



Thriller: The Musical Life of Michael Jackson

By Nelson George

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Thriller takes us back to a time in 1982 when Michael Jackson was king of the charts, breaking the color barrier on MTV, heralding the age of video, and becoming the ultimate representation of the crossover dreams of Motown's Berry Gordy, who helped launch Jackson's career with the Jackson 5. In this incisive and revealing examination of the making and meaning of *Thriller*, Nelson George illuminates the brilliant creative process (and work ethic) of Jackson and producer Quincy Jones, deftly exploring the larger context of the music, life, and seismic impact of Michael Jackson on three generations. All this from a groundbreaking journalist and cultural critic who was there. George questions whether the phenomenon Jackson became is even possible today. He revisits his early writings on the King of Pop and examines not only the stunning success of *Thriller* but also Jackson as an artist, public figure, and racial enigma—including the details surrounding his death on June 25, 2009.

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Thriller: The Musical Life of Michael Jackson By Nelson George Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From [Booklist](#)

Originally this book was to be about the “enduring influence of Thriller,” but after Jackson's death, George decided to be more comprehensive. The result is a brief if heartfelt assessment of Jackson's career and life. Positing that it is unlikely that Jackson's meteoric rise to pop-music dominance could be repeated today, George reappraises his own earlier writings about Jackson and reinvestigates the incredible work ethic that defined Jackson and producer Quincy Jones in the days when they produced Thriller, Jackson's magnum opus and one of the most successful and influential recordings in pop-music history. As one would expect from George, the narrative goes beyond surface concerns about mass sales to consider how Jackson's superstardom affected black artists' entry into the then-significant realm of MTV playlists, mainstream music culture, and popular culture at large. Although George's analysis and insight are laudable, he mentions the charges of pedophilia that dogged Jackson in his final years only in passing. That omission is keenly felt, but this is still a more than useful retrospective on the man and his music. --Mike Tribby

Review

***Kirkus*, May 2010**

“[A] reverent—but not wholly uncritical—blend of memoir, music journalism and pop sociology to commemorate the untimely death of the controversial but immensely gifted pop icon...A worthy postmortem tribute that admirably avoids both easy sensationalism and knee-jerk sentimentalism.”

***Booklist*, June 2010**

“A brief if heartfelt assessment of Jackson’s career and life...George reappraises his own earlier writings about Jackson and reinvestigates the incredible work ethic that defined Jackson and producer Quincy Jones in the days when they produced Thriller...As one would expect from George, the narrative goes beyond surface concerns...George’s analysis and insight are laudable...A more than useful retrospective on the man and his music.”

***Milwaukee Shepherd Express*, 6/24/10**

“[George] offers many penetrating insights in the space of this succinct biography”

***Newsweek*, 6/25/10**

“*Thriller* is like having a refreshing and fascinating conversation with a man who’s spent far more time thinking about Jackson’s music than his demons.”

About the Author

Nelson George is the award-winning author of a dozen books, including his memoir, *City Kid*, and the classic *Hip-Hop America*. He is also a two-time recipient of the ASCAP Deems Taylor Award. George was born in Brooklyn, where he still lives.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Mildred Parker:

The actual book Thriller: The Musical Life of Michael Jackson has a lot of information on it. So when you read this book you can get a lot of gain. The book was compiled by the very famous author. Tom makes some research just before write this book. This particular book very easy to read you will get the point easily after looking over this book.

Bryce Adams:

Thriller: The Musical Life of Michael Jackson can be one of your basic books that are good idea. We all recommend that straight away because this publication has good vocabulary that may increase your knowledge in words, easy to understand, bit entertaining but nonetheless delivering the information. The article writer giving his/her effort that will put every word into satisfaction arrangement in writing Thriller: The Musical Life of Michael Jackson yet doesn't forget the main place, giving the reader the hottest in addition to based confirm resource information that maybe you can be considered one of it. This great information may drawn you into brand new stage of crucial contemplating.

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