

TV Review: The Best New Show of the Year is 'Glee'

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on September 9, 2009 - 1:10pm

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CHICAGO – Ryan Murphy's brilliant "Glee" is not only the best new show of the year, it's off to one of the best starts for any series in the last several fall seasons. Much closer to [Alexander Payne](#) [20]'s "[Election](#) [21]" than Disney's "[High School Musical](#) [9]," this is a clever blend of satire, pop tunes, laugh-out-loud comedy, and rich, interesting characters that you simply shouldn't miss.



Television Rating: **5.0/5.0**

Since I first reviewed "Glee," I was worried about two things. One, is the show too quirky and unusual for TV? Could it suffer the same fate as other critically acclaimed shows that never found an audience like "Pushing Daisies" and "Veronica Mars"?

Two, would the quality of the premiere that was so good that Fox aired it four months early maintain itself? The jury is still out on the former but I've seen two more episodes (tonight's "Showmance" and the fourth episode, "Preggers") and can confirm that the quality of the show definitely does not falter.



The members of McKinley High's Glee Club learn a new song and dance to perform in front of the school in "Showmance," the series premiere episode of GLEE airing

Wednesday, Sept. 9 (9:00-10:00 PM ET/PT) on FOX. Pictured L-R: Amber Riley, Chris Colfer, Kevin McHale, Jenna Ushkowitz, Lea Michele and Cory Monteith.
Photo credit: Carin Baer/FOX

The first new episode, “Showmance,” airs tonight on Fox and sets several plotlines in motion that will clearly be a better part of the first season of the show. One of the many great things about the first new episode of the debut season of “Glee” is that it makes clear that music will not merely be one part of the show, but often serve as a commentary on the characters and plotlines instead of just being filler.



Rachel (Lea Michele, L) and Finn (Cory Monteith, R) take direction on a new song and dance routine in “Showmance,” the series premiere episode of GLEE airing Wednesday, Sept. 9 (9:00-10:00 PM ET/PT) on FOX.
Photo credit: Carin Baer/FOX

For example, one of the driving plotlines of the first season of “Glee” will be the relationship between glee club manager Will (Matthew Morrison) and his crazy wife Terri (Jessalyn Gilsig) and the very clever writers of the show use the gang performing “Gold Digger” as not just a musical number but a commentary on Will’s home life. At the same time, a love triangle forms between Rachel (Lea Michelle), Finn (Cory Monteith), and his cheerleader girlfriend Quinn (Dianna Agron) and the episode ends with an amazing, passionate version of “Take a Bow” that makes the emotions feel more genuine than standard TV dialogue ever could.

That’s the amazing thing about “Glee”. It is definitely a satire of high school life but the writers and their incredibly talented cast find a way to make it emotionally resonant at the same time. A lot of credit for the latter should go to the best ensemble for any new show this year. Scene-stealer Jane Lynch is going to get a lot of credit but Michelle, Gilsig, and Jayma Mays are doing excellent work as well.

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 writers of “Glee” are bringing the clichés of the high school TV show genre to the surface so they can be both satirized and made three-dimensional by exposing their untruths.

There have been plenty of shows that started strong and then fell from the peak of their first few episodes. “Glee” shows no signs of doing that. And even if it does, the first three hours that I have seen will stand among the best of 2009.

‘Glee’ premieres on FOX on Wednesday, September 9th, 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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