



TECHNICAL FACT SHEET

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 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.