Screaming crowds. Thousands of fans on Facebook. When 17-year-old Gerson Santos became a top-10 finalist in the Portuguese televised musical talent competition *Ídolos*, he had to adjust to the fame and attention that came with his success. Gerson decided to embrace this unique opportunity to preach the gospel and quickly became known across the Portuguese media as the “Mormon competitor” willing to answer questions about his faith.

How did you decide to enter *Ídolos*? How did you prepare?

Ídolos was a television show I really enjoyed watching. I have always liked performing and hoped to someday enter a music competition. This year I didn’t hesitate; I simply signed myself up for the show and went to the audition with my dad. I guess you could say I’ve been preparing for *Ídolos* my entire life. Every experience I had with *Ídolos* was amazing, without exception. I tried to take advantage of every opportunity that came my way.



Name: Gerson Santos

Age: 17

Location: Setúbal, Portugal

Hobbies: Singing, acting, playing guitar, watching movies, dancing with his sisters, composing and playing music with his brother, and studying at the music conservatory

What missionary opportunities did you have during the competition?

Once during a dinner with the other contestants, we talked a little bit about religion, and I spoke about my faith and the standards of the Church. Later I gave each of the finalists a copy of the *For the Strength of Youth* pamphlet so they could better understand what I believe. Some said the Church’s standards seemed really conservative, but others praised me for having such high standards in these days.

Ídolos must have taken up a lot of your time. How did you still have time for Church responsibilities?

I continued to say my prayers, read my scriptures, participate in seminary,

and take the sacrament every Sunday. I am currently preparing to serve a mission, which is something I’ve wanted to do since I was little. I serve in my ward as ward pianist, ward missionary, and assistant to the bishop in the priests quorum. I had to dedicate almost all my time to the competition, but I made sure to first dedicate time to the Lord. ■