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AWARDS

# Oscars flashback: When Beyoncé performances did not translate into gold





Jorge Drexler accepts his Oscar for the original song “Al Otro Lado Del Río” from the motion picture “The Motorcycle Diaries.” (Brian van der Brug / Los Angeles Times)

**By Randee Dawn**

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Beyoncé can seemingly do just about anything — but as it turns out, her performing a nominated song on the Oscars telecast is no guarantee of victory. That’s something everyone at L.A.’s Kodak Theatre learned 20 years ago when she sang (or duetted on) three of the five tunes nominated for original song. And the winner? A self-acknowledged “totally unknown person.”

## **Vroom vroom!**

Though in 1963 Robert Goulet performed all the nominated songs at the Oscars, since 1973 priority has primarily gone to the original artists who performed the song in the film. But things went a bit retro in 2005.

The winner, “Al Otro Lado Del Río” (“The Other Side of the River”) came from “The

Motorcycle Diaries,” with music and lyrics by Uruguayan singer Jorge Drexler. But it was performed onstage by Antonio Banderas and Carlos Santana, neither of whom was involved with the film. As the L.A. Times [reported after the ceremony](#), Drexler — a physician who turned musician at 30 — wasn’t well-known enough to sing his own song on the show.

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## MUSIC

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That’s not to say he didn’t perform his song, though. Instead of a speech, Drexler accepted the award from Prince and sang several lines from his song a capella, ending with, “Ciao. Thank you. Gracias. Ciao.”

“I’m very bad at giving speeches, and I just really wanted to sing,” Drexler [told The Times](#) the day after his win. “Since they didn’t let me sing on the show, but they gave me 45 seconds to do something, I just decided to do what I do best.”

The version Banderas and Santana performed of his song was not really his first choice, he said, but was gracious in victory during his interview: “I’m so grateful to the academy for giving us all a lesson in openness. Against all predictions, they voted for a totally unknown person who had no type of lobby behind him and who made no move to even get nominated.”

This was Drexler’s first and only Oscar, and the only Oscar for “Diaries,” which had also been nominated for adapted screenplay. It was the second non-English song to ever win in the category.



MUSIC

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Feb. 3, 2025

### The Bey-list

Drexler wasn't alone, though, in being pushed aside for more ratings-friendly performers. Beyoncé duetted with American Boychoir on “Vois sur ton chemin (Look to Your Path)” from “The Chorus.” The song was written by Bruno Coulais (music) and director Christophe Barratier (lyrics). It was Coulais' first and only nomination; first-timer Barratier's film was nominated in the foreign language film category, though it didn't win. In the movie, it had been sung by Jean-Baptiste Maunier, from the choir Les Petits Chanteurs de Saint-Marc.

Beyoncé went solo on “Learn to Be Lonely” from “The Phantom of the Opera,” written by Andrew Lloyd Webber and Charles Hart. Oscar nominee and “Phantom” actor Minnie Driver performed the song during the closing credits and on the soundtrack. Webber had previously won an Oscar for 1996's “Evita” and was nominated for his work on “Jesus Christ Superstar” in the early 1970s; it was Hart's first and only nomination. The film was also nominated for cinematography and art direction but didn't win either of those trophies .

Beyoncé returned again to duet with Josh Groban on “Believe” from “The Polar Express”; Groban had performed the song in the film and on the soundtrack. It was written by Glen Ballard and Alan Silvestri; this was Ballard's first nomination and Silvestri's second — he had previously been recognized for his original score on 1994's “Forrest Gump.”

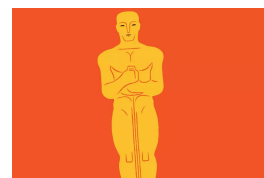
The only nominees who got to perform their own song in their entirety were the

members of Counting Crows. Adam Duritz, Charlie Gillingham, Jim Bogios, David Immerglück, Matt Malley and David Bryson were nominated for their music, while Duritz and Dan Vickrey received recognition for their lyrics. The band performed “Accidentally in Love” from “Shrek 2,” and were all first-time nominees. The film was nominated for animated feature but didn’t win.

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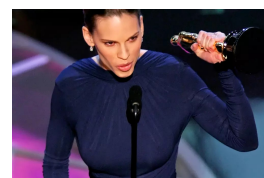
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