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## 'This Is It': Film re-creates pop star Michael Jackson's planned concert

### Jackson fans can see it on big screen

By James Grant of The News-Sentinel  
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#### Related

See a preview of Michael Jackson's "This Is It"

Look out, those weary of all things Michael Jackson: A new movie titled "Michael Jackson's This Is It" will open Oct. 28 for a limited two-week run in theaters.

Tickets go on sale Sunday, and this promises to be an event most fans of Jackson, and even those who are just plain curious, will want to see. Local theater Web sites didn't give any information Wednesday morning about whether they would show the film.

The movie is being culled from more than 100 hours of behind-the-scenes footage shot in April through June as Jackson prepared for his concert comeback in London. All the footage was shot in high definition and will give people a glimpse of what Jackson's last live show would have looked and sounded like had he not died June 25. Kenny Ortega, Jackson's director and creative partner on the "This Is It" tour, will direct the film.

Not since the golden age of MTV and the days of "Thriller" has a new Michael Jackson project been as anticipated as this movie. Worldwide, there is tremendous interest in the film, and locally there seems to be immense interest as well.

Bob Roets, owner of Wooden Nickel Music, is the same age as Jackson and says he grew up with Jackson's music and even bought the first few Jackson 5 singles (on vinyl 45s, no less) when they came out in the late '60s and early '70s. He wants to see the movie but is leery of crossing the line from capitalism into exploitation.

"It's a document of history," Roets said. "I can't believe they can actually get it out that quick. The footage that I saw, I believe it was on CNN originally, it was mind-boggling to actually see what appeared to be a great conditioned Michael Jackson ready to go."

"The thing is," Roets added, "in a way, I'm a little disappointed there's so many people that just want to capitalize on his death and release things I don't know necessarily should be (released) or not."

Whether or not any new material should come out, it's clear that fans, at least in the Fort Wayne area, are looking to purchase Jackson material. This past summer, there has been an explosion of interest in his music.

"In July and August, the six-week period following his death, we were actually — we haven't been up in a lot of years, mind you — we were actually up 11 percent chainwide due to his sales," Roets said. "Chainwide on good days, we were selling an average of 30 to 40 pieces a day for a period of about three or four weeks."

Fort Wayne resident Malcolm Rodgers, 23, also wants to see the film but isn't concerned about it being exploitative. Asked why he'd want to see the movie, he said:

"Because it's Michael Jackson. He's a musical genius, and to see some of his concert footage and actually see something like that honoring him, I think it'd be kind of interesting to see what they all put together."

"It probably is (exploitative)," Rodgers said. "That's going to happen. I still think Michael Jackson is Michael Jackson, and his music is always going to be his music, so I don't really mind that people are kind of getting into it more now."

Ana Hatzigeorgiou, co-owner of Friends and Friends Too restaurants, is also a longtime fan of Jackson. She is curious to see the film and how he performed but feels it might have been better to release it not so soon after his death.

"Michael Jackson, I grew up with him basically in my life," Hatzigeorgiou said. "I think he was a brilliant artist, and I just wanted to, I guess, go and pay homage to him. I think it would have been better if they would have waited a year, maybe on the year memorial of his death. I think it might have been a little bit better."

While no firm plans have been announced for a DVD or CD release of "Michael Jackson's This Is It," it's likely to follow, possibly for the holiday shopping season.

Maybe the big screen is the best place for the film's debut, since Jackson was in many ways bigger than life.



#### More Information

##### Jackson film

**What:** The film "Michael Jackson's This Is It"

**When:** Oct. 28 for two weeks (times unavailable)

**Where and cost:** Check area theater listings

New song, CD

A new Michael Jackson song, "This Is It," will release as a single Oct. 12, Billboard magazine reported. A double album with two versions of the new song, plus original masters of hit songs in the "This Is It" film, will be released Oct. 27.