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## Prince Breaks Out Beatles, Rolling Stones at Oscar Party

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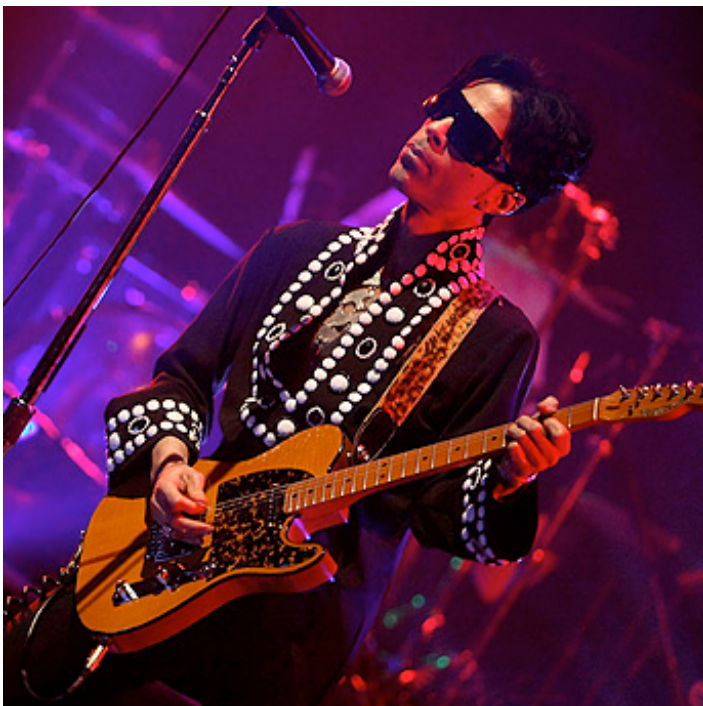


Photo: Ryman/Getty

Last night in L.A., after all the Oscars were handed out, Prince played host to several hundred diehard fans — and

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a few famous names — at his all-night afterparty. The stars certainly had their pick of flashy post-show parties Sunday night — the *Vanity Fair* bash at the Sunset Towers Hotel, Elton John's annual AIDS Foundation soiree at the Pacific Design Center, Madonna's get-together at Guy Oseary's pad, Demi Moore's house party for her closest A-list friends ([check out photos from some of the night's bigger bashes](#)) — but those looking to get their groove on until the wee hours of the morning headed to L.A.'s Avalon Ballroom, where Prince was playing a solid mix of covers and hits.

Unlike Prince's past awards show after-parties, typically held at his Hollywood Hills home and thrown under a strict by-invitation-only policy, this one was open to the plebes among us. At \$100 per person — first come, first serve — the show doubled as a launch-pad for his soon-to-debut Website Lotusflowe3r.com. A few hundred hopefuls had lined up on Hollywood and Vine hours in advance, knowing full well that it would be a very long wait. After all, the Purple One was still sound-checking at 11:30 p.m. and doors had yet to open. Shortly after midnight (and while Prince and select guests were being entertained by an all-girl jazz band upstairs at the Avalon's exclusive lounge Bardot), an orderly crowd made its way inside filling only half of the venue's main floor — not that the post-Oscar folks (some still wearing gowns and tuxedos) were complaining after a full day of elbow rubbing.

Starting close 1:45, the nearly two-hour set kicked off with a tease — the opening progression to "Purple Rain," which brought out the diminutive Prince, strolling onto the stage carrying a blinged-out baton. He soon traded it in for a guitar and, backed by a three-piece band (keyboardist Morris Hayes, drummer Cora Dunham and bassist Joshua Dunham), backup singers Shelby Johnson and Olivia Warfield and killer harmonica player Frederic Yonnet, Prince launched into a string of covers, beginning with The Cars' "Let's Go" and segueing into "Crimson and Clover" mashed with "Wild Thing." "I'm the DJ tonight," he boasted from the stage shortly after dedicating the night to Oscar winner Penélope Cruz and giving a nod to celebrities viewing from the VIP area. Among them: Alicia Keys, Queen Latifah, Angie Harmon, Tyler Perry, Maroon 5's Adam Levine and Oscar nominee Taraji P. Henson.

And while the bars had closed twenty minutes into the performance, Prince's banter kept spirits high. Introducing

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a bellowing rendition of the Beatles' "Come Together," he asked his subjects: "I'm here and you're here, that's all we need to start a party, right?" Indeed, as Prince launched into the Rolling Stones' "Honky Tonk Woman" and then surprised all with a true-to-the-original take on Jimmy Eat World's "The Middle," the dance floor had filled considerably. By the time "Jungle Love" and "Play That Funky Music" came around, the place, as they say, was jumping. Prince closed out the set by asking for volunteers to join him on "The Glamorous Life," the song he wrote for Sheila E., then proceeded to invite audience members to the stage for free-for-all, to which a couple dozen brazen fans eagerly obliged.

"Turn those Blackberries off and dance," Prince chided just after three in the morning, his guitar hero energy not waning in the slightest. The crowd's energy, however, was another story. Still, diehards hoping to hear more from the Prince hit list stuck around until the bitter end, and weren't disappointed to get "I Feel For You" as an encore (at 3:22 in the morning). But he never did come back to "Purple Rain," and with awards season over, it may be a while before we get another chance.

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