



MICHAEL JACKSON

# 101

THE REMIXES



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 Andy Healy 2014

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MICHAEL JACKSON



THE REMIXES

Michael gave the world a wealth of music.  
Songs that would become a part of our collective sound track.  
And for that the 101 series is dedicated to Michael  
and all the musicians and producers who brought the music to life.

This special Remix Supplement is also dedicated to producers and remixers  
who brought their talents to broaden Michael's reach and made us hear new things  
in their reimaginings.

By a fan for the fans.





# 349 OFFICIAL REMIXES

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## MOST REMIXED TRACKS

27	REMIXES	JAM
24	REMIXES	STRANGER IN MOSCOW
24	REMIXES	THIS TIME AROUND
20	REMIXES	THEY DON'T CARE ABOUT US
18	REMIXES	WHO IS IT
16	REMIXES	SCREAM
16	REMIXES	IN THE CLOSET

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\* INCLUDES 7" EDITS, 12" EXTENDED MIXES,  
A CAPPELLA & REMIXES





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The Remix. A tightrope of reinterpretation. A rebirthing of melody. A reimagining of rhythm. What makes one remix work and another fail? Does staying too close to the source material make it an homage or a bore? Does straying away from the key melody make it a bold creation or render it almost unrecognizable and unlistenable?

Michael's catalogue of rich melody and rhythm made it ripe for remixes. Such deep textures to play with, to stir and concoct into something new. To take the essence that Michael laid down either in message or melody and expand on it, creating an exciting fresh take that inspires the listener.

Here collected are 20 of the greatest remixes of Michael's classic songs by artists who rose to the challenge and delivered inspiring and captivating retellings.

The selection has been based on and limited to only official remixes readily available on released singles or on the rare occasion a promo release. And despite there being some wonderful remixes of classic Jackson 5 tracks, those for the moment have been set aside.

The final 20 selections have been evaluated based on artistry, and how in the art of creating a remix the song has evolved. How the remix pays both homage to the essence of the original but also expands its appeal. What you won't find are ballads replayed as club thumpers (like the atrocious 'You Are Not Alone' and 'Earth Song' remixes) but what you will find are remixes that excite your ears and help you discover something new in the original recordings.

And whilst it was reported that Michael wasn't a huge fan of remixes (despite commissioning many), as a fan hearing new interpretations would often make you rediscover something in the album version. There's nothing better than listening to the original, but sometimes a good remix will take you somewhere new. As it should.

I hope reading through the list inspires you to listen to the remixes and contrast them against the original. And maybe find a new favourite.







**B**efore DJ's and remixers started to strip down and rebuild tracks adding new melodies or embellishments, the extended mix delivered exactly what it promised; an extended take on the original song you knew and loved. Normally it meant repeating the intro by a few bars, repeating the chorus over and over in an extended fade and maybe an instrumental version of a verse thrown in for good measure.

With the arrival of disco that swept through nightclubs, resident DJ's would loop breaks and choruses in an attempt to keep the dance floor filled. As club culture grew, artists started recording their own floor fillers creating 6+ minute songs that just kept the groove going. Donna Summer's epic "Love To Love You Baby" with its never ending run time of 16:53 was a prime example of this; written and produced with the club scene in mind.

Around this time singles from 'Destiny' and 'Triumph' were also being given the 12" treatment (with mixed success) and the run times of songs like 'Don't Stop Til You Get Enough' demonstrated that Michael knew the power of keeping the groove going.

So when it came time to record the 'Bad' album, Michael and company set out to create longer, extended versions of the songs that would then be trimmed down to album and single lengths. Some studio trickery would augment it with loops of sections and edits, but the intent was there from the beginning.

With the main section of the song captured the musicians and Michael would just keep going, riding the groove. Listening back to the extended mixes from this era you can almost hear the perfectionist cap slipping off MJ's head, replaced with a joyous abandon as he would lay down fresh ad-libs and really dig into the track.

As the first single off the album to receive this extended treatment, 'Bad' gave us the first real glimpse of what the recording sessions

would have been like with Michael loosening up and becoming more playful once the main part of the song had passed.

With an extended intro that teases out the bubbling white noise prior to the infectious bass creeping in, the groove is firmly established for the dance floor. Aside from the extended intro the track follows the same structure of the album version. The only notable exception being the removal of the horn accents during the chorus that appeared on the very first pressing of the album version. Similarly the synth solo by Greg Phillinganes gets a boost in the mix and as a result feels more energised and frantic.

It's only at the 3:48 mark that we are introduced to new elements as Michael's fully charged scream heralds in an extended breakdown complete with Michael in full ad-lib preacher mode taunting "you know it / you know" and calling out for David Williams to feature with a funky guitar riff. With this build up of funk Michael lets the groove strut its stuff as he adds little beatbox flourishes here and there before repeating the opening verse in a more freestyle mode really twisting and contorting the vocal melody.

The fade quickly follows leaving you wanting more and with perhaps the obvious hint of "false fade" in the title the track comes roaring back with blistering horn stabs. Now Michael continues to freestyle with the same bluster that would be contained in the call and response section of the short film.

With Michael stomping on the floor as he sings, he grinds his way into the track. One moment he is laughing with carefree abandon, the next he is taunting and teasing with breathy deliveries of "who's really really bad?" before scatting and mimicking the guitar hook.

As the first real extended mix that offered new elements to hook into, 'Bad' set the bar for how a remix should balance elements familiar to the listener while still offer some new surprises.



**A**s a remixer there must be that moment of first listening to the master multitracks you're given and being able to hear every element of the recording that must simultaneously send chills up the spine and a sense of dread into the mind.

How does one top this? How does one try to re-present it? How do you pick what to keep, what to embellish and what to remove? How do you make the track feel current without losing too much of the vibe that made it a classic?

By the time 'Rock With You' was given the remix treatment in 1995 the song's classic groove and arrangement had been so heavily infused into the musical landscape that trying anything that would dramatically alter the feel of the song would be a risk.

But rather than just try to remake 'Rock With You' with a new disco drive, Frankie Knuckles delved into the richness of the multitracks and brought forward elements that, until then, had remained unheard by anyone beyond the original recording sessions.

Opening with the soft twinkling of a piano that teases out the melody, the introduction transforms the song from a classic disco era track into a smooth torch song.

As Michael croons "Giiiiirl, close your eyes, let that rhythm get into you" the delivery becomes more seductive, more alluring. The intensity of the piano builds from teasing to rapturous to match Michael's delivery.

The arrivals of strings caresses the melody and sweeps the listener up as the song transitions from torch song to full on disco inferno fanning a Chicago House fire.

Launching into the style for which he was known, Frankie Knuckles still has the good sense to know who is master here and who

is servant. Instead of trying to make it a demonstration of what Frankie Knuckles can do he strikes the perfect balance of artist and remixer underpinning the track with a signature house beat but making sure the melodic elements that made 'Rock With You' such a stand out track in the first place remained.

He presents the familiar strings and horns and resists the urge to replace or rewrite any signature element. Instead he allows elements of old and new to converge into a new wondrous exploration.

And perhaps the greatest joy of the remix is hearing unheard ad-libs and vocal contortions as Michael rings out the final 30 seconds. The goose bump inducing way he sings "Giiiiirl, girl, girl, ye-ee-ah, yeah" was guaranteed to make hardcore clubbers and at home listeners lose their mind. Presented like the unearthed gems they are, Frankie ensured that old and new fans were rewarded.

And for perhaps the first time it made you wonder what other outtakes or instruments were trimmed or muted in the final album mix. It piqued your curiosity and made you replay that final 30 seconds over and over until you couldn't imagine hearing 'Rock With You' without hearing that blissful trill.

The 'Rock With You' Frankie's Favourite Club Mix succeeds the way all good remixes should; it captivates and draws you in with its restyling of the intro, keeps you attention with the combination of new house beats and classic instrumentation, and gives you a moment of pure, unexpected joy in the final moments.

As a pioneer of House Music (some might argue the originator) Frankie Knuckles would go on to remix several of Michael's songs with varying success but with 'Rock With You' he produced a track that makes listening to it today just as exhilarating as back in 95.





Sometimes when remixing a classic track reinvention is in order. And when you are dealing with a classic song such as 'Beat It' whose every detail has been scrutinised, dissected and imprinted on our collective memory the challenge is to create some new excitement around it.

Hot off the heels of his successful 'Play' album Moby rose to the challenge of reinventing 'Beat It' for a new club era.

Turning the track on its head and kicking off with Eddie Van Halen's explosive solo informed the listener that this wasn't going to be the expected remix. Instead Moby takes elements of the original and refashions them like never before.

The electrochimes form the bases of a ultra high energy techno groove laden with samples of phrases from Michael's vocals. With the intensity of the track on overdrive it builds to an inevitable climax only to back off from the edge and switch gears to a sparse dub arrangement with all the hallmarks of a Lee 'Scratch' Perry production. The reggae groove and bass as primary melody gives the verses space for Michael's vocals to add extra bite.

One can even hear borrowed structural elements of grunge in the slow burn verse meets explosive chorus arrangement employed to give the track contrast. The clash between the two seems to give the listener a moment of reprieve

in the verses (and club goers a chance to catch their breath) before plunging them back into the relentless intensity of the chorus concoction.

The Sub Mix was a clever way to get what is for all intents and purpose a celebrated rock track into the clubs and expose Michael to a whole new generation of dance music enthusiasts who were, for a moment in time, preoccupied by the uber hard beats of techno and house.

It also manages to preserve the quality of the original while presenting it in a new and unexpected light and in doing so proves the power of Michael's song writing and ability for his hooks to cross genres and audiences.











The difficulty with crafting a great remix is knowing the fine balance between homage and evolution. Stick too close to the source material and you may not offer anything new for the listener. Stray too far and you might lose them in an unrecognizable cacophony that bares little resemblance to the original track. The IHS Mix of 'Who Is It' manages to walk this tightrope with flair.

Opening with the beautiful angelic choir introduction of the album version the listener is presented with the familiar, coaxing them in. It is only when the choir is looped that we become aware of the remixer's handiwork.

As a backdrop to Michael's isolated lead vocals they provide an extra sense of filmic drama to the telling of love and loss that the song deals with. This arrangement also allows for the clarity of Michael's voice to ring through and gives the remix a slow burn as keys are added striking solemn chords underpinning his desperate search for answers.

As the prechorus hits the song is transformed from the dark, stalking groove of the original into a more dance centric track inspired by a reworking of James Brown's "Funky Drummer" beat underneath. The sparse arrangement puts Michael's vocals front and centre with their cadence and rhythm powering the track. A reinterpreted bass line gives the track an elastic feel almost as if the tension of Michael's plight is simultaneously tightening and unwinding around him.

Using snippets of ad-libs and vocals in the breakdown adds to the enjoyment of the track with Michael's pleas of "have mercy" driving home his predicament.

And like a nightmare crashing around

him the song builds and falls in repetition as wave after wave of discovery and accusations surface. This draws the listener in with each passing verse and allows for the tension to be ratcheted up again and again. Taking on an almost cinematic approach the valleys and peaks of the arrangement allow for the drama in the vocal narrative to really hit home.

Perhaps the most enticing moment of the remix comes in the string breakdown at 3:45 when a vocoder treated voice pleads "Now won't you help me?"

This small addition to the track gives it a hint of dread and acts as a tipping point for the remix with the song spiralling into Michael's personal hell of betrayal and deception. Sonically it is as though Michael's world is falling around him, placing him in the eye of a tumultuous relationship storm. Its maddening, almost nightmarish quality reflects the inner torture and anguish expressed in the lyrics. The doubt, the recrimination.

The IHS Mix is one of the best examples of meshing elements of original source material with new musical elements to help evolve the track's mood. There is a degree of respect and restraint present that allows the song to stay true to its original intent, highlighting the wondrous melodies and vocals and adds to them in a way that makes it as equally compelling as the original album mix.

And whilst Michael felt some remixes took too much liberty with his original arrangements the inclusion of the IHS Mix in his career spanning retrospective 'The Ultimate Collection' in place of the album track hints at Michael not being completely at odds with the power of what an inventive remix could bring to his music







When 'Black or White' was reigning atop the charts all over the world the production team of Clivilles & Cole lent their talents to turn the pop rocker into a bona fide club house anthem.

Kicking off the track by taking Michael's trademark end of line grunts and exaltations and refashioning them as a beatbox like groove Clivilles & Cole let you know from the outset that while this is a Michael Jackson song but not everything will go as expected.

With a springing House beat and ricocheting synth bells bouncing all over the musical spectrum the feel is more frenetic and intense than the original track. Knowing the power of a great hook, the guitar is kept in the mix, its catchy refrain cluing the listener into the track they know and love.

With just Michael's vocals and the bubbling beat carrying the verse we're allowed to hear the clarity and purity in Michael's delivery, the way he ascends and descends the melody with ease while still adding a bit of bite to the lyrics. The double claps just noticeable in the mix thrust the verses forward and give them extra energy.

With the second verse the jangling strums of the acoustic guitar becomes more present than in the album mix with the strums acting more like accents that attack and punch through the sonic landscape than just support it.

Again the remixers wisely choose to keep elements familiar to the listener but also allow for extra little flourishes either removed from the album version or buried so deep in the mix you barely notice them. Case in point in the build to the rap rather than the rapid-fire keyboard run we hear a quick ascending and descending guitar lick that gives the track more of a rock feel. As well as being a surprise for the listener it also introduces the extra guitar flourishes under the rap that were removed from the

original and placed here instead of the funkier groove of the album version.

These little flourishes continue throughout the rest of the mix with short little guitar licks underneath the extended vocal outro and a soaring guitar beneath the "yeah yeah yeahs".

Perhaps knowing that for a radio mix it's wise not to stray too far away from the overall structure of the song, C&C refrain from messing with the arrangement but twist and add to it in such a way that keeps it vibrant, and in doing so present your ear with something new to enjoy like the extended "yeah yeah yeahs" of the outro.







**W**ithout the spoken intro of the album version, KI's 12" mix of 'In The Closet' does away with sweet seduction and gets right down to business. Instead it hits us with Michael's beatboxing and voice as instrumentation to seduce the listener. Using Michael's breath, whispers and humming as a base to build upon the heat is immediately turned up. This Michael-made percussive groove underpins the mix as it is overlaid with a tweaked and more sensual bass, the impatient desire of a grinding organ and a more New Jack Swing style groove.

The beat and vocal only arrangement of the verses gives priority to Michael and his every utterance allowing his voice to punch through with all his little percussive accents. This clarity is especially evident in the 2nd verse when Michael's double tracked vocal is crystal clear in the mix and less hidden than in the album version.

Even during the spoken breakdowns Michael is present with heavy breathing and impassioned pleas of "I Want It".

And when the chorus hits, the rolling drums snap and pound like a runaway heartbeat fuelled on by passion and desire.

The beauty of this remix is in the choices of what to highlight and what to pull back. Ki has chosen to give prominence to certain moments like the natural breakdowns, but also isolates certain phrases or even words to heighten the tension and seduction. Case in point the isolation of "rub it" in the second verse or in the way the final pass of "she wants to give it / ahhh she wants to give it" is presented a cappella before returning to the groove as if making the whole act of seduction complete.

With remixes of 'In The Closet' numbering in the teens, many great remixes vie for an airing but the KI 12" Mix eeks out the competition and rightfully leads the pack.



### ALSO RECOMMENDED

Freestyle Mix

A beatbox driven groove, the headphone worthy Freestyle Mix offers a take that borders on pure a cappella giving the mix a raw and primal feel to it.







## WANNA BE STARTIN' SOMETHIN'

Tommy D's Main Mix

**L**ike the world coming out to play, Tommy D's Main Mix of Michael's iconic 'Wanna Be Startin' Somethin'' opens with a lush synth bed and percussive rhythm that gives the song an exotic take. Flipping the original's arrangement on its head and kicking off with the "Ma ma Se Ma ma Sa Ma Ma Coo Sa' chant the remix has a celebratory feel from the outset.

With tribal like house beats the song bounces along with a confident swing gathering you up in its wake and propelling the groove forward as Michael's vocals kick in with the opening verse. Augmenting the original rhythm with extra percussion of shakers, clave sticks, and congas not to mention the customary house style piano chords, the remix brings a brightness and light to the track in contrast to the lyrical content of suspicion and victimisation (a ploy no doubt learned from Michael's own arrangement of the song that belies the darker themes of the lyrics).

The extra instrumentation from subtle DJ scratches, to embellished percussion, to scrubbing organ runs, to beckoning guitar, puts the remix in full on party mode.

With the familiar horns and iconic guitar run of the break down we are reminded of the brilliance in the original. But even original elements are given a subtle tweak such as the flange effect given to the main guitar riff, the constant synth bass line supported by a more exploratory electric bass run, and even elements of Michael's vocals are given echo effects and added reverb to give the song a truly larger than life epic scale.

Tommy D presents us with a remix that is designed to be played loud from every corner of the world and acts as a true celebration of the original.











**R**eady to party the Silky Soul 7" remix of 'Remember The Time' by Steve 'Silk' Hurley kicks off with 30 seconds of pure aural delight.

If the rich keys and Michael quick intro don't instantly grab you, the scat led build into the sax melody surely will. And if your not hooked by then the surprising sample of the iconic 'Rock With You' drum fill will surely finish the job.

With this nod to old school MJ this remix gives 'Remember The Time' more of an Off The Wall era feel. Less New Jack Swing and more modern house the Silky Soul 7" bursts with a joyfulness that is infectious.

Michael's vocals are lush and warm and play perfectly against the warm synth beds, the playful horn runs and organ stings that fill out the production without swamping and overpowering the song.

The restructure of Michael's scatting ad-libs in a constant break and bounce counterplay keep your feet moving in anticipation of what will come next.

There is also a sense of play in the way Michael's vocals are cut up and rearranged at key moments to add extra punch to the track and further delight the listener.

Just listen to the breakdown at 2:51 with the jaggig organ stabs and try

not to be thrilled by the way the vocals are edited to deliver "I bet, I bet ya... remember" and then again a beat later when Michael's utterance of "I don't know" from the album intro is replayed to add an extra hint of charm to the track.

Greater attention is also given to the background vocals and ad-libs in the final minutes of the song that are treated and rearranged here to act almost as equals to the lead. With the diced and sliced ad-libs repeating "do you remember girl" in the outro they convey an extra sense of urgency to the reminiscence and bring added excitement to the listening experience.

Whilst the 7" is a trimmed down version of Steve Hurley's original 7 plus minute 12" remix (which is also worthy of a listen) this tighter arrangement and constricted time frame results in Hurley having to ensure every choice in the mix pays off. And pay off it does. Without an extended intro or prolonged midsection, the 7" edit ensures the remix stays focused and doesn't loose any traction.

This cut to the chase approach pays off presenting a captivating and exciting remix that delivers on the promise of one of Michael's greatest feel good songs. Guaranteed to get heads bopping and feet moving the Silky Soul 7" remix is a must have in any collection.

### ALSO RECOMMENDED

#### 12" Main Mix

For lovers of the extended breakdown of the Short Film this is the mix for you. Pure new jack swing sparse arrangement set against Michael's voice and chills inducing final 45 seconds.









**K**eeping spirits high the Roger's Underground Solution Mix takes 'Don't Stop Til You Get Enough' from the cool vibe of the R&B clubs and re-presents it as an all out clubland celebration.

By keeping elements of the original disco tinged arrangement and updating it with a swinging house beat, the listener is presented with the familiar and also something new and exciting. With the piano bouncing the main melody on its keys it sets the foundations for signature instruments we love from the original to play with. Against newly formed synth beeps the original guitar hook jags its way across the dance floor as Michael's vocals sing out with that familiar sense of tease and utter abandon.

Once again, perhaps driven by the power and purity of the vocals, the remixer chooses to keep the remix to a sparse arrangement even removing all instruments bare the house beat at times to let the listener revel in the joy that comes from Michael's delivery. This is especially evident in the piano breakdown of the chorus that leads us to the instrumental bridge. Here it's just Michael's vocals and piano giving us a glimpse into what an initial studio run through might have sounded like. As the

piano builds to that familiar crescendo we are plunged back into the bounce of the house beat.

Whilst a wonderful modern take on one of Michael's undeniable classics, the Underground Solution Mix does also have its drawbacks that stop it being as equally wondrous a retelling as the original. For starters the sweeping strings that played such a captivating role in the album version are noticeably absent from the new incarnation. This omission leaves you wanting more and seems to ground the remix firmly to the dance floor rather than letting it fly and spin into the stratosphere. Similarly the exclusion of the brass section means the remix fails to deliver on the true knockout punch of the original

Towards the end of the mix Michael's scatting ad-libs make a teasingly brief appearance and continue under the fade missing an opportunity to really highlight them and tease out the track even more..

All told though Roger's Underground Solution Mix delivers a rousing clubland dance floor filler and gives a fresh look at one of Michael's all time greatest and forever classic songs.







## BLOOD ON THE DANCE FLOOR

Refugee Camp Mix

It's a rare occasion when the remix is the preferable iteration of a song over the original. But when the Refugee Camp Mix of 'Blood On The Dance Floor' was released it showed how on an inventive remix could indeed supersede the feel of the original.

Set against a scratchy hip-hop groove the Refugee Camp Mix is a starker take on the sometimes underwhelming album mix. Jettisoning the original Teddy Riley production (something Teddy himself was disappointed he didn't get to do prior to the album's release) the remix looks to carve out its own identity.

Stripped down to bare essentials of drum groove and stabbing guitars, the sparse arrangement brings Michael's vocals to the fore, letting his impassioned guttural delivery cut through.

This sparse treatment also allows for the harmonies to really punch through the mix and give the track some added warmth. This is especially evident in the sublime breakdown at the 3 minute mark where with pristine clarity we hear Michael ring out a chills down the spine solitary high note against the swelling harmonies.

With extended guttural utterings from Michael leading into each verse mixed with trademark James Brown grunts, the Refuge Camp gives 'Blood On The Dance Floor' a more primal feel to it. The remix delivers a harder, more dangerous and mysterious edge to the song, drawing us deeper into the plight of the protagonist and the deadly dealings of Susie.

Doing away with over production and keeping it to its grittier bare minimums the Refuge Camp remix lets 'Blood On The Dance Floor' stand on its own as a track rather than feel like a co-opted rewrite of 'Remember The Time' that the album version at time alludes to.









Putting Michael's publishing catalogue to work, this Jam & Lewis remix dials up the funk with a healthy helping of Sly & The Family Stone's 'Thank You (Falettinme Be Mice Elf Agin)'. With Larry Graham's distinctive plucking bass line at the helm the use of this sample draws a direct line between *Scream* and Janet's 'Rhythm Nation' (which also uses a different section of 'Thank You' as its primary building block).

As a backdrop for Michael and Janet's vocal delivery 'Scream Louder' still contains all the bluster and rage of the original, but also puts Michael back into classic funk mode with an arrangement that harkens back to the unabashed funk of *Off The Wall*. For any fan that ever wondered what an *Off The Wall* era MJ would have sounded like in the 90s this might hold the answer.

In addition to the Sly sample that loops in an hypnotic fashion, Jam & Lewis lay down a whirling organ that crushes with heavy almost anthemic chords. Additionally the sample lifted from Janet's own track 'The Knowledge' (one of Michael's all time favourite songs) is also more evident than the album mix.

The frantic horn blasts that follow the calming breakdown at the 3:33 mark dials up the funk even more with an arrangement that Jerry Hey would have been proud of. These horn trills become the driving point for the remainder of the track supported by sprawling synth beds and extra guitar licks.

And perhaps knowing that as a listener you don't want this funkified version to end the remix teases with a momentary false end before kicking in with one last pass of glorified funk.

Some might argue that by doing away with the hard edge industrial soundscape of the original the Jam & Lewis remix loses some of its bite. But by presenting this funkified reworking they in fact meld Michael's angry side with his funk side, and do so in a truly convincing fashion.









**F**or his take on 'Off The Wall' Junior Vasquez went to the heart of the lyrics and delivered an all out party centric remix that demands a packed dance floor.

A whirling Rhodes keyboard beckons us as a slow building beat thumps in time as if guiding us to the centre of the floor. And if that's not enough, Michael's vocalization of the beat complete with hiccups and gasps call out to us. And just incase you're immune to his charms a soulful call out of "come on, yeah" is thrown in for good measure.

From there it's straight into the track. The stomping beat drives the sparse arrangement of the verse with the track opening and filling out in the chorus. By the second verse the addition of strings and beeping synth adds to the carefree nature of Michael's delivery.

Being sure to preserve the excitement of the original but build it into a more epic party vibe for the 90s, Junior slowly builds on the foundation of the Rhodes and springing beat steadily adding more and more accompaniment rather than show his whole bag of tricks all at once.

Whilst this slow build approach gives you something new to hook into as the song progresses it does mean that certain opportunities are not played to their full potential, most notably the bridge that doesn't have enough distinction from the main groove to really deliver what it should.

Designed with the dance floor clearly in mind the remix doesn't lift as much as it potentially could but stays true to its clubland origins where a driving beat is king.

It's only in the last minute of the song when perhaps the pressure is off that Vasquez really starts to play around with the structure adding some punch to the mix with extra beats and effects, even using Michael's percussive vocals to hammer home the point. As with many of the remixes of the 'Off The Wall' era we're treated briefly to a few out take ad-libs that didn't make it onto the album version, and left wanting more.

Setting out to conquer the party vibe the Junior Vasquez remix delivers a fitting modern counterpoint to the disco driven flavour of the original.





## THEY DON'T CARE ABOUT US

Love To Infinity's Walk In The Park Mix

**M**ichael was a master at seducing your ear with a beautiful melody or irresistible groove and then overlaying lyrics that at first, until you stopped to process them, seemed innocuous. 'Money', 'Smooth Criminal', 'Billie Jean' all have this lyrical sharp edge that at first you don't see. So it seemed somewhat fitting that when Love To Infinity took on remix duties for 'They Don't Care About Us' they looked to deconstruct the song and contrast the hard hitting nature of the lyrics with a softening of the production.

Opening with background noise of children playing set against soothing keys and synth pads, the song takes on a more introspective and thoughtful approach. Looped over and over beneath the mix is the chanting of the school yard and the call out of "don't worry what people say we know the truth" perhaps further cementing the honesty of children as seen in Michael's eyes.

In this new imagining the lyrics take on a more honest assessment, less confrontation and more statement of feelings in search

for understanding. It also contains the most convincing re-edit of words deemed offensive in the album version.

With a softer arrangement Michael's voice is allowed to punch through harder, and his words are given the chance to really register with the listener. This is added by the decision to drop the beat out at certain points and further draw focus to the message in the lyrics.

Revisiting the multitracks uncovered an unused choir that is present in this retelling adding an epic sense of importance to the track. Slowly added into the mix the choir assists in turning the remix into a message of comforted unity rather than combative battle cry.

### ALSO RECOMMENDED

Dallas Main Mix

Harder hitting with a James Brownesque feel the raucous hip hop beat and trap snares match the bite in the lyrics. Also unveils the full choir later used in Immortal.









**B**umping out of your speakers with a top-down volume-up summer drive vibe, Roger Sanchez's reworking of 'Jam' sweeps you up in its bright and bouncing groove.

With a freshly minted shuffling beat that mixes elements of new jack with 2-step Roger makes sure not to steer too far from the elements that made the original such a breakout track from 'Dangerous'.

Bubbling keys and funk plucked guitar underscore the message in Michael's "State of the World" address as he pleads for unity in solving the problems that plague the world. The clever use of breakdowns further highlights Michael's point of view and also acts as a moment of clarity as he proclaims "you can't hurt me I've found peace within myself".

The familiar and irresistible horn licks and scratching stabs ensure your head keeps bopping and provide extra accent to Heavy D's rap. But instead of coming out of the rap all full of bluster, Sanchez drops the beat and strips back the arrangement to allow for a moment of just Michael, his finger snaps and swirling synth beds to catch your breath before segueing into a freestyle synth solo that adds a jazz funk edge to the remainder of the mix.

Cool and refreshing, Sanchez's Jeep mix is made to be pumped out of car stereos and acts as the perfect sound track for a getaway when you need an escape from the world.

### ALSO RECOMMENDED

Silky 7"

Steve 'Silk' Hurley grinds out a garage house meets funk reinvention in this blistering horn lick fuelled take. Chopping up MJ's ad-libs he creates counter melodies and accents that will have you pressing repeat over and over.









**S**mooth and sorrowful. Sparse and haunting. Charles Roane's Full R&B Mix beautifully illustrates the isolation and lament of 'Stranger in Moscow'.

Here the mood is more solemn, almost helpless as the piano plays notes that fall like rain drops set against a minimalist beat of congas and drums. The swooning guitar and fretless bass give the mix a soulful sway as Michael recounts the feelings of being holed up in a strange town with the sense that the whole world has abandoned him.

Supporting the vocal rather than trying to overpower or compete with it, the production is organic, real and raw reflecting the emotion that Michael wrings from each syllable he sings. There's a clarity in purpose here that is evident in every note, in the way the song is arranged and evolves.

Subtlety is key, with soft strings that rise into the arrangement like a flickering flame while the wandering freestyle

piano works to underscore the search for connection throughout.

The restraint shown in the production allows for Michael's vocals to cut through and for his sense of melancholy to really permeate the track. Critics might argue that the remix suffers as there is no real build or musical offering of hope and fades rather than ends, but this too could be seen as the remixer's vision of presenting the tale of isolation as a bleak reality without the happy ending.

Whereas others tasked with remixing the track tried to recreate 'Stranger in Moscow' as a joyful dance track (to disastrous effect) and completely missed the point, Charles Roane saw the beauty in the sparse arrangement of the original and recast it with more earthy organic tones that further heighten the plight of Michael in his loneliest of hours. And in doing so made it a remix worthy of repeat playing.

### ALSO RECOMMENDED

Hani Dub Hop Mix

Set against a trip hop beat and brooding with hints of MJ's vocals this dub remix verges on threatening.

Swirling and sweeping through the sonic landscape Michael's urgent and desperate ad-libs become hypnotic.











**W**ith a skip in its Neo-Soul infused groove the Track Masters remix of the sublime and terribly underrated 'Butterflies' is perhaps one of the rarest remixes in Michael's vast collection. Released initially as a promo only 12" and slated for full commercial release the remix was yanked from production despite the song's strong performance charting in the Top 20 on the Billboard Top 100. As a result this somewhat obscure remix is a new discovery for many a fan.

Having dabbled with guest rappers before on previous releases hearing someone from the hip hop world on an MJ track was nothing new. It was new however for a female rapper to appear along MJ. As if relishing that notable distinction the Master Mix kicks off with Eve delivering her trademark stylised rhymes over a swinging beat assisted by an interpolation sample of Issac Hayes classic make out song 'A Few More Kisses' on constant loop.

For her part Eve's rhymes are smoother and softer than her usual stock and trade and slide in perfectly with the more chilled out vibe of the Track Masters production and synch in with the overall them of the lyrics.

Keeping with the Neo-Soul flavour of the original the arrangement during the verses is sparse, restricted to just the core ingredients of beat, chords and Michael's ever so smooth as silk vocals. Adding the most subtle of pauses in the beat following the first verse adds an extra bit of tease to the arrangement as Michael details the anxiousness of new love.

The full harmonies in the chorus are fully supported with the existing sliding horns of the original and the Issac Hayes sample sprinkled in for good measure and extra seduction.

The B section in the second verse is heightened as Michael climbs his vocal register accompanied by a building horns and string arrangement that adds to the joy of hearing Michael hit those stratospheric high notes.

Eve's rap reprise feels like a natural fit rather than an overbearing add on and builds on the overall narrative of the song.

As a smooth companion to the original the Track Masters remix proves yet again that whatever genre he played in Michael would always reign supreme.







## You Rock My World

Track Masters Remix feat Jay-Z

**C**reeping out of your speakers with a chilled and confident lean back vibe the Track Masters Remix of 'You Rock My World' puts a decidedly urban spin on the first single off *Invisible*. In a King of Pop meets King of Hip Hop collaboration Jay-Z guest features on the track delivering a sharp as a switchblade and twist on a rhyme verse to kick off the remix

With a working relationship they debuted several month's prior in June of 2001 (2 month's prior to the singles release) and further cemented by a rumoured but often disputed repaying of favour by Michael with an uncredited backing vocals on Jay-Z's "Girls Girls Girls", Jay-Z gives his verses on an MJ track the right balance of respect and refrains from trying to dominate Michael's verses with unnecessary ad-libs.

With a cool summer vibe to it, the Track Masters rebuild 'You Rock My World' from the ground up with a remix full of swagger; a strolling beat, super infectious whistle, bright acoustic guitar playing and smooth as butter bass lines (not to mention a brief sample of Biz Markie 'Nobody Beats The Biz'). All of this gives Michael's vocals a little more sway to them as they sit inside the beat and gives space to the irresistible hook of the chorus vocal melody supported by the sure to be stuck in your head whistle refrain - an at once perplexing but enjoyable inclusion on a hip hop styled track.

Although hardly an extended mix with a slight run time of 3:28 (compared to the 5:06 run time of the album version) the Track Masters manage to make the remix feel full of life and balance the new arrangement with an approach that makes it feel like a natural extension to the original rather than a total left turn.

A missed opportunity to help push the single the remix was released only as a promo 12" and CD. However it did find its way onto radio and into the fan community and reigns as perhaps the most file shared remix of Michael's career.











**S**linkier and more mysterious than its album counterpart the Mouse T Radio Rock mix of 'Ghost' still manages to thrill.

Surprisingly restrained and reserved from a production point of view, especially for someone best known for his clubland bangers this is quite a feat. Doing away with his trademark hyper beats Mousse T replaces them with a stripped down approach to really illicit the feeling from the lyrics.

By removing the sound effects that appear in the original, the focus here is clearly on the vocals and music to convey the sense of dread and betrayal that the lyrics deal with.

Whilst the mix has a Radio Rock moniker, it falls more in line with modern blues, with emotionally evocative guitar noodling set against the narrative of the lyrics. Just listen to how the guitar weeps and howls during the chorus, and how more freestyle and searching its playing becomes with each passing verse matching the sense of paranoia and questioning of the lyrics. Add to the increased in the mix sweeping harmonies that float through your speakers like the figurative Ghosts of the title and you have a listening experience that really wraps around you and draws you in.

Michael's voice is more prominent in this stripped back, more relaxed approach letting you really hear the multilayered depth in the backing harmonies that underpin each chorus. And the introduction of tight snare strokes after the second chorus ramps up the groove and makes it more driven propelling it through the final minutes and in turn gives Michael's ad-libs more bite.

Trimmed down to a radio friendly 4:27 the remix doesn't try to overpower with a raft of bells and whistles and unlike his boisterous (and less successful) club inspired remix, Mousse T demonstrates a degree of respect that stays true to the intent and intrigue of the original.









### ALSO RECOMMENDED

Tony Moran's 7" HIStory Lesson

Tightly wound in this trimmed down edit of his epic 8 minute remix, this mix blasts off from the first thumping beat and doesn't let up. A high energy mix that gets the heart racing.

**H**ISTORY with its chopping and changing alternating rhythm and hard to soft melody was always going to be a difficult track to reimagine and remix. And whilst it was Tony Moran's hyperclub driven 'HIStory Lesson' that got the official nod as a single and garnered more spins in clubs with its epic 8 minutes of pounding beats and spiralling synth runs, it's the quiet determination of The Ummah Radio Mix that steals the show.

With hypnotic guitar intro and forward propulsion groove the remix does away the usual overproduction and let's Michael's words of motivation propel the track. The verses feel sharper edged with Michael's lyrics taking on greater importance. The whirling organ beneath the vocals gives us a hint of soft church revival with Michael as inspirational preacher.

By anchoring the remix with a steady beat the transition to the chorus is smoother and less jarring. The lyrics also take on a less saccharine vibe and become more convincing with a hard tight snare underpinning them. The result is the words feel more profound and more like the true words of motivation that they are.

And that is the power of this remix, its bare, raw approach shifts the focus onto the power of the lyrics and the struggle and ongoing journey they deal with. With the final build extra instrumentation is introduced to give it more power before returning to its constant step. Whilst a bigger finish may have been called for, perhaps this is the key in the Ummah mix's message that the journey and ambition continues and you have to keep moving.

If the oft played Tony Moran mix wants you to get up and dance, The Ummah mix is all about getting you to march on and meet your goal and for that reason is more befitting of the theme in the original.









**B**orrowing from the lessons learned in his remix of Janet's 'Any Time Any Place' R. Kelly brings a slo-jam spin to 'You Are Not Alone' that gives it a softer, more seductive feel.

With a bed of quintessential slo-jam percussion and warm and teasing synth lines, R. Kelly strips back the production to let Michael's voice really shine through the verses. Taking on a quiet storm approach the remix slowly brews in the verses then builds and swirls with extra instrumentation with each passing chorus.

For the chorus Kelly brings in additional strings to give it extra flight but ensures in letting Michael's voice sway you with its emotion rather than overly relying on the music to tug at the heart strings. In the second pass of the chorus the inclusion of piano and acoustic guitar give it extra warmth and comfort with an almost earthy tone as it approaches the bridge.

And what a bridge. Ascending in unison with Michael's voice, strings gather and build as Michael sings "Whisper 3 words and I'll come running". And as Michael reaches for that glorious extended high note the song shifts in its power and passion.

A crisp snare cracks heralding in a change in feel as the intensity increases and with the key change the production takes on more of a live feel, freeing itself from the shackles of a programmed execution. Splashing cymbals add to the urgency and as a result Michael's vocals feel more passionate and pleading. The backgrounds feel lush and fuller with the increased prominence of the choir and extra orchestration.

With the inclusion of a live audience at the end of the mix R Kelly juxtaposes the adoration and isolation of fame, and perhaps offers a sense of reassurance to Michael illustrating that his fan base is still there and as such he will never be alone.



## ALSO RECOMMENDED

### Smooth Criminal 'Annie Mix'

If you can't get enough of Michael's pleas for Annie, then this is your mix. Electric bass swaps out the heavy keys of the album cut and the emphasis here is clearly on the groove (and Annie).

### Hollywood Tonight 'Throwback Mix'

Remixed to include the iconic beat of 'Billie Jean' (per Michael's work in progress requests) this mix gives a better feel for how Michael left the track than the finished version on 'Michael' especially for the exclusion of the spoken word section.

### The Way You Make Me Feel 'Dance Extended Mix'

Remixed by Bruce Swedien with a clear focus on the dance floor this extended take features a tweaked mix, extra horns and a glorious extended elastic bass breakdown.

### Is It Scary (Downtempo Groove Mix)

Remixed with an apt sense of tension and dread Eddie Arroyo abandons his techno instincts and creates a dramatic take built on a driving groove.

### SWV - Right Here 'Human Nature Duet (Demolition Mix)'

The closest we ever got to a remix of 'Human Nature' is this duet mix with SWV's 'Right Here' (which sampled Human Nature in their own remix). Remixed by Teddy Riley the pre-mashup duet is set against a classic hip hop beat and helped introduce 'Human Nature' to a new generation of club goers.









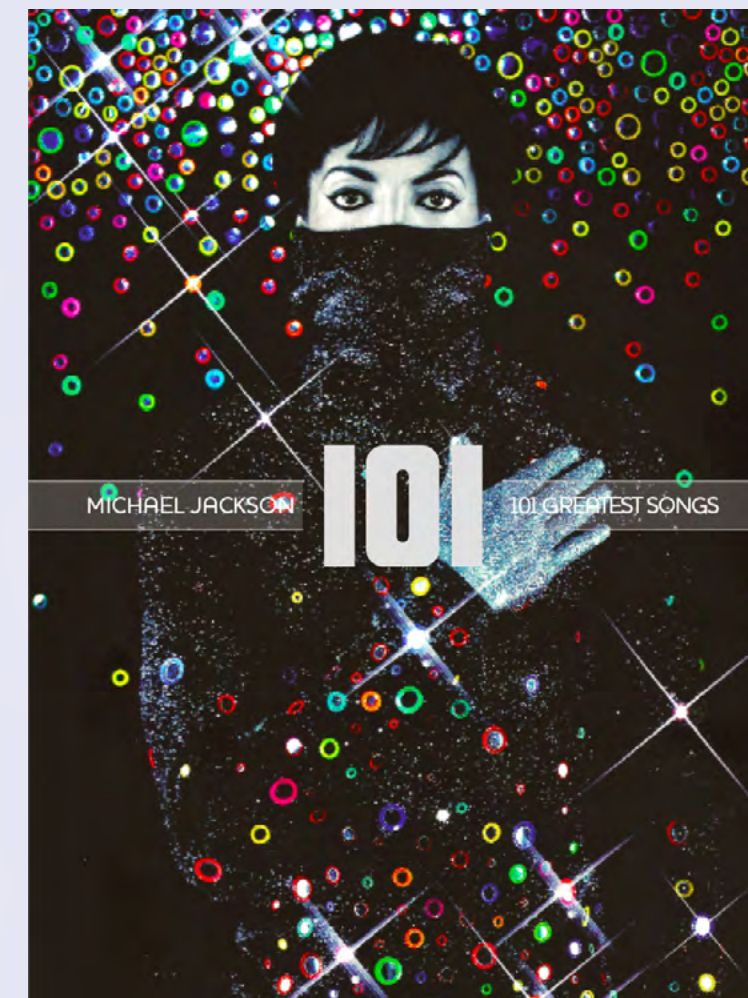
I hope this exploration into the The Remixes of Michael Jackson has made you want to revisit and dig deeper into his art. If one of your must haves isn't on the list let me know and tell me what it means to you.  
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