

First Season : 13 episodes (+1) Length (per episode) : 20 – 25 min



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The main achievement of - Academy is the combination of several significant elements of popular programs:

- programs like IDOL and POPSTARS were **music based**, but not at all connected with MTV (were music should be at "home") and broadcasted on other stations, there was no real "answer" by MTV (I am not counting variations like MAKING THE BAND which is still a casting show; by the way the main argument against these formats, I will soon return to this point) and **fan culture**
- even though MTV became more program than music based, it produced hitshows like PIMP MY RIDE. The reason to it's success I don't see in it's host Xzibit (who is probably not getting a cent for his twice a half day shooting schedule) or in guests (!) everybody can **identify** with, not only because of their broken cars. The real stars are the mechanics. They are **crazy** like the guys from JACKASS, but there efforts are not nihilistic, they are goal oriented – even if the ideas are absolutely crazy. They work **professionaly**, but are still nice and funny like the **guy next door**.

Taking these six elements together, MTV Academy has all what it takes to become the next hit-show, as long as it presents them in a new way, but still somehow familiar.

Many people watched casting shows, and some even bought the resulting records. But why musicians at award ceremonys are "Booh"ing at them? Because they don't feel "real". They may be talented, good looking or even spent hours practicing in a garage – but a producer wrote their singles before they even went to the first casting. That is why casted bands have only short term success (because boy-groups become man-groups who are not adored by girls any longer, but by their mothers), but a "real" grown band like the RHCP or TOOL can always count on their fans. They are going to buy their records, even if they will be crappy in a few years, like the ROLLING STONES albums of the last two decades, or the 10<sup>th</sup> live album of PINK FLOYD. And fans buy records – they don't make illegal copies, they want autographs on the cover, not on a burned CDR. So instead of cloning another casting-show, MTV Academy is looking for 16 promising *real* bands without a record contract (one sponsor of the program has to be a major label, from the second season on all four), one from each region in Poland.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> I want to point out that the following introductory analysis is not beyond my competence: I have a university degree for cultural siences and wrote my final work on music videos and music television. Due to the fact that I can't make a living on it, I made my hobby to my profession – so I am editing, writing, shooting and directing whatever crosses my way.

In the end, one of these 16 bands will get the promised record contract with a major label<sup>2</sup>. The season as a whole has a three-act structure over 13 episodes.

The Bands	;
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What all bands have in comon is that they offer identification potential for the audience. They are talented, but something is missing. Maybe they are great instrumentalists, but their songwriting is bad. Maybe they have great songs, but they can't play them right. Maybe they are good looking, but they don't know how to move. Maybe they have all what it takes – except the guts to play on stage They are not only selected by the region they are from, their talent and potential, but also by the factors humor, musical style, appearance, image and "something crazy". So in each of the first episodes there has to be a balanced mixture of hip-hop, rock/alternative, soul/r'n'b/funk, and electronic oriented bands. The why will be understandable by the structure.

The Host	
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The bands are presented by somebody well known for his or her open-minded musical devotion. Not necessarily by a star, but someone who is funny, spontaneous and direct.

## Episodes 01-04 -----

Each episode is featuring four bands, selected after regions, and referring to the introduced creteria. Our host is visiting them, and each band is introducing their home (the city / region they are from), where they come from, where they go to, who inspired them, why they decided to make music. The host is NOT presenting the bands, he or she is only reacting for the audience to the self-presentation of each group / region. Each band named some international as well as national stars as inspiration, and it is pointed out by the host, what each group needs to get to the next level. Now each group can get their personal trainer / (national) star – a surprise for the bands: for example it could be instead of the artists themselves their stylist, coreographer, or whoever is available for the program. The audience can vote by SMS, telefone and Internet, which two bands will get ONE of their mentioned desired stars. By doing so, there is build up tension for the future episodes.

Now each episode continues only by featuring two bands at a time. First the host is meeting the two personal trainers, selected by the bands themselves. They will coment on the skills of "their" band as well as appreciating them as fans.

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One album, option on second – the same type like for casting bands, but the success will show, that the potential is signficantly higher, which is why from the second season on all major labels will be sponsors, with one band contract each.

Next, the trainer will surprise the band with a new task. Not only by training them in what they need the most (in the most crazy – MTV – way, and definitely not like in MTV BECOMING), but also by telling them to write a new song about themselves for the next round. Referring to each musical directon, there should be rules, to make the task more difficult. Without this last task, here would be not enough difference to another MTV show, in which somebody is learning something new in very limited time. Here the bands also add something themselves. At the end of each show we hear the finished song and see how much each band has improved their skills. The audience is voting again, only one band makes it to the next round.

## Episodes 09-12 -----

Four bands are left. If possible one band of each musical category is in the center of the whole episode. This time they have to work on duets with two of the left over three other bands – also from a different region and a different musical style, and they only can exclude one. Here we will see, how musicaly open they are, enough to learn about weaknesses and/or strenghts of each band. This will give the label and main sponsor more excellent insight into how well they are capable to work with a producer.

## Episode 13 - "Graduation Day" / Conclusion & Season 2

The final episode is longer than the others so far, because it is supposed to be a live event, with all four bands. Each is playing one of their own songs, as well as the written one for the show. After an intermediate voting, which band will get the desired record contract, the two duet versions will be performed live. Then a final voting and the winner plays their song in the end. The +1 episode is a MAKING THE VIDEO special edition, to keep track to the new band on the spot.

Academy has all what it takes, if my conclusions from the beginning are right. It is based on real music, because it features real bands with which the audience can identify. People from next door, from their town or region, playing their favourite musical genre, or maybe have similar musical inspirations. The audience is developing fan charecteristics throughout the program. The crazy aspects of their training can only be mastered, if they show professional behaviour, which we expect from stars. Here the audience is entertained on the one hand, but on the other living through a katharsis themselves. And we are introduced to the first outline of a future single. That's all what it takes. The whole show is free commercial time to generate real fans, because they do the work of writing the song themselves, maybe with some help of other real musicians. A "service", only MTV can supply. Next to a major label, other sponsors are instrument manufactures, soft- and hardware producers, tourist agencies from each featured region, clothing labels and or stores – and many more.

The final has four bands, because in the future each one of them at this stage will be (of course inofficially) already be signed by a label, and only for one of them the official title of the show is to be won.



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