



## MJ...THE LIFE AND TIMES OF THE KING OF POP 1958-2009

*Rock City/Wienerworld*

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To get the obvious complaint out of the way up front, those expecting a biographical retrospective of Michael Jackson's life ought to look elsewhere, which might make you wonder why this was called "The Life And Times Of The King Of Pop." However, as a document of events after Michael Jackson's death this DVD is worth checking out.

Following a 3 minute 40 second video montage the film begins where Michael Jackson's life ended, with the 911 call and the ambulance arriving at his home. Some of the news reports that flashed around the world then lead into Jermaine Jackson's emotional announcement that his brother, Michael, had died. The film then cuts to footage of Michael Jackson's coffin being wheeled out of Forest Lawn Memorial Center en route to the private family memorial service. It is then that the bulk of this documentary really begins.

Cutting to the Staples Center in LA this film does a good job of preserving some of the official memorial service footage as Berry Gordy, Brooke Shields, and Ervin 'Magic' Johnson make speeches about the departed King Of Pop. Smokey Robinson reads a letter from Nelson Mandela and Stevie Wonder and Usher perform at the ceremony. Of course there is also footage of Michael's family with Jermaine and Marlon Jackson both making emotive speeches while Michael's daughter Paris breaks down as she says how much she loves her father. The fans are not forgotten either as the film shows interviews outside about the memorial tribute and Michael himself. The tributes continue with footage from Madonna's July 4th 2009 opening night, quickly followed by more fan tribute footage including some, quite frankly painful, on-street performances of Michael Jackson recordings.

With this taking up the majority of the documentary's 79 minutes the remainder of the film is a collection of seemingly random footage beginning with Michael Jackson's London announcement of the 'This Is It' tour which sadly never came to pass. There is also footage of Michael engaging in a water fight with Janet Jackson and Macaulay

Culkin at the Neverland ranch back in 1990, some old interview footage - with Michael speaking on rumors including skin bleaching, footage of his Pepsi commercial accident and his child abuse not guilty verdict. Added to this is an amount of film that perhaps offers an insight into the surreal world that Michael was forced to live in as he is chased by the media, constantly filmed, photographed and surrounded by, at times, hysterical fans.

Finishing once more with a snippet of the memorial service footage the film closes with the apt line that "maybe now Michael they will leave you alone." While far from being anything like a complete look at Michael's life this DVD does a decent job of documenting the immediate aftermath of his death with the final 30 minutes of so acting almost as a bonus to bring together some other footage that may not necessarily fit elsewhere. Yes, the final part of the DVD seems somewhat shoe-horned in and yes, the film doesn't begin to show Michael Jackson's "Life And Times," but, bearing that in mind, it is still a decent enough film that deserves a spot in the collections of any avid Jackson fan. Those less concerned with Michael Jackson's demise and its aftermath may perhaps be better suited to look elsewhere...

- Tom Clover