

= Dream On ( Glee ) =

" Dream On " is the nineteenth episode of the American television series Glee . The episode premiered on the Fox network on May 18 , 2010 . It was directed by Joss Whedon and written by series creator Brad Falchuk . Neil Patrick Harris guest @-@ stars as former glee club star Bryan Ryan . Working as a school board auditor , he threatens to cut the glee club out of the budget , bitter at never having attained his own show @-@ business dreams . Rachel ( Lea Michele ) attempts to find her birth mother , and Artie ( Kevin McHale ) struggles with his desire to walk . The episode title is a reference to Aerosmith 's song " Dream On " , also performed during the episode .

The episode features cover versions of seven songs , four of which were released as singles , available for digital download , and three of which are included on the soundtrack album Glee : The Music , Volume 3 Showstoppers . " Dream On " was watched by 11 @.@ 59 million American viewers and received generally positive reviews from critics . Maureen Ryan of the Chicago Tribune , Bobby Hankinson of the Houston Chronicle , Gerrick . D Kennedy of the Los Angeles Times and Todd VanDerWerff of The A.V. Club all deemed it one of the best episodes of the season , while Aly Semigran of MTV , Entertainment Weekly 's Tim Stack and Raymund Flandez of The Wall Street Journal praised the musical performances . Blair Baldwin of Zap2it in contrast felt that the songs were inconsistent , and while Harris ' appearance was generally well received , Eric Goldman of IGN felt that his storyline was lacking in impact .

= = Plot = =

Bryan Ryan ( Neil Patrick Harris ) , a former McKinley High glee club member , arrives as an auditor from the school board . He speaks to the glee club , asking everyone to write their biggest dream on a piece of paper . He then takes Artie 's ( Kevin McHale ) paper and tosses it into the trash , making a point that their dreams will never come true . Having failed to realize his own dreams , he intends to cut the glee club . Glee club director Will Schuester ( Matthew Morrison ) convinces him that it is not too late to pursue his dreams and sings " Piano Man " with him . They both audition for the role of Jean Valjean in the local production of Les Misérables , singing " Dream On " as a duet . Bryan decides not to cut the glee club , and even presents them with new costumes and sheet music , but changes his mind when cheerleading coach Sue Sylvester ( Jane Lynch ) announces that Will landed the lead role . Will gives up his role in Les Misérables to Bryan in order to save the glee club .

Rachel ( Lea Michele ) confides in Jesse ( Jonathan Groff ) of her lifelong dream to discover the identity of her mother . While they are searching through boxes of records from her basement , Jesse takes a cassette tape from his jacket and pretends that it came from the box . The tape is labeled as a message from mother to daughter . Rachel refuses to listen to the tape , stating that she is not ready . Jesse later meets with Shelby Corcoran ( Idina Menzel ) , the coach of Vocal Adrenaline , who reveals that she is Rachel 's biological mother , but a contractual agreement with Rachel 's two fathers prevents her from meeting with Rachel until Rachel is 18 . Jesse reveals that though he had " befriended " Rachel just to get more acting practice , he had actually started liking her . She implores Jesse to convince Rachel to listen to the tape . Back at Rachel 's house , Jesse starts the tape playing as Rachel enters her bedroom , then leaves her to listen to it . On the tape , Shelby sings " I Dreamed a Dream " , leading to a duet with Rachel in a dream sequence , ending with Rachel back in her room in tears .

After Bryan 's discouraging speech , Tina ( Jenna Ushkowitz ) retrieves Artie 's paper from the trash and learns that his biggest dream is to become a dancer . Tina would like to dance with Artie , but he falls off his crutches when he tries to stand up from his wheelchair . Tina comforts Artie by showing him some of the latest research in spinal cord injury treatments . While waiting for Tina to buy pretzels at the mall , Artie fantasizes about being able to stand up from his wheelchair and dances to " The Safety Dance " in a flash mob dream sequence . He later asks guidance counsellor Emma Pillsbury ( Jayma Mays ) for advice on how to cope with the possibility of walking again in light of the new research , but is disappointed when Emma tells him that such treatments may not

become available for a long time . Tina continues to offer to dance with him but he declines , insisting that she choose another partner but agreeing to sing during the dance . Tina chooses Mike ( Harry Shum , Jr . ) as her dance partner as Artie leads the glee club into " Dream a Little Dream of Me " .

= = Production = =

" Dream On " was filmed in March 2010 . In October 2009 , Michael Ausiello of Entertainment Weekly reported that 20th Century Fox , the studio behind Glee , had approached Joss Whedon about directing an episode during the show 's first season . Series creator Ryan Murphy is a fan of Whedon 's work , and praised the musical episode of his series Buffy the Vampire Slayer , commenting : " Joss directed one of the great musical episodes in the history of television on Buffy , so this is a great , if unexpected , fit . I 'm thrilled he 'll be loaning us his fantastic groundbreaking talent . " Whedon deemed Glee his favorite television show , but downplayed his influence over the episode . Asked by Ileana Rudolph of TV Guide whether the episode would feature songs from Buffy , or his 2008 musical Dr. Horrible 's Sing @-@ Along Blog , Whedon replied : " I would have to say a resonant ' no way . ' The episode isn 't about me . It 's the next episode of Glee . Hopefully my hands will be invisible on the show . " Whedon felt that his job was to be anonymous : " to find the most compelling way to present a story without calling attention to himself . " He acknowledged his proclivity for killing off fans ' favorite characters , jesting that he planned to murder Principal Figgins ( Iqbal Theba ) .

Whedon feels the episode 's title is pertinent to the storylines , explaining that the aim was to examine the desires at the core of the central characters , including Will 's desire to perform , Rachel 's desire to find her biological mother and Artie 's desire to walk again . He stated : " I was really lucky because there 's a real phonetic coherence of the episode that brought them all together on an emotional level . For me , it was just a question that they dovetailed and didn 't feel random and you understood why these three stories were all in the same show . "

Kristin Dos Santos of E ! Online commented on Whedon 's tendency to work repeatedly with the same actors , and hoped that Dr. Horrible star Neil Patrick Harris might appear in the episode . Four months later , in February 2010 , Dos Santos reported that Harris had signed a contract to appear on Glee . Murphy created a role especially for the actor , who received clearance from CBS to appear on Fox for the episode . Ausiello reported that Harris would play Bryan Ryan , a former high school rival of glee club director Will Schuester ( Matthew Morrison ) , now a member of the Lima school board , intent on revenge for never having fulfilled his own potential by cutting the school arts program . Morrison stated that Harris ' character is two years older than Will , and " got all the girls and the good songs " during their high school days .

Recurring characters who appear in " Dream On " are glee club members Santana Lopez ( Naya Rivera ) , Brittany Pierce ( Heather Morris ) , Mike Chang ( Harry Shum , Jr . ) , Matt Rutherford ( Dijon Talton ) and Jesse St. James ( Jonathan Groff ) , astronomy teacher Brenda Castle ( Molly Shannon , appearing alongside her Kath & Kim co @-@ star , John Michael Higgins ) , and Vocal Adrenaline coach Shelby Corcoran ( Idina Menzel ) . The episode features cover versions of seven songs . Will and Bryan duet on " Dream On " by Aerosmith , and " Piano Man " by Billy Joel . Bryan also sings " Daydream Believer " by The Monkees , and a Les Misérables auditionee played by Wendy Worthington sings " Big Spender " from Sweet Charity . Artie performs " The Safety Dance " by Men Without Hats and " Dream a Little Dream of Me " by The Mamas & the Papas , and Shelby and Rachel sing " I Dreamed a Dream " from Les Misérables . Each of the songs except " Piano Man " , " Big Spender " and " Daydream Believer " were released as singles , available for digital download , and " Dream On " , " The Safety Dance " and " I Dreamed a Dream " are also included on the soundtrack album Glee : The Music , Volume 3 ? Showstoppers . " I Dreamed a Dream " charted at number 36 on the Irish Singles Chart .

= = Reception = =

### == Ratings ==

In its original broadcast , " Dream On " was watched by 11 @. @ 59 million American viewers and attained a 4 @. @ 8 / 12 rating / share in the 18 ? 49 demographic . In the United Kingdom , the episode was watched by 1 @. @ 54 million viewers and was the most @- @ watched show of the week on the non @- @ terrestrial channels . In Canada , it was watched by 1 @. @ 86 million viewers , making Glee the tenth most @- @ viewed show of the week . In Australia , Glee drew its highest @- @ ever overnight audience with 1 @. @ 30 million viewers , and won its timeslot in all key demographics . Its consolidated ratings were adjusted up to 1 @. @ 56 million , making " Dream On " the eleventh most @- @ viewed program of the week .

### == Critical response ==

The episode received generally positive reviews from critics . Maureen Ryan of the Chicago Tribune deemed " Dream On " a " highly enjoyable " , " emotionally satisfying " episode , and possibly her favorite since the pilot . Ryan praised Whedon 's directing , writing that it is clear " Whedon really gets what this show is good at when it 's working " . Lee Ferguson of CBC also called " Dream On " one of his favorite episodes of the season , commenting that : " NPH easily outperformed some of the other recent celebs ( including Molly Shannon and Olivia Newton @- @ John ) who 've stopped by the show " , and hoped that his character would return in the future .

CNN 's Lisa Respers France praised both the Artie and Rachel storylines , and wrote that : " Harris ' Bryan Ryan character had it all : timing , great singing and a crazy chemistry with Jane Lynch 's character , Sue Sylvester . " James Poniewozik of Time deemed the episode " exceptional in ways that went beyond guest appearances " , noting : " it was not just good compared with recent episodes , but entertaining , arresting and moving in an unqualified sense . " Bobby Hankinson of the Houston Chronicle called " Dream On " : " one of the best episodes in one of the greatest freshman seasons in recent history " , while Gerrick D. Kennedy of the Los Angeles Times similarly deemed the episode one of the best of " an already stellar freshman season " , and Todd VanDerWerff of The A.V. Club graded the episode " A " and called it " one of the two or three best Glee episodes ever . Hell , it might be THE best . "

Aly Semigran of MTV reviewed the episode 's musical performances positively , calling " Piano Man " the series ' " most realistic musical number " and writing that " nothing even came close to the amount of awesome " that was the " Dream On " duet . Semigran noted that McHale 's songs " proved he was a force to be reckoned with " , and called the " I Dreamed a Dream " duet " goosebump @- @ inducing " , observing : " Pretty sure that 's what musical theater lovers ' dreams are made of . " Raymund Flandez of The Wall Street Journal called Michele and Menzel 's number " one of the most touching duets in the show so far " , stating : " the vulnerability they both convey is stunning in its simplicity and perfection . " Entertainment Weekly 's Tim Stack wrote that the " Piano Man " duet was so good he wished it had been released for download . He rated the songs performed " B + " through to " A " and called " Safety Dance " one of his favorite moments of the episode , deeming it a " joyous , huge performance ? definitely one of the most elaborate numbers the show has done before . "

Blair Baldwin of Zap2it wrote that while the " Dream On " performance began perfectly , Harris " killed the song " with an " ear @- @ wrenching " lead @- @ in to the chorus . Baldwin also highlighted synchronization problems with the " Safety Dance " choreography , and wrote that Shum 's dancing to " Dream a Little Dream " was " terrible " and " sloppy " . Baldwin did enjoy the " I Dreamed a Dream " performance , and hoped for greater consistency in the future . Eric Goldman of IGN rated the episode 7 @. @ 7 / 10 , writing that while he had expected the episode to be " freaking awesome " , instead it was merely " okay " . He felt that the musical numbers " failed to really resonate " , and called Harris ' character " amusing in theory " but ultimately " one @- @ note " and lacking in impact , with a storyline that " fizzled out " . In December 2012 , TV Guide named the " Safety Dance " rendition one of Glee 's best performances .

In August 2010 , the 62nd Primetime Creative Emmys awarded Harris an Emmy ( out of two total ) in the ' Best Guest Actor in a Comedy Series ' category for his " Dream On " appearance and performance .