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"THIS IS IT!" - Michael Jackson ONE Premiers! (https://www.CirqueFascination.com/?p=4153)

By Richasi

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Cirque du Soleil and the Estate of Michael Jackson present

MICHAEL JACKSON ONE Story and directed by Jamie King

EXCLUSIVELY AT MANDALAY BAY IN LAS VEGAS WORLD PREMIERE JUNE 29, 2013

Las Vegas, June 29, 2013 – Cirque du Soleil and the Estate of Michael Jackson present tonight the world premiere of Michael Jackson ONE in Las Vegas, a new creation taking residency exclusively at Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino. Directed by Jamie King, this entirely new show is the second creative project to be developed between Cirque du Soleil and The Estate of Michael Jackson after the top grossing Michael Jackson THE IMMORTAL World Tour, currently playing arenas in Asia as it travels the world.

THE SHOW

Michael Jackson ONE is a sonic, tonic fusion of acrobatics, dance and visuals that takes the audience on an immersive journey through the music and spirit of Michael Jackson.

Driven by Michael's powerful, multi-layered music – heard like never before in a riveting, state-of-the-art surround-sound environment – ONE takes the audience through a series of seamless visual and musical tableaux, at the heart of a world that is in turn majestic, playful, magical and heart-warming.

In Michael Jackson ONE, Michael's artistry and spirit are expressed through the vibrant energy of the cast of 63 dancers and performers, underscored by aerial performance, driving acrobatics, and vivid choreographies that use the urban/hip hop idiom as a springboard for exploration.

ONE is a heartfelt tribute to the work, innovative spirit, and legacy of Michael Jackson – the King of Pop, the genius, the visionary, the One.

THE NAME

Michael Jackson believed that all people are unique and equal, regardless of race or culture. His message was one of unity, harmony and hope for a better world. At once evocative and enigmatic, the name Michael Jackson ONE also presents a paradox: Michael was a multifaceted artist who strove to fuse together various musical styles and art forms. It is a fitting title for a unifying journey into the world of the King of Pop, the genius, the visionary, the One.

THE CREATORS

Along with Jamie King-who started his career as a dancer on Michael's Dangerous World Tour and also directed the arena touring show Michael Jackson The Immortal World Tour by Cirque du Soleil-, Michael Jackson ONE will bring together the creative minds behind the Michael Jackson Estate, John Branca and John McClain, and the diverse talents of the following creators):

Who are We?

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- o) Guy Laliberté Creative Guide
- o) Jean-François Bouchard Chief Creative Content
- o) Jamie King Writer and Director
- o) Welby Altidor Director of Creation
- o) Carla Kama Associate Director
- o) Kevin Antunes Musical Director
- o) François Séguin Set and Props Designer
- o) Zaldy Goco Costume Designer
- o) Michel Lemieux Man in the Mirror scene creator
- o) Victor Pilon Man in the Mirror scene creator
- o) Travis Payne Choreographer
- o) Rich and Tone Talauega Choreographers
- o) Parris Goebel Choreographer
- o) Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui Choreographer
- o) Ivan " Flipz " Velez Choreographer
- o) Olivier Simola Choreographer
- o) Rob Bollinger Acrobatic Performance Designer
- o) Germain Guillemot Acrobatic Performance Designer
- o) Ben Potvin Acrobatic Choreographer
- o) Andrea Ziegler Acrobatic Choreographer
- o) Raymond St-Jean Projections Designer
- o) Jimmy Lakatos Projections Designer
- o) David Finn Lighting Designer
- o) Jonathan Deans Sound Designer
- o) Pierre Masse Acrobatic Equipment and Rigging Designer
- o) Nathalie Gagné Makeup Designer
- o) Brian Drader Dramaturge
- o) Manon Beaudoin Characters' Guide
- o) Henry Fong Illustrator

Creators' bios and images are available Cirque's press room: LINK /// < http://goo.gl/pWPX7 >

THE TABLEAUX

The Main Character: Michael Jackson – A living presence in the show through video, whispers, laughter, urging, spoken and projected narrative, screaming, silhouettes, elemental forces, etc. Michael's spirit is guiding the performers and the audience on the journey, culminating with the release from the grip of Mephisto, which leads everyone to reconnect with Michael's spirit and his child-like heart. Michael is also represented through certain of his visual iconography – his iconic glove, hat, shoes and glasses – which are transformed into talismans meant to represent certain qualities possessed by Michael. He is the primary protagonist, our Guide. And through his music, lyrics and words, he is also our narrator.

/// The Vortex – Inspired by the first four verses of Beat ItThe four misfits who are referred to as the Heroes – Clumsy (slackliner), Shy (martial artist), Smarty Pants (juggler), and Sneaky (manipulation specialist) – get sucked into a Vortex after sneaking into the show.

/// Time Tripping - Beat It

Time goes crazy as we cross the metaphoric threshold into a magical world inspired by Michael's imagination. High above the audience, rotating bungees churn to the funk-infused, drum and guitar-driven rhythms of Beat It.

/// Hide & Seek - Leave Me Alone/Tabloid Junkie/Too Bad

Mephisto, a malevolent machine made of radios, microphones, tungsten bulbs, televisions, cameras, and surveillance equipment, makes his first appearance along with the Tabloid Junkies, his dance corps and guards.

/// Lost and Alone - Stranger in Moscow

This scene is the Spanish web lament to loneliness of the Beggar Boy, a character in the song "Stranger in Moscow", while Ngame, the Mother Moon character, watches over.

/// Clumsy and the Shoes - Bad

The sweet but awkward Clumsy learns how to live in his body with the help of Michael's magical shoes. Living up to his nickname at first, his bumbling routine eventually turns into a masterful double slackline act.

/// The Smooth Criminals - Smooth Criminal

Mephisto sends in his elite force, the Smooth Criminals (rhythmic gymnasts), to do battle with the MJ Warriors, Michael's dance corps. The Warriors get down to business – the yin to the Criminals' yang.

/// Human Nature/Michael's Magic Trunk – I'll Be There/Human Nature/Never Can Say Goodbye Memories of Michael surface as the Heroes discover why they're there – the love they share for Michael – as a magical song is set free in physical form through the performance of a fleet-footed, free-styling dancer and contortionist named Wink who literally glides on the stage.

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Guy Laliberte's Poetic

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/// Shy and the Glasses – 2000 Watts/Jam

As she senses Michael's spirit around her, Shy, an introverted young lady, dons Michael's sunglasses, and finds her inner courage. Shy battles Mephisto in a fearless display of martial arts prowess.

/// The Warriors of Peace - They Don't Care About Us

The MJ Warriors perform a striking choreography in unison in a tableau that conveys one of the messages dear to Michael. In the face of war, violence, poverty and strife, we must dare to hope, comfort, dream and believe.

/// Ngame Gives Birth - Planet Earth/Earth Song

Ngame, the Mother Moon Goddess, ushers in a new beginning. During a stunning shadow play act, Michael's poignant vocal performance delivers a raging lament against what the world stands to lose.

/// Our Heroes Regroup - Smile

The self-appointed leader of the ragtag group of Heroes, Smarty Pants finds the magical hat and rediscovers her childlike heart.

/// Smarty Pants & The Hat - Wanna Be Startin' Somethin'

One of Michael's qualities, gracefulness, is learned by Smarty Pants as she joins in a towering hat juggling act as images of giant hats float and bob everywhere on the screen and on the stage.

/// MJ's Girls - The Way You Make Me Feel

The MJ Girls' homage to Michael, and the MJ Boys' homage to the Girls... The dancers all knock each other off their feet in a swagger-meets-sass rivalry that is a nod to the iconic The Way You Make Me Feel short

/// Dirty Diana - Dirty Diana

Dirty Diana – Mephisto's Siren – and the Muse – a conduit for Michael's music – go head to head, leading to a staggering, one-of-a-kind pole dancing act.

/// Sneaky & The Glove - This Place Hotel/Working Day & Night

Sneaky, the little troublemaker, has his glove go rogue in a dazzling display of "hand in glove" manipulation.

/// The Billie Jeans - Billie Jean

Michael's virtuoso moves, and his Warriors dressed in stunning, glowing LED costumes to the driving, electrifying beat of the iconic song.

/// Mephisto's Trap - Scream

Mephisto's primary force and dance corps, the Tabloid Junkies, shape shift into the Werewolf Dogs while the Heroes and the talismans are captured.

/// Mephisto Triumphant - Thriller

Evil forces in the underbelly of Mephisto's world, the Thrillers (dance corps) and the Ghouls (trampoline artists and rhythmic gymnasts) celebrate Mephisto's victory. They are in full thrall, leaping and flipping in a gravity-defying performance that uniquely combines inverted trampoline and trampo-wall.

/// Sneaky & Mephisto Transform - Speechless

The Talismans are reclaimed, and Sneaky lets love into his heart. Mephisto is vanquished at last.

/// Ngame's Tribute To Michael- I Just Can't Stop Loving You Ngame performs her duet with the Star.

/// Michael's spirit is brought to the stage - Man In The Mirror

Michael's energy and spirit are shared with the cast and audience through an illusion that occurs during the moving, scintillating Man In The Mirror.

/// Electric Love Parade - Black or White

Two sides become One. In a group acrobatic and choreographic tableau, the whole cast reunites on the stage, including the Heroes who return in the "Leave Me Alone" rocket.

/// Walk Out - Don't Stop 'Til You Get Enough/Remember The Time/Medley

A final message from Michael – "We're putting love back into the world. To remind the world that love is important. To love each other. We are ONE."

COSTUMES

The Fabric of a Legend

Michael Jackson's visual iconography is firmly entrenched in the minds of his fans. In fact, some of these visual icons – Michael's white glove, penny loafers, fedora hat and shades – are at the very core of the storyline of Michael Jackson ONE and are charged with symbolism and have the force of talismans.

"My creations are all rooted in Michael's world and his songs, and radiate his spirit," says Zaldy Goco, who designed the wardrobe for Michael Jackson THE IMMORTAL World Tour. "My goal was to find ways to make an impression and surprise Michael's fans with my costume designs."

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Light and Dark

The storyline of Michael Jackson ONE inspired Zaldy to group the characters' costumes into two families each with its own distinct look and esthetic: one represents light, Michael's world, while the other represents dark and the world of the character Mephisto, the hero's nemesis. The former is represented by the color white, rainbow colors and light tones, while the latter features black, navy and red. The color red is associated with Mephisto and his minions, including the "Smooth Criminals", the Paparazzi, the Tabloid Junkies and Dirty Diana.

Graphic Look

Zaldy wanted the costumes to have a graphic, Manga-style illustration look and feel. To bring his vision to life, he needed a material with which he could create stiff shapes, yet that was stretchable and flexible in order to free up the artists' movement. He found the perfect material in neoprene, which he used for most of the show's costumes. Neoprene is a synthetic rubber used for a wide range of applications, including sportswear, wetsuits, laptop-computer sleeves, drum practice pads and other waterproof products.

Visual effects

The costumes in Michael Jackson ONE brim with visual effects and illusions of all kinds. For example, the shape-shifting gangster-type characters in the "Smooth Criminal" scene remove their navy blue trench coats, revealing their pinstriped suits underneath. The artists' backside is all white, but when the lights go out, the black light reveals UV drawings all over the artists' backs and faces. The drawings represent dragon tattoos inspired by the real, full-body tattoos traditionally worn by the yakuza, members of Japanese organized crime.

Inflatables were used in the costumes of the characters in the "Tabloid Junkies" scene. During their act, the artists trip a switch in their costume that causes a CO2 (carbon dioxide) explosion in their tiny backpacks. A hood in the shape of a dog's head pops out of the packs and over the artists' head, instantly turning them into dog-like characters.

The artists' costumes in the "I Can't Stop Loving You" and "Billie Jean" scenes are equipped with hundreds of LED lights. The costumes are designed in such a way that the performers disappear completely and the only thing the audience sees is the movement and changing colors of the LED lights.

Costume Close-ups:

- Michael Jackson loved gold, crystals and things that glitter and shine. He was fond of Swarovski crystals, and the use of this material in the show was self-evident. In itself, the "Dirty Diana" costume contains over 7,000 Swarovski crystals.
- The glitter on the costume of the guitarist who plays the
 Muse character a conduit for Michael's music was created
 with the same technique used for one of Michael's costumes in
 the THIS IS IT show: the costume is braided with clear
 pockets filled with Swarovski crystals. With the Muse's
 costume, Zaldy pays tribute to the last ever costume designed
 for Michael Jackson. Her guitar shoots 30-foot streams of
 pyro.
- The material of the trench coats worn by the "Smooth Criminal" characters looks like silk. It is made of a highend French fabric woven from a plastic material that gives the costume a liquid shine. When the rhythmic gymnasts do cartwheels, their coat seem to hang in the air, emphasizing their graceful, swirling motions.
- The capes of the "Tabloid Junkies" characters are lined with tabloid headlines about Michael Jackson in several languages.
- The fedora hats used in the show come from the same maker that made Michael Jackson's fedora hats.
- There are approximately 1,150 costume pieces in the show.

SOUND ENVIRONMENT

Michael Jackson's music spans many genres and has a radiating force that emanated from his focusing power, his unique voice as well as his charisma and energy on stage – a combination that would leave concertgoers breathless.

A sound of epic proportions

Often described as epic in breadth and scope, Michael's dynamic, multi-layered music lends itself perfectly to the controlled environment of a theatre. The sound system created exclusively for the Michael Jackson ONE Theatre immerses the audience in a concert ambience.

Working with the multi-track master recordings alongside Musical Director Kevin Antunes, Sound Designer

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Jonathan Deans explains: "When Michael recorded albums, he actually performed in the studio, dancing, singing with the choir. You can hear him at work. The recordings literally explode with his high vocal and physical energy." The audience will experience this vividly when hearing the music in the Michael Jackson ONE Theatre; Michael's essence is right there, all around.

Michael Jackson ONE features hits that have been rearranged yet remain close to the album versions and are treated in a cinematic fashion. Kevin Antunes, who was also the Musical Designer on Michael Jackson THE IMMORTAL World Tour, took the multi-track master recordings and ornamented them in surround sound. Some of the sound feels like it surrounds the spectators or comes from above or behind, literally sending chills down their necks.

Putting the spectator right on stage

Jonathan Deans took all the musical layers and literally placed them strategically inside the volume of the theatre on separate groups of speakers. The sound comes at the audience from different angles, and it makes the experience very realistic, as if one were standing on stage in the middle of an orchestra and the sounds of the instruments were coming from different directions. And the sound systems has the whole room covered: helicopters fly in surround sound above the audience while Vincent Price's laugh at the end of "Thriller" begins in the main speakers, moves around the room and ends in the speakers in each seat. Because of the technology that went into the seat design, the audience can in fact hear certain sounds that have never been heard before with a unique, surround sound feel.

Antunes added layers and instruments to the music, and brought certain unnoticed elements of the songs to the fore. He added a lot of power to the guitar solos, including the pick slides, whammy bar and other 1980s dive sounds. Included in cast of 61 dancers and acrobats, are one vocalist and one guitarist performing live on stage.

SCENIC ENVIRONMENT

Michael Jackson was a multi-faceted artist who like to fuse musical styles and art forms, but he never made forays in the world of theater per se, with the exception of the musical adventure film The Wiz. Michael Jackson ONE is the first large-scale production developed for the theater about the world and music of the King of pop.

A theatrical adaptation of the world of Michael Jackson

With its large moving towers, the dynamic and versatile decor created by Set Designer François Séguin for Michael Jackson ONE is loosely inspired by the Dangerous album cover. The TV screens and statuettes are resolutely baroque in style, as are the rosettes painted on the proscenium. The set design concept, which comes to life under the lights and through the video projections, may also recall the scalable architecture of the theater sets created by Arthur Miller and Bob Fosse. The world of the printed press and other vehicles for tabloid news also permeates the set concept.

Mephisto

Mephisto is both a key part of the set and a "character" in the show. Mephisto is a malevolent machine flanked by his minions. The sprawling mechanical monster is composed of TVs, cameras, flashes, microphones, tungsten bulbs, surveillance equipment and various other objects. Mephisto appears at the start of the show in a huge vortex when TV monitors, newsreels and newspapers are sucked inside the lens of a camera.

PROJECTIONS

In Michael Jackson ONE, the video content is an integral part of the storyline and helps to create atmospheres and to move the story along during each of the different tableaux. The images also have a rhythmic function, blending seamlessly with the music and the performances.

The video images on the proscenium, the audiovisual walls, the tulle screen and other projection surfaces help to create the show's vibrant, immersive atmospheres, as does the video content projected onto the four moving towers on stage and the LED screen upstage.

Thanks to a GPS tracking system equipped with sensors, video content can be projected on the artists as they move about on stage. For example, images are projected on a dozen shields held by dancers during the They Don't Care About Us scene.

For the show's creators, Michael was a beacon and a guide throughout the creation process. The audience feels his presence and his spirit more and more during the production through projections as well as scintillation effects (like stardust) associated with certain characters.

Technical elements under the spotlight:

- On stage, four large towers used as projection surfaces, move from side to side and go up and down, even turning into platforms for the dancers and acrobats.
- The stage has 66 winches with speeds of up to 12 ft per

- second.
- Hanging from the ceiling, two 96-ft overhead tracks have two acrobatic trolleys each for moving artists, some of whom fly over the audience from the back of the house.
- The rocket in the Tabloid Junkies scene is a nod to the Michael Jackson video Leave Me Alone.
- Each of the theatre's 1,804 seats has three speakers left, right and center for a total of 5,412 seat speakers.
- Apart from the 587 lighting fixtures, there are 295 custom LED fixtures built into the show's various set pieces.
- For the projections, the stage is equipped with 1 LED track with 8 trolleys, each trolley supporting 8 LED panels.
- 26 projectors display video content on the stage and around the proscenium.
- In addition to the projectors, there are 11 TV monitors and a 40-ft-wide, 30-ft-high LED wall made up of 8 separate columns

HOW DO I SEE THE SHOW?

PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE: Starting July 1, performances are Saturday to Wednesday at 7:00pm and 10:00pm. Starting September 3, performances are Saturday to Wednesday at 7:00pm and 9:30pm. There are no performances on Thursdays and Fridays.

TO RESERVE TICKETS: Call 877.632.7400 or 800-745-3000 Go to www.cirquedusoleil.com/mjone or www.mandalaybay.com Visit the Michael Jackson ONE box office, the Mandalay Bay Events Center box office, or any of the MGM Resorts International box offices.

TICKET PRICES: \$69, \$99, \$130, \$140, \$155, plus LIMITED Golden Circle seating. Prices do not include tax or fees. Starting September 7, Saturday performance prices \$69, \$99, \$130, \$160, plus LIMITED Golden Circle seating. Prices do not include tax or fees. Tickets are available 120 days in advance of the performance date.

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