

Thriller Live (Tour - Glasgow)

Date Reviewed: 21 April 2013

★★★★

WOS Rating:

Wouldn't the world be a very different place if little [Michael Jackson](#) had not had be plucked from the maternity ward and made to "Ease on Down the Road" to Motown? Seven hundred and fifty million albums wouldn't have been sold; songs like "Beat It" and "Man in the Mirror" would never have been murdered in karaoke bars; scores of chimpanzees wouldn't have been given the opportunity to make use of a butler and masses of drunken men wouldn't have broken then legs moonwalking.

And, of course, the West End would never have been treated to *Thriller Live*, a fantastic tribute to the King of Pop featuring more songs that there were llamas at Neverland. Like an evening of time travel, this production of song, dance and impression thrills its audiences from the afro-tastic early days of "ABC" and "Want You Back" to the plastic fantastic days of Bubbles and "They Don't Really Care About Us."

There are times, as you might expect in a piece like this, when the production is less "Off the Wall" and more "off to the club." Indeed, there are a few members of the cast who would happily replace Jackson's now iconic candy apple red *Thriller* jacket with a Butlins redcoat. Indeed, there are a few performances in the roster that are as believable as Jackson's claims that he only had a few face lifts. One cannot help but wish that the show, too, was more biographical and used the musical numbers to illustrate, in some way, the story of a life, not just the story of the songs.

On the whole, the performances are outstandingly good. With both the softness and the fire of Jackson's voice, [Samantha Johnson](#)'s vocals are some of the most excellent that I have heard on a Glasgow stage all year. [John Moabi](#), too, is able to sound almost identical to Jackson and, like Johnson, is engaging and entrancing. Entrancing, too, are the huge dance routines in the later sections of the show: from "Thriller" to "Smooth Criminal", it racks up the production values and launches into dramatically exciting and visually engrossing stagings of scenes based on the music videos and motifs of Jackson's work.

Does it matter that the production often feels like it could be staged in a pub with a fair sized dance floor and a few coloured lights? Not even slightly. Bruno Mars' career is testimony to the fact that straightforward Michael Jackson tribute acts can be lucrative and enjoyable. And that is exactly what this is - an energetic, passionate and fantastically entertaining moonwalk through the hits of one of music's legends. Though is one that will leave some audience members wanting more in terms of production values, ye cannae beat it if you're wacko about Jacko.

Shamone etc.

[- by Scott Purvis](#)