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Thriller Album Review

Background Information

Michael Jackson's *Thriller* was released by Epic Records dated November 30, 1982. Paul McCartney was the first musician to appear on one of Michael Jackson's songs, and he only appears on one track. The album's major producer, Quincy Jones, was primarily motivated by Jackson's attempts to develop an album with every song being a smash. The album was recorded at LA from April to November 1982 on something like a three-quarter million budget. Notably, the album earned Michael's debut album the top spot mostly on Billboard charts and remained for 38 weeks. In 1983, it was the greatest album on the planet and the first in the US for 2 years, 1993 and 1994 (Kooijman 120). By the close of 1983, *Thriller* had shipped 32 million albums sold, making it the best-selling record of the era.

Contrasting Songs

Wanna Be Startin' Something is the first song to explore and analyze, with two more to follow. This song opens the album and promptly starts in a lively mode to seize the audience's and listener's attention (Wiley 102). This song begins with a three-hit snare drum, which permits the tune to be played repeatedly. Additionally, as the music proceeds, the drums shift to a livelier and modified rhythm, which combines with the quick and intricate bass line to create an almost

swing-like effect. It is also worth noting that the song makes good use of call-and-response and vocal diversity. The main vocals are fast and forceful, giving the music a confrontational feel.

Furthermore, it is stated that the song makes superb use of subtleties that combine nicely to generate a breakdown in which a slew of noises is played and crescendoed, then abruptly stopped and replaced with a guitar solo. The drum machine, which is vital in creating a clear and consistent rhythm that is then looped, has been welcomed by the music industry. Notably, the song's subject matter and message are about how people start conflicts over nothing, such as a semantic quibble or spreading false rumors.

Thriller is the second song incorporating steps, wolf howling, winds, cries and applaud, percussion, bassline, synthesizer, guitar, and even cymbals such as trumpets and trombones (Wiley 109). The song tells the story of how different horror and thriller themes were used in the production. Furthermore, the song begins with a synth crescendo accompanied by drums before jumping into one of the song's primary tunes immediately before bass enters the mix. In turn, the guitar is seamlessly integrated into the music, broadcasting a short, repeating funk-like faltering rhythm that brings the piece together. As a result, this song is said to have better technological upgrades, which are represented Horns, synths, bass, a drumming machine, guitars, and voices are among the instruments used.

Beat It is the third and final song on the album. This is the album's fifth song, and it features a repeated drum rhythm and a repeating bass harmonization that varies in arpeggios for the verse. The chorus is a distinctive melody built around a rhythm that serves as the song's major motor (Kooijman 123). On the other hand, the melodies and contrasts are such that there is a specialization in the chorus and then variance in verse around mezzo-piano; the vocalists have been given an impulsive mode to make the vocals stand out. Alternatively, the vocals are

synchronized with the guitar and bass to avoid any illogic. The song's sturdy and powerful quality is preserved through repetitive yet driving percussion rhythms (Tordjman 62). Thus, music experts have remarked on how well-thought-out the song is. Even while it has its strength, it also has a lovely riff with wonderful harmonies and dynamics. The piano was given a touch-up of resonance, and a drum machine was employed to maintain the sound tight and clear, so technology was utilized throughout the composition.

Music and Identity

Michael Jackson utilized his lyrics on this album to question how a Black American guy should conduct and be seen in the United States. *Billie Jean* exhibited Jackson as the center of attention. On the other hand, *Bad* portrayed Jackson as a rule-breaker, while *Human Nature* revealed a more sexual element (Kooijman 125). All of these issues were considered taboo in the nation at the moment. Notably, Michael Jackson had no qualms about defying the status quo with his record. However, through songs like *Thriller*, whose video served as a parallel for the country's existing prejudice and contradictory emotions toward African Americans at the time, the album pushed racial boundaries. The video depicted Jackson's transformation from a gorgeous young black man to a beast, depicting whites conflicting thoughts about being romantically linked with a Black American male in a racially divided country.

Music and Technology

This album embraced the use of technology during its production and revolutionized this particular facet of the industry. The drum machine, which is vital in creating a clear and consistent rhythm that is then looped, has been welcomed by the music industry, and it was first incorporated in this *Thriller* album. Besides, the *Thriller* album contains songs that feature

increased technology advances, represented by a combination of instrumentation, including trumpets, synthesizers, bass, a drum machine, guitar, and multitracked vocals. The instruments had been given a touch-up of resonance, and a drum machine has been employed to keep the sound crisp and clear throughout the piece (Tordjman 65).

Music and Form

Jackson shifted his musical form and style; punk, post-disco, rockers, and funk are mixed. A tense *Thriller* foreshadowed Michael's personal life's discordant elements; he started to adopt a paranoid and darker thematic notion as he progressed (Kooijman 126). For instance, *Thriller* is a mix of disco and funk as its main forms while the song and words conjure up images of dread, romance, love, political freedom, thus relating with different ilk and culture.

Music and Peripheries

Michael Jackson, an African-American, changed the music industry with his single, music video, and album *Thriller*. These songs' music videos revolutionized the way the music industry created and promoted new releases. For that reason, when *Thriller* was debuted, it was one of the most expensive music videos ever made (Wiley 115). Previously, African-American performers' albums were usually targeted towards an all-black fanbase. However, Michaels' record label, Epic, advertised *Thriller* worldwide and to everyone.

Music and Business

When it came to marketing, Michael and his crew were incredibly inventive in how they got the songs on air. They began by sending a song featuring a white artist (Paul McCartney) who had a lot of radio airplay (Wiley 111). As a result, Michael also got extra playing. Michael also included choreography in his music videos, resulting in possibly one of the most iconic

dance moves ever produced (the moonwalk). People bought the CD to learn how to do this maneuver, which helped him get a lot of traction. Thus, with that working in his favor, he grew album sales and distribution internationally.

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