

= Listen (Beyoncé song) =

" Listen " is a song recorded by American singer Beyoncé . The song was written by Henry Krieger , Scott Cutler , Anne Preven , and Beyoncé , and produced by The Underdogs , Matt Sullivan and Randy Spendlove for the 2006 musical film Dreamgirls , in which Beyoncé 's character Deena Jones sings the song in an expression of independence from her controlling husband . Columbia Records released " Listen " as the lead single from the Dreamgirls : Music from the Motion Picture soundtrack album on December 5 , 2006 . It additionally appeared as a hidden track on international editions , and on the deluxe edition of Beyoncé 's second solo studio album , B 'Day . The Spanish version of the song , " Oye " , was released on the EP , Irreemplazable , and the Spanish deluxe edition of B 'Day .

One of four new songs written for the feature version of Dreamgirls (originally a 1981 Broadway musical) " Listen " is a soul @-@ R & B song ; its lyrics make reference to tenacity , love , the refusal to defer dreams and finally rise towards fame . Its instrumentation includes bass , drums , guitars , keyboards , percussion , and violins , among others . The song was a critical success . Contemporary music critics complimented the strong and emotional vocals of Beyoncé , and added that the lyrics perfectly elaborate on Deena Jones 's life . " Listen " won Best Original Song at the 2007 Critics ' Choice Awards . It was nominated in the same category at the 2006 International Press Academy Satellite Award , at the 2007 Golden Globe Awards , and at the 2007 Academy Awards .

" Listen " peaked at number 61 on the US Billboard Hot 100 chart and generally peaked inside the top 20 positions in European countries . It fared better in the United Kingdom where it reached number eight thanks to a live duet performance of Beyoncé and Alexandra Burke at The X Factor , where Burke emerged as the winner after singing " Listen " during the finale . The song was also covered by Charice and Melanie Amaro during the finale of the first season of the The X Factor in the US , where she emerged as the winner . Two accompanying music videos were filmed for " Listen " ; the performance version was directed by Diane Martel , and the second one , being Vogue Shoot Version , was directed by Matthew Rolston . " Listen " was also a part of her set list on The Beyoncé Experience (2007) and I Am ... Tour (2009 ? 10) .

= = Context = =

In the film version of Dreamgirls , Beyoncé portrays the character of Deena Jones , a pop singer loosely based on Motown star Diana Ross . The story explores the life of The Dreams (based on The Supremes) , a fictional 1960s group of three female singers : Effie White (Jennifer Hudson) , Deena Jones and Lorrell Robinson (Anika Noni Rose) , whose manager Curtis Taylor (based on Berry Gordy and played by Jamie Foxx) manipulates their personal and professional relationships .

During the second half of the film , Curtis and Deena argue at dinner over Deena 's desire to make her film debut in an urban film instead of the Cleopatra prequel that Curtis is producing . An angry Curtis asserts his creative and psychological control over his wife , informing Deena that he would not let anyone else " handle " her , because , in his words , " no one knows you the way I do " . Curtis tells Deena that he put Deena as lead singer of the Dreams because her voice " had no personality . No depth . Except for what [he] put in there " .

In the context of the film , " Listen " is a 1975 song that Deena records on Rainbow Records , a recording empire established by Curtis . She is actually recording the song in a booth as a track , but the song also reveals Deena 's growing disgust at being considered merely Curtis ' property . Used in the film as a last @-@ minute recording by Deena before leaving Curtis " to find her own voice as a newly independent woman " , co @-@ writer Anne Preven called " Listen " a song which " Deena is exclaiming , ' You don 't know who I am , and I know I do . ' "

= = Production and composition = =

Upon reading the script for Dreamgirls , director Bill Condon felt the second half of the film needed

a song . The " emotional punch " of " And I Am Telling You I 'm Not Going " led him to ask the musical team for Dreamgirls " to create a new and equally moving song to energize the second act " . Led by Henry Krieger , the composer of the original 1981 Broadway musical version of Dreamgirls , " Listen " was written with help from Scott Cutler , Preven , and Beyoncé ; it was one of four songs written for the film version of Dreamgirls . " Listen " was produced by the R & B @-@ pop production duo The Underdogs .

" Listen " is a soul @-@ R & B ballad , which is written in the key of B major , and set in common time at a moderately slow groove of 62 beats per minute . Beyoncé 's vocals range from the note of F ? 3 to G5 . The song 's music takes its instrumentation from the bass , celli , drums , guitars , keyboards , percussion , violas , and violins . According to Sarah Rodman of The Boston Globe , its lyrics make reference to tenacity , love , and the refusal to defer dreams ; Beyoncé , as the female protagonist , sings , " demanding her moment in the sun " . Chuck Taylor of Billboard magazine wrote that Beyoncé shimmers " with evocative emotion " , rising to new heights alongside " a golden melody with spellbinding , rafter @-@ raising production " . The lyrics are written in the traditional verse @-@ chorus form . The song starts with the lines : " Listen to the song here in my heart , a melody I start but can 't complete " . A bridge follows after repeating the pattern and ends in another chorus .

= = Release = =

" Listen " was released as the lead single from the soundtrack album Dreamgirls : Music from the Motion Picture . Beyoncé recorded an introduction to " Listen " entitled " Encore to the Fans " ; the song alongside its introduction is featured on international editions of Beyoncé 's second album B 'Day as a hidden track . A Spanish version titled " Oye " was produced and released on the deluxe edition of B 'Day . On January 29 , 2007 , " Listen " was released as a CD single , containing its album and instrumental versions , in the US . On January 19 , 2007 , it was serviced as a CD Single in the UK , and several European countries , where a remixed produced by Fraser T Smith was later released on March 9 , 2007 .

= = = Reviews = = =

" Listen " scored generally positive reviews from contemporary music critics . A reviewer from Pitchfork Media stated that " when Beyoncé belts out the chorus , the inspiration is real , tangible , and contagious " . Describing the song as a " devastatingly beautiful ballad " , Chuck Taylor of Billboard magazine wrote , " Beyoncé delivers the performance of her career , another defining moment in the brilliant flick [besides Hudson 's ' And I Am Telling You I 'm Not Going '] . " Peter Travers of Rolling Stone noted that the song " adds grit and touching gravity to Deena " . Another reviewer of the same publication called the song " epic " noting that Beyoncé " unfurls the true range of her magnificent voice " . Comparing the song to Andrew Lloyd Webber 's " piano weepie [s] " , a writer of The Observer stated that " Listen " is a " bangers @-@ to @-@ ballads ratio to die for " . Calling the song a " showstopper " , Sarah Rodman of The Boston Globe wrote : " [' Listen '] is a big , soppy ballad that will move some to tears and irk others as a stunning example of art imitating life imitating art without a shred of irony . " Sal Cinquemani of Slant Magazine said that " Listen " will undoubtedly be " the payoff for fans of Beyoncé 's voice who sat through the first [thirty @-@ eight] minutes of [B 'Day] waiting for the cum shot . " By contrast , Jody Rosen 's review for Entertainment Weekly was less impressed , describing " Listen " as " gloopy " and " an inspirational ballad about ' the song in my heart ' , which builds to an enormous schlock @-@ opera climax " .

= = = Awards and nominations = = =

" Listen " was nominated for Best Original Song at the 2006 International Press Academy Satellite Award and in 2007 at the Golden Globe Awards and at the Academy Awards . Also in 2007 , Dreamgirls received seven nominations at the 12th Annual Critics ' Choice Awards , where the film

won four awards , including Best Original Song for " Listen " . At the Academy Awards , Beyoncé was not listed as one of the honorees . She is officially one of the four writers of the song , but as per Academy Rule 16 , only three major contributors of a song are eligible . The executive committee of the organization had determined , during their meeting in December of the same year , that Beyoncé 's contribution was the smallest .

= = = Chart performance = = =

" Listen " entered and left the UK Singles Chart on three separate occasions , In February 2007 , it entered at number 60 and peaked at number 16 on March 3 , 2007 before leaving the chart on March 24 , 2007 . On December 4 , 2008 , Alexandra Burke performed the song in the final 5 week of The X Factor , ' prompting the song to re @-@ enter the UK Singles Chart at number fifty @-@ three , which is a higher position than it reached in the United States on initial release , where it peaked at 61 . In the finale of The X Factor , Burke , who would become the winner , performed " Listen " as a duet with Beyoncé . Accordingly , the song surged from number 60 to number eight on the UK Singles Chart on December 27 , 2008 , selling 28 @,@ 000 copies . The following week , " Listen " fell to number 30 ; it remained in the top 40 for two additional weeks . As of December 2008 , sales of the single stood close to 120 @,@ 000 copies in the United Kingdom alone . " Listen " last re @-@ entered the UK Singles Chart on November 14 , 2009 at number 84 . As of July 2013 , the single has sold around 300 @,@ 000 units in the UK . It peaked at number three in Italy .

= = Music videos = =

Two music videos exist for " Listen " , the first being a performance one and the second being a Vogue Shoot . The first music video premiered on MTV 's Making the Video on November 28 , 2006 . The other music video was released online and through the Dreamgirls DVD special features .

Performance Version

This video , which was directed by Diane Martel , features Beyoncé walking through a performance hall in modern @-@ day street clothes , performing the song . Once she arrives onstage and at the song 's bridge , she appears in costume as Deena , dressed in a 1970s @-@ era gown . Intercut into the video are scenes from Dreamgirls , most of which depict Deena 's relationship with Curtis . These clips , however , were taken out in the director 's cut version of the video ; this version appeared on the B 'Day Anthology Video Album . In her first outfit , Beyoncé is seen wearing a Wonder Woman T @-@ shirt .

Vogue Shoot Version

The music video , directed by Matthew Rolston , features Beyoncé wearing a modern @-@ day tank top , performing the song against a blank background which changes back forth from white and black . Interspersed are some scenes from a photo shoot within her film Dreamgirls . This version appears on the Dreamgirls DVD release . In the director 's cut of this version , Beyoncé is seen posing for a photo shoot not featured in the film in which she wears very outlandish clothing . As the shoot progresses it becomes more and more evident that Beyoncé is not happy with the direction of the shoot and when she is handed a bird to pose with she becomes fed up , walks away and strips down to the black tank top and tights underneath . She then climbs the staircase of the building to the rooftop and finishes singing the song .

= = Live performances = =

Beyoncé first performed " Listen " on the Oprah Winfrey show and received a standing ovation from her cast members , the audience , and left Oprah speechless . Upon the song 's completion , Oprah simply exclaimed , " Wow . " The second performance was at the 49th Grammy Awards held at the Staples Center , in Los Angeles , California , on February 11 , 2007 . MTV News ' staff members coined it as the Best Oscar Performance , writing : " Beyoncé killed it with a passionate performance of ' Listen ' . " Beyoncé later performed " Listen " with Alexandra Burke on December 16 , 2008 , at

the final of the The X Factor , with Burke having performed the song alone two weeks previously . Burke battled to control her emotions when Beyoncé joined her on stage and dissolved into tears when their duet was over . Burke went on to win the competition later that night . Barbara Ellen of The Observer praised Beyoncé 's performance of the song saying that " there seemed something a little overpowering , invulnerable , dare I say , ungenerous , about Beyoncé - almost as if she were a giant slithering diva / snake hell bent on swallowing poor quivering Burke whole . "

In addition , " Listen " was a part of Beyoncé 's set list on The Beyoncé Experience and I Am ... World Tour . On August 5 , 2007 , Beyoncé performed the song at the Madison Square Garden in Manhattan . Jon Pareles of The New York Times praised the performance , stating : " Beyoncé needs no distractions from her singing , which can be airy or brassy , tearful or vicious , rapid @-@ fire with staccato syllables or sustained in curlicued melismas . But she was in constant motion , strutting in costumes . " In Los Angeles , Beyoncé performed the song , dressed in a glittering silver dress with mink fur . It was executed without any backup dancers , and live instrumentation . Jim Farber of Daily News noted that during the performance of the song at the I Am ... World Tour , Beyoncé blended her alter ego Sasha Fierce 's potent and her own pained personality and added that " those two emotions made this Beyoncé 's greatest live moment " When Beyoncé performed the song in Sunrise , Florida , on June 29 , 2009 , she was wearing a glittery gold leotard . As she sang , animated graphics of turntables , faders and other club equipment were projected behind Beyoncé , her dancers and musicians . Beyoncé was accompanied by her two drummers , two keyboardists , a percussionist , a horn section , three imposing backup vocalists called the Mamas and a lead guitarist , Bibi McGill . " Listen " was included as on her live albums The Beyoncé Experience Live (2007) , and the I Am ... World Tour (2010) .

= = Cover versions = =

= = = Glee version = = =

" Listen " was covered by Charice for the American TV show Glee episode " Audition " , which aired on September 21 , 2010 . This version was released as a single , debuted at number 38 on the Billboard Hot 100 , higher than Beyoncé version . It also charted at number 51 on the Canadian Hot 100 chart the same week . Charice 's version also peaked at number 87 on the Australian Singles Chart , at number 33 in Ireland , and at number 51 in the United Kingdom .

= = = Melanie Amaro version = = =

On September 22 , 2011 , an 18 @-@ year @-@ old Melanie Amaro performed " Listen " on the second day of the opening week of first season of the The X Factor in the US . As commented by both Becky Bain of Idolator and Jennifer Still of the British entertainment and media news website Digital Spy , the " powerful [and] emotional " performance " deservedly brought the judges to their feet " . Amaro received a standing ovation from the audience and panel of judges alike . The performance of Amaro also brought Nicole Scherzinger to tears . She said : " This is why I do this . People like you inspire me . You made a believer out of me . Thank you . " Paula Abdul said : " You are the brightest gift , God bless you . " L.A. Reid declared : " Melanie , you are truly amazing . You have the gift , you have the soul , you have the spirit , you have the swagger ... you have the X Factor " while Simon Cowell said : " When I was asked by a lot of people why I was bringing this show to America , it was because I hoped that we were going to find someone like you . "

She also sang " Listen " during the finals on December 21 , 2011 . A writer of Fox News Channel commented that the judges " didn 't want to stop listening to Melanie Amaro " while she was singing a " soaring rendition " of the ballad . Simon Cowell said , " I brought this show to America because I believe some of the greatest singers in the world are from this country , and you just proved that . I think you , based on that performance tonight , to me , should be the winner of ' The X Factor , ' because you 're going to represent this country all over the world . " L.A. Reid also commented , "

That wasn't a \$ 5 million performance . That was a \$ 50 million performance . " Sarah Maloy of Billboard magazine felt that her performance was " as powerfully and passionately [sang] as she did the first time " . Lisa de Moraes of The Washington Post praised Amaro 's rendition , writing that it contained a " determined look on her face , lots of generous spreading of the arms , and plenty of big notes " . Amaro eventually emerged as the winner of the The X Factor , performing this song for the final time .

= = = Dreamgirls stage revival version = = =

A modified version of " Listen " , with new lyrics by Willie Reale , was added to the song score of the 2009 touring revival of the stage version of Dreamgirls . This version presents the song as a duet between the characters Deena and Effie , as Effie explains to Deena that she must leave Curtis and gives her advice on how to find her independence . The revised version of the stage musical , and the new version of " Listen " , debuted at the Apollo Theater in Harlem , New York on November 22 , 2009 .

= = = Other versions = = =

Caressa Cameron , an American model performed the song live during the 2010 Miss America pageant , where she appeared wearing a yellow dress and later during the night won the Miss America title . On September 6 , 2011 , 31 @-@ year @-@ old Marina Davis performed " Listen " during one of the audition episodes of the third season of The X Factor (Australia) . Davis received praise from the judging panel . Ronan Keating said it was an impressive performance and she 's got one of the best voices in the competition , while Mel B confirmed that Davis has definitely got the " X @-@ Factor " . On March 30 , 2012 , Katelin Koprivec sang " Listen " on the Australian talent show , Young Talent Time . Sarah De Bono also sang " Listen " on The Voice (Australia) on May 21 , 2012 . Michelle Griffin of The Age wrote that Bono had " the lungs to carry it off " but " not quite [like] Beyoncé 's commanding delivery " . Her version of the song peaked at number 13 on the Australian Singles Chart . On November 3 , 2012 , Jahméne Douglas performed the song on the ninth series of The X Factor in the UK , receiving praise from the judges of the show . Sarah Fitzmaurice of the Daily Mail wrote that Douglas proved he had an " amazing " voice while he " belted out " the song . Alex Fletcher of Digital Spy also noted that the cover was a " belter " and the singer " bloody well nailed it " . On May 10 , a 12 @-@ year @-@ old girl Michèle won the contest of The Voice Kid in Germany after performing the song on the final show . Sam Bailey sang " Listen " on August 31 , 2013 during the tenth season of The X Factor in the UK . It was described as the highlight of the episode and Bailey received standing ovation from the judges . Louise Saunders from the Daily Mail noted that Bailey 's cover was " touching ... emotional , and flawless " . American Idol runner @-@ up Jessica Sanchez sang " Listen " on March 16 , 2014 during Solaire Resort & Casino 's first anniversary concert . Krisia Todorova covered it in the first song of her audition . Mia Negoveti? (Croatia) covered it in the first song on " Zvezdice " vocal contest and in the Little Big Shots airing on NBC TV in March , 2016 . In April 2016 , Shalyah Fearing , a contestant of The Voice sang " Listen " in her First Live Play @-@ offs .

= = Formats and track listings = =

= = Charts and certifications = =