

TV Review: Ryan Murphy’s Excellent ‘Glee’ is Unlike Anything on TV

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on May 15, 2009 - 10:39am

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CHICAGO – Much closer to [Alexander Payne](#) [19]’s “[Election](#) [20]” than Disney’s “[High School Musical](#) [9],” the pilot for [Ryan Murphy](#) [17]’s “[Glee](#) [8]” is one of the best of the last several years, a clever blend of satire, pop tunes, laugh-out-loud comedy, and rich, interesting characters. The one thing I kept thinking during the pilot of “Glee”? This is too good for network TV. It will never last.



Television Rating: **5.0/5.0**

“Glee” is about a high school Spanish teacher named Will (Matthew Morrison) who takes over a glee club of misfits including the overzealous Rachel (Lea Michele) and a football star (Cory Monteith) who refuses to be the bully he’s supposed to be.

Will wants to break down a few of the clique walls at his high school and bring joy back to the halls. Music will clearly be a major part of the show, as popular tunes like Amy Winehouse’s “Rehab” and Journey’s “Don’t Stop Believin” are featured in the pilot and creator Ryan Murphy has revealed that current pop tunes will be a regular part of the program.



But this is not a show about singing, dancing, happy teens who learn a lesson at the end of every episode. It’s about expectation, ability, difficult decisions, and finding your passion as a student or as a teacher. And expressing yourself in whatever way you can...and, yes, sometimes that has to be through song.

The entire cast on “Glee” is exceptional with Matthew Morrison, Jayma Mays, Lea Michele, and Cory Monteith standing out and Jane Lynch is always great, but it’s the script for the pilot by Ryan Murphy (“[Nip/Tuck](#) [16],” “Popular”), Brad Falchuk, and Ian Brennan that is truly remarkable. This is sharper, wittier dialogue than most movies I’ve seen this year, much less the sorry state of television in 2009. Do you love

Murphy's "Nip/Tuck"? The pilot for "Glee" is better.

Yes, a lot of the characters at Carmel High fall into cliché and stereotype and I could see that turning off a few viewers, but cliché is an essential element to satire and if the dialogue is clever enough, which it truly is in "Glee," that doesn't matter. The cliché needs to be brought to the forefront to be undermined by something deeper and that's exactly what "Glee" does. It doesn't wallow in stereotypes, it makes them three-dimensional by blowing them up.

What's even more remarkable about the script for the pilot of "Glee" is its emotional impact. Murphy and his co-writers take dialogue that if reprinted might send you into sugar shock, but they make it work. It's a show about creativity, passion, and ambition done both as a satire of high school life but also as an honest ode to pursuing your dreams.



Glee: Members of the Glee Club rehearse in a special preview episode of Glee airing Tuesday, May 19 (9:00-10:00 PM ET/PT) on FOX. Pictured L-R: Jenna Ushkowitz, Chris Colfer, Kevin McHale, Amber Riley and Lea Michele.

Photo credit: Carin Baer/FOX

Full of completely unpredictable twists and turns, "Glee" is simply fantastic. And FOX clearly knows it. Do you think they would be bringing it out for a four-month early "preview" if they didn't?

And "Glee" is clearly a tough sell, the kind of show that is going to need glowing reviews and great word-of-mouth if it wants to survive. Most people checked out at the word "musical" and show with teen casts have a well-deserved stigma. I worry that "Glee" will struggle to find an audience but I find it interesting that Fox is experimenting with different ways to build word-of-mouth, giving their show a well-in-advance preview and allowing fans to download and re-watch it all summer long.

Not only am I anxiously counting the days until "Glee" airs again, this hardened, cynical critic plans to do something that he hasn't done since the earth-shattering first episode of "Lost" - watch a pilot again. "Glee" is that good. The message of "Glee" is that the only life worth living is one that you're really passionate about. I'm really passionate about the quality of this unique, excellent show and I really doubt I'll be alone.

It's impossible to say for sure after seeing only one episode, but if the rest of this series lives up to the potential of the first hour, "Glee" will easily be one of the best shows of 2009-2010.

Check out this great trailer for "Glee" before you go:

'Glee' premieres on FOX on Tuesday, May 19th, 2009 at 8pm CST. It stars Matthew Morrison, Lea Michele, Jessalyn Gilsig, Jane Lynch, Jayma Mays, Cory Monteith, Amber Riley, Chris Colfer, Jenna Ushkowitz, and Kevin McHale. It was created by Ryan Murphy.



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