

**Movie Review: Michael Jackson's *This Is It***  
(Worldwide Premiere – 10/27/09)

**Hollywood, Calif. (Oct. 28, 2009)** – Simply: You must see this. It is a live concert-cum-documentary, a draft of Michael Jackson's *This Is It* shows in London based on rehearsal footage at Staples Center in Los Angeles. But those shows will, of course, never happen, so this is it. If you have ever wanted to see Jackson up close and personal, this is it. If you have wondered about Jackson's physical condition as he was rehearsing, this is it. If you missed seeing him live, well this is it. But don't just see it anywhere. The audio is astonishing and charged, with most of the video of cinematic quality, although there are a few camera shots that are less than HiDef quality. So you should find the theater with the absolute best sound system and a nice huge screen for viewing. Take bathroom and refreshment breaks before the show, you won't want to miss a moment.

I caught this flick last night packed in with international critics that were relegated to the landmark Grauman's Chinese Theater on Hollywood Blvd., a theater that is a cultural icon in its own right. But the audio system there is somewhat dated and lacking, and not well-equipped for live concert productions. The new Regal 14 @ L.A. Live and other new theaters have sound systems that can better handle the powerful and riveting audio.



During a dialogue with director Kenny Ortega, Jackson states that he wants the show to "take [fans] where they've never been before." This movie does that and it demonstrates Jackson's intent to "shock the world" with 50 London *This Is It* shows. It provides a unique glimpse into Michael as vibrant, passionate, sensitive, fun, and very alive during the rehearsals. There is no question in my mind that he had the stamina to successfully complete the 50 London shows, so I would reject the notion that he was pushed to the limit by promoters. In addition, Jackson appears to be in full control of not only himself but all aspects of the production process, including full mastery of all creative elements.

It was quite clear that everyone around Jackson was trying to please him. Michael was always right. Of course, his unmatched artistic skills, ever-present pursuit of perfection, and history of pop music successes give him a license of creative authority, but his abstract communications often leave others a bit confused. Still, I think Ortega, his music director, and other performers around him understood him quite well. During rehearsal of "I Want You Back," Jackson stops the performance and complains that the music makes him feel like someone is pounding a fist into his inner ear. After an exchange with Ortega, it was concluded that what Jackson meant was that the sound mix was off.



Music in the movie covers the 40 years of Jackson's pop career, from the Jackson 5 days to just-released tracks. It is a raw look at Jackson and his interactions with people, as well as his professional thought process. It clarifies that he was a pretty normal guy, socially well-adjusted with a sense of humor and engaging, not a weirdo or introvert. If he is watching, I'm sure that Jackson would want to be remembered exactly like this. I hope that *This Is It* remains the focal point for his legacy and historical persona.

It is a must-see that I will never forget and it validates Jackson's perch as King of Pop. *This Is It* opened today worldwide for an anticipated 2 week engagement.

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**External Links**

- **L.A. Times Review:** <http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/news/music/la-et-this-is-it28-2009oct28.0.4507172.story>
- **BBC Review:** <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/entertainment/8329103.stm>
- **Sony Pictures:** <http://www.sonypictures.com/>
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