

Michael Jackson: Moscow Case 1993 ★★1/2

(2011) 52 min. DVD: \$14.95. Music Video Distributors (avail. from most distributors).



Egor Trubnikoff's narrow-focus documentary presents the Russian perspective on Michael Jackson's 1993 trip to the former USSR, combining archival commentary from the time with recent remembrances from those who attended his concert or helped to promote it. In addition, the film incorporates footage of Jackson mingling with fans in Moscow, although his music and the performance itself are notably absent (likely due to licensing reasons).

Producer Ruslan Miroshnik recalls that "it was a total mess all around," adding that Jackson's list of tour

requirements was around 600 pages long, surely a rarity in Russia.

Miroshnik also speaks about the Wild West mentality that had taken hold of the city, where contract killings took place on a regular basis (although no violence marred the concert). The show itself must have been strange for Jackson, since high ticket prices and false rumors that he wasn't really coming (or wouldn't actually sing) scared many fans away. It also rained the entire time, so cleaning ladies periodically swept the stage with mops. The most interesting material here revolves around Jackson's visit to an orphanage, where he seems both delighted and alarmed by the children, especially an excitable young man who gives Jackson a big kiss. An English-language narrator offers a simultaneous news-report-style translation of the Russian interviewees, while colored-pencil sketches fill in some visual gaps, and a somewhat incongruous accordion score provides the musical backdrop. A curio for Jackson fans, this is a strong optional purchase. Aud: P. (K. Fennessy)