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## PRINCE'S OSCAR NIGHT HOUSE PARTY: FUNKIN' 'TIL DAWN

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There are very few artists for whom your Aunt Whittlz will wait in a chilly parking lot for two hours, PopWatchers, but Prince is one of them. To borrow a phrase from the Airborne Toxic Event -- one of the few acts the Purple One didn't cover during tonight's public house party -- it was sometime around midnight when those of us assembled outside Hollywood club Avalon were let in from the cold, and my feet, tortured by high heels since sometime around noon, had lost their will to live. Though I'd later be given a handwritten list that included names like Eliza Dushku, Taye Diggs, Alicia Keys, and Queen Latifah, the only celeb in sight at this lonesome hour was Baron Davis, who plays basketball. And yet I waited, patiently, to be summoned inside. For he is Prince. And he operates on his own time, a time that my colleagues estimated at approximately two hours later than hip-hop time, which means approximately four hours later than the time you and I are expected to maintain. Which is fine. Because he is Prince, and I think he actually might be able

to buy the Greenwich Mean if he wants.

Follow me after the jump for the rundown on the funkier Oscar party of the night, sponsored by [LotusFlow3r.com](#), a new website named for one of the three albums Prince is expected to release this year. Along with his own time zone, Prince is also operating in his own music industry these days, and LotusFlow3r -- note also the paisley-riffic spelling-- will be your home for all things purple in the days to come.

It was 1:39 a.m. when the band at last took the stage, and teased with the opening chords of "Purple Rain" before transforming them into a funky jam anchored -- as was much of the night -- by the extraordinarily hardcore blues-harp blow of Frenchman [Frederic Yonnet](#). At 1:44, the tiny guitar god emerged, clad in what looked to be fancy black pajamas with mirrored embellishments at the neckline and cuffs, twirling a bedazzled cane with panache before picking up his axe for a groove that wandered through Allen Toussaint's "Yes We Can Can" and some very "Also Sprach Zarathustra" *aaaahs* before bizarrely landing in a square-on cover of "Let's Go." Which is a Cars song. Which was pretty much how the whole evening went.

"Turn the lights down, please," Prince asked, after sending a shout-out to Penelope Cruz, Taraji Henson, and Esmeralda Spalding, all of whom were apparently watching from a balcony where your intrepid reporter was not allowed to go. Down on the ground, the vibe was less fancy Oscar soiree, more junior prom. "I'm just gonna let this breathe," he continued. "Y'all all right? This is what we do at house parties. I'm the DJ tonight." And DJ he did -- except, you know, with his guitar -- right into a mashup of "Crimson and Clover" and "Wild Thing," which led to "7," the opening voiceover of which sent scads of party-goers onto the half-full dance floor to tear things up. The bar had closed, but its

tenders remained, silhouetted against the mirrors, nodding their heads coolly to the music. "I'm here, and you're here," Prince said. "That's all we need to have a party, right?"

Indeed, that and a crackling cover of the Beatles' "Come Together" will get a jam going for sure, especially when your simple six-piece band -- bass, keys, drums, harmonica, and two backup singers -- can create a super-sized wall of whatever sound you want, accompanied by the festive circus light show of Cora Dunham's kit. Yet the noise being generated by those musicians was no match for the man of the hour, who wields his instrument with ultimate precision even when breaking down "Let's Go Crazy"-style. Unlike some of our more prominent public noodlers (with their funny man-faces and their histrionic jerking about), it is a joy to watch Prince ply his craft.

He did "Cream," which I wasn't sure he was still allowed to play; he did "Honky Tonk Women"; he did Jimmy Eat World's "The Middle," which was hands down the highlight of the night, especially his take on that rollicking solo in its midst. I thought for a second he was gonna do Poison's "Fallen Angel," but then he stopped, breathed, kicked into "The Bird" and "Jungle Love," and by 3 a.m. he had the most amazing cross-section of the crowd dancing on stage -- a flock of people that, in all sincerity, looked like the outdoor audition scene in *Girls Just Wanna Have Fun*. There was the '80s video dancer, gyrating sweatily in a business suit. There was the tomboy in her white t-shirt and jeans. There were two women in cocktail dresses vibing on each other. There was a dude on crutches. One man was squatting behind Prince, inexplicably beating the floor with a scarf. Sadly, none of them stepped to the mic when their host said, "Okay! Karaoke, y'all! Who knows 'Glamorous Life'?" and so the backup singers were left to carry that weight all alone, but a portly gentleman in a porkpie hat was more than happy to take the verse on "Play That Funky Music." This was when the junior prom became something more like an 8th grade dance. Next to me in the crowd, a woman in a white sweatband was actually vogue-ing.

But all good things must come to an end, or at least a pause, and so Prince left his house party for a bit -- tossing his guitar into the crowd on the way, where it was instantaneously retrieved by a very large roadie -- and the silence of the encore break set in. So, too, did the realization that it was nearing dawn and your Aunt Whittiz had been up n' at 'em Oscar style for nearly 21 hours. I tried to call upon the eye contact I'd made with Brad Pitt on the red carpet to fuel me, but it was no use -- the tank was empty, and everything I was experiencing was colored with that "this would be really cool if it was like 7:30 p.m. right now and I'd actually eaten lunch or dinner" stain, and I just wanted to go home. I waited for Prince to return, to see what he'd kick into for his second set, and when it turned out to be "I Feel 4 You" (which I'd totally danced to when the actual DJ played it like three hours before), I headed weakly for the door. I am a total wuss, PopWatchers.

I'm supposed to maybe get a full set list later, which I will post here if you're interested. Meanwhile, do know that I had a pretty good time during Prince's Coachella show last summer, and tonight's festivities completely and utterly blew that bit out of the water. I cannot recommend strongly enough that the Academy consider this man for next year's Academy Awards show: He obviously loves him some Oscars, loves him some movie stars, and will cover any song that moves. Imagine him taking on whatever ballad closes out the next Pixar hit! Ah, the glory. Plus, he'd be there, and we'd be there... and that's all you need to have a party, right?

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