



One on one: Alex Newell

'Glee' cast member Alex Newell heads to Charlotte for annual HRC Gala

Alex Newell, who plays "Wade 'Unique' Adams" on FOX's hit show "Glee" from creator Ryan Murphy, will be lighting up Charlotte audiences on Feb. 23 when he takes the stage at the annual Human Rights Campaign North Carolina Gala at the Charlotte Convention Center. *qnotes* got the opportunity to speak with Newell before his arrival in the Queen City and chatted about his high school days, his passion for music, his experience on "Glee" and his love for RuPaul and her "Drag Race."

qnotes: Thanks for chatting today. We're all so excited about your upcoming visit to Charlotte. Have you ever been to North Carolina before?

Alex Newell: I've been through it. When I was younger, me and my mother would always drive through the east coast to go to Alabama where our family is. We've made stops there, but I was too young to remember.

Are you looking forward to coming to Charlotte? Have any plans while you're in town?
I'm not going to be there that long, but I hope to squeeze in what I can.

How did your appearance at the HRC Gala come about? Are you excited about it?
I've gone to a lot of the HRC events. I go and sing at all the ones I get invited to. I've been to Chicago and San Diego and now Charlotte. It's one of those things I hold near and dear to my heart. Whenever I get the opportunity, I never shoot it down. It's something I always love to go and do.

High school is not that long in the past for you...
I'm 20 now, so just one year ago.

What was your experience like there? Were you out? Were you ever bullied?
I was bullied, in a sense. I was different and the school had never seen anything like me. When people see something different, they tend to shut down and they don't know what to do about it. I'm just so different and have such a large personality and I'm always loud and if I have a problem, I say it. It was easy for people to pick out things to attack me with. But, in my sophomore year, I stopped letting it get to me. I sang a song at mass — I went to a Catholic high school — and I turned from the gay kid at school who was loud and obnoxious to *the* singer of our generation.

I've heard you played football in high school. Is that true?
That's not true, but I saw that, too (laughs).

Were you involved in any sports.
No, not at all. I don't know what sports are. But, I did try out for Pop Warner when I was six, but they rejected me for some reason, even though they aren't supposed to reject anyone.

Really, so music has always been your real passion?
It always has been.

You were accepted to Berklee, but decided to move to Los Angeles, instead?
Yes, I was accepted to Berklee School of Music. I was packing my bags and getting ready to go and I had made friends there already and then I got the phone call that I had to move out here. It was like a slap in the face, but I was like, "Oh my God!"

Is higher education still on your list of things to do?
Of course. I've always wanted to go to college and learn how to be better at what I know how to do already and be the best at it. I might go back and do something different now.

When you first went on "The Glee Project," did you know what character you might be considered for?
Never. But, I always had a dream of a character I would play and it would be Mercedes' brother. But, never, there was never anything I had my mind set on or that I knew Ryan would think of.

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