

= Props (Glee) =

" Props " is the twentieth episode of the third season of the American musical television series Glee , and the sixty @-@ fourth overall . Written and directed by Ian Brennan , the episode is the first of two new episodes that aired back @-@ to @-@ back on Fox in the United States on May 15 , 2012 . It features New Directions preparing a new performance routine for the impending Nationals competition , an extended sequence in which Tina (Jenna Ushkowitz) has a vision of the glee club having swapped roles , including herself as Rachel , and an appearance by special guest star Whoopi Goldberg as NYADA dean Carmen Tibideaux .

The episode received mostly positive reviews overall , though reaction to the musical performances was not as strong . The body @-@ swap sequence was given an enthusiastic reception . The scenes featuring Coach Beiste (Dot @-@ Marie Jones) and Puck (Mark Salling) were also much praised , and in particular the pair 's acting was highlighted . Their performance of the song " Mean " , by contrast , received the most divergent reactions from reviewers , yet it was the one song from the four singles released from the episode to chart in North America , and debuted on the Billboard Canadian Hot 100 .

Upon its initial airing , this episode was viewed by 6 @. @ 09 million American viewers and received a 2 @. @ 5 / 8 Nielsen rating / share in the 18 ? 49 demographic . The total viewership was down significantly from " Prom @-@ asaurus " the week before .

= = Plot = =

When New Directions starts planning a setlist for the impending Nationals competition , Tina (Jenna Ushkowitz) is frustrated that Rachel (Lea Michele) is again singing lead while she remains stuck in the background , and walks out . When Rachel tries to bribe her to withdraw her objections , she tells Rachel that she wants to experience a standing ovation of her own . Tina later falls into a fountain and strikes her head , which causes her to experience a vision in which all of the glee club members have switched roles , ? most notably , she sees herself as Rachel and Rachel as Tina . " Rachel " performs " Because You Loved Me " , and the club gives her a standing ovation . She thanks " Tina " for her support , and " Tina " in turn gives " Rachel " advice on how to salvage her failed NYADA audition . After Tina comes back to reality , she conveys that advice : Rachel should see NYADA dean Carmen Tibideaux (Whoopi Goldberg) in person ? she is conducting a master class at Oberlin . Tina drives Rachel there , but Carmen has been annoyed by Rachel 's repeated messages and says she does not deserve any special attention . Tina disagrees , telling Carmen that although Rachel wants whatever she can get and is " a pain in the ass " , but retorts that Rachel gets it all because she is exceptional . Rachel invites Carmen to attend their Nationals performance , and pledges to audition for NYADA every year until she is accepted .

Sue (Jane Lynch) announces that rival glee club Vocal Adrenaline is the team to beat , thanks mostly to its transgender lead singer Wade " Unique " Adams (Alex Newell) , who has become a media star . Sue decides that New Directions needs a similar gimmick to win and she tells Kurt (Chris Colfer) to dress in drag , but he adamantly refuses . Puck (Mark Salling) dons a dress and volunteers to lead the drag number , but Will vetoes the gimmickry and refocuses the group on its choreography .

Santana (Naya Rivera) , Brittany (Heather Morris) , and Mercedes (Amber Riley) are worried because Coach Beiste (Dot @-@ Marie Jones) has not left her abusive husband , Cooter (Eric Bruskotter) , as she claimed . Beiste tells them that adult relationships are more complex and insists she is fine . Hockey player Rick " The Stick " (Rock Anthony) ridicules Puck for being seen in the dress ; they agree to a fight outside the school . Rick gains the upper hand and Puck is thrown into a dumpster , but he emerges brandishing a switchblade . Coach Beiste breaks up the fight ; in the locker room , Puck tells her that the knife is a fake stage prop , and she retorts that he could have gotten expelled . Puck replies that he is flunking out anyway and a failure , telling her that she does not know what it feels like to be worthless . He breaks down , and Beiste comforts him as he cries . At home , Beiste tells Cooter that she is leaving him , and removes her wedding ring . He asks who

else would love her ; she answers : " Me " . Back at the school auditorium , she joins Puck in singing " Mean " , tells him that she has arranged for him to retake a crucial test to graduate , and promises to help him pass . As the episode ends , Rachel and Tina sing " Flashdance ... What a Feeling " , and board the glee club 's bus to Nationals .

= = Production = =

This episode was written by Glee co @-@ creator Ian Brennan , who also made his directorial debut in this episode . While the first scenes for the episode were shot on March 30 , 2012 , on a day that also saw scenes shot for the previous two episodes , shooting on the episode began in earnest on Monday , April 9 , 2012 , after the completion of the prior episode at the end of the week before . Filming continued into the following week at least through Wednesday , April 18 , 2012 , by which point the next episode had begun shooting in parallel .

The plot has Tina suffering a " mild " head injury ? she falls into a fountain ? that causes her to see an alternate reality version of New Directions : actors playing club members had to swap roles with another actor in the cast . Chris Colfer , who normally plays Kurt Hummel , said that the portrayals " were really hard to nail ? they 're not over the top by any means " . Pairs who are swapping roles include Tina and Rachel , Kurt and Finn (Cory Monteith) , Mike (Harry Shum , Jr .) and Joe (Samuel Larsen) , Puck and Blaine (Darren Criss) , Artie (Kevin McHale) and Santana , Quinn (Dianna Agron) and Sugar (Vanessa Lengies) , Rory (Damian McGinty) and Sam (Chord Overstreet) , Mercedes and Brittany , and Will and Sue .

In addition to those mentioned above , other recurring roles include football coach Shannon Beiste (Jones) and her husband , football recruiter Cooter Menkins (Bruskotter) , and Newell as Vocal Adrenaline lead singer Wade " Unique " Adams . Special guest star Whoopi Goldberg returns for a second appearance as NYADA dean Carmen Tibideaux .

Four songs from the episode were released in the US as singles available for digital download : Taylor Swift 's " Mean " performed by Jones and Salling , Jason Mraz 's " I Won 't Give Up " performed by Michele , Irene Cara 's " Flashdance ... What a Feeling " performed by Michele and Ushkowitz , and Celine Dion 's " Because You Loved Me " performed by Ushkowitz as Rachel . " I Won 't Give Up " is also featured on the soundtrack album Glee : The Music , The Graduation Album . A fifth song , an excerpt of " Always True to You in My Fashion " from Kiss Me Kate , is performed by an unnamed male student (Derek L. Butler) singing in a master class for Carmen ; it was not released as a single .

= = Reception = =

= = = Ratings = = =

" Props " was first broadcast on May 15 , 2012 in the United States on Fox . It aired at the usual time for an episode as the first hour in a two @-@ hour special evening with " Nationals " as the second hour . It received a 2 @. @ 5 / 8 Nielsen rating / share in the 18 ? 49 demographic , and attracted 6 @. @ 09 million American viewers during its initial airing , down from the 2 @. @ 7 / 8 rating / share and 6 @. @ 67 million viewers of the previous episode , " Prom @-@ asaurus " , which was broadcast on May 8 , 2012 . Viewership was down significantly in Canada , which also aired the episode as the first hour of a two @-@ episode special , where 1 @. @ 34 million viewers watched the episode on the same day as its American premiere , down over 18 % . It was the fourteenth most @-@ viewed show of the week , down from thirteenth in the previous week , when 1 @. @ 65 million viewers watched " Prom @-@ asaurus " .

Although the United Kingdom also aired these two episodes together , viewership rose rather than fell . " Props " first aired on May 17 , 2012 , and was watched on Sky 1 by 795 @, @ 000 viewers . This was an increase of nearly 7 % from the previous episode , " Prom @-@ asaurus " , which attracted 744 @, @ 000 viewers when it aired the week before . In Australia , " Props " was

broadcast on May 17 , 2012 , but unlike in the other three countries , it was the only episode broadcast that week . It was watched by 607 @, @ 000 viewers , a decrease of over 4 % from the 636 @, @ 000 viewers for " Prom @-@ asaurus " on May 10 , 2012 . Glee was the seventeenth most @-@ watched program of the night , down from thirteenth the week before .

= = = Critical reception = = =

The episode received mostly positive reviews . John Kubicek of BuddyTV called it " easily my favorite episode of the past two seasons , and quite possibly one of the best episodes the show has ever made " . Damian Holbrook of TV Guide described it and the episode that followed , " Nationals " , as " clever , funny and filled with moments that felt like little gifts to the fans who have hung in there " . Houston Chronicle 's Bobby Hankinson said the " double feature continued the recent hot streak " of episodes , and Michael Slezak of TVLine highlighted this episode 's " script that winkingly acknowledged fan complaints that Ryan Murphy & Co. all too often ignore some of Glee 's original players in favor of new and more @-@ hyped flavors " . The A.V. Club 's Todd VanDerWerff wrote that it showcased writer and director Ian Brennan 's " strengths of acid comedy and sad stories of small @-@ town teenagers who 'll never get anything but to sweat it out on the streets of a runaway American dream " ; he gave " Props " a " B " grade . Rae Votta of Billboard said , " It felt organically Glee , zany but with heart . "

E ! Online 's Jenna Mullins thought the body @-@ swap sequence " breathed fresh ' n ' crazy air into Glee " , and Kubicek called it " the best thing Glee has ever done and will ever do " . Jyll Saskin of MTV said it was " super trippy , makes no sense plot @-@ wise " and was a " totally awesome Glee moment " ; Entertainment Weekly 's Erin Strecker wrote that " the entire cast deserved an MVP award for their completely on @-@ point mannerisms " , and singled out " Finn and Puck all snuggly together , holding hands and dressed up like Kurt and Blaine " . VanDerWerff , however , described it as a " totally odd curiosity that comes out of nowhere " , and said that the car trip taken by Tina and Rachel later in the episode was more successful at showing Tina " what Rachel 's life is like " . Kubicek called the offer of the trip and subsequent drive a " sweet bonding moment " between the pair , and called it " great " that " Tina is the one who saves the day " at the meeting with Carmen , but Chaney wondered why it took Rachel two episodes to regain her drive and aspirations .

The scenes with Puck and Beiste were much praised , as were the actors . While reviewers such as Bell and VanDerWerff criticized the domestic abuse storyline , both were far happier with the way it was ended than with how it had been introduced in " Choke " ? VanDerWerff wrote that " the fact that both Puck and Beiste 's storylines resolve at the same time in the same scene is a nice piece of writing , with some strong acting " . Votta called the pair 's scenes " delightful " and thought they merited a " road trip adventure spin @-@ off " ; Bell said that she " could have seriously watched an hour dedicated to Beiste and Puck " . Slezak highlighted " terrific work " by Jones and Salling , and the scenes with " Beiste holding a sobbing Puck " and confronting Cooter as " pretty remarkable " . Strecker called the latter scene " painful to watch , in the best possible way " , and Bell described Salling 's performance in the former as " truly incredible " .

= = = Music and performances = = =

The musical performances were greeted with somewhat less enthusiasm than the episode as a whole , and given mixed to positive reviews . An example of this was the song 's opening number , " I Won 't Give Up " . Saskin wrote that " Rachel sings Jason Mraz , like everything else , beautifully " , while Rolling Stone 's Erica Futterman credits her for having made a " sappy ballad mildly more tolerable " . Strecker gave the performance a " B + " grade and called it a " classic Berry power ballad " ; " B " grades were given by Slezak and Washington Post 's Jen Chaney , who also noted Rachel 's " vocal power " .

" Because You Loved Me " performed by Tina as Rachel received the most consistently positive reviews , though both Chaney , who gave the song an " A ? " , and Strecker , who graded it a " B + " , stated their belief that the real Rachel would have done it better , and Saskin was more blunt : " We

love you , Tina , but you just can 't belt like Rachel " . Futterman was the most pleased , and wrote : " The richness of her voice removes some of the Lite FM softness embedded in the tune , and it really is great to see Tina get a song that suits her vocal abilities " .

The most divergent views were expressed about Puck and Beiste 's performance of " Mean " . Crystal Ball of Huffington Post asked , " How could you not be moved by their duet in the auditorium ? " E ! Online 's Jenna Mullins called it " one of the highlights of the season " , and Slezak gave it a grade of " A " . Chaney 's " B + " followed her statement that " it was more effective than Swift 's version because I can believe that both Puck and Beiste have had it rough " , and Strecker described it as " lovely and thematically perfect " and gave it a " B " . VanDerWerff said he " could have done without " their duet , and Futterman was even harsher : " it was quite unfortunate " . Houston Chronicle 's Bobby Hankinson wrote that he " sort of liked " how the pair were " simultaneously improving upon and butchering a Taylor Swift song " , and Saskin characterized it as " heartfelt and passionate " .

Futterman said of " Flashdance ... What a Feeling " that " there was a glimmer of old @-@ school Glee in the performance , carefree underdog status that made me smile " . Saskin and Chaney both found the performance lacking ; the former wrote that " something about this version falls flat " , and Chaney gave it a " B ? " and said it " wasn 't as soaring as it could have been " , though " Rachel and Tina 's bonding moment was sweet " and she liked " the way it took us from hour one into hour two and Nationals " . Slezak and Strecker both gave the performance an " A ? " .

= = = Chart history = = =

One of the four singles released for the episode , " Mean " , charted on the Billboard Canadian Hot 100 at number seventy @-@ one , which was higher than either of the two songs that debuted on that chart from " Nationals " in the same week ; none of these songs charted in the US . One other single from the episode , " I Won 't Give Up " , though it did not sell well enough to chart on the US Billboard Hot 100 the week it was released , affected the charting there of the Jason Mraz original , which moved up from thirty @-@ four to twenty @-@ nine on the Hot 100 ; it had previously charted as high as number eight .