

A Candle for Michael Newsletter

Issue #129 - January 2024

Sharing MJ news and comment from the World Wide Web



Editorial

The Broadway cast of MJ: the Musical gave us a special treat for Christmas this year - their own energetic performance of the Jackson 5's "Santa Claus is Comin' to Town," which you can watch [here](#). The US tour of the show has been a big hit in LA at Hollywood's Pantages Theatre (see News item opposite) For Aussie MJ fans, the announcement that the show will be coming to Sydney in 2025 was a great Christmas present.

Another treat came from guitar virtuoso Carlos Santana, who appears on Michael's song "Whatever Happens" on the *Invincible* album. Last month, Carlos posted a [video](#) of himself playing "Stranger in Moscow" live on social media. He wrote: "I love and adore Michael Jackson. We should have global Michael Jackson day. Stranger in Moscow - Live San Rafael New Georges."

As we head into 2024, I wish you many happy days ahead and lots and lots of wonderful *Michaeling!*

Kerry Hennigan

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Global MJ Pilgrim ("I'm with the doll")

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Calendar of MJ Events

Ongoing – MJ ONE by Cirque du Soleil, Las Vegas.

Until 3 Mar – Photographic exhibition: [MJ: Stage of Michael Jackson](#) at Earth Plaza, Yokohama, Japan

Until 26 May – [MJ: The Musical](#), New York City

20 Dec – 28 Jan – [MJ the Musical on tour](#) - Hollywood CA at Pantages Theatre (see story opposite)

25 Jan – Major Love Prayer www.majorloveprayer.org

30 Jan – 25 Feb – MJ the Musical on tour – San Francisco CA

27 Feb – 3 Mar – MJ the Musical on tour – Salt Lake City, UT

5 Mar – 10 Mar – MJ the Musical on tour – San Diego, CA

6 Mar – 14 Sep – MJ the Musical UK opens in [London](#)

• MJ: the Musical at Pantages, Hollywood

The US tour of MJ: the Musical reached Hollywood just prior to Christmas and scored some excellent publicity on [KTLA 5 News](#) including high praise for Roman Banks who plays the lead as Dangerous era Michael. The show is playing at Pantages Theatre, where some scenes from Michael's "You Are Not Alone" short film were shot. Siedah Garrett attended opening night with her "Man in the Mirror" and "Keep the Faith" co-writer Glen Ballard and posted a glowing report on [social media](#), noting: "Standing ovations after last night's MJ the Musical opening night in Hollywood!" [Broadway World](#) reported that others attending included Berry Gordy, Susanne de Passe and Kenny Ortega. The same publication subsequently published an excellent review by [Tracey Paleg](#), who wrote: "It's purely Michael, with love. And the entire cast, especially lead Roman Banks (opening night) as Jackson render a spectacular feat of narrative musical theatre like nothing that we've seen in 2023. MJ the Musical is celebratory and deeply triumphant." [Russell Tom](#) also gave the show a glowing review, stating: "MJ" is the most incredible biographical musical ever put on stage. It's more than just a faithful tribute with flashy costumes and imitations set to a recorded soundtrack, it's an emotional concert that strikes a heart-pounding chord. Full of heart, soul, and irresistible charm." Another great review came from Alisa Hayashida in the [South Pasadenaan](#), "A heart and show-stopping, mid-show standing ovation came after the culmination of Thriller ends in Jackson winning 9 Grammys in one night," she writes. "I have never seen this in my life and it certainly felt like the minutes long ovation was just as much for Jackson himself as for the performers on stage. Even 15 years after his death, it's clear he still has super fans with people actually screaming 'We love you, Michael!' from the audience as if they were indeed at a concert." Two of Michael's gloves from the Grammy Museum are on display at the theatre during the show's run (until 28 Jan). See a photograph of them on the theatre's [Facebook](#) page.

• MJ: the Musical heading to Australia in 2025

It's official! MJ: the Musical is headed to Sydney, Australia in 2025. Thus far the only details released are that the show will open at the Lyric Theatre in Pymont in February. To keep up with the news as released, sign up to the show's [official website](#), or [Club Lyric](#). Read Glam Adelaide's article [here](#).

• Stolen MJ Master Tapes pulled from auction

Auction house Gotta Have Rock and Roll has withdrawn twenty five tracks recorded by Michael at the Hit Factory in NYC in 1994 from its winter auction catalogue. MJ Estate lawyer Jon Steinsapir wrote to the auction house on Nov 29 asking them to "cease and desist from any and all efforts to further auction these tapes," and also immediately return them. "Neither Michael Jackson nor his record company, Sony Music Entertainment, ever sold or gave away master tapes from his recording sessions at The Hit Factory (or anywhere else)," the letter advised. "These tapes were unquestionably stolen or otherwise taken without authorization. Accordingly, they are the property of the Jackson Estate." When GHR&R advised it would not comply with the Estate's request, litigator Alex Spiro advised on behalf of the Estate that he was seeking an immediate court restraining order against the auction house. As reported by [Billboard](#), the tracks were removed from the auction listing. The songs were "Oh Love," "Sexy Love," "Doing What My Heart," "New Jelly" and many others.

• Tom Mesereau part of Estate's legal team for trial

With a trial on the Robson and Safechuck claims against the Michael Jackson companies now a possibility, not only have the two claimants hired a new legal team (the same one for both of them, again) but the MJ Estate has now also called in a new team for this case. Tom Mesereau (the same T-Mez who defended Michael back in 2005) and Jennifer L. Keller. Thanks to [@andjustice4some](#) on Twitter for the court document

12 Mar – 17 Mar – MJ the Musical on tour – Tempe, AZ

19 Mar – 31 Mar – MJ the Musical on tour – Costa Mesa, CA

10 Apl – 28 Apl – MJ the Musical on tour – Tucson, AZ

10-24 Apl – MJ: the Musical on tour – Denver CO

30 Apl – 5 May – MJ The Musical on tour – Des Moines, IA

7 – 12 May – MJ: the Musical on tour – Kansas City MO

14-26 May – MJ: the Musical on tour – Minneapolis MN

28 May – 6 Jun – MJ: the Musical on tour – St. Louis, MO

11 – 16 Jun – MJ the Musical on tour – Buffalo, NY

18 Jun – 7 Jul – MJ the Musical on tour – Boston, MA

9 – 14 Jul – MJ: the Musical on tour – Grand Rapids MN

16 Jul – 11 Aug – MJ: the Musical on tour – Cleveland OH

13 Aug – 8 Sep – MJ: the Musical on tour – Washington DC

4 Dec – 32 Jan 2025 – MJ: the Musical opens in Hamburg, Germany. **Tickets now on sale.**

Feb 2025 – MJ: the Musical opens in Sydney, Australia

News of Note

- **Michael's music on seven Billboard charts**

The headline from Forbes on 13 Dec was "Michael Jackson Claims A Top 40 Hit On Seven Billboard Charts This Week." As reported by [Hugh McIntyre](#), "Just weeks after reappearing on several *Billboard* charts with his annual Halloween smash 'Thriller,' Michael Jackson once again finds himself on several rankings." Michael and his brothers appeared on three charts with 'Santa Clause Is Comin' to Town' and 'I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus,' and *The Jackson 5 Christmas Album* reappeared on the Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums chart. Michael also fills two spaces on both the Billboard 200 and Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums charts with *Thriller* still going strong on both. Back in [November](#), *Thriller* had already chalked up 600 weeks on the Billboard 200. Catch up with more chart news [here](#).

- **Digital drama over Michael's 'first' recording**

When a Swedish company called Anotherblock announced on Dec 6 that it would digitally release a Michael Jackson track which it claims was the first time his voice had been put on tape ('Big Boy' – 1967 version) the MJ Estate's lawyer Jon Steinsapir advised the company that the Estate owns all rights to Michael's name, image and likeness, along with his trademarks and use of any of them in marketing, advertising or in the product itself would be a violation of those rights. Anotherblock claims it was digitally releasing the track in partnership with Michael's mother, Katherine, and with a company called Recordpool "which purportedly controls the intellectual property rights to the recording." Reportedly, a portion of the sale revenue was to go to a nonprofit organisation serving Lake County, Indiana, where Gary is located. Mr Steinsapir's letter to Anotherblock advises "We have no information to confirm that the unreleased recordings you are making available are in fact the first time Michael Jackson's 'voice was put on tape' or even that it was the first time he recorded in a studio at all. Indeed, we have good reason to believe that this is not the first time Michael Jackson ever recorded in a studio. Because of that, you are likely misleading the public." Anotherblock's website was offering the song, "including \$25 and \$100 packages and various other goodies," according to Katie Bain on [Billboard](#).

- **Thriller 40 – how a monster dance became iconic**

An article by Jacqui Palumbo and Gabrielle Smith, with animations by Taylor Su, on the [CNN website](#), celebrates the iconic Thriller choreography for last month's 40th anniversary of the release of the short film and premiere of the Thriller 40 documentary on various streaming platforms and cable channels. The article is an excellent visual tribute.

snippets which provide the relevant details and [@MJRepository](#) for further details and explanations.

- **Thriller inspires 'Gargoyle of Gotham'**

Writer/artist Rafael Grampa's DC Black Label comic book series titled *Batman: Gargoyle of Gotham*, has been described as having a proper horror movie vibe. Grampa explains in [Popverse](#) that he was looking to evoke something dramatic - like Michael Jackson's Thriller video. "That music video had a big impact on me at the same time that I met Batman," Grampa says. "Those things kind of blend in my perception of entertainment. That's a big example for what I'm trying to do with *Gargoyle of Gotham*. I'm trying to entertain people in the same way that I was entertained with Thriller." A preview video of his Batman series can be accessed [here](#).

- **Michael played doubles tennis at Diana's house**

Diana Ross' 51-year-old actress daughter Tracee Ellis Ross says her mom wasn't a "partier" who was constantly surrounded by Hollywood celebrities. But... "Don't get me wrong," she said in a recent interview, "Michael Jackson was around. Marvin Gaye called the house all the time. Cher and my dad and mom and Michael played doubles tennis. Andy Warhol photographed me. You know what I mean?" Read the full story [here](#).



- **NBA champ pays tribute to Jordan and Jackson**

Philadelphia 76ers player and NBA Hall of Famer Allen Iverson has revealed his childhood dream was to emulate basketball legend Michael Jordan and pop icon Michael Jackson. Iverson recently posted a tribute to both MJs on his Instagram account, commenting on his old desire to live up to their illustrious careers. "My childhood dream was to be like these two!" Iverson wrote. Read the story as reported in [Sportskeeda](#).

- **Taj Jackson's update on 'Re-Righting History'**

Michael's nephew Taj Jackson has provided an [update](#) on his MJ documentary project, revealing some of the obstacles he has encountered, "from stall tactics, to strong arm intimidation, to backstabbing." Taj writes. "And unfortunately some of this comes directly from so called 'Allies.' I've been offered outside \$\$\$ to either dilute this MJ project, or shelve it. My character has been constantly tested, my dedication challenged and my livelihood threatened. I've personally shouldered way too much privately because I didn't want to put any of this burden on others. And through it all, I still remember that promise I made to my uncle..." Taj is now thinking that he will make the project more transparent in the New Year, which sounds like a great idea for all of us who have supported Taj and his project.

- **Super Bowl MJ Funko Pop! now available**



You can order him now!!! MJ's Super Bowl Funko Pop figure is now available (as of Dec 31) via [Amazon](#) after having been sneak previewed at an expo last year (and impatiently anticipated by some of us... well, me, certainly!) Also available is the Diamond Glitter Funko figure of Michael from the 1984 Grammys, complete with sunglasses, recalling the night he won 8 Grammys in one evening. The product review on [hotstuff4geeks.com](#) has links to buy it online.