

= The Substitute ( Glee ) =

" The Substitute " is the seventh episode of the second season of the American television series Glee , and the twenty @-@ ninth episode overall . It was written by Ian Brennan , directed by Ryan Murphy , and premiered on Fox on November 16 , 2010 . The episode guest stars Gwyneth Paltrow as Holly Holliday , a substitute teacher who takes the place of glee club director Will Schuester ( Matthew Morrison ) while he is ill . Cheerleading coach Sue Sylvester ( Jane Lynch ) becomes principal of William McKinley High School , and glee club members Mercedes Jones ( Amber Riley ) and Kurt Hummel ( Chris Colfer ) experience tension in their friendship .

The episode features cover versions of six songs , which received mixed reviews from critics . While the Glee cover of Cee Lo Green 's " Forget You " and mash @-@ up of " Singin ' in the Rain " with Rihanna 's " Umbrella " attracted critical praise and charted both on the Billboard Hot 100 and internationally , the episode 's dance @-@ based performances were criticized for their choreography and strict adherence to the original versions . The episode was watched by 11 @. @ 70 million US viewers , and was the top scripted show among adults aged 18 ? 49 for the week of broadcast .

Paltrow 's guest appearance attracted positive commentary , but the episode 's sub @-@ plots were less well received . Aly Semigran of MTV , Robert Canning of IGN and Entertainment Weekly 's Tim Stack all deemed the episode one of the best of the season . Time 's James Poniewozik felt that it was a relatively subdued , mediocre episode , and Todd VanDerWerff of The A.V. Club found it to be an improvement on the previous two episodes , if not genuinely good . The National Alliance on Mental Illness criticized the episode for its depiction of bipolar disorder . Paltrow won the 2011 Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Guest Actress in a Comedy Series for her performance .

= = Plot = =

Cheerleading coach Sue Sylvester ( Jane Lynch ) is appointed acting principal of William McKinley High School after having Principal Figgins ( Iqbal Theba ) infected with the flu . Glee club director Will Schuester ( Matthew Morrison ) is also infected , and takes time off work to recover . He is cared for by his ex @-@ wife Terri ( Jessalyn Gilsig ) , which leads to them sleeping together .

Glee club co @-@ captain Rachel Berry ( Lea Michele ) attempts to take over for Will , but this results in chaos . At the request of Kurt Hummel ( Chris Colfer ) , club lessons are instead covered by substitute teacher Holly Holliday ( Gwyneth Paltrow ) , whose unconventional methods include discussing Lindsay Lohan 's rehabilitation in Spanish , singing " Conjunction Junction " to her English class , and roleplaying as a bipolar Mary Todd Lincoln for the History class . When Holly first arrives at glee club rehearsal , she impresses the club with her rendition of Cee Lo Green 's " Forget You " . Rachel is annoyed and worries that Holly may be unable to sufficiently prepare them for the upcoming Sectionals competition . Holly later wins over Rachel by duetting with her on " Nowadays / Hot Honey Rag " from Chicago .

Kurt neglects his best friend Mercedes Jones ( Amber Riley ) in favor of his new friend Blaine Anderson ( Darren Criss ) . Mercedes is offended when Kurt tries to set her up on a date with a football player on the basis that they are both black , and feels left out when she accompanies Kurt and Blaine to dinner , where conversation is dominated by gay issues and icons . When Sue begins a healthy eating initiative and declares a ban on " Potater Tots " , Mercedes organizes a student protest and fills the tailpipe of Sue 's car with Tots , causing \$ 17 @, @ 000 worth of damage .

Sue 's initiative proves popular with the students ' parents , and her appointment as principal is made permanent . She fires Will , who is later visited by Holly seeking advice . Holly feels out of her depth as a teacher , having enabled Mercedes ' behavior . She confesses that she originally took her work seriously , until a student ( Lindsay Sims @-@ Lewis ) punched her in the face , prompting her more laid @-@ back approach . Terri arrives while they are talking and is angered by Holly 's presence . Will asks her to leave , telling her that their reunion was a mistake and concluding their relationship for good .

Kurt confronts Mercedes , suggesting that she is substituting food for love and their friendship for a

romantic relationship . Mercedes decides to talk to the student Kurt attempted to set her up with . As she departs , Kurt is approached by school bully Dave Karofsky ( Max Adler ) , who threatens to kill him if Kurt reveals his closeted homosexuality .

At the urging of the glee club members , Sue reinstates Will . He suggests a group performance of " Singin ' in the Rain " , but asks for Holly 's help to modernize it , resulting in a mash @-@ up with Rihanna 's " Umbrella " .

= = Production = =

Paltrow 's Glee appearance marked her first ever scripted @-@ series guest performance . The role of Holly was created for her by series creator Ryan Murphy , a personal friend who suggested that she showcase her vocal and dancing talent ahead of the December 2010 release of the film *Country Strong* , in which Paltrow plays a country singer . Upon announcing her casting in September 2010 , BBC News reported that she would appear in two episodes of the series . E ! Online 's Kristin dos Santos stated that Holly would serve as a love interest for Will , with Murphy later confirming that Holly 's appearance would create a love quadrangle between herself , Will , guidance counselor Emma Pillsbury ( Jayma Mays ) and her boyfriend Carl Howell ( John Stamos ) . However , Fancast later reported that Paltrow 's guest @-@ arc had been reduced to a single episode , and neither Mays nor Stamos appear in " The Substitute " . Post @-@ broadcast , Murphy stated that both he and Paltrow hoped that she would appear on Glee again in the future , depending on the right storyline . In December 2010 , Paltrow confirmed that she would return to the series for another episode at a later date , and in January 2011 , Murphy confirmed her reappearance , this time as a sex education teacher planned for episodes 15 and 16 . Paltrow won the 2011 Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Guest Actress in a Comedy Series for her appearance in " The Substitute " .

" The Substitute " includes a fantasy sequence in which Will hallucinates the club members as kindergarten @-@ aged children . Child actors were hired to portray the characters ' younger selves , including Jake Vaughn and Lauren Boles as a young Finn and Rachel . The episode also features the return of Gilsig , following an absence spanning several episodes . The actress felt that Will 's illness allowed viewers to see the couple with their defences down for the first time , and that the addition of Holly highlighted a double standard in their relationship . She explained that while Terri is not " the most palatable person " , she is at least faithful to Will , while he has " a wandering eye " and treats Terri badly in " The Substitute " . Recurring characters in this episode include glee club members Mike Chang ( Harry Shum , Jr . ) and Sam Evans ( Chord Overstreet ) , Principal Figgins , school bully Dave Karofsky , cheerleader Becky Jackson ( Lauren Potter ) , wrestler Lauren Zizes ( Ashley Fink ) and Kurt 's friend Blaine Anderson .

The episode features cover versions of six songs . Paltrow performs on four , which she recorded in a single afternoon . Her numbers include " Conjunction Junction " from *Schoolhouse Rock !* , and a clean version of Cee Lo Green 's " Fuck You ! " entitled " Forget You " . The producers considered having Paltrow sing a Coldplay song , but decided to save the band 's work for a competition episode . Morrison and Shum , Jr. enact a frame @-@ by @-@ frame recreation of " Make ' Em Laugh " from the musical film *Singin ' in the Rain* . Paltrow and Michele duet on " Nowadays / Hot Honey Rag " from the musical *Chicago* , and the glee club with Morrison and Paltrow perform a mash @-@ up of " Singin ' in the Rain " with " Umbrella " by Rihanna featuring Jay @-@ Z. The staging of " Singin ' in the Rain / Umbrella " required the cast to spend twelve hours filming in a tank of water .

All of the songs performed , with the exception of " Conjunction Junction " , were released as singles , available for download , and " Forget You " is featured on the soundtrack album *Glee : The Music , Volume 4* . " Forget You " and " Singing in the Rain / Umbrella " charted both on the *Billboard Hot 100* and internationally . The former reached number 11 in the US and 12 in Canada , while the latter peaked at number 10 in Ireland . Green 's " Fuck You ! " entered the top ten of the *Hot 100* for the first time following the Glee cover , with sales rising 94 % in a week .

= = Reception = =

= = = Ratings = = =

During its original broadcast , " The Substitute " was watched by 11 @. @ 70 million US viewers . It attained a 5 @. @ 0 / 14 Nielsen rating / share in the 18 ? 49 demographic , making it the top @- @ rated show of the night amongst adults aged 18 ? 49 . In the weekly program rankings , Glee was the top scripted show among adults 18 ? 49 , and placed twentieth in overall viewers . Viewership and ratings both increased from the previous episode , " Never Been Kissed " , which was watched by 10 @. @ 99 million viewers and attained a 4 @. @ 6 / 13 rating / share . In Canada , viewership also improved on " Never Been Kissed " , with " The Substitute " drawing 2 @. @ 29 million viewers and ranking ninth for the week , up from 1 @. @ 97 million and twelfth for the previous episode . In Australia , the episode drew 1 @. @ 06 million viewers , making Glee the seventh most @- @ watched show of the night , and nineteenth of the week . Viewership declined from " Never Been Kissed " , which was watched by 1 @. @ 08 million viewers ; despite this , the series registered a rise from eighth and twenty @- @ seventh in the daily and weekly program rankings respectively . In the UK , the episode was watched by 2 @. @ 55 million viewers ? 2 @. @ 11 million on E4 , and 439 @, @ 000 on E4 + 1 ? becoming the most @- @ watched show on cable for the week .

= = = Critical response = = =

The episode received mixed reviews from critics . Aly Semigran of MTV , Robert Canning of IGN and Entertainment Weekly 's Tim Stack all deemed it one of the best of the season , with Canning rating it an " incredible " 9 @. @ 5 / 10 , and Semigran stating that it contained all of the series ' best elements : " surprising musical numbers , with the right balance of humor and life lessons . " Todd VanDerWerff of The A.V. Club found it to be an improvement on the previous two episodes , writing that if not genuinely good , " The Substitute " at least proved that Glee has not been entirely subsumed by its own hype . Time 's James Poniewozik felt that it was a relatively subdued , mediocre episode , which contained " a collection of good small moments " . Brett Berk of Vanity Fair criticized the focus it placed on the adult characters at the expense of the teenagers and the disregard for continuing plot strands in favor of a celebrity cameo , but concluded that " despite all that , some of it kind of worked . " The National Alliance on Mental Illness ( NAMI ) took exception to this episode , which , it stated , " mocked and trivialized bipolar disorder " during Paltrow 's history classroom scene , in which she role @- @ plays as Mary Todd Lincoln . NAMI encouraged people to contact Murphy and Fox TV to convey their disappointment with the scene .

Paltrow 's guest appearance attracted critical praise . Both Stack and E ! Online 's Kristin dos Santos called it Emmy @- @ worthy , with the former rating it amongst her best ever performances , and the latter stating that Holly received " some of Glee 's best @- @ ever one @- @ liners . VanDerWerff enjoyed her role , and wrote that Holly injected an effortless sense of fun , despite much of her plot being nonsensical . Entertainment Weekly 's Ken Tucker praised Paltrow for being one of the first guest stars to perform well alongside Sue , and wrote that her classroom scenes made the episode " one in which the guest star both stood out and meshed with the cast " . The Atlantic 's Meghan Brown commented that Paltrow " brought a massive spark to what could have been a one @- @ note role " , and her Atlantic co @- @ author Kevin Fallon wrote that her energetic performance saved an episode that might have been " in shambles without her presence " . Canning stated that Paltrow 's casting could have been distracting , but instead she fit the role " seamlessly " , and CNN 's Lisa Respers France compared her performance favorably to Britney Spears 's cameo in the episode " Britney / Brittany " . Several critics stated that they enjoyed Paltrow 's appearance despite experiencing trepidation about it prior to broadcast . Berk found her " surprisingly great " , and Poniewozik ssid that while her casting was somewhat distracting , she was able to make Holly a sympathetic character without overdoing her neediness and commitment @- @ phobia . Jen Chaney of The Washington Post recommended a " lengthy moratorium " on internet criticism of Paltrow ,

suggesting that with her Glee appearance , her " mission to charm the American public may be complete " .

Critics were divided over the Schuester sub @-@ plot . Both Semigran and Poniewozik enjoyed Will 's characterization , with Poniewozik commenting that he became an " identifiable human " again , following a season throughout which his behavior has been erratic and unreliable . In contrast , VanDerWerff criticized the sub @-@ plot for ignoring Will 's culpability in the breakdown of his marriage , and expressed displeasure at his inconsistent characterization , deeming it one of the season 's biggest problems . Stack commented negatively on the return of Terri , finding her dislikeable and unnecessary , as Glee already has a villain in Sue .

The Mercedes storyline attracted criticism . Fallon took offence at Glee 's sole overweight black character turning into a " fried potato @-@ addicted junkie " , and both Berk and Stack commented that while they had hoped for Mercedes to receive a major storyline , they did not want it to be centered on her weight issues . Semigran called it " rather disposable " but appreciated the " silliness and levity " it introduced , and Respers France noted that she did not mind the storyline itself , but disliked Kurt lecturing his supposed best friend . VanDerWerff felt that the Tots plot was " one element too many " in what could have been a " pretty potent emotional storyline " , but praised the performances by Colfer and Riley . Stack appreciated their dinner with Blaine , finding it representative of what he enjoys about the show , commenting : " Last week , Kurt 's sexuality was the central emotional storyline of the episode , and this week it was played for laughs . Kurt 's character has to walk that fine line between being a role model and becoming too saintly . I think the writers are navigating that tightrope quite , quite well . "

= = = = Music = = = =

Musical performances also received mixed reviews . Anthony Benigno of the Daily News gave " Conjunction Junction " a grade of " A " ; he noted that ordinarily he would have declined to review it due to its short length , but said " what a glorious ten seconds it is " . Benigno and Poniewozik criticized the sanitization of " Forget You " , but while the latter found it inferior to the original version , the former preferred Paltrow 's deeper voice and graded the song " A " . Rolling Stone 's Erica Futterman felt the censorship of the song did not adversely affect its success , and deemed Paltrow 's rendition " charming and sassy " . Megan Vick of Billboard called it " the most exciting number " of the episode , and Stack went further in his praise : he bestowed a grade of " A + " and lauded it as " one of the most memorable and energetic Glee performances ever , thanks in no small part to Paltrow " . Green told MTV that he was flattered by the cover , particularly as he was not aware Paltrow would perform it when granting Glee clearance . He called her performance " great " , and commented that he had not been aware she was such an accomplished vocalist .

Benigno and Stack praised the choreography of " Make ' Em Laugh " , but both graded it lower than " Forget You " , at a " B " and " B + " respectively . Futterman called the recreation an " impressive feat " , but likened it to hallucinatory Britney Spears covers in the episode " Britney / Brittany " in that it " stands alone better than it fits into the plot . " Vick was critical of the performance , observing that Glee covers from musicals often introduce classic songs to viewers with a modern twist , an element which was absent in " Make ' Em Laugh " . The Chicago cover also left some critics wanting , and Futterman , The Wall Street Journal 's Raymund Flandez and The Atlantic 's Patrick Burns all found its choreography lacking . Fallon suggested that Glee should be wary of overusing recreations , having already done so in " The Power of Madonna " , " Britney / Brittany " and " The Rocky Horror Glee Show " , and VanDerWerff criticized the performances as " outright plagiarism , not homage " .

Benigno and Futterman compared " Singin ' in the Rain / Umbrella " favorably to mash @-@ ups performed in the preceding episode . Benigno graded it " B " , though he said that by using " Singin ' in the Rain " as the chorus , the song lacked catharsis , a sentiment echoed by Flandez , who praised the costumes , props and staging , but wished the rendition had had more " bite " and " attitude " . Futterman described it as a " buoyant and catchy homage to the old and the new [ that ] perfectly captures Glee 's musical spirit " . In contrast , Vick felt the song could not compare to the previous episode 's mash @-@ ups . She deemed the staging implausible , questioning how a glee

club in financial difficulty could afford elaborate water features for a rehearsal number . Stack was willing to overlook such improbability ; he wrote that he loved the mash @-@ up and graded it an " A ? " . Amy Reiter of the Los Angeles Times appreciated the choreography and the manner in which " Paltrow 's sassiness undercuts [ Morrison 's ] overripe sweetness " , and named it potentially her favorite group number of the season .