

= Pilot (Glee) =

" Pilot " is the pilot episode of the American television series Glee , which premiered on the Fox network on May 19 , 2009 . An extended director 's cut version aired on September 2 , 2009 . The show focuses on a high school show choir , also known as a glee club , set within the fictional William McKinley High School in Lima , Ohio . The pilot episode covers the formation of the club and introduces the main characters . The episode was directed by series creator Ryan Murphy , and written by Murphy , Brad Falchuk and Ian Brennan . Murphy selected the music featured in the episode , with the intention of maintaining a balance between showtunes and chart hits .

The episode achieved 9 @. @ 619 million viewers on first broadcast , and 4 @. @ 2 million when the director 's cut version aired . Critical response was mixed , with The New York Times 's Alessandra Stanley highlighting the episode 's unoriginality and stereotyped characters , but praising the showmanship and talent of the cast . The Daily News 's David Hinckley opined that the show was imperfect and implausible but " potentially heartwarming , " while USA Today 's Robert Bianco noted casting and tone problems , but commented positively on the show 's humor and musical performances . Mary McNamara for the LA Times wrote that the show had a wide audience appeal , calling it : " the first show in a long time that 's just plain full @-@ throttle , no @-@ guilty @-@ pleasure @-@ rationalizations @-@ necessary fun . "

= = Plot = =

Spanish teacher Will Schuester (Matthew Morrison) learns that Sandy Ryerson (Stephen Tobolowsky) , the head of William McKinley High School 's glee club has been fired for inappropriate sexual behavior toward student Hank Saunders (Ben Bledsoe) . The school principal , Figgins (Iqbal Theba) , gives Will permission to take over the club , and he plans to revitalize it , naming the group New Directions . The club consists of fame @-@ hungry Rachel Berry (Lea Michele) , diva Mercedes Jones (Amber Riley) , flamboyant countertenor Kurt Hummel (Chris Colfer) , paraplegic electric guitar player Artie Abrams (Kevin McHale) and stuttering goth Tina Cohen @-@ Chang (Jenna Ushkowitz) . Will 's efforts are derided by Sue Sylvester (Jane Lynch) , head of the school 's successful cheerleading team , the Cheerios who soon plans to abolish the Glee club to restore her money funded towards the spoilt Cheerios . His wife Terri (Jessalyn Gilsig) is also unsupportive , suggesting that Will become an accountant to increase their income and give up teaching . Rachel threatens to leave the club if Will cannot find a male vocalist with talent comparable to hers . When the school 's football coach Ken Tanaka (Patrick Gallagher) allows Will to try to recruit football team members , in return that he put a good word for Emma for him (because Ken likes her) , he discovers that quarterback Finn Hudson (Cory Monteith) is secretly a talented singer . He plants marijuana in Finn 's locker , and blackmails him into joining New Directions . Finn , determined not to disappoint his widowed mother , complies .

Will takes New Directions to see Vocal Adrenaline , a rival club , perform . He is accompanied by Emma Pillsbury (Jayma Mays) , the school 's mysophobic guidance counselor , who has a crush on him . Vocal Adrenaline perform an impressive rendition of Amy Winehouse 's " Rehab " , which leaves New Directions worried about their chances of competing in the regional show choir competition . When Will returns from the performance , Terri informs him she is pregnant . Believing he needs to support his family , Will regretfully tells the club he is resigning , and applies for a job as an accountant . Finn is attacked by the football team for his involvement with New Directions , and initially decides to quit the club . The team traps Artie in a portable toilet which they intend to tip over , however , Finn refuses to take part . He apologizes to the Glee club members , and the group resolves to continue without Will . Emma urges Will to reconsider his decision to leave by showing him a video of him in Glee Club when he was at McKinley High , and when he comes across New Directions performing " Don 't Stop Believin ' " he decides to stay , telling the club he couldn 't bear to see them win Nationals without him .

= = Production = =

== Conception ==

Ryan Murphy , Brad Falchuk , and Ian Brennan created Glee . Murphy drew inspiration from his own childhood , which saw him play the lead role in all of his high school 's musicals . Brennan and producer Mike Novick were also highly involved in their own schools ' glee clubs . Brennan originally wrote a script for a Glee movie , but Murphy believed the concept would work better as a TV series . Fox picked up the series pilot within 15 hours of receiving the script , which Murphy attributes in part to the success of the network 's American Idol , commenting : " It made sense for the network with the biggest hit in TV , which is a musical , to do something in that vein " . Murphy intended the show to be a form of escapism , explaining : " There 's so much on the air right now about people with guns , or sci @-@ fi , or lawyers running around . This is a different genre , there 's nothing like it on the air at the networks and cable . Everything 's so dark in the world right now , that 's why ' Idol ' worked . It 's pure escapism . " With regards to Glee 's audience , Murphy intended for it to be a family show which would appeal to adults as well as children , with adult characters starring equally alongside the teenage leads . Glee is set in Lima , Ohio . Murphy chose a Midwest setting as he himself originates from Indiana , and recalls childhood visits to Ohio to the Kings Island theme park . Although set in Lima , the show is actually filmed at Paramount Studios in Hollywood .

== Music ==

The episode features covers of numerous songs sung on @-@ screen by the characters . Musical segments take the form of performances , as opposed to the characters singing spontaneously , as the intention is for the series to remain reality @-@ based . Murphy has commented that his interest lay in creating a " postmodern musical " , rather than " doing a show where people burst into song " , drawing on the format of Chicago . Murphy is responsible for selecting all of the songs used , and strives to maintain a balance between show tunes and chart hits , as : " I want there to be something for everybody in every episode . That 's a tricky mix , but that 's very important ? the balancing of that . "

Songs featured in the pilot are " Where is Love ? " from Oliver ! , Aretha Franklin 's " Respect " , " Mister Cellophane " from Chicago , Katy Perry 's " I Kissed a Girl " , " On My Own " from Les Misérables , " Sit Down , You 're Rockin ' the Boat " from Guys and Dolls , " You 're the One That I Want " from Grease , REO Speedwagon 's " Can 't Fight This Feeling " , Amy Winehouse 's " Rehab " and " Don 't Stop Believin ' " and " Lovin ' , Touchin ' , Squeezin ' " by Journey . The director 's cut version also includes an acoustic rendition of John Denver 's " Leaving on a Jet Plane " . Murphy was surprised at the ease with which use of songs was approved by the record labels approached , and explained : " I think the key to it is they loved the tone of it . They loved that this show was about optimism and young kids , for the most part , reinterpreting their classics for a new audience . " The score of the episode features a cappella covers of instrumental songs provided by The Swingle Singers . Dance routines were choreographed by Zach Woodlee .

Four of the songs featured in the episode were released as singles , available for digital download . " On My Own " charted at number 42 in Ireland and 73 in the UK , and " Can 't Fight This Feeling " charted at number 117 in the UK . " Rehab " charted at number 93 in Australia , 38 in Ireland , 62 in the UK and 98 in America . " Don 't Stop Believin ' " reached number 2 in the UK , 4 in America , 50 in Canada , 5 in Australia , 4 in Ireland and 16 in New Zealand . It sold 177 @,@ 000 copies in the US in its first week , and went on to sell the most copies of any Glee single : it was certified gold with 500 @,@ 000 sales in the US in October 2009 , and reached one million in sales and platinum certification in March 2011 ; it has also been certified platinum in Australia .

== Casting ==

In casting Glee , Murphy sought out actors who could identify with the rush of starring in theatrical

roles . Instead of using traditional network casting calls , he spent three months on Broadway , where he found Morrison , who had previously starred on stage in Hairspray and The Light in the Piazza , Michele , who starred in Spring Awakening , and Ushkowitz , from the Broadway revival of The King and I. The role of Rachel was written specifically for Michele . Colfer had no previous professional experience , but reminded Ryan of the character of Kurt from The Sound of Music , and was thus cast as Kurt Hummel . He originally auditioned for Artie with the song " Mr. Cellophane " , however Murphy was so impressed by his performance that the role of Kurt was created for him . Colfer commented on his casting : " I 'm so happy to be a part of something that is so new and different and so needed at this time . It 's good to have something positive , especially for kids in small towns , like myself , who need a little pick @-@ me @-@ up . It 's true : You can be famous ? even if there 's no money left in the world . "

Auditioning actors with no theatrical experience were required to prove they could sing and dance as well as act . Mays auditioned with the song " Touch @-@ a , Touch @-@ a , Touch @-@ a , Touch Me " from The Rocky Horror Show , while Monteith initially submitted a tape of himself acting only , and was requested to submit a second , musical tape , in which he sang " a cheesy , ' 80s music @-@ video @-@ style version " of REO Speedwagon 's " Can 't Fight This Feeling " . " Monteith has deemed his casting " spot on " as : " I 'm just like my character . I 've never trained or had any lessons . I can just do it ? with some adjustments , obviously . " McHale came from a boy @-@ band background , having previously been part of the group Not Like Them . He auditioned with the song " Let It Be " and tested alongside Colfer and Ushkowitz . He explained that the diversity of the cast 's backgrounds reflects the range of different musical styles within the show itself : " It 's a mix of everything : classic rock , current stuff , R & B. Even the musical theater stuff is switched up . You won 't always recognize it . " Lynch was originally intended to be a guest star , but became a series regular when a Damon Wayans pilot she was working on for ABC fell through .

= = Reception = =

= = = Ratings = = =

Over the hour of broadcast , the first airing of the episode drew an average of 9 @.@ 619 million US viewers . It began with 12 @.@ 518 million , dropping after the first half @-@ hour from first place in the ratings to third , retaining only 8 @.@ 917 million viewers . The episode ranked fourteenth in the weekly program ratings , and was the fourth most viewed show on the Fox network for the week . It received a 3 @.@ 9 / 7 rating / share in the key adults 18 ? 49 demographic . The director 's cut version of the episode attained 4 @.@ 2 million viewers , and a 1 @.@ 8 / 5 rating / share in the 18 ? 49 demographic . The episode was the nineteenth highest viewed show in Canada for the week of broadcast , with 1 @.@ 04 million viewers . It was watched by 278 @,@ 000 viewers in the United Kingdom , a 1 @.@ 3 % audience share , and by a further 100 @,@ 000 on timeshift , a 0 @.@ 6 % share . The director 's cut was aired on January 11 , 2010 , followed by Showmance , and was watched by 1 @.@ 76 million viewers , becoming the most @-@ watched show on E4 for the week , and the most @-@ watched show on cable for the week .

= = = Awards and nominations = = =

Following the first broadcast of the episode , Glee was nominated for three Teen Choice Awards : Choice TV : Breakout Series , Choice TV : Breakout Star Male (Cory Monteith) and Choice TV : Breakout Star Female (Lea Michele) . Murphy was nominated for the 2009 Directors Guild of America Award for Outstanding Directing of a Comedy Series for his work on the episode . Robert J. Ulrich , Eric Dawson , Carol Kitzer and Jim Carnahan won an Artios Award for casting of a comedy series , Mark Hutman was nominated for the " Single Camera Television Series " Art Directors Guild Award , and David Klotz won a Golden Reel Award for " Best Sound Editing : Short Form Music in Television " for his work on the episode . At the 62nd Primetime Emmy Awards , Murphy , Falchuk

and Brennan were nominated for the " Outstanding Writing for a Comedy Series " award for their work on the episode . Murphy was additionally nominated for the " Outstanding Directing for a Comedy Series " award , and Hutman , Christopher Brown and Barbara Munch were nominated for the " Outstanding Art Direction for a Single @-@ Camera Series " award .

= = = Critical reception = = =

Entertainment Weekly 's Ken Tucker gave the episode an A , posing the question : " Has there ever been a TV show more aptly named than Glee ? It both embodies and inspires exactly that quality . " Glee was the top ranked topic on social networking site Twitter on the night of its initial airing . Alessandra Stanley for the New York Times called the show " blissfully unoriginal in a witty , imaginative way " , saying the characters are " high school archetypes " but noted " a strong satiric pulse that doesn ' t diminish the characters ' identities or dim the showmanship of a talented cast " . The Daily News ' David Hinckley wrote that the show " isn ' t close to perfect " but " has likable characters , a good sense of humor and a reasonably deft touch with music . " He called the pilot episode " not very plausible " but " potentially heartwarming " , writing of the musical choices : " The duet of " You 're the One That I Want " from Grease may be a little obvious , but setting a group dance routine to Amy Winehouse 's " Rehab " shows some inspiration . Whether Glee can hold that note remains a very unanswered question . But it will at least be worth watching to see . " USA Today 's Robert Bianco assessed : " There 's a lot to like here : the exuberance of the musical numbers , the bite to the comedy and the joy of seeing something different . It has casting and tone problems , but it has all summer to fix them . "

The Baltimore Sun 's David Zurawik was critical of the show 's characterization and comedy , but was impressed by the staging of " Don 't Stop Believin ' " , calling it " so elevating and inspirational that it almost redeems all the stereotypes and lame humor that come before . Grit my teeth as I did at how one @-@ dimensionally empty @-@ headed the writing could be , I will still be back for the start of this series in the fall because of its musical punch . " Tom Jicha for The Sun Sentinel similarly claimed of the episode that : " A lively score and appealing performers somewhat compensate for overly familiar characters and plotting " , while Rob Owen for the Pittsburgh Post @-@ Gazette agreed : " It 's the music that makes Glee a gleeful delight . Without the song @-@ and @-@ dance production numbers , this Fox pilot would be just another high @-@ school @-@ set comedy @-@ drama . "

The Chicago Tribune 's Maureen Ryan commented that : " the two biggest musical numbers are tremendously entertaining . They 're shot and performed with verve , and they put to shame those medleys contestants often perform on the Wednesday edition of American Idol " , but again observed : " Whether it will work as a satirical dramedy about the cutthroat social environment of high school is another matter . " Of the principal cast , Ryan said : " Casting Matthew Morrison as Will Schuester [...] was a wise move ; the actor not only has a sweet voice but a hangdog hopefulness that gives a needed anchor to the show 's more satirical elements . Cory Monteith gives quarterback Finn Hudson a jock @-@ ish authority mixed with an appealingly square naivete , and Lea Michele not only has an amazing voice but manages to make her character , spoiled diva Rachel Berry , more than a humorless stereotype . " She was critical , however , of Gilsig as Terri , calling her " the worst thing about Glee " and opining : " As written by Murphy and played by Gilsig , the character is screechy , unfunny and deeply unpleasant . It 's as if Ryan didn 't trust that the audience would get behind Will and the saga of his ragtag glee club and so saw fit to give the teacher the shrewish , nagging wife from hell . "

In contrast , Tom Shales for The Washington Post criticized Morrison as Will , writing : " Morrison is definitely not gleeful and doesn 't seem particularly well equipped to be a high @-@ school impresario ; as pipers go , he 's not even marginally pried . " Shales was more positive regarding Lynch 's performance , and concluded that : " Dramatic tension isn 't exactly plentiful , but pleasingly staged songs and a general aura of retro ingenuousness come through , and seem awfully if fitfully refreshing " . Variety 's Brian Lowry also highlighted acting and characterization issues with the show , writing that : " It 's among the adults , alas ? who are mostly over @-@ the @-@ top buffoons

? where Glee nearly sails off the rails , from Jane Lynch 's tyrannical cheer matron to the salivating football coach , a bit like the Rydell High gang in Grease . " Lowry felt that : " Modest redemption comes from the stammering Emma (Heroes ' Jayma Mays) , who has a clear crush on Will , even though he 's married to his high @-@ school sweetheart . Perhaps to foster a rooting interest (or at least sympathy) for a Will @-@ Emma pairing , said wife (Jessalyn Gilsig) is initially presented as a ditsy shrew . " Mary McNamara for the Los Angeles Times has called Glee : " the first show in a long time that 's just plain full @-@ throttle , no @-@ guilty @-@ pleasure @-@ rationalizations @-@ necessary fun . " She praised Lynch as Sue , writing that " Lynch alone makes Glee worth watching " , and claimed that overall : " The music , though by no means edgy , is energetic with a wide audience appeal , like the show itself .