

= Born This Way (Glee) =

" Born This Way " is the eighteenth episode of the second season of the American television series Glee , and the fortieth episode overall . It originally aired on Fox in the United States on April 26 , 2011 . The episode was written by Brad Falchuk and directed by Alfonso Gomez @-@ Rejon , and is a tribute to Lady Gaga , the second such tribute to the artist in the show 's history ; the first one was " Theatricality " . Most of the major plots of the episode center on the topic of homosexuality , as Kurt (Chris Colfer) lays the groundwork for his longtime bully Dave Karofsky (Max Adler) to come to terms with his sexuality , and Santana (Naya Rivera) plots to run for school prom queen in the hopes of winning her love interest Brittany (Heather Morris) from Artie (Kevin McHale) .

" Born This Way " attracted mostly positive reception from most critics of the show , as many felt that it was one of the better episodes of the season . However , the episode came under scrutiny by several conservative media critics who criticized the show 's depiction of homosexuality . This episode featured cover versions of seven songs , notably a cover of " Born This Way " by Lady Gaga . Other musical works featured in the episode include cover versions of the Keane song " Somewhere Only We Know " and " I 've Gotta Be Me " from the 1968 Broadway production Golden Rainbow . The musical covers and performances were met with generally positive reception from critics , with several noting that it contained the best musical selection in a while . With the exception of " Barbra Streisand " , all cover versions were released as singles available for digital download .

Upon its initial airing , the episode was viewed by 8 @. @ 62 million American viewers , and garnered a 3 @. @ 4 / 11 Nielsen rating / share in the 18 ? 49 demographic , the lowest ratings and total viewership of the season . The episode 's ratings and total viewership significantly declined from the previous episode , " Night of Neglect " , which had previously been the low point in viewership .

= = Plot = =

During dance rehearsals for the upcoming Nationals competition , New Directions glee club co @-@ captain Finn Hudson (Cory Monteith) accidentally breaks Rachel Berry 's (Lea Michele) nose . Her doctor (George Wyner) recommends septoplasty and elective rhinoplasty ; Rachel considers modelling her nose after Finn 's current girlfriend Quinn Fabray (Dianna Agron) , and the two girls duet on the mash @-@ up " I Feel Pretty / Unpretty " . Both Finn and Puck (Mark Salling) oppose her planned transformation . Puck tries to help her accept her nose as part of her Jewish heritage , and recruits Kurt Hummel (Chris Colfer) , who convinces her to look to her idol Barbra Streisand , who refused to succumb to pressure to alter her nose . Ultimately , Rachel decides against having surgery .

Club member Santana Lopez (Naya Rivera) uses Rachel 's broken nose as a launching point to highlight the other group members ' physical flaws . Aiming to help them achieve self @-@ acceptance , glee club director Will Schuester (Matthew Morrison) urges them to embrace their perceived flaws by printing them on T @-@ shirts to be worn during a group performance of Lady Gaga 's " Born This Way " . He also encourages school guidance counselor Emma Pillsbury (Jayma Mays) to confront her OCD ; she begins treatment with a psychiatrist , Dr. Shane (Kathleen Quinlan) .

Santana , who is a closeted lesbian , decides to run for school prom queen in the hope that she can win the love of her best friend Brittany Pierce (Heather Morris) , who is dating Artie (Kevin McHale) . She realizes that popular jock Dave Karofsky (Max Adler) is also in the closet , after noticing him checking out Sam (Chord Overstreet) , and hatches an elaborate scheme to attain her goals : she threatens to out Karofsky unless he agrees to stop the bullying that drove Kurt from McKinley and the glee club . The pair form an anti @-@ bullying club to make the school safer in order to entice Kurt back and bolster the glee club 's chance at Nationals , though mostly to boost Santana 's popularity before the prom . They also become one another 's " beard " to bolster their heterosexual facades .

Karofsky issues an apology to Kurt at a group meeting involving Will , Principal Figgins (Iqbal

Theba) , and their fathers . Though Kurt wants to transfer back to McKinley from Dalton Academy , he is hesitant until Karofsky admits privately that Santana 's prom queen scheme is behind his change of heart and the anti @-@ bullying movement ; Kurt agrees to return , but only if Karofsky will start a school PFLAG club with him . As Kurt arrives back at McKinley , the Dalton Academy Warblers glee club that he had joined while he was away ? fronted by his boyfriend Blaine Anderson (Darren Criss) ? serenades him in farewell with a rendition of Keane 's " Somewhere Only We Know " . Kurt marks his re @-@ entry to New Directions with a solo performance of " As If We Never Said Goodbye " from Sunset Boulevard .

As the race for prom queen intensifies , Lauren Zizes (Ashley Fink) begins campaigning against Quinn . She discovers that Quinn 's first name is Lucy , and that she used to be an overweight outcast who had rhinoplasty before re @-@ inventing herself and transferring to McKinley . Lauren attempts to sabotage Quinn 's campaign by revealing her former image to the other students , but it backfires when Quinn 's popularity actually increases amongst the girls like Lauren . Lauren apologizes to Quinn , but Quinn commends her for her confidence and pride . Brittany shows off her shirt to Santana , and gives Santana a shirt reading " Lebanese " , believing that it reads " Lesbian " . Santana balks at wearing it , and the two argue ; Brittany finally storms off saying that if Santana loved herself as much as Brittany loved her , she would put on the shirt and dance with her . The episode closes with the club , minus Santana , embracing their identities and performing " Born This Way " . During the song , Emma arrives wearing a T @-@ shirt that acknowledges her own problems ? it reads " OCD " ? and she and Will join the performance . Karofsky and Santana watch from the audience , with Santana wearing her " Lebanese " shirt .

= = Production = =

The episode was extended and ran for 90 minutes , as opposed to the usual 60 minutes . Michael Ausiello of TVLine reported that the producers included two extra musical performances to fill the extended time slot . Series creator Ian Brennan stated that he believed the extension was granted as there were two songs which would otherwise have been cut for length . He welcomed the additional 24 minutes of screen time , and commented : " We 're always desperately cutting down our episodes . Even when we write them , and then in the editing room we 're always throwing away stuff that I really love to get it down to time . [...] It will be just really interesting content @-@ wise for us [to have an extension] . "

The focus of the episode is Lady Gaga 's song " Born This Way " , which she approved for use in Glee before the song premiered . This will be the second episode to highlight Gaga 's music , the first one being season one 's " Theatricality " . According to Monteith , the focus of " Born This Way " is the characters " embracing the things about [them] selves that [they] don 't like and tailoring [their] performances around that . " It features homophobic Dave Karofsky starting to come to terms with his homosexuality . The plot arc , which began in the season 's sixth episode , " Never Been Kissed " , is intended by series creator Ryan Murphy to have a happy ending . He explained that , while someone like Karofsky could turn to drugs or alcohol or commit suicide , Glee is " by nature optimistic " , so he plans to conclude the storyline positively . For fellow closeted character Santana , " Born This Way " set up the final three episodes of the season , which will increase focus on her love for her best friend Brittany . The episode additionally marked the first appearance of guest star Dr. Shane , " a very smart , cool and kind psychiatrist " who may become a recurring character . Other characters seen in " Born This Way " include glee club members Mike Chang (Harry Shum , Jr .) , Sam Evans and Lauren Zizes , Kurt 's boyfriend Blaine Anderson , school bully Azimio (James Earl) , Principal Figgins , and Karofsky 's father , Paul (Daniel Roebuck) .

In addition to " Born This Way " , the other songs covered in the episode were Keane 's " Somewhere Only We Know " , " As If We Never Said Goodbye " from the musical Sunset Boulevard , a mash @-@ up of " I Feel Pretty " from West Side Story and " Unpretty " by TLC , " I 've Gotta Be Me " from the musical Golden Rainbow , and Duck Sauce 's " Barbra Streisand " . All but " Barbra Streisand " were released as digital singles for the episode . " Somewhere Only We Know " was included on the series ' seventh soundtrack , Glee : The Music Presents the Warblers , and " As If

We Never Said Goodbye " , " Born This Way " and " I Feel Pretty / Unpretty " were included on the series ' eighth soundtrack , Glee : The Music , Volume 6 .

= = Reception = =

= = = Ratings = = =

" Born This Way " was first broadcast on April 26 , 2011 , in the United States . It averaged a 3 @. @ 4 / 11 Nielsen rating / share in the 18 ? 49 demographic , and also averaged nearly 8 @. @ 62 million American viewers during its initial airing . The first hour of the show garnered 8 @. @ 3 million American viewers and a 3 @. @ 3 / 9 rating in the 18 ? 49 demographic , despite airing simultaneously with a rerun of NCIS on CBS , The Biggest Loser on NBC , No Ordinary Family on ABC , and One Tree Hill on The CW . The last half @-@ hour of the episode had 8 @. @ 5 million American viewers , as well as a 3 @. @ 4 / 9 rating in the 18 ? 49 demographic , despite airing alongside a rerun of NCIS : Los Angeles on CBS , Dancing with the Stars on ABC , The Voice on NBC , and Hellcats on The CW . The total viewership and ratings were the lowest of the second season of Glee , and was down from those of the previous episode , " Night of Neglect " , which was watched by 9 @. @ 80 million American viewers and acquired a 3 @. @ 8 / 11 rating / share upon first airing . In the UK , the episode was watched by 2 @. @ 52 million viewers (2 @. @ 087 million on E4 , and 433 @, @ 000 on E4 + 1) , becoming the most @-@ watched show on E4 and E4 + 1 for the week , and the most @-@ watched show on cable for the week .

= = = Critical response = = =

" Born This Way " was given a positive reception by many critics of the show . Erica Futterman of Rolling Stone and Sandra Gonzalez of Entertainment Weekly both considered it to be an improvement from the previous episode . Futterman wrote that it " gave us the charm , wit and just @-@ zany @-@ enough @-@ to @-@ be @-@ plausible plot lines we were sorely missing after last week 's predictable " episode , and added , " Even better : the episode didn 't feel as long as the 90 minutes it clocked in at . " IGN 's Robert Canning gave the episode a " great " rating of 8 out of 10 . While he said the episode was entertaining , he felt that it did not need to be an hour and a half . Emily Yahr of The Washington Post agreed about the extended length , and did not like what she called " lame attempts to fill time " , which she said " detracted from what started as a decent episode " . She did , however , cite several " promising storylines " , including Rachel 's , and noted , " Usually , New Directions leader Rachel Berry is a caricature of all things annoying ? but this episode , we see her genuinely struggling with wanting to love herself the way she is " . The Houston Chronicle 's Bobby Hankinson summed it up as follows : " Not an epic episode , just sort of ? meh . " Amy Reiter of The Los Angeles Times reacted more positively and wrote , " The 90 @-@ minute episode had a lot of laughs , a lot of heart , some good lessons , character development , a few good numbers and more than a few surprises . "

The A.V. Club 's Todd VanDerWerff gave it a " B " , and wrote that he " finally got a sense that , yes , this second season has been building toward something and has been trying to tell an emotional story , as well as a humorous one . ' Born This Way ' , for the first time in a long time , made me feel like I could say I was a fan of Glee without a million qualifiers . " Gary Mills of the Florida Times @-@ Union felt that the episode didn 't live up to its hype , but also said that he wasn 't disappointed . Brett Berk of Vanity Fair reacted positively , and noted that by " focusing on what makes these lovable dorks , well , lovable dorks ? and not pop , or high @-@ school , superstars ? tonight 's episode , if a bit tidily , reminded us that these are supposed to be kids " . Matt Zoller Seitz of Salon thought that " Born This Way " was " the show 's best episode to date " , and " an epic about a hero returning from a long journey , walking serenely through halls that once scared him , and performing with such skill and sincerity that his friends stared at him with love and awe . " Aly Semigran of MTV had mixed emotions . She criticized the abrupt changes of the storylines in the episode , and

thought that the episode " was a noble effort " but " it didn 't quite work the way it was supposed to . " Raymund Flandez of The Wall Street Journal stated that the episode " sounded just the perfect notes " and called it " the best episode yet " . He continued : " The night held wonderful gems : A clear message . Witty repartee (?) . Great character build up . And tailored songs that carried emotional heft . "

Several critics praised the development of Santana . Hankinson wrote , " My goodness , Santana . It 's as if all the writers sat around a room , identified the best lines of tonight 's episode and then decided to give them all to Santana . Fantastic . " VanDerWerff called Santana the highlight of the episode : " The best thing about this episode is Naya Rivera 's work as Santana and the story the three writers have cooked up for her . Rivera 's really come into her own this season , going from just a generic bitchy cheerleader to an actual character who has motivations and might be a better villain for the show than Sue . " He added , " the storyline of Santana realizing she was in love with Brittany and , thus , is probably a lesbian has been nicely plotted and surprisingly deep . The reveal about Santana hasn 't washed away her less savory qualities ; indeed , it 's heightened them , to a degree , as she struggles to be true to herself and still maintain her status as the hottest girl in school . " Jenna Mullins of E ! Online wrote of Santana , " This episode just cemented my love for her . The insult spew in the beginning of the episode was awesomely mean . " She also said that Santana 's " inner monologue is often more entertaining than other characters ' outer monologues " . CNN 's Lisa Respers France considered Santana the episode 's highlight , and went on to write , " She embraced her inner lesbian (sort of) and rattled off the best [lines] like ' the only straight I am is straight @-@ up [bitch] . ' You gotta love that . "

Some critics reacted negatively to the episode . Scott Pierce of The Salt Lake Tribune felt that the show has jumped the shark starting from this episode . He felt that the Kurt storyline had some major flaws , and that the messages being sent have been mixed . The episode garnered criticism from a number of conservatives , who found the depiction of homosexuality abrasive . In an interview with ABC News , conservative media critic Dan Gainor felt that it was Ryan Murphy 's " latest depraved initiative to promote his gay agenda . " He added : " This is clearly Ryan Murphy 's vision of what growing up should be , not most of America 's . It 's a high school most parents would not want to send their kids to . "

= = = Music and performances = = =

The musical performances and cover versions in the episode received generally positive commentary . Gonzalez stated that she loved the song choices , and Meghan Brown of The Atlantic felt that this episode carried the best selection of music of a Glee episode in a long time . Flandez commended that they are " tailored songs that carried emotional heft " .

Critics mostly reacted with acclaim for the mash @-@ up of " I Feel Pretty / Unpretty " . Gonzalez gave the performance an " A " and commented : " While part of me would have said that pairing Rachel and Quinn for a duet would vocally be like putting a pit bull in a cage match with a Maltipoo , it actually worked ! There was a surprisingly balanced and incredibly lovely tone . " All three writers of The Atlantic 's review praised the mash @-@ up : Patrick Burns said it was beautiful , and noted that " the arrangement was clever , the ladies sounded great , and the song was placed perfectly into the plot of two characters who were restored a bit of their depth in this episode " , Brown stated that the song was lovely , and Kevin Fallon felt that it was " unexpectedly gorgeous and haunting " , and noted that it was " yet another example of how skilled the music directors are at these mash @-@ ups . " Semigran felt that it was the best performance of the night , and TV Line 's Michael Slezak gave the piece an " A " , and said that it was a " vocally and visually stunning set piece for the unlikeliest of duet partners . " Flandez commented that the song " floated like gossamer between Rachel and Quinn as they beautifully poured the sentiments of ugly ducklings " , and Futterman wrote , " It 's a poignant moment , and the inclusion of West Side Story 's ' I Feel Pretty ' makes for a great pop / theater mash @-@ up that reminds us of what Glee is at its heart . "

Kurt 's performance of " As If We Never Said Goodbye " was also met with critical acclaim . Brown stated that the song was " absolutely stunning in every conceivable way . " She thought that he had

the emotional connection , the musicality , and the storytelling ability " down pat " . Gonzalez gave the song an " A ? " and wrote , " Kurt apparently picked up a few helpful notes ... from his Warbler brothers and emerged an even better solo singer than I recall Most enjoyable , however , was a tenderness Kurt added to the song that I don 't think could have been duplicated by any other member of this ensemble . " Slezak commended Kurt 's voice , gave the song an " A " , and said , " I feel like we haven 't had too many strong musical moments from Kurt this season , but this number , which pushed Chris Colfer 's falsetto to impressive heights , went a long way to erase the deficit . " Futterman thought that it was " a sweeter moment than last season 's ' Rose 's Turn ' , but the high notes and big vocals are still there . " Berk gave it three out of five stars and called it " lovely , and properly sentimental " . Zoller Seitz called the performance " spellbinding " and concluded , " Chris Colfer turns ' As if We Never Said Goodbye ' into a valentine to self @-@ knowledge and self @-@ improvement ? and a young , gay singer 's dream of treating the world as a stage and commanding it like a star . "

The New Directions ' rendition of " Born This Way " was strongly approved by Lady Gaga . On her Twitter account , she wrote , " I really loved Glee 's Born This Way episode . I admire the show for being brave + fighting for such modern social messaging . Never back down . " Gonzalez gave the performance a " B + " , and commented that it wasn 't her favorite group number , mostly because she felt the song " wasn 't [Lady Gaga 's] best effort " . Berk was less kind about the song , and called it a " crappy but thematically admirable Gaga tune " , though he gave it three stars out of five . Slezak gave it an " A ? " and approved of the rendition : " it was nice to see and hear Tina , Mercedes and Kurt on lead vocals ? instead of , say , Blaine , Rachel , and Mr. Schue . "

The duet of " I Gotta Be Me " by Finn and Mike was considered to be " shockingly adorable " by Berk , who gave it four stars out of five . Slezak was less impressed : " The jazz band arrangement and the Mike @-@ teaches @-@ Finn @-@ some @-@ moves choreography was cute , I guess , but it 's not a good sign that I spent half the number focusing on Mike 's matching green t @-@ shirt and shoe laces . " He went on to question the song 's inclusion ? " In an episode about confronting one 's greatest teenage insecurities , I wonder if there might have been a better choice for a solo than the popular football player with the cheerleader girlfriend lamenting his inability to dance " ? and ultimately gave the performance a " B ? " . Futterman also commented on the song 's selection , though from a slightly different angle : " In theory it 's charming ? and there are definitely moments of the ' I can dance / You can 't dance ' exchange that were enjoyable ? but we couldn 't ever imagine this song as something Finn would have voluntarily picked . "

" Somewhere Only We Know " , as performed by Blaine and the Warblers , received an " A + " from Gonzalez , who loved the song and commented that she was " going to miss the Warblers " . Slezak gave the performance a " B " , and said that he " can 't be too mad at another pretty song sung well by Darren Criss . " The performance was acclaimed by Futterman , who wrote , " While the rest of the Warblers maintain their stoic facade , Blaine shows enough emotion to make this bittersweet Keane tune a simple , yet powerful , performance . "

The flash @-@ mob mall performance of " Barbra Streisand " was deemed to be pointless by Gonzalez , and she gave it a " C " , her lowest grade of the episode . Futterman enjoyed the performance , thinking that it was " the episode 's most fun moment and beats out last year 's ' Safety Dance ' for Glee numbers done in a mall . " Slezak also reacted positively to the performance , giving it a " B + " .

== = Chart history == =

Several of the cover versions featured debuted on numerous musical charts . The show 's rendition of " Born This Way " debuted at number forty @-@ four on the Billboard Hot 100 , on an issue dated for May 4 , 2011 . It sold 73 @,@ 000 copies in the United States in its first week of release as a digitally downloadable single . The mash @-@ up of " I Feel Pretty / Unpretty " was the highest charted single featured in the episode , debuting at number twenty @-@ two on the Billboard Hot 100 . It also peaked at number thirteen on the Digital 100 charts and sold 112 @,@ 000 digital downloads in the United States in its first week of release . It was the highest charting Glee single

on the Billboard charts since "Loser Like Me", which debuted at number six on the Billboard Hot 100 and sold over 210 @, @ 000 downloads in its first week. "Somewhere Only We Know" peaked at number forty @-@ two on the Billboard Hot 100 charts, and it sold over 75 @, @ 000 copies within its first week. The fourth single, "As If We Never Said Goodbye", charted at number eighty .

In Ireland, two of the songs debuted on the Irish Singles Charts on an issue dated May 5, 2011. The mash @-@ up peaked at number thirty @-@ seven, while the cover version of "Somewhere Only We Know" trailed behind at number forty @-@ seven. On May 6, three of the singles appeared on the Canadian Hot 100. The "I Feel Pretty / Unpretty" mash @-@ up peaked the highest out of all the singles, debuting at twenty @-@ eight. It was followed by "Born This Way" and "Somewhere Only We Know", which debuted at number thirty @-@ one and fifty @-@ two on the charts, respectively.