

## ‘Michael Jackson’s This is It’ Would Evocatively, Memorably Move Even Rhythmless Zombies

Submitted by [HollywoodChicago.com](http://www.hollywoodchicago.com) [1] on October 28, 2009 - 12:59am

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Rating: **4.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – Even a rhythmless zombie will be able to siphon [Michael Jackson](#) [17]’s prowess now. And this time, *this is it*.

If you thought the king of pop wouldn’t deliver on his latest bout of 50 sold-out worldwide concerts, think again. “Michael Jackson’s This is It” takes you on a raw ride behind the scenes, pulls at all the right heartstrings and unleashes what the late master performer would have done had he not passed much too young.



The poster for the “Michael Jackson’s This is It” concert film.

*Image credit: Sony Pictures*

The 112 minutes of this Michael Jackson legacy – comprised of footage leading up to his very last weeks on Earth – fly by as you try to prevent the closing credits from scrolling too soon. No matter your musical taste, there likely isn’t a tune in this concert film that you won’t recognize (perhaps except for one about MJ’s green love for our “sick” planet).

The documentary and its CD soundtrack feature most of the following hits: “Thriller,” “Man in the Mirror,” “Billie Jean,” “This is It,” “Earth Song,” “Heal the World,” “Black or White,” “Beat It,” “Who is It,” “Threatened,” “Ghosts,” “I Just Can’t Stop Loving You,” “Shake Your Body (Down to the Ground),” “The Love You Save,” “I’ll Be There,” “The Way You Make Me Feel,” “Put the Blame on Mame,” “Human



Nature,” “HIStory,” “Jam,” “Don’t Stop ‘Til You Get Enough,” “Smooth Criminal,” “Speechless,” “Wanna Be Startin’ Somethin’,” “They Don’t Care About Us” and “Bad”.

For the right to whittle these minutes down from more than 100 hours of rehearsal footage, Sony Pictures paid a handsome \$60 million. The film, which opened in 99 countries on Oct. 28, 2009, currently only has a planned two-week run. “Michael Jackson’s This is It” will expand to 110 countries by this weekend and could be extended beyond the two weeks depending on its box-office performance.

The tour was supposed to begin in the summer of 2009 in London. The film, which is produced with the full support of Michael Jackson’s estate, chronicles the lead up to the tour from March through June 2009. Tickets for the currently limited film engagement went on sale on Sept. 27, 2009. The featurette from the film can be watched now below.

Interestingly, only [Michael Jackson’s death on June 25, 2009](#) [18] upgraded the film to the big screen despite an initial plan for it to go straight to DVD.

Director Kenny Ortega (“Michael Jackson Memorial” on TV, “High School Musical 3: Senior Year,” “High School Musical 2,” “High School Musical,” “Hocus Pocus,” “Newsies”) uses the rare screen time not only for one last reminder of how Michael Jackson’s trend-setting stylings remain timeless but also as a unique peak inside the man in this mirror.

“Michael Jackson’s This is It” captures the artist’s perfectionism, love for his fans, adoration for his colleagues and perhaps most surprisingly his loneliness despite a legion of global lovers.

You get the sense that Michael Jackson sometimes tunes into the world that loves him but also fades out to another place where he hears what it’s supposed to sound like, sees what it should look like and feels what it must feel like. Though Michael stands on stage with either no one in the crowd or just his close-knit band of performers, he projects what it would have looked like with his full houses.

The film is paced chronologically in the order in which the tour was rehearsed. The editing room revolved between using high-definition frames as well as lower-quality rehearsal footage. If lower-quality footage was intended to give you the sense that you’re a fly on the wall in this rehearsal space, the same feeling was accomplished with the high-def cameras. It’s unclear why the decision was made to use lower-quality cameras.

The film’s most questionable decision, though, was to avoid the more controversial aspects of his life. While “Michael Jackson’s This is It” is pitched as a behind-the-scenes film and it delivers on that promise, the documentary serves as a pleasure chest to fans without objectively scrutinizing his life.

As would be expected, everyone in this film utterly respects and idolizes Michael Jackson. It’s as if anyone they’ve ever worked with before was practice for this prime time to shine with the best. The design of the film is to help compensate all these performers for the global tour was supposed to be but not meant to be.

While the film could receive criticism for emotionally exploiting a fan’s need for closure through financial gain, such a claim would be unwarranted. This is a story that’s worthy of the big screen and these performers deserve the rewards the film reaps.

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Though “Thriller” was injected with special effects now that weren’t around then, “Smooth Criminal” was designed now to look like it did long ago in Chicago. The film ultimately chooses to pay homage to Michael Jackson’s life – without recognizing his death – and allows the music to make his impact immortal.

*“Michael Jackson’s This is It” from director Kenny Ortega features Michael Jackson along with the following performers: Alex Al, Nick Bass, Michael Bearden, Daniel Celebre, Mekia Cox, Misha Gabriel, Chris Grant, Judith Hill, Dorian Holley, Shannon Holtzapffel, Devin Jamieson, Bashiri Johnson, Charles Klapow, Jonathan Moffett, Tommy Organ, Orianthi, Darryl Phinnessee, Mo’Nique, Dres Reid, Ken Stacey, Tyne Stecklein, Timor Steffens and more.*

The film opened on Oct. 28, 2009. “Michael Jackson’s This is It” which has a running time of 112 minutes, is rated “PG” for some suggestive choreography and scary images.



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