



Keep on with the Force— Don't Stop: The Sheer Dance-Floor Opulence of *Off the Wall*

"I didn't want *Off the Wall* to sound like outtakes from *Destiny*."

—MICHAEL JACKSON I

The enormous success of *Thriller* was a perfect storm of many things—the remarkable tunes, the world-class production, the stellar guests, the album's videos being shown incessantly around the world, the maturation of MTV, the globalization of record company marketing, but most importantly, the advances made on an album he made in 1979 that captured him at the exact moment where he became an adult. The album was called *Off the Wall*.

In 1979, it was certainly not a given that Michael Jackson would become an adult solo superstar. It was then nearly a decade since he and his brothers came blazing onto the scene, but the latter-day success of the Jacksons had been sizeable rather than spectacular. *Destiny* had indeed proved popular, but there were still those who believed that their move away from Motown had sounded a long, slow death knell for them.

Off the Wall was to change all that. Michael Jackson's fifth solo album was released on August 10, 1979, on Epic Records. Arriving in the same month that he turned twenty-one, it was an amazing moment, presenting a new seemingly fully



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With touring commitments, Jackson simply didn't have the time to write a full album of songs, and he desired Jones to A&R the best and most sympathetic material possible for him. The overarching message was clear—Jackson wanted his fans to feel satisfied. The last thing he wanted was a Motown-style hits and fillers special. And he didn't want the album to sound like the Jacksons. "Hard words to spit out," Jackson recalled, "considering how hard we'd worked to become the Jacksons." Keyboard player Greg Phillinganes acted as musical director (a role he had performed with élan on *Destiny*) and percussionist Paulinho da Costa returned as well to a line-up that was comprised of some of the hottest players in Los Angeles. Jones had



been working with the Brothers Johnson, and as a result, Louis "Thunderthumbs" Johnson was to give the album its incredibly fluid bass drive. It was to take around six months to record at Allen Zentz Recording in Hollywood, with strings added at Cherokee and horns recorded at Westlake, with Jones ably assisted by his longtime engineer Bruce Swedien.

DON'T STOP 'TIL YOU GET ENOUGH

So much hinges around the majesty of the album's opening track and lead single, "Don't Stop 'til You Get Enough." The first song entirely written by Jackson became the foundation stone on which all of his future career would be built. The original idea came to him at the Jacksons'



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home in Encino. He could not stop bouncing the melody round his head, walking around singing and ad-libbing about faith and the power of love; immediately, he and brother Randy went into their home studio and cut a demo on piano and percussion. The song was built around its loose, almost tribal groove, a groove that had been unlocked on "Shake Your Body (Down to the Ground)." Written by Randy and Michael, "Shake Your Body" was the first time they married disco rhythms with something more visceral, a return-to-Africa rhythm which nodded to Lamont Dozier's nine-minute opus "Going Back to My Roots" from his 1977 album, *Peddlin' Music on the Side*. Here the formula was notched up



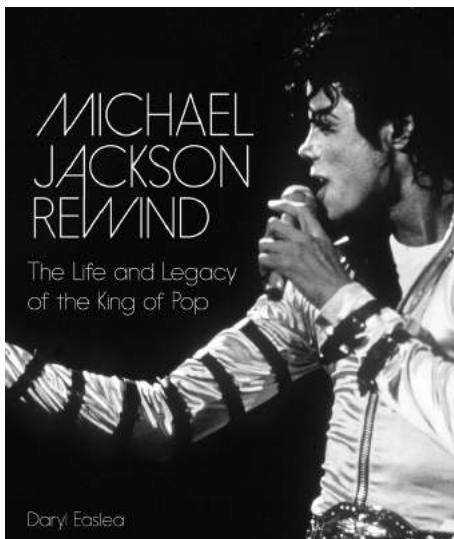
to its highest limit, creating something at once rooted in the soil and flying high in the galaxies.

Nineteen musicians made the noise that still sounds like the future, standing with Donna Summer's "I Feel Love" and Chic's "Le Freak" as one of the most monumental records of its age. With the first film of the *Star Wars* franchise enjoying its tremendous global popularity, Jackson's



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MICHAEL JACKSON: REWIND

THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF POP MUSIC'S KING

By Daryl Easlea and Ndugu Chancler

Relive the incredible history of the King of Pop - in reverse - with *Michael Jackson: Rewind*.

By the time Michael Jackson passed away in 2009, he had sold an estimated 750 million records worldwide over his career; He had won 26 American Music awards and 13 Grammy awards as well as the Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award, and was ranked number three, after The Beatles and Elvis Presley, of best-selling music artists. Five years after his death, the net worth of his estate is more than 600 million dollars. He is, without a doubt, one of the most popular - and controversial - artists of all time.

Now, for the first time ever, author Daryl Easlea will explore the life and history of Michael Jackson...in reverse. Starting with his tragic death and rewinding to his early hits with the Jackson 5 and life in Gary, Indiana, this is a complete illustrated history of the King of Pop: his genius, his life, and his demons. Loaded with over 300 images, a timeline of his life, a complete discography, and more, this is the must-have book for any Michael Jackson fan.

Key Points:

- In a unique new way to approach critical biographies, this is the untelling of Michael Jackson, his incredible and controversial story told in reverse.
- Author Daryl Easlea is an author and broadcaster well-known for his pop music biographies. He has written books on Peter Gabriel, Cher, Madonna, and more.
- Loaded with over 300 photos in a really spectacular package, this will be essential for fans of Michael Jackson.

Author Information

Daryl Easlea is an author, DJ, and broadcaster whose work can be found in *Record Collector* (where he was once deputy editor), *The Guardian*, *The Independent*, and on the BBC. He is the critically acclaimed author of *Without Frontiers: The Life and Music of Peter Gabriel*, *Cher: All I Want to Do*, *Madonna*, and *Talent Is an Asset: The Story Of Sparks*.

Among his work on *Thriller* and *Bad*, **Ndugu Chancler** provided one of the most famous drumbeats of all-time on "Billie Jean." He also has played with artists including Frank Sinatra, Miles Davis, George Duke, Weather Report, Santana, and Lionel Richie. He played on "Love Is in Control (Finger on the Trigger)" by Donna Summer. Listed as one of the Top 25 drummers in the world, aside from his ongoing musical career, he is currently Professor of Jazz and Contemporary Music Studies at the Thornton School Of Music, University Of Southern California.