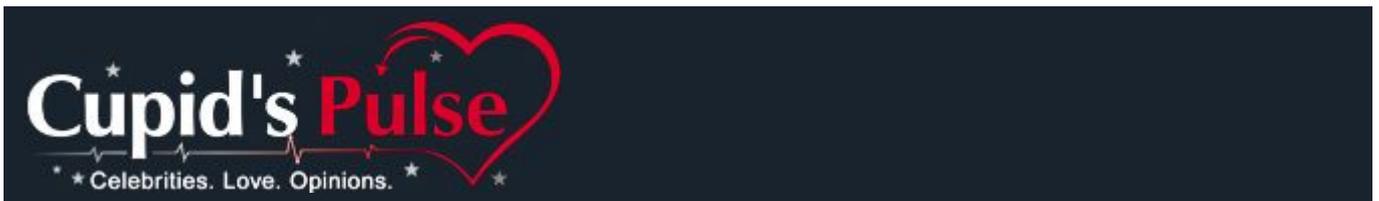


Lea Michele



We first fell in love with this Jersey girl as Rachel Berry on *Glee*, and she continues to impress audiences as her acting and singing career flourishes. Lea Michele was born on August 29, 1986 in the Bronx, New York, but she grew up in Tenafly, New Jersey. She discovered her passion for performing at a young age and was drawn to the New York City theater scene. At eight years old, she landed the role of Cosette in the Broadway production of *Les Misérables*. After her debut, she moved on to the production of *Ragtime* and landed another part in a revival of *Fiddler on the Roof*. She was accepted to New York University's Tisch School of Arts but decided to turn it down to continue to pursue her career. Her big break came in 2006 with *Spring Awakening*, a rock musical in which she played Wendla. After two years, she left the show to move to Los Angeles and seek out movie and television roles.

Her work on *Glee* earned the actress her first Emmy nomination in 2010. She has been praised for several of her singing performances on the show, including her rendition of "Don't Rain on My Parade," originally sung by Barbra Streisand, and the cast's rendition of "Don't Stop Believin'," which became the top downloaded song on iTunes. Besides her work in *Glee*, the star also appeared in the movie *New Year's Eve*, where she played opposite Ashton Kutcher, and voiced Dorothy's character in an animated version of *The Wizard of Oz*.

Prior to appearing together on *Glee*, Lea Michele briefly dated actor Matthew Morrison. In November 2009, she began a two-year [celebrity relationship](#) with Broadway actor Theo Stockman. Michele first met Cory Monteith in October 2008 when he was cast as Finn, her love interest on *Glee*. They became an official couple in November 2011 but kept their relationship and love private until February 2012. The famous couple remained together until Monteith's drug overdose in July 2013. After the news of his tragic death spread, the actress stayed out of the public eye for weeks, finding solace at co-star Kate Hudson's house. During the 2013 Teen Choice Awards, she spoke publicly about Monteith's death for the first time and paid tribute to him in her acceptance speech for one of the event's awards. During the summer of 2014, she began dating model and lifestyle coach Matthew Paetz, who appeared in her music video for "On My Way." The celebrity couple, who have documented their love on Instagram, moved in together in September 2014.