

= Duets ( Glee ) =

" Duets " is the fourth episode of the second season of the American television series Glee , and the twenty @-@ sixth episode overall . It was written by series creator Ian Brennan , directed by Eric Stoltz , and premiered on Fox on October 12 , 2010 . The episode featured seven cover versions , including a mash @-@ up of " Happy Days Are Here Again " and " Get Happy " by Barbra Streisand and Judy Garland , respectively .

In the episode , transfer student Sam Evans ( Chord Overstreet ) joins the glee club . Director Will Schuester ( Matthew Morrison ) assigns the members to perform a duet with another classmate , and offers a prize for the best performance . The students form their duos and begin practicing , testing several relationships and initiating others ; after first being recruited by Kurt Hummel ( Chris Colfer ) , Sam ultimately finds himself partnered with Quinn Fabray ( Dianna Agron ) .

" Duets " received generally positive reviews from critics , and many praised the show for its character development and varied song choices . The episode also featured a neck @-@ nuzzle between Santana ( Naya Rivera ) and Brittany ( Heather Morris ) , which was a subject of interest to many critics and led Christie Keith of AfterEllen.com to refer to the episode as " queerest episode of any series that 's ever been on television " . In its original broadcast , " Duets " was watched by 11 @. @ 36 million American viewers . It was the top @-@ rated program of the night in the 18 ? 49 demographic , attaining a 4 @. @ 7 / 13 Nielsen rating / share . Both viewership and ratings rose from the previous episode , " Grilled Cheesus " .

= = Plot = =

Glee club director Will Schuester ( Matthew Morrison ) announces a duets assignment and competition ; the prize for the winning duo is dinner at Breadstix . He tells them that club member Puck ( Mark Salling ) has been sent to juvenile detention for stealing an ATM , and introduces a new member , Sam Evans ( Chord Overstreet ) . Kurt ( Chris Colfer ) suspects that Sam is gay and asks him to be his duet partner ; Sam agrees . Club co @-@ captain Finn Hudson ( Cory Monteith ) separately attempts to convince them not to be partners , as he fears that Sam will be bullied to the point of quitting if he sings a duet with another guy , but Sam insists on honoring his given word to Kurt , and Kurt is still angry at Finn for some homophobic comments he made when they were roommates . After his father Burt ( Mike O 'Malley ) points out that just as Kurt had a crush on Finn the year before , he may now be taking advantage of Sam , Kurt releases Sam from their partnership , and as his competition entry sings " Le Jazz Hot ! " from Victor Victoria in a " duet " with himself . Kurt comes away from this feeling lonelier than ever and wonders if he will ever truly be accepted for who he is by his peers and family .

Cheerleaders Santana ( Naya Rivera ) and Brittany ( Heather Morris ) make out , but when Brittany suggests they sing Melissa Etheridge 's " Come to My Window " together , Santana refuses and trivializes their relationship . Santana believes her best chance of winning is by partnering with Mercedes ( Amber Riley ) , and together they sing " River Deep ? Mountain High " . Brittany pairs up with Artie ( Kevin McHale ) , and they start dating . Artie loses his virginity to Brittany , but before they compete Santana tells him that Brittany only wanted him for his voice so she could win the competition . He is deeply upset that his first sexual experience was the consequence of such petty motivations , so he breaks up with Brittany and dissolves their partnership . Tina ( Jenna Ushkowitz ) and her boyfriend Mike ( Harry Shum , Jr . ) argue about whether they should duet at all , but he ultimately agrees to join her on " Sing ! " from A Chorus Line , his first solo performance for glee club ; their duet draws praise from Will .

Finn and his girlfriend Rachel Berry ( Lea Michele ) initially practice singing " Don 't Go Breaking My Heart " , but Rachel suggests they should throw the competition so Sam can win , to make him more likely to stay in the glee club . When Sam has a slushee thrown in his face by bullies , Quinn ( Dianna Agron ) helps him to clean up . They subsequently become duet partners , and during a rehearsal he attempts to kiss her . Quinn is upset and tells him they cannot sing together , but she is later convinced to reconsider by Rachel . Rachel and Finn , dressed as a schoolgirl and a priest in

an intentionally offensive move to damage their chances of victory , perform " With You I 'm Born Again " by Billy Preston and Syreeta Wright . Sam and Quinn sing " Lucky " by Jason Mraz and Colbie Caillat . The club members all vote for themselves except Finn and Rachel , who vote for the winners , Sam and Quinn . Over the victory dinner at Breadstix they form a bond , and Quinn tells Sam that she considers the meal their first date .

Noticing that Kurt is lonely , Rachel tells him how much the club members value him and asks him to duet with her for fun now that the competition is over in an act of solidarity . The episode ends with them singing the Judy Garland / Barbra Streisand mash @-@ up of " Happy Days Are Here Again " and " Get Happy " for the glee club .

= = Production = =

In " Duets " , Brittany and Santana are shown together in bed . A physical relationship between the two was first alluded to in the season one episode " Sectionals " . Rivera sought clarification on the nature of their relationship from " Sectionals " director Brad Falchuk , who informed her that the two characters had been intimate in the past . Series creator Ryan Murphy told Morris that as Glee is a primetime series , he did not want to show them making out . Interviewed by Brett Berk of Vanity Fair in May 2010 , Morris stated that Brittany and Santana were simply best friends , and the show would not be taking them in a " friends with benefits " direction . However , at the Television Critics Association Summer Press Tour in August 2010 , Murphy stated that the characters would in fact kiss on screen in an upcoming episode . Falchuk later explained that the Brittany / Santana storyline had begun " almost as a goof at first " , however " then we realised this show is so inclusive , and then there were people we weren 't representative of . This whole lesbian @-@ bisexual female community . We 're fortunate the network wasn 't resistant of it and let us try it out , then it became something much deeper . " In " Duets " , Brittany also had a brief relationship with Artie . Morris told Jarett Wieselman of the New York Post that she is a fan of McHale 's , and had been pressing Murphy to give their characters a storyline together since the beginning of the season .

Series regular Mark Salling did not appear in " Duets " , which prompted media speculation that he would not return to the show due to a breach of contract . However , his absence was for creative reasons , as it allowed Sam to establish himself within the glee club and begin a relationship with Puck 's ex @-@ girlfriend Quinn . Overstreet stated that Sam was initially created as a romantic interest for Kurt , but his storyline was adjusted to pair him with Quinn as a result of the chemistry the producers detected between himself and Agron .

The episode featured cover versions of seven songs : Ike & Tina Turner 's " River Deep ? Mountain High " , Jason Mraz and Colbie Caillat 's " Lucky " , Elton John and Kiki Dee 's " Don 't Go Breaking My Heart " , " Le Jazz Hot ! " from Victor Victoria , " Sing ! " from A Chorus Line ? which was Shum , Jr . ' s first lead vocal performance on the series , Billy Preston and Syreeta Wright 's " With You I 'm Born Again " , and a mash @-@ up of " Happy Days Are Here Again " and " Get Happy " as performed by Judy Garland and Barbra Streisand . Colfer and Michele 's costumes and positions in the latter number matched those in the Garland and Streisand original . Although it was not performed , Melissa Etheridge 's " Come to My Window " was suggested as a performance piece by Brittany ; five months prior to the episode 's broadcast , Etheridge had joked that her songs were not " gay enough " for use on Glee . All of the songs except " With You I 'm Born Again " were released as singles , available for download . " River Deep ? Mountain High " and " Lucky " were also featured on the fifth soundtrack album of the series , Glee : The Music , Volume 4 , while " Don 't Go Breaking My Heart " was included on the fourth extended play , Glee : The Music , Love Songs .

= = Reception = =

= = = Ratings = = =

In its original broadcast , " Duets " was watched by 11 @. @ 36 million American viewers . It was the top @- @ rated program of the night in the 18 ? 49 demographic , as it attained a 4 @. @ 7 / 13 Nielsen rating / share . Both viewership and ratings rose from the previous episode , " Grilled Cheesus " , which was watched by 11 @. @ 20 million viewers and attained a 4 @. @ 6 / 13 rating / share among adults 18 ? 49 . In the weekly program rankings , Glee was the fourth most @- @ viewed show among adults 18 ? 49 , and the second scripted show behind only Modern Family . In overall viewers , it placed nineteenth for the week . In Canada , the episode was watched by 2 @. @ 25 million viewers , which placed it at seventh for the week . Viewership again rose from the previous episode , which was watched by 1 @. @ 99 million viewers and ranked eleventh . In Australia , " Duets " drew 1 @. @ 04 million viewers , making Glee the ninth most @- @ viewed show of the night and twenty @- @ eighth of the week . It was also up from " Grilled Cheesus " , which attracted 1 @. @ 02 million viewers and ranked eleventh on the night , and thirty @- @ second for the week . In the UK , the episode was watched by 2 @. @ 51 million viewers ( 2 @. @ 11 million on E4 , and 397 @, @ 000 on E4 + 1 ) , which made it the most @- @ watched show on E4 and E4 + 1 for the week , and the second most @- @ watched show on cable for the week .

= = = Critical response = = =

" Duets " was generally well received by critics , many of whom contrasted it favorably with the preceding season two episodes . The New York Times 's Rebecca Milzoff called it the best of the season to that point " in terms of old @- @ school Glee " , and indeed , both Lisa Respers France of CNN and Jarett Wieselman of the New York Post found it a reminder of why they originally loved the show . Raymund Flandez of The Wall Street Journal summarized : " This was a return to that honeymoon feeling , when Glee first surprised , scandalized and satisfied you . " TV Guide 's Damian Holbrook and the Houston Chronicle 's Bobby Hankinson appreciated the lack of gimmicks ; the former explained " No Britney numbers . No forced guest stars . No reasons to check out . It 's amazing how satisfying a show can be when the characters we invested in a year ago get to do something more than set @- @ dress a stunt . " James Poniewozik of Time labelled it " easily the strongest character episode so far this season " . While The Atlantic 's Kevin Fallon opined that the series finally achieved the correct " tonal balance of comedy and drama " , his colleague Meghan Brown provided one of few dissenting reviews ; she called it a lazy , nonsensical episode which contributed to a building " sophomore slump " . MTV 's Aly Semigran found it lackluster after " Grilled Cheesus " , and although Anthony Benigno of the Daily News deemed it an improvement on the previous episode , he concluded that it was not one of the season 's best .

Several themes ran through the reviews , one of which was the lack of focus on adult characters . IGN 's Robert Canning ? who rated " Duets " 8 @. @ 5 / 10 , signifying a great episode ? felt that this contributed to its success , as it " allowed for small but interesting character development to take place , even with some of the minor characters . " Todd VanDerWerff of The A.V. Club was surprised that he did not miss the presence of cheerleading coach Sue Sylvester , but Hankinson , Semigran and Rolling Stone 's Erica Futterman all lamented her absence . The gay @- @ centered storylines also attracted much commentary . Christie Keith of lesbian and bisexual media website AfterEllen.com suggested that " Duets " was " the queerest episode of any series that 's ever been on television " . Entertainment Weekly 's Tim Stack wrote that Kurt " stole the show in terms of pure emotional power " and called him " the most important character on television right now " . USA Today 's Ann Oldenburg questioned whether Glee had gone " too far " by depicting a physical relationship between Santana and Brittany . Several reviewers appreciated the resultant development of Brittany 's character : Poniewozik enjoyed the exploration of her " basic loneliness " , E ! Online 's Jenna Mullins was pleased to see more than her usual " deadpanning and one @- @ liners " , and Wieselman called it a " wonderful moment " when she and Artie broke up , which led to the depiction of " real feelings " in Brittany for the first time . Canning found Brittany and Artie 's coupling " uneven " and preferred her with Santana , as their development made them " uniquely interesting and a blast to watch . " VanDerWerff conversely deemed Brittany 's pairing with Artie " one of the most resonant things the show 's ever done " .

The storylines that involved Rachel received mixed commentary . Both Poniewozik and Stack appreciated the pairing of Rachel and Kurt : the former called them " probably the strongest pairing " of the episode due to similarities in their characterization , and the latter lauded Rachel 's line " I know you 're lonely ... but you 're not alone " as " an incredibly powerful statement coming in the midst of all these gay youth suicides [ , which ] further illuminates the relevance and importance of a show like Glee . " Fallon said that the episode " added some flavor " to the relationship between Rachel and Finn , which was " in danger of going stale " , and Berk noted that " Duets " was the first time he had ever been " marginally compelled " by a storyline which involved the pair . Benigno was far less favorable : he called Rachel a lunatic , and a " self @-@ absorbed crazy woman who will do anything short of black @-@ ops assassination to secure the [ Nationals ] trophy . "

Sam and Quinn 's burgeoning relationship met with a fairly positive response . Canning would have preferred for them to become friends first , and Benigno deemed their sexual tension unrealistic , based on Sam 's success at charming Quinn in Na 'vi , the fictional language of Avatar . However , while Berk declared himself " fully exhausted with the flimsy cheerleader / quarterback paradigm " , Sam 's Na 'vi and Matthew McConaughey impression led him to concede that they are " cute together " . Stack and Mullins shared this sentiment , and VanDerWerff called their flirtation " exceptionally well @-@ handled " .

= = = Music and performances = = =

The episode 's musical performances ? deemed " among the most varied and terrific in the show 's history " by VanDerWerff ? were also generally well received . Futterman found it refreshing for the main characters to receive equal performance time . Although Poniewozik opined that some numbers were included based on iTunes sales potential rather than how well they served the plot , Holbrook was pleased that the songs " drove the story instead of drowning out the characters " , and both Hankinson and Dave Itzkoff of the New York Times welcomed the contextually appropriate song selection . Opinions were divided over the best performance . Both Futterman and VanDerWerff felt that Mercedes and Santana should have won the duet competition with their performance of " River Deep ? Mountain High " . The former called it " one of the series ' best " duets , and the latter further praised it as potentially " the best musical number the show 's ever done from a pure performance standpoint . " Wieselmann wrote that it was the best song of the episode , and that he " didn 't want it to ever end " . However , Hankinson highlighted its lack of " emotional punch " , and Semigran deemed it her least favorite performance . She and Benigno named " Sing ! " as their favorite routine , though Benigno gave it only a " B " grade , as its appeal hinged on Mike 's dancing , rather than his vocal performance . Berk gave it four stars out of five , his highest rating of the episode , tied with " River Deep ? Mountain High " . Though Flandez and Hankinson also commented positively on the song , the former thought that Tina 's sung interjections became annoying and the latter called it " far from the best of the evening " .

Burns chose " Lucky " as " the most impressive number of the evening " , and Respers France called it the most adorable . Semigran and the Los Angeles Times 's Amy Reiter agreed that it was cute , and Flandez praised its " charm and simplicity " . Stack and Benigno gave it an " A " ; Stack eagerly anticipated more duets between Quinn and Sam , and Benigno called it " absolutely fantastic " , with particular praise for Agron , who he opined is often overlooked . Though Futterman also noted its charm , she did not think it was a worthy winner of the duets competition . Berk gave it just two stars out of five , as he found it " kind of boring " . The mash @-@ up of " Happy Days Are Here Again " and " Get Happy " was widely acclaimed . Respers France , Reiter and Hankinson named it the musical highlight of the episode ; Fallon and Stack went further and hailed it as a highlight of the entire series . Poniewozik commented that the number was " so appropriate that , had it not existed , Glee probably would have had to invent it " . Wieselmann suggested that Colfer and Michele " redefined show @-@ stopper " with their performance , and Itzkoff lauded it as " a powerful reminder of why it 's worth sticking with Glee through what has quickly proved a polarizing season . "

Of the remaining songs , Rachel and Finn 's performance of " Don 't Go Breaking My Heart "

attracted praise for Monteith 's vocals , which Stack and Yahr commented " sounded better than ever " . " Le Jazz Hot ! " received a split response . Burns wrote that Kurt " pulled it off flawlessly " , and Fallon called the performance " far more moving and rousing " than any of the songs in " Grilled Cheesus " . Stack and Benigno both graded it " B + " ; the latter deemed it " very good " but " not transcendent " . Reiter felt that the costumes and choreography overpowered the emotion of the piece , and Futterman found the number " too self @-@ indulgent and reminiscent of previous performances like ' Rose 's Turn ' . " Berk rated it two stars out of five , and commented , " I get the idea , and the execution is commendable , but it still kind of sucked . " Rachel and Finn 's deliberately offensive version of " With You I 'm Born Again " received a " C " and " C + " from Benigno and Stack respectively . Both conceded that it was acceptable vocally , but as Stack acknowledged , " the point of this song was to hate it , and I gotta say , Glee : you played me like a fiddle . " In December 2012 , TV Guide named their rendition one of Glee 's worst performances . Regardless of being a send @-@ up , Respers France found the number " oddly endearing " .

= = = Chart history = = =

All six of the cover versions released as singles debuted on the Billboard Hot 100 , and appeared on other musical charts . On the Hot 100 , the show 's rendition of " Lucky " debuted at number twenty @-@ seven ; it was at number seventeen on the Billboard Canadian Hot 100 . The other five songs on the Hot 100 were " River Deep ? Mountain High " at number forty @-@ one , which also made number thirty @-@ six on the Canadian Hot 100 ; " Happy Days Are Here Again / Get Happy " at number forty @-@ eight , which also made number fifty @-@ five on the Canadian Hot 100 ; " Don 't Go Breaking My Heart " at number fifty , which also made number thirty @-@ one on the Canadian Hot 100 ; " Sing ! " at number eighty @-@ seven , which also made number sixty @-@ seven on the Canadian Hot 100 ; and " Le Jazz Hot ! " at number ninety @-@ four , which also made number eighty @-@ eight on the Canadian Hot 100 .

= = Cultural references = =

" Viewing Party " , a November 2010 episode of The Office , centers around the entire Dunder @-@ Mifflin staff gathering at a co @-@ worker 's apartment to watch this episode .