

= Funeral ( Glee ) =

" Funeral " is the twenty @-@ first episode of the second season of the American musical television series Glee , and the forty @-@ third overall . It first aired May 17 , 2011 on Fox in the United States , and was written by series creator Ryan Murphy and directed by Bradley Buecker . The episode featured Jonathan Groff guest starring as Jesse St. James , who is brought in as a consultant to help the New Directions glee club prepare for the National Show Choir competition . Sue Sylvester 's ( Jane Lynch ) sister Jean ( Robin Trocki ) dies unexpectedly , and the glee club helps Sue plan her funeral .

The episode received a wide range of reviews , from highly enthusiastic to harshly critical . The performances of the five songs covered were generally well @-@ liked , though having four of them arranged as a series of auditions in the middle of the show met with disapproval . All five songs were released as singles , and three of them charted on the Billboard Hot 100 .

Upon its initial airing , this episode was viewed by 8 @.@ 97 million American viewers and garnered a 3 @.@ 6 / 10 Nielsen rating / share in the 18 ? 49 demographic . The total viewership and ratings for this episode were down slightly from the previous episode , " Prom Queen " . Lynch was nominated for an Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Comedy Series at the 63rd Primetime Emmy Awards for her work on the show , and submitted this episode for judging .

= = Plot = =

Will Schuester ( Matthew Morrison ) , director of New Directions , the McKinley High School glee club , hires Jesse St. James ( Jonathan Groff ) ? an alumnus of championship @-@ winning rival glee club Vocal Adrenaline ? as a consultant to help them develop a strategy to win the upcoming Nationals competition . Jesse convinces Will to use Vocal Adrenaline 's methodology , which is to identify the club 's best performer and center the entire performance on that person , and Will decides to hold auditions to determine who will be featured . Santana Lopez ( Naya Rivera ) , Rachel Berry ( Lea Michele ) , Mercedes Jones ( Amber Riley ) and Kurt Hummel ( Chris Colfer ) all audition , with Jesse and Will as judges . Jesse is highly critical of the performances by Santana , Kurt and Mercedes , while he praises his former girlfriend Rachel 's performance . He tells Will that Rachel is the clear winner , which angers the other three . Ultimately , Will decides to ignore Jesse 's advice and instead plans to do for Nationals what brought them victory at the Regionals competition : having the whole group sing original songs .

Cheerleading coach Sue Sylvester ( Jane Lynch ) is deeply upset by the death of her sister , Jean ( Robin Trocki ) . She lashes out by having the glee club 's flight to Nationals in New York City rerouted so it has a layover in war @-@ ravaged Tripoli , and kicks Becky Jackson ( Lauren Potter ) off the Cheerios . Sue allows Finn Hudson ( Cory Monteith ) and Kurt to plan Jean 's funeral and help her sort through Jean 's personal belongings , and agrees to have the glee club to perform at the funeral , as she believes no one will attend otherwise . While going through Jean 's belongings , Finn and Kurt discover that her favorite movie was Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory , and arrange a funeral inspired by the film . At the funeral , an emotional Sue is unable to continue reading her eulogy after a few sentences , and Will reads the remainder for her . The glee club then sings " Pure Imagination " , the theme song of the film . Touched by Will 's support , Sue later tells him that he is a good friend and he has what Jean had and she does not : a pure heart . She says that she will no longer attempt to destroy the glee club , and announces that she is planning to run for the United States House of Representatives . For the first time , she wishes him good luck . Sue also apologizes to Becky , reinstates her as a member of the Cheerios , and tells her she will be captain of the squad in the fall . Sue asks for and receives a hug from Becky .

Finn realizes his true feelings for Rachel during the funeral , and breaks up with Quinn Fabray ( Dianna Agron ) afterward . He later thanks her for not quitting glee club because of their breakup ; Quinn tells him that quitting would have ruined her " big plans " for New York , and refuses to tell him what they are . Finn sees Jesse and Rachel sharing a brief kiss on stage ; after they leave , he brings a flower from behind his back . Will 's ex @-@ wife , Terri ( Jessalyn Gilsig ) , who aided Sue

's earlier plot to sabotage the glee club 's flights , gives Will first @-@ class plane tickets to New York for the entire club , revealing that they were a donation from an airline executive . She tells him she is moving to Miami to start over with her life and to pursue her retail management career , and they say goodbye .

= = Production = =

The episode was written by series co @-@ creator Ryan Murphy and directed by Bradley Buecker . Two months before it aired , Murphy confirmed at PaleyFest 2011 that there was a death planned before the end of the season , but that it would not be recurring character Dave Karofsky , despite rumors that his death would be paving the way for Kurt 's return to McKinley High . Further details were eventually supplied by entertainment reporter Michael Ausiello , who reported on April 19 , 2011 that a " beloved character " would be dying in the " season 's penultimate episode " , and one week later that the character was female . Morrison confirmed in late April that there would indeed be a death , and added : " The episode right before the finale is called ' Funeral ' . We were actually at a funeral home yesterday , shooting all day . It was a very taxing day . " The day the episode aired , Lynch revealed in an interview that Murphy had conferred with her before proceeding with the storyline : " He took me aside at a party and said ' I want your blessing on this before we move forward . ' I said , ' It sounds like a really great storyline . ' It ? s the thing that will break Sue Sylvester ? s heart and get to where she lives . " Lynch was nominated for an Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Comedy Series at the 63rd Primetime Emmy Awards for her work on the show , and submitted " Funeral " to be the episode by which she would be judged .

Groff returns for the second of three consecutive episodes as Jesse . Terri 's colleague Howard Bamboo ( Kent Avenido ) also returns , and makes his only appearance of the second season after having featured in several episodes during the first . Other recurring guest stars in the episode include glee club members Mike Chang ( Harry Shum , Jr . ) , Sam Evans ( Chord Overstreet ) and Lauren Zizes ( Ashley Fink ) , cheerleader Becky Jackson ( Lauren Potter ) , and in an uncredited appearance in a video shown during the funeral scene , Sue 's sister Jean Sylvester ( Robin Trocki ) . Additional guests include Becky 's mother Donna Jackson ( Kari Coleman ) , and Jim Metzler as the Reverend who presides at the funeral .

" Funeral " features cover versions of five songs : " Back to Black " by Amy Winehouse , sung by Rivera ; " Some People " from Gypsy , performed by Colfer ; " Try a Little Tenderness " by Otis Redding , sung by Riley ; " My Man " in the Barbra Streisand version from the film of Funny Girl , performed by Michele ; and " Pure Imagination " from Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory , sung by New Directions .

= = Reception = =

= = = Ratings = = =

" Funeral " was first broadcast on May 17 , 2011 in the United States on Fox . It garnered a 3 @.@ 6 / 10 Nielsen rating / share in the 18 ? 49 demographic , and received 8 @.@ 97 million American viewers during its initial airing , despite airing simultaneously with the NCIS season finale on CBS , The Biggest Loser on NBC , Dancing With the Stars Freestyle Special on ABC , and the One Tree Hill season finale on The CW . The total viewership and ratings for this episode were down slightly from those of the previous episode , " Prom Queen " ? which was watched by 9 @.@ 29 million American viewers and acquired a 3 @.@ 7 / 11 rating / share in the 18 ? 49 demographic upon first airing on television .

The episode 's Canadian broadcast , also on May 17 , 2011 , drew 1 @.@ 58 million viewers . It was the fourteenth most @-@ watched show of the week , and ranked two places higher than the previous week 's " Prom Queen " , even though it drew 13 % fewer viewers than the 1 @.@ 82 million recorded for that episode . In Australia , the episode was watched by 1 @.@ 07 million

viewers on June 8 , 2011 , which made Glee the seventh most @-@ watched show of the night and the twenty @-@ first most @-@ watched for the week . This was up slightly from " Prom Queen " , which attracted 1 @. @ 04 million viewers on June 1 , 2011 , and was the eighth most @-@ watched program of the night and twenty @-@ sixth of the week . In the UK , the episode debuted on June 7 , 2011 , and was watched by 2 @. @ 19 million viewers ( 1 @. @ 76 million on E4 , and 427 @, @ 000 on E4 + 1 ) , which made it the most @-@ watched show on E4 and E4 + 1 for the week , and the most @-@ watched show on cable for the week . This was up slightly over " Prom Queen " , which aired on May 23 , 2011 , and was watched by 2 @. @ 11 million viewers , again the most @-@ watched show on cable for the week .

= = = Critical response = = =

" Funeral " was met with a wide range of reviews , from highly enthusiastic to harshly critical . Lisa Respers France of CNN said it was " one of the best episodes ever " , and MTV 's Aly Semigran called it " authentic " and " one of the very best " of the season if not the series as a whole . Robert Canning of IGN wrote that it was " a great episode that truly showcased the talents of Jane Lynch " and rated it 8 @. @ 5 out of 10 . Rolling Stone 's Erica Futterman said that the episode " felt like a recycled version of things we 've seen previously " and added that the show is " not as entertaining when it 's simply a showcase " . Todd VanDerWerff of The A.V. Club gave the episode a " C " and characterized the funeral scene as " the highlight of an uneven episode " . The Atlantic 's Kevin Fallon wrote , " Killing off Sue 's sister seemed cruel , but ultimately paid off ? it 's too bad the episode completely derailed afterward , dying its own rapid death in turn . " Anthony Benigno of The Faster Times had little good to say , and singled out the writers for doing " such a crappy job " on the penultimate episode of the season .

Lynch as Sue received high praise for her acting . Canning wrote that she " stole the episode " and " perfectly portrayed a woman [ whose ] hard heart was trying terribly not to break , but not being able to stop it . " BuddyTV 's John Kubicek stated , " it 's impossible for me to say that Lynch wasn 't exceptional , because her slow breakdown and attempt to cover @-@ up her emotions was well done and fit perfectly with the character . " Respers France commented that " we got to see the range and complexity of Sue Sylvester " , and Sandra Gonzalez of Entertainment Weekly said that Lynch did an " outstanding job of delivering even the funniest quips with an underlying sense of sadness " . Sue 's characterization in the series was criticized by several reviewers , however . Amy Reiter of The Los Angeles Times stated that the " consistent inconsistency of Sue 's character is wearing thin " , and that " our sense of her fails to advance , wandering endlessly between pure evil and pure love for her sister . " Futterman called the episode a " too @-@ little @-@ too late attempt at redemption for Sue 's poor characterization this season . " VanDerWerff wrote that the episode " feels very self @-@ consciously like a way to just remove her character from the table for the season finale " , that " it feels very self @-@ consciously like an attempt by the show to address the fact that the character doesn 't make any sense " , and criticized the death of Jean : " killing her solely to right a wayward character arc is lazy writing , and no amount of actor commitment can wholly save it . " Fallon described the funeral plot line as " pure , classic Glee : Egregiously random , emotionally manipulative , wholly unnecessary to plot development , and , in the end , deeply moving . "

The secondary plot line , about the auditions for New Directions soloist at Nationals , was roundly criticized . Canning called it a " faux drama " , though he added that Jesse was " a delight to despise " , and VanDerWerff said it was " completely ridiculous to do this with Nationals coming up " in a week 's time , and " constructed almost entirely " to make Jesse a " jerk " . Houston Chronicle 's Bobby Hankinson also hit on the lack of preparation for the upcoming competition and stated that it seemed " like a very bad idea " to be going without a setlist already decided on , much less with songs unwritten . He said the four audition numbers were " awkwardly paced " , though he thought they were " fantastic " ; Reiter said they " stood out like glinting gems in a somewhat muddy episode " . Canning and VanDerWerff also criticized the block of four songs in the middle of the episode which , as VanDerWerff put it , " stops the show cold " . James Poniewozik of Time was unhappy for

another reason altogether : " Having four people stand up and sing solos into a microphone may be music ; but it ain 't a musical . "

Poniewozik wrote of Will 's Broadway plans that " his ambitions , and guilt over them , make a much more believable and compelling conflict than Matthew Morrison has had to convey for much of the season . " VanDerWerff complimented Morrison on his portrayal of Will : " every time the show hands him anything to play that 's something that makes vague sense , he does a good job with it . " Other kudos for the actors were provided by Respers France , who highlighted the " further great acting " seen during " Finn and Quinn 's moment in his truck " , and E ! Online 's Jenna Mullins , who called the scene where Finn and Kurt help Sue with her sister 's room " positively heartbreaking " , and the trio of characters " magnificent " . Although Canning stated that " Terri leaving lacked much punch " , Poniewozik commented that it was " satisfying to see her realized as an adult for once " .

= = = Musical commentary = = =

While the placement of the four solos together in the middle of the episode was questioned , the songs themselves were met with approbation : VanDerWerff called all four " really good performances " . Santana 's rendition of " Back to Black " was declared " spot on " by Futterman , and Raymund Flandez of The Wall Street Journal wrote that it was performed " with raspy sensitivity " , and went " deep into the emotional truth of the song " . Kubicek was less enthusiastic , and called it " pretty good , but nothing groundbreaking or special " , and Semigran called it " decent " . Benigno said that " Rivera 's delivery gives this song its smoldering swagger " and gave it an " A ? " , and Poniewozik praised Rivera as " really impressive " .

" Some People " received adequate to good reviews . Gonzalez missed Kurt 's usual charisma and thought the performance " a bit lackluster " , and Benigno called it " kind of a boring cover " . It received their lowest grades of the show , " B " and " B ? " , respectively . Kubicek stated , " Kurt has a unique voice that sounds positively beautiful with the right melodic song , but this is a terrible song for his style " , and Vanity Fair 's Brett Berk added , after he gave it two out of five stars , that it was " not the best showcase of Kurt 's talents " . Futterman and Reiter referred approvingly to Kurt 's " upper register " , and both Reiter and Respers France said he " ripped it " on his song .

" Try a Little Tenderness " received a stream of bouquets from the critics . Kubicek raved that Mercedes " gave 100 % of what she has to offer , which is pure greatness " , and Respers France said she " stole the night " and was " amazing " . Berk broke his own scale of one to five stars with six stars , and praised " the unstinting instrument that is Mercedes ' voice " . Gonzalez gave it an " A " and called it " pure perfection " , but Benigno was more restrained with a " B + " , and wrote " she hits a little too hard for my taste " and " the vocals ? threaten to engulf the song itself " .

" My Man " was also lauded . Flandez called it " heartstopping " , and Futterman summed up with , " she nails the Funny Girl closer , making it one of Rachel 's top performances on the show " . Berk called it " good singing " and gave it three stars out of five , and Gonzalez gave it an " A ? " . Benigno was more generous with an " A " grade , and said , " even by Lea Michele 's standards , the vocals here are fan @-@ fucking @-@ tastic " . Hankinson agreed : " Rachel truly nailed the most difficult song she 's ever sung . "

The one group number , " Pure Imagination " , received reviews that touched on the song itself as much as the performance . Fallon called it " unsettling yet touching " and Poniewozik described it as " odd but perfect " . Berk , on the other hand , characterized it as " pure dreck " . Benigno felt that while the song was " really quite good " , the " stupidity of the scene " it was in detracted from it , resulting in a grade of " B + " , while Gonzalez , when she gave it an " A ? " , said she hadn 't been a " huge fan of the cover " when she heard it before the show aired , but it grew on her in context . Futterman wrote , " The New Directions break into a restrained , tender take on " Pure Imagination " with lush harmonies on the chorus that 's exactly right for the moment . "

= = = Chart history = = =

Only three of the five cover versions debuted on the Billboard Hot 100 : " Pure Imagination "

debuted at number fifty @-@ nine , " Back to Black " at number eighty @-@ two , and " My Man " at number ninety @-@ four . " Pure Imagination " was the only song to make the Billboard Canadian Hot 100 at number eighty @-@ seven .

Of the five songs that were featured in the episode , three were featured on the eighth soundtrack album of the series , Glee : The Music , Volume 6 : " Pure Imagination " , " My Man " , and " Try a Little Tenderness " . The album was released on May 23 , 2011 , and debuted at number four on the US Billboard 200 , selling 80 @,@ 000 copies in its first week , which was the second @-@ lowest opening sales figure for a Glee release next to the extended play Glee : The Music , The Rocky Horror Glee Show , and lower than the 86 @,@ 000 sold by Glee : The Music Presents the Warblers in its first week the previous month . The album was also at number four on the Canadian Album charts .