

= The First Time (Glee) =

" The First Time " is the fifth episode of the third season of the American musical television series Glee , and the forty @-@ ninth overall . Written by Roberto Aguirre @-@ Sacasa and directed by co @-@ executive producer Bradley Buecker , it first aired on Fox in the United States on November 8 , 2011 . The episode features the preparations for performing West Side Story and the show 's opening night , and the various events leading to the decisions by two of the show 's student couples ? Rachel (Lea Michele) and Finn (Cory Monteith) , and Kurt (Chris Colfer) and Blaine (Darren Criss) ? to begin having sex .

While an advanced copy of the episode was released to several reviewers and was highly praised by them , the reviewers of the broadcast were not as generally enthusiastic . In particular , some of the plotting and resulting characterization came in for criticism . The performance of " America " , however , was widely acclaimed , especially that of Santana (Naya Rivera) in the role of Anita . While the advance publicity about the " first time " events drew some pre @-@ broadcast condemnation , many critics were enthusiastic about the fact that a gay couple was being given such a storyline .

All six songs were released in five singles , available for download . Of these , " Uptown Girl " , a song sung by the returning Dalton Academy Warblers , charted on the Billboard Hot 100 , and also on the Canadian Hot 100 . The remaining songs , all from West Side Story , did not chart . Upon its initial airing , this episode was viewed by 6 @.@ 91 million American viewers , the lowest of the season , and garnered a 3 @.@ 1 / 10 Nielsen rating / share in the 18 ? 49 demographic . The total viewership for this episode was down somewhat from the previous episode , " Pot o ' Gold " , though ratings were fractionally higher .

= = Plot = =

Artie Abrams (Kevin McHale) has taken charge of directing the school musical , West Side Story , and he tells the two leads ? Rachel (Lea Michele) , playing Maria , and Blaine (Darren Criss) , playing Tony ? that they are not conveying enough emotion in their rendition of " Tonight " . He questions whether they can convincingly portray the roles if they are still virgins . Later , his co @-@ director Coach Beiste (Dot @-@ Marie Jones) confesses to him that she is attracted to football recruiter Cooter Jenkins (Eric Bruskotter) , who is at McKinley to scout potential players for Ohio State , though she is sure he would never consider her . Artie thinks otherwise , and acting on his advice , Cooter arranges a date with her .

Blaine and Kurt (Chris Colfer) discuss their decision to postpone sex . Blaine goes to Dalton Academy to invite the Warblers to see him in West Side Story and arrives as they are performing " Uptown Girl " . Afterward , new Warbler Sebastian Smythe (Grant Gustin) makes a play for Blaine , intercut with Santana (Naya Rivera) and Rachel singing " A Boy Like That " from the musical . They later meet at a coffee shop , and Kurt arrives as Blaine is telling Sebastian that he already has a boyfriend . Sebastian convinces them to go with him to the local gay bar and supplies fake IDs . While Blaine and Sebastian are dancing , Kurt is surprised to see Dave Karofsky (Max Adler) , who has transferred to another school . When Blaine and Kurt leave , Blaine is drunk and aroused , and urges Kurt to have sex with him in the back seat of the car ; Kurt refuses , and Blaine angrily walks home .

Rachel lets Finn (Cory Monteith) know that she is interested in having sex with him , but he balks when she admits her reason is to be a better Maria . Later , she asks advice from the other girls in the show . While Santana and Quinn (Dianna Agron) both urge her not to have sex with Finn , Tina (Jenna Ushkowitz) reveals that she and Mike (Harry Shum , Jr .) had sex over the summer and says how wonderful it was with the boy she loved ? her words are intercut with Rachel and Santana singing " I Have a Love " in rehearsal . Mike 's father (Keong Sim) confronts him about his participation in the musical , and Mike tells him he wants to be a professional dancer , not a doctor . His father disowns him .

Cooter recruits Shane (LaMarcus Tinker) for Ohio State , but not Finn , who is despondent about

his future . Rachel comforts him , and promises that she will help him find a new future . Back at school , Blaine apologizes to Kurt for getting drunk , and says he cares nothing for Sebastian . Kurt proposes that they go over to Blaine 's house for the night .

On opening night , Artie is assailed by self @-@ doubt , but he is thanked by the cast for his leadership , and he thanks them for trusting him . They perform " America " , which gets a standing ovation . Blaine and Rachel , waiting to go on and still virgins , are afraid they will not convey the necessary emotion , but Rachel reminds Blaine that they both have found their soulmates in Finn and Kurt , just like Maria and Tony had with each other . As they sing " One Hand , One Heart " on stage , they are also shown in scenes involving their first sexual encounters with their true soulmates .

= = Production = =

The episode began filming on September 23 , 2011 , and ended on October 14 , 2011 . The last nine days were shot in parallel with the sixth episode , which began shooting on October 6 , 2011 , and briefly with the seventh episode , which began shooting on October 13 , 2011 .

Grant Gustin makes his first appearance in this episode , playing a new " major " recurring character , Sebastian Smythe , a " gay Dalton Academy Warbler who sets his sights on Blaine " . Gustin won the role after " an exhaustive , weeks @-@ long casting search " , and the character is referred to as " promiscuous " and " scheming " . Gustin 's first day on the Glee set was September 26 , 2011 . He had been playing the role of Baby John in the touring company of Broadway revival of West Side Story since it opened on September 30 , 2010 , and left the show after performing on September 23 , 2011 to return for his first day with Glee .

Although the Dalton Academy Warblers also return in this episode , they are not voiced by the Tufts Beelzebubs , who sang backgrounds for Warblers numbers in the second season . According to Curt Mega , who sings lead on the Warblers track in this episode , the backgrounds were sung by " Jon Hall , Brock Baker and Luke Edgemon and some others " , with the three named men having played on @-@ screen Warblers in the second season . Some of the actors who played Warblers in the second season , including Hall and Mega , returned for the third . After the Warblers were filmed on October 3 , 2011 , Dominic Barnes , who played Trent in season two , tweeted to Gustin , " very impressive moves today sir " , to which Gustin replied , " Thanks bro ! Fun stuff ! ! " .

Another " major recurring role " debuts in this episode : Eric Bruskotter joins the cast as Cooter Jenkins , " a football recruiter who comes scouting for talent at McKinley , but finds he can ? t take his eyes off the team ? s gruff but big @-@ hearted coach . " Other recurring guest stars that appear in the episode include football coach Shannon Beiste (Jones) , the focus of Cooter 's eyes , former prom king Dave Karofsky (Adler) , exchange student and new glee club member Rory Flanagan (Damian McGinty) , and Mike 's parents Julia Chang and Mike Chang , Sr. (Tamlyn Tomita and Sim) .

This episode features six covers , five of which are from West Side Story , the stage musical being rehearsed and performed during the course of the episode : " A Boy Like That " and " I Have a Love " sung by Rivera and Michele , " Tonight " and " One Hand , One Heart " sung by Michele and Criss , and the number performed by the Sharks and Jets , " America " . The sixth cover , " Uptown Girl " , is sung by the Dalton Academy Warblers , with Mega on lead vocal .

= = Reception = =

= = = Ratings = = =

" The First Time " was first broadcast on November 8 , 2011 in the United States on Fox . It garnered a 3 @. @ 1 / 8 Nielsen rating / share in the 18 ? 49 demographic , and received 6 @. @ 91 million American viewers during its initial airing , the lowest number of viewers for a new episode in the third season . While the show 's viewership was down by over 7 % from the 7 @. @ 47 million for

previous new episode , " Pot o ' Gold " , which was broadcast on November 1 , 2011 , the rating in the 18 ? 49 demographic increased slightly from the 3 @. @ 0 / 8 rating / share received by that episode .

Viewership also decreased in other countries , and hit season lows in the United Kingdom and Australia as well . In the United Kingdom , " The First Time " was watched on Sky1 by 973 @, @ 000 viewers , down 7 % compared to " Pot o ' Gold " the previous week , when 1 @. @ 05 million viewers were watching . In Australia , " The First Time " was watched by 660 @, @ 000 viewers , which made Glee the fourteenth most @- @ watched program of the night . The viewership was down almost 9 % from " Pot o ' Gold " , which was seen by 724 @, @ 000 viewers . In Canada , however , viewership was up slightly and 1 @. @ 66 million viewers watched the episode , which made it the fifteenth most @- @ viewed show of the week , up three slots and over 2 % from the 1 @. @ 62 million viewers who watched " Pot o ' Gold " the week before .

= = = Pre @- @ broadcast reception = = =

Like " Asian F " before it , screener copies of this episode were sent to a number of critics before the show aired . Michael Ausiello of TVLine called it " stellar " and a " standout episode " , and Entertainment Weekly 's Tim Stack wrote that it was " one of Glee 's best installments ever " and an " exceptional episode " . Both articles headlined the sexual theme of the episode , and made prominent mention of the fact that both couples would be " having sex for the first time " .

Prior to broadcast , Colfer anticipated that the episode 's sexual themes and content would prove controversial among television watchdog groups . He said , " I absolutely expect to hear from them , but I think it 's handled very sweetly and very emotionally . They 're expecting this big , raunchy , suggestive , brainwashing storyline when , really , it 's very sweet . " Before the episode aired , the conservative Parents Television Council called the show " reprehensible " and the Fox network reckless for " celebrating teen sex " .

= = = Critical reception = = =

When the show aired , the reviewers were not as uniformly enthusiastic as the screeners . Bobby Hankinson of The Houston Chronicle called this " one of the better episodes in the show 's three @- @ season run , though not as good as ' Asian F ' " . Time 's James Poniewozik weighted them differently , calling " The First Time " the " best episode , overall , of Glee season three " . Raymund Flandez of The Wall Street Journal said it had " tasteful restraint , subtle playfulness and smoothly woven storylines " , and The Atlantic 's Kevin Fallon said the episode " treats its characters realistically and send an important message " . Robert Canning of IGN gave the episode a " good " grade of 7 @. @ 5 out of 10 . Rolling Stone 's Erica Futterman wrote that it was " clinical and awkward " , and the " second flatline " episode in a row , though she complimented the four actors playing the two couples as " genuine and relatable " . John Kubicek of BuddyTV said that the episode infuriated him " on a grand scale " . Amy Reiter of The Los Angeles Times wrote that the episode was " far more nuanced , gentle @- @ hearted and romantic than it sounds ? much more about love than about sex " , and a number of reviewers agreed , including AOLTV 's Crystal Bell . For Hankinson , however , " the teenage lust was played a touch too safe , a bit too romanticized " .

Canning said that Kurt and Blaine 's " attempts to get a little wild " , and " trying to grow up faster than they should " , were " the better parts of the episode as they felt the most realistic " . Futterman praised their departure from the bar as a " very faithful and honest scene " . Todd VanDerWerff of The A.V. Club and Kubicek both had issues with Blaine 's characterization . The latter asserted that he " just behaves however the writers need him to behave in order for the scene to work " , while the former said that Blaine 's season three storyline " hasn 't been bad by any means , but it does feel like Darren Criss is playing someone who 's quite a bit different from the guy he was playing last season " . Bell was impressed by the way the characters ' relationship " inspires gay youth in a way that we haven 't seen on network television yet " and called them " amazing role models for all teens " , and Fallon said it was " remarkable " and a " milestone " that " the decision by gay teen

characters to lose their virginities is given equal weight to that of a straight couple " . Anthony Benigno of The Faster Times characterized the scene with Kurt and Karofsky as " subtle " and " a home run " , and Entertainment Weekly 's Abby West called it a " perfect little nuanced scene " , while Ausiello said it was his " favorite scene of the episode " .

Poniewozik complimented the way " Monteith really sold Finn 's feeling of being helpless and overmatched " , and Canning said that Finn 's reaction to Rachel 's admission that she wanted to have sex because of the play was a " solid and true moment " . Rachel 's reasoning , however , came in for harsh criticism : Brett Berk of Vanity Fair said it was " neither believable nor even amusing " that she would try intercourse for such a reason , Bell called her a " dunce " , and VanDerWerff didn 't believe that she would just blurt it out to Finn . The Star @-@ Ledger 's Vicki Hyman felt her decision to go all the way did not " ring quite true " , and Poniewozik called it " essentially pity sex " . Ausiello had a different view ? " I would hardly call it pity sex " ? and West said she was " going to choose to believe " that Rachel did not have her first time " just to make him feel better " .

Several of Artie 's scenes came in for criticism . The scene where he advised Rachel and Blaine to have sex was viewed by Poniewozik as " a forced conflict designed to drive the plot " and highly implausible for a number of reasons . Kubicek stated that " acting is about pretending , and if Rachel is really a great actress , she 'd be able to play the emotion without needing to have sex " . Bell and West made similar points . Rae Votta of Billboard commented on the " weird " plotline that involved Artie and Coach Beiste , for which Kubicek called Artie 's actions " inappropriate " . While Hyman " liked Artie coming into his own as a director " , she called his pre @-@ show jitters " jarring " , though she called his final speech " a nice moment " , and Benigno characterized it as " a kind of cheesy but actually appropriate speech " . Futterman felt it was a " valid and heartwarming point " , but " awkwardly slotted in " . Poniewozik credited Jones as Coach Beiste with " stunning work " , and Kubicek said Beiste 's " fragile lack of self @-@ esteem " was " believable and heartfelt " and that Jones was " brilliant " .

The scene where Mike is disowned by his father was characterized as " weird " and " tonally off " by VanDerWerff and " abrupt and unlikely " by Hyman . Kubicek was even more critical : " the most over @-@ the @-@ top , terribly cliched scene ever " . However , Votta gave " kudos to Glee for sticking with Mike 's story this season as he figures out his path " , and West wrote that Shum " played it well " , while Canning said it and the later scene with his mother " were mighty effective , if a bit stereotypical " . Hyman and West also approved of the latter scene .

Sue 's absence from the episode was applauded by Bell , who called it " exactly what the show needed " . Michael Slezak of TVLine said " the show might be at its best " when Sue and Will " are relegated to benchwarmer status " , and Poniewozik " did not miss them one bit " . The new Warbler , Sebastian , was said to be " instantly loathsome " by Benigno . His scene with Blaine that was blended with Santana and Rachel singing " A Boy Like That " was variously described as " savvily intercut " by Hyman , " heavy @-@ handed " by Votta , and bringing " the dangers of teen love " to " ferocious life " by Slezak .

Of the ending , Futterman noted that " the final scenes actually wound up truthful to these characters " , and Kevin Sullivan of MTV wrote that " when the two separate moments finally did arrive at the end of the episode , it felt like the natural end and was quite touching " .

= = = Music and performances = = =

Supervising Music Editor David Klotz received a Best Sound Editing : Short Form Musical in Television nomination at the 2012 Golden Reel Awards for his work on the episode . The musical performances were generally well received by reviewers , though a few songs came in for some criticism . One that was given near @-@ universal plaudits was " America " , from Hankinson 's " awesome " to Hyman 's " killer rendition " to VanDerWerff 's " one of the best production numbers the show has ever done " . The most frequent caveat seemed to be the accents used by the singers ; Flandez thought they " could 've used a little finesse " , and Futterman characterized them as " questionable " , though both complimented the performance 's dance moves . Santana 's

performance in the number and the show came in for particular comment : The Hollywood Reporter 's Lesley Goldberg called her " completely captivating as Anita " , and Rae Votta of Billboard mentioned her " two stand out vocal performances " .

Of the four other songs from West Side Story , " Tonight " was given an " A ? " and called " pretty wonderful " by Benigno , while Futterman thought it " very sweet , yet very vanilla " and West gave it a " B " and noted it " was lacking something " . Slezak gave the musical 's songs a collective grade of " A " . Although others praised Santana as Anita , Futterman was not impressed with her rendition of " A Boy Like That " and wrote , " Santana 's part of the song is not nearly angry or urgent enough and sounds like a watered @-@ down version of what Santana is capable of " . West gave the song a " B + " , and stated that the song was " stellar for Rachel 's fire " . Futterman singled out Rachel for " I Have a Love " : " Rachel delivers the best vocals of the night with her powerful , yet incredibly high soprano that sounds effortless despite being out of her normal range . " Benigno and West both gave " One Hand , One Heart " an " A " ; the former called it " wonderful " , although he railed about the prevalence of show tunes in the episode , and the latter wrote , " This was the perfect soundtrack to the trio of first times . "

The one song that did not come from the musical was " Uptown Girl " . Votta said the performance by the Dalton Academy Warblers , with " leads by minor Warbler Nick , played by Curt Mega " , was " refreshing and nostalgic all at once , a bright pop musical spot in an episode devoted to Broadway and a reminder of the dominant Dalton presence last season " . Bell wrote that the " Warblers were totally born to sing ' Uptown Girl ' " , and Goldberg called it " among the young season ? s best " performances . Flandez said it was a " terrific performance " , though Benigno was more restrained , and gave it a " B + " despite there being " less innovation " in the a cappella " gimmick " , and noted that " the barbershop @-@ quartet finish is actually pretty good " . Slezak , however , said the song was the only musical " weak link " in the episode , and Canning called it " too polished " . Futterman thought the lead singers were " grating and over @-@ the @-@ top " , and Poniewozik characterized the performance as " unfortunate " .

= = = Chart history = = =

One of the six cover versions released as five singles ? the " A Boy Like That " single also contained " I Have a Love " ? debuted on the Billboard Hot 100 : " Uptown Girl " debuted at number sixty @-@ eight . It also debuted on the Canadian Hot 100 at number eighty @-@ three . The other singles , all from West Side Story , did not chart . Two of these singles , " Uptown Girl " and " Tonight " , are included on the soundtrack album Glee : The Music , Volume 7 .