



The Glove. Called The “Holy Grail” of MJ collectibles by auction dealer Darren Julien, this *HIS* oric glove was worn by Michael during his legendary “Billie Jean” performance on *“Motown 25: Yesterday, Today, Forever”*

. The NBC television special, featuring a “Who’s Who” of Motown acts, was taped in front of a live studio audience on March 25th, 1983. It was broadcast on May 16th, where it was seen by an American audience of almost 50 million people. The special marked the “reunion” of the original Jackson 5, which had not performed together (with brother Jermaine) since 1976. But the electrifying performance that night that literally changed

HIS

tory...was

Billie Jean

. In fact, it was the indelible significance of what took place that evening which made The Glove itself so iconic from that very moment onward.

The Performance:



After performing a medley of hits with his brothers, Michael reminisced for a moment with the crowd, insisting that *“those were magic moments, with all of my brothers...I like those songs a lot.”*

Then, he walked back toward the microphone stand, placing the mic back in its clasp. *“But especially...”*

(his facial expression now instantly transforming to a very serious and deliberate one)

“I like...”

(screeching from the crowd, we hear “BILLIE JEAN!!”)...

“The new songs.”

What unfolded in front of our eyes after that is forever etched in all of our minds, no matter how long you have been a Michael Jackson fan. Christopher Smith, now a columnist for the LA Times, described what it was like to be there at that exact moment: *“It wasn’t a roar--more the sound of simultaneous shrieks from all over the auditorium, like everyone being scared at once.”*

Even though Michael performed this song live *hundreds* of times after that performance, nothing could match the raw ENERGY and emotion displayed on that particular night. From the moment he reached down to pick up that hat...swooping it onto his head in a single motion, the

POSE

, pelvic thrusts, a quick look behind him, hand on knee, hand on knee, hands out, hands out, throwing the hat,

POSE.



Clapping hands, hands on belt, reaching back for an (imaginary) comb...through the hair (twice)...comb back. All perfectly in sync to the grooves and the drum beats pulsating through the song's intro. Indeed, one could write an entire dissertation describing just the first *20 seconds*

of that performance alone. As Michael would sing years later...“divinity in motion.”



No matter how many times we’ve seen this performance since, the intensity and emotion on display that evening leaves us mesmerized, and the irresistible urge to watch it again...and again. Undoubtedly the most memorable part of the performance was his public debut of the moonwalk, which would instantly become Michael Jackson’s signature dance. Certainly, Michael’s later performances of Billie Jean (on tour and on TV) are much more technically sound, and more polished than “Motown 25”. And indeed, Michael’s live concerts all included a stellar and extended “spotlight only” routine to the distinct beats of drummer “Sugarfoot” Moffett.



However, nothing can compare to the magic of that singular night in 1983, and the passion exuding through Michael’s eyes, face, and body could never be matched again...even by a perfectionist like MJ.

[Watch Michael’s “Motown 25” Performance](#)



“Motown 25” was a coronation which catapulted Michael Jackson to the world's consciousness like never before. Many of the 50 million people who watched that performance bought *Thriller* in the coming months, keeping it #1 on the Billboard charts for an unprecedented 37 weeks, soon making it the biggest selling album of all time. Michael’s appeal transcended race,

gender, age, religion...and had everyone from professional dancers to young school children mimicking his dance moves and the way he dressed. And at the very center of that “look” was...The Glove.

The Glove:

As memorable as the performance itself from that night was The Glove that adorned his left hand. Michael talks about the evolution of wearing the single glove as a stage costume piece in *Moonwalk*: *“I had been wearing a single glove for years before Thriller...I was wearing it on some of the old tours back in the 1970s, and I wore one glove during the Off the Wall tour and on the cover of the live album that came out afterward...but it hadn't gotten a lot of attention until [Motown 25]. I felt that one glove was cool. Wearing two gloves seemed so ordinary, but a single glove was different and was definitely a **look.**”*

That “look” was something that became known as Michael’s trademark. And, even though he had been wearing it for



years, the single glove, along with the matching socks, the sequin jacket, and the black fedora worn on Motown 25 instantly became identifiable as Michael Jackson’s magical persona. And for that very reason, The Glove worn on that night has a historical significance within Pop Culture perhaps rivaled only by Dorothy’s “ruby red” slippers.

The sequin glove worn on the Motown 25 special is significantly different from the other gloves Michael had worn before or since. Previously, Michael most often wore his glove on the *right* hand. Starting with this performance, he almost always wore the glove on his left hand. Presumably, this freed his right hand to do other dance choreography (pointing, throwing his hat, removing an (imaginary) comb from his back pocket and combing his hair, etc.), as well as holding the microphone.



Apparently made in a hurried fashion, (not unlike the spontaneity and last minute creation of the performance itself) it is made using a cream leather golfing glove with an interior label reading "Made In Korea." The Glove has an adjustable Velcro flap on the back of the hand with a single white snap at the back of the wrist. Other gloves from this era (as made by costumer Bill Whitten) were covered with individually hand-sewn Swarovski crystals, a meticulous and time-consuming process. However, this glove uses a mesh "web" of faceted rhinestones, hand cut to the glove's shape. These rhinestone strips have been whip stitched to the back of the glove. Rhinestones are completely absent on the palm of the glove (presumably on purpose in this instance, to allow Michael to alternately and easily hold the microphone in his gloved hand).

Following his performance that evening, Michael gifted The Glove to long time friend Walter "Clyde" Orange, one of the



founding members of the Commodores. Orange knew Michael Jackson and his family since the Summer of 1971 when the Commodores toured with the Jackson 5 as their opening act. In November of 2009, Orange commissioned The Glove to Julien's Auctions, and it sold for a then record **\$420,000** at Julien's 2009 Music Icons auction. The Glove is now on display at the [MJ Gallery At Ponte 16 in Macau](#)

For more detail on this glove and the auction of it, view our [memorabilia listing here](#) . To see more personally owned and worn MJ clothing memorabilia, [click here](#)

. Photos from "Motown 25" provided courtesy of www.MJPhotosCollectors.com

. For additional photos from Motown 25, [click here](#)

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