

= Billie Jean =

" Billie Jean " is a song by American singer Michael Jackson . It is the second single from the singer 's sixth solo album , Thriller (1982) . It was written and composed by Jackson and produced by Jackson and Quincy Jones . There are contradictory claims on the meaning of the song 's lyrics . One suggests that they are derived from a real @-@ life experience , in which a female fan claimed that Jackson (or one of his brothers) had fathered one of her twins . However , Jackson himself stated that " Billie Jean " was based on groupies he had encountered . The song is well known for its distinctive bassline played by Louis Johnson and Jackson 's vocal hiccups . The song was mixed 91 times by audio engineer Bruce Swedien before it was finalized , though he reportedly went with the 2nd mix as the final product .

The song became a success ; it was one of the best @-@ selling singles of 1983 and is one of the best @-@ selling singles worldwide . The song topped both the US and UK charts simultaneously . In other countries , it topped the charts of Switzerland and reached the top ten in Austria , Italy , New Zealand , Norway and Sweden . " Billie Jean " was certified platinum by the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) in 1989 . Rolling Stone magazine placed the song in the 58th spot on its list of The 500 Greatest Songs of All Time .

Awarded numerous honours ? including two Grammy Awards , one American Music Award , and an induction into the Music Video Producers Hall of Fame ? the song and corresponding music video helped propel Thriller to the status of best @-@ selling album of all time . The song was promoted with a short film that broke down MTV 's racial barrier as the first video by a black artist to be aired in heavy rotation . Also , Jackson 's Emmy @-@ nominated performance on Motown 25 : Yesterday , Today , Forever , in which Jackson premiered his " moonwalk " , helped to popularize the song . It was additionally promoted through Jackson 's Pepsi commercials ; during the filming of one commercial , Jackson 's scalp was severely burned . Covered by modern artists , " Billie Jean " sealed Jackson 's status as an international pop icon .

= = Background = =

Jackson stated several times that " Billie Jean " was based on the groupies he and his brothers encountered while part of The Jackson 5 . " Billie Jean is kind of anonymous . It represents a lot of girls . They used to call them groupies in the ' 60s . " He added : " They would hang around backstage doors , and any band that would come to town they would have a relationship with , and I think I wrote this out of experience with my brothers when I was little . There were a lot of Billie Jeans out there . Every girl claimed that their son was related to one of my brothers . "

Jackson 's biographer J. Randy Taraborrelli promoted the theory that " Billie Jean " was derived from a real life experience the singer faced in 1981 . The Magic & The Madness documents how a young woman wrote Jackson a letter , which informed the singer that he was the father of one of her twins . Jackson , who regularly received letters of this kind , had never met the woman in question and ignored it . The woman , however , continued to send Jackson more letters , which stated that she loved him and wanted to be with him . She wrote of how happy they would be if they raised the child together . She pondered how Jackson could ignore his own flesh and blood . The letters disturbed the singer to the extent that he suffered nightmares .

Following the letters , Jackson received a parcel containing a photograph of the fan , as well as a letter and a gun . Jackson was horrified ; the letter asked that the pop singer kill himself on a certain day and at a specific time . The fan would do the same once she had killed their baby . She wrote that if they could not be together in this life , then they would be in the next . To his mother 's dismay , Jackson had the photograph of the woman framed and hung above the dining room table of their family home . Afterwards , the Jacksons discovered that the fan had been sent to a psychiatric hospital .

= = Production = =

Michael Jackson wrote " Billie Jean " with his female fans in mind , and later stated that when he wrote the song , he knew it would be a success : " A musician knows hit material . Everything has to feel in place . It fulfills you and it makes you feel good . That 's how I felt about ' Billie Jean ' . I knew it was going to be big when I was writing it . " The singer explained that he was so absorbed by the song that , in one instance , he did not notice that his car had caught fire as he drove down a freeway with a friend until a passing motorcyclist informed him . Jackson noted : " The kid probably saved our lives . "

Jackson faced numerous disagreements with the song 's co @-@ producer . It has been reported that Quincy Jones did not want the song to appear on Thriller and that he felt that the song was too weak to be part of the collection , but Jones has stated this is a false rumor . The producer disliked the demo and did not care for the song 's bassline . Jones wanted to cut Jackson 's 29 @-@ second introduction , which was the longest one ever created at the time . The entertainer , however , insisted that it be kept . " I said , ' Michael we 've got to cut that intro ' " Jones later recalled . " He said : ' But that 's the jelly ! ' [...] ' That 's what makes me want to dance ' . And when Michael Jackson tells you , ' That 's what makes me want to dance ' , well , the rest of us just have to shut up . " Jones also wanted to change the track 's title to " Not My Lover " , as he believed that people would think the song referred to the tennis player Billie Jean King . Jackson refused to change the title and asked Jones to give him co @-@ producing credits for the track , as he felt that the demo tape sounded exactly like the finished product . In addition , Jackson wanted extra royalties . Jones granted neither and the two fell out for several days .

Having resolved their differences , Jones had Jackson sing his vocal overdubs through a six @-@ foot @-@ long cardboard tube . Jackson 's entire lead vocal was performed in one take ; he had received vocal training every morning throughout the production of the song . Jazz saxophonist Tom Scott played the lyricon . Bass guitarist Louis Johnson was then brought in and he played his part on every guitar he owned , before Jackson finally settled for a Yamaha bass . Greg Phillinganes was also drafted in and he played the keyboard . He later said of the song , " ' Billie Jean ' is hot on every level . It 's (sic) hot rhythmically moving action got Michael excited . It 's hot sonically , because the instrumentation is so minimal , you can really hear everything . It 's hot melodically [...] lyrically [and] vocally . It affects you physically , emotionally , even spiritually . "

The song was mixed by Bruce Swedien ninety @-@ one times ? unusual for Swedien , who usually mixed a song just once . Jones had told Swedien to create a drum sound that no one had ever heard before . The audio engineer was also told to add a different element : " sonic personality " . " What I ended up doing was building a drum platform and designing some special little things , like a bass drum cover and a flat piece of wood that goes between the snare and the hi @-@ hat " Swedien later wrote . " The bottom line is that there aren 't many pieces of music where you can hear the first three or four notes of the drums , and immediately tell what the piece of music is . " He concluded , " But I think that is the case with ' Billie Jean ' ? and that I attribute to sonic personality . "

= = Composition = =

" Billie Jean " blends sounds of post @-@ disco , rhythm and blues , funk , and dance @-@ pop . The song opens with a standard drum beat along with a standard hi @-@ hat , and it contains hardly any reverberation . After two bars , another standard open hi @-@ hat enters . After two more bars , a repetitive bassline enters . Each time it passes through the tonic , the note is doubled by a distorted synth bass . This accompaniment is followed by a repetitive three @-@ note synth , played staccato with a deep reverb . The defining chord progression is then established . Jackson 's quiet vocals enter , accompanied by a finger @-@ snap , which comes and goes during the verses , as the rhythm and chord progression repeats .

According to Daryl Hall , when Jackson was recording " We Are the World " , Jackson approached him and admitted to lifting the bassline for " Billie Jean " from a Hall & Oates song (apparently referring to Hall 's " I Can 't Go for That (No Can Do) " from the 1981 album Private Eyes) : " Michael Jackson once said directly to me that he hoped I didn 't mind that he copied that groove . "

Hall says he told Jackson that he had lifted the bassline himself , remarking , " it 's something we all do . "

According to Inside the Hits , the lyrics refer to the commotion created by Billie Jean on a dance floor . She entices the crowd with a seductive come @-@ on before luring Jackson to her bedroom , through the fragrance of her perfume . Jackson 's vocal range spanned from a high baritone to a falsetto and he usually wrote melodies to show this range . However , in the verses of " Billie Jean " , the singer 's vocals range from a tenor to a low falsetto . A four note falsetto is showcased in the chorus and , during the last line , Jackson peaks at a full octave . The song has a tempo of 117 beats per minute and is in the key of F ? minor . Following the first chorus , a cello @-@ like synth eases in at the beginnings of both the third , and later , the fourth , verses . Upon the announcement that the baby 's eyes resemble Jackson 's , a voice laments , " oh no " . This is met with Jackson 's signature falsetto " hee hee " . The bridge debuts the strings , and holds a pedal tone tonic with the exception of two lines and a chord leading into the chorus . Violins are then played , followed by a four @-@ note minor guitar solo . During the solo , vocal shouts , screams and laughs are added . Throughout this , the chord progression remains unaltered and is laced with Jackson 's vocal hiccups . All the musical and vocal elements are then brought together in the final chorus . In the fade , Jackson repeats the denial of fathering Billie Jean 's child .

= = Release and reception = =

On December 1 , 1982 , Thriller was released to critical and commercial success . A month later , on January 2 , 1983 , " Billie Jean " was released as the album 's second single ; it follows Jackson 's successful duet with Paul McCartney on " The Girl Is Mine " . The song reached number one on Billboard 's Hot 100 chart , where it remained for seven weeks . After seven weeks at number one , the song fell to number 5 , and stayed in the top ten for 11 weeks . Billboard ranked it at the No. 2 song for 1983 . " Billie Jean " topped the R & B chart within three weeks , and became Jackson 's fastest @-@ rising number one single since " ABC " , " The Love You Save " and " I 'll Be There " in 1970 . It remained at number one for nine weeks , before the single was eventually replaced by The Gap Band 's " Outstanding " . " Billie Jean " peaked at number 9 on the Adult Contemporary chart . It was also number one in the UK Singles Chart . " Billie Jean " and Thriller topped both the singles and album charts in the same week . This occurred on both sides of the Atlantic simultaneously , a feat very few acts have ever achieved . The song was the third best selling single of 1983 in the US and ninth in the UK . " Billie Jean " also reached number one in Switzerland , the top ten in Austria , Italy , New Zealand , Norway and Sweden .

In a Rolling Stone review , Christopher Connelly described " Billie Jean " as a " lean , insistent funk number whose message couldn 't be more blunt : ' She says I am the one / But the kid is not my son ' " . He added that the track was a " sad , almost mournful song , but a thumping resolve underlies [Jackson 's] feelings " . Blender stated that the song was " one of the most sonically eccentric , psychologically fraught , downright bizarre things ever to land on Top 40 radio " . They added that it was " frighteningly stark , with a pulsing , cat @-@ on @-@ the @-@ prowl bass figure , whip @-@ crack downbeat and eerie multi @-@ tracked vocals ricocheting in the vast spaces between keyboards and strings " . Overall , the magazine described the track as " a five @-@ minute @-@ long nervous breakdown , set to a beat " . Stylus said of the song , " It 's one of the best representations of film noir in pop music , ending with no resolution except a single mother and selfish , careless scumball . " In a review of Thriller 25 , AllMusic observed that " Billie Jean " was " startling " in its " futuristic funk " . The track also won praise from Jackson biographers . Nelson George stated that Jerry Hey 's string arrangement added danger to " Billie Jean " , while J. Randy Taraborrelli added that it was " dark and sparse " by Quincy Jones ' production standards .

" Billie Jean " has been recognized with numerous awards and honors . At the 1984 Grammy Awards the song earned Jackson two of a record eight awards ; Best R & B Song and Best R & B Male Vocal Performance . It won the Billboard Music Award for favorite dance / disco 12 " LP , and the magazine 's 1980 's poll named " Billie Jean " as the " Black Single of the Decade " . The American Music Awards recognized the track as the Favorite Pop / Rock Single , while Cash Box

honored the song with the awards for Top Pop Single and Top Black Single . The track was recognised with the Top International Single award by the Canadian Black Music Awards , and awarded the Black Gold Award for Single of the Year . " Billie Jean " has also been awarded for its sales . It won the National Association of Recording Merchandisers Gift of Music award for best selling single in 1984 . By 1989 , the standard format single was certified platinum by the Recording Industry Association of America , for shipments of at least one million units . The digital sales of " Billie Jean " were certified gold in 2005 , for shipments of at least 500 @, @ 000 units . The digital sales of " Billie Jean " were certified 2x Platinum in US on May 9 , 2013 . The total number of digital downloads of the song in the US , as of October 2014 , stands at 2 @. @ 9 million . In May 2014 , a viral video of a high school @-@ aged teenager imitating Jackson 's Motown 25 performance of the song helped the song re @-@ enter the Billboard Hot 100 at number 14 , with much of its chart performance was 95 % credited to streams of the viral video .

= = Promotion = =

= = = Music video = = =

The short film for " Billie Jean " is considered the video that brought MTV , until then a fairly new and unknown music channel , into mainstream attention . It was one of the first videos by a black artist to be aired regularly by the channel , as the network 's executives felt black music wasn 't " rock " enough . Directed by Steve Barron , the video shows a photographer who follows Jackson . The paparazzo never catches the singer , and when photographed Jackson fails to materialize on the developed picture . The entertainer dances his way to Billie Jean 's hotel room and as he walks along a sidewalk , each tile lights up at his touch .

After he performs a quick spin , Jackson jumps and lands , freeze framed , on his toes . Upon arrival at the hotel , Jackson climbs the staircase to Billie Jean 's room . Each step lights up as he touches it and a burnt out " Hotel " sign illuminates as he passes . The paparazzo then arrives at the scene and watches as Jackson vanishes under the covers of Billie Jean 's bed . Trained by the police , the paparazzo is then arrested for spying on Billie Jean . Jackson sported a new look for the video ; Jheri curled hair . Jackson 's clothes , a black leather suit with a pink shirt and a red bow tie , were copied by children around the US . Imitation became so severe that , despite pupil protests , Bound Brook High School banned students from wearing a single white glove like Jackson had on during the performance of " Billie Jean " at Motown 25 : Yesterday , Today , Forever .

Walter Yetnikoff , the president of Jackson 's record label CBS , approached MTV to play the " Billie Jean " video . He became enraged when MTV refused to play the video , and threatened to go public with MTV 's stance on black musicians . " I said to MTV , ' I 'm pulling everything we have off the air , all our product . I 'm not going to give you any more videos . And I 'm going to go public and fucking tell them about the fact you don 't want to play music by a black guy . ' " MTV relented and played the " Billie Jean " video in heavy rotation along with Prince 's " Little Red Corvette " . After the video was aired , Thriller went on to sell an additional 10 million copies . The short film was inducted into the Music Video Producers Hall of Fame in 1992 . In a 2005 poll of 31 pop stars , video directors , agents and journalists conducted by telecommunications company 3 , the music video was ranked fifth in their " Top 20 Music Videos Ever " . The video was also ranked as the 35th greatest music video in a list compiled by MTV and TV Guide at the millennium .

The music video is featured on the DVDs Video Greatest Hits ? HIStory , Number Ones , on the bonus DVD of Thriller 25 and Michael Jackson 's Vision .

= = = Motown 25 = = =

On March 25 , 1983 , Michael Jackson performed " Billie Jean " to critical and popular acclaim . Staged at the Pasadena Civic Auditorium , Motown 25 : Yesterday , Today , Forever was a celebration of Motown Records ' twenty @-@ fifth anniversary (despite the fact that Motown ,

launched in 1959 , was only 24 years old in 1983) . Organized by Suzanne de Passe , the event was to feature all of the most popular Motown acts , both past and present . The Motown stars were to reunite for one evening , to pay tribute to Berry Gordy and acknowledge his effect on their lives . Jackson initially refused the invitation , but reconsidered after a personal visit from Gordy , for whom the singer had great respect . It was decided that the singer would perform " Billie Jean " .

Following performances by Marvin Gaye , Smokey Robinson , and Mary Wells , The Jacksons took to the stage for their first group performance together in eight years . The brothers sang a medley of their old hits . After they finished with " I 'll Be There " , they left Michael alone on stage . He addressed the audience and then went into his routine . He wore black pants , leather penny loafers , a black sequined jacket , and a single white rhinestone glove . To begin his performance , Jackson snapped a fedora to his head and struck a pose ? his right hand on his hat and his left leg bent . During a musical interlude , the singer executed a move which many believe to have sealed his status as a pop icon . Jackson glided backwards to perform the moonwalk , before he spun on his heels and landed en pointe . It was the first time Jackson had performed the moonwalk in public ; he had practiced it in his kitchen prior to the show .

Motown 25 : Yesterday , Today , Forever was watched by 50 million people and Jackson 's routine earned him an Emmy nomination . With the performance , Jackson reached a new audience and increased the sales of Thriller , which eventually became the best @-@ selling album of all @-@ time . The day after the show aired , Jackson was called by his childhood idol Fred Astaire , who commended the singer . Another childhood idol , Sammy Davis , Jr . , had admired Jackson 's black sequined jacket during the performance and later received it as a gift .

Jackson stated at the time that he was disappointed in his performance ; he had wanted to remain on his toes longer than he had . Jackson subsequently said that " Billie Jean " was one of his favorite songs to perform live , but only when he did not have to do it the way he had on Motown 25 : Yesterday , Today , Forever . " The audience wants a certain thing ? I have to do the moonwalk in that spot , " he later said . " I 'd like to do a different version . "

In a Top 100 list compiled by VH1 and Entertainment Weekly in 2000 , Jackson 's performance was ranked as the sixth greatest rock ' n ' roll TV moment . Five years later , Entertainment Weekly named Jackson 's Motown 25 performance as one of the most important pop culture moments in history . " It was a moment that crossed over in a way that no live musical performance ever had . There was a messianic quality to it " , Entertainment Weekly editor Steve Daly commented . The performance has been shown on television numerous times . It is also featured on the DVDs : HIStory on Film , Volume II and the bonus DVD of Thriller 25 .

= = = Pepsi commercials = = =

In 1984 , Pepsi sponsored the Jacksons ' Victory Tour . In return , Michael and his brothers were to star in two commercials for the company . Jackson had reworked " Billie Jean " for the commercial and entitled it " Pepsi Generation " . The song was used as the official jingle for the commercials and released as a 7 " promo single . The launch of " The Choice of a New Generation " campaign in February 1984 was attended by 1 @, @ 600 people who were issued with a programme and the 7 " single . During the filming of the second commercial , a firework exploded and Jackson 's hair caught fire . The incident left the singer in need of reconstructive surgery . The commercials were premiered at the Grammy Awards , the same night he collected a record eight awards .

= = Live performances = =

Along with " Thriller " , " Wanna Be Startin ' Somethin ' " , and " Beat It " , " Billie Jean " was performed for all of Michael Jackson 's tour concerts . After the ending chorus , the drum solo is always extended for a period of time as Jackson dances under one spotlight . The song almost always ends with Jackson singing " Billie Jean is not my lover " and throwing his hat towards the audience . Exceptions are some of the concerts in the Victory Tour , where he held his hat up and threw it afterwards . Since the Victory Tour , the performance has evolved in terms of dance moves

and overall song length .

Victory Tour ? Performance just over six minutes in length ; only about 30 @-@ 45 seconds in the spotlight dance ending .

Bad tour ? Flashing lights and sounds transition Beat It to Billie Jean . The first and second leg performances are considerably different , as the first leg was more like the " Victory Tour " , and Jackson did more dance moves in the second leg and the ending was therefore longer in the second leg , around seven minutes in length .

In the Dangerous World Tour , an illusion was made for Jackson to appear on the upper floor the moment " Thriller " ended through the use of a masked dancer posing as Jackson who he had switched with in the middle of the song . Jackson performed the song at a slightly slower speed than the Victory and Bad tours , but still faster than the studio version .

1993 Super Bowl ? Jackson performed a part of Billie Jean consisting of only the first refrain , second chorus and instrumental bridge where he did the moonwalk before ending with a pose .

1995 MTV VMA & 1999 MJ & Friends ? Shortened studio remix performed as part of a medley during the 1995 MTV Awards . Snare from " Why You Wanna Trip On Me " were added in the solo , in addition to the Billie Jean Bassline .

Royal Brunei Concert 1996 ? Similar tempo and instrumentation to the HIStory Tour. and the snare sample from " Why You Wanna Trip On Me " is repeatedly played throughout the spotlight ending along with the main drumbeat , but there is no bassline .

HIStory Tour ? Performances of the song were usually eight minutes with some up to nine minutes , always preceded by the two- or three @-@ minute " suitcase " intro , in which Jackson pulls his jacket , glove and hat out from a suitcase . Similar tempo and arrangement to the studio version .

Madison Square Garden ? Very similar to the HIStory Tour in instrumentation and vocal mixing , but some verses before the moonwalk are sung live and switches back and forth with playback . The " suitcase " intro is seen here as well .

This Is It ? One of these rehearsals was filmed completely and shown in the film This Is It . Here , the song is approximately 6 minutes in length .

Performances of the song are available on the HIStory on Film , Volume II , HIStory World Tour , Live in Bucharest : The Dangerous Tour , and Live at Wembley July 16 , 1988 video albums .

= = Billie Jean 2008 = =

Michael Jackson 's original version of " Billie Jean " was remixed by Kanye West for Thriller 25 , a 25th anniversary reissue of Jackson 's Thriller . Entitled " Billie Jean 2008 " , the remix garnered a mixed reception ; most critics felt that it was impossible to improve upon the original . Pitchfork Media 's Tom Ewing explained that a guest verse " might have added dynamics to the mix 's clumsy claustrophobia " .

Mike Joseph , in review of Thriller 25 for PopMatters , described the track listing of the reissue as " pleasant " but West 's " lazy " remix was the only exception . He added , " You 've been given the opportunity to remix the most iconic single from one of the most iconic albums of all time , and all you can do is stick a drum machine on top of the song 's original arrangement ? " . Rob Sheffield of Rolling Stone disliked the removal of the original bassline , and compared it to " putting Bobby Orr on the ice without a hockey stick " . IGN 's Todd Gilchrist praised West 's remix and stated that it was a " pretty great track " . He added , " it almost overplays the track 's originally understated drama , his additions enhance the song and demonstrate that in a contemporary context . "

= = Cover versions = =

= = = The Bates version = = =

In 1995 German punk rock band The Bates covered " Billie Jean " on their album Pleasure + Pain . The cover was also successful although intricacies of the original were not included in the cover .

The music video parodies Alfred Hitchcock 's Psycho .

===== Track listing =====

Maxi @-@ CD

Billie Jean ? 4 : 25

Tonight (Remix) ? 3 : 45

Love Is Dead (Part II) ? 3 : 22

Yeah (Acoustic Version) ? 1 : 06

===== Charts =====

===== The Sound Bluntz version =====

Canadian dance group The Sound Bluntz also recorded a cover which peaked at No. 17 on the Australian charts during March 2003 . It also reached No. 17 in Belgium , No. 14 in Finland , and No. 53 in the Netherlands .

===== Track listing =====

CD @-@ Maxi Kontor 14305 @-@ 5 (Edel)

Billie Jean (Beat Radio Mix) ? 4 : 00

Billie Jean (Beat Clubb Mix) ? 6 : 50

Billie Jean (Full Effect Mix) ? 7 : 34

Dura Dura (Reprise) ? 1 : 36

===== Charts =====

===== Other notable cover versions =====

In 1983 , Slingshot hit number one on the Billboard Dance / Disco charts with " Do It again / Billie Jean Medley " . British funk group Linx recorded the track in 1997 and retitled it " Billie Jean Got Soul " . Their cover peaked at number 34 in Sweden .

English musician Ian Brown took " Billie Jean " to number 5 on the UK charts in 2000 . It was the B @-@ side of " Dolphins Were Monkeys " . Brown later commented , " I love Jackson . I want to do a Jackson EP with ' Thriller ' , ' Beat It ' , ' Billie Jean ' and ' Rockin ' Robin ' or ' ABC ' on it . Hopefully I 'll get it done " . The singer later covered " Thriller " on Golden Gaze , from his second solo album , Golden Greats .

" Billie Jean " was recorded by American rock musician Chris Cornell for his Carry On album in 2007 . Cornell said of his cover , " I didn 't plan on it . It just sort of happened organically . I changed the music quite a bit , I didn 't touch the lyrics . " He added , " And it 's not a joke . I took a completely different approach to it , musically . " Cornell had previously performed the song live in Europe , including an acoustic set in Stockholm , Sweden in September 2006 . He later said , " I was getting ready to do some acoustic shows on a promotional tour for Revelations and I just wanted to have fun with it . " The cover received favorable reviews from critics . MTV noted the " bluesier , more pained and impassioned feel " which stripped away " any pop elements of the original " . Los Angeles Times described the track as " a grim , spooky take " on Jackson 's " Billie Jean " , and added that it was " amusing enough , even if it sounds a lot more like Metallica 's ' Nothing Else Matters ' " . The newspaper concluded that " Jacko 's mega hit [survived] the stunt translation " . In 2008 , Cornell 's version was performed live by David Cook on the seventh season of American Idol , and this version charted on Billboard 's Hot 100 at No. 47 . In May of the same year , dance act

Signature used " Nachna Onda Nei " on Britain 's Got Talent in their audition and again in their final performance . In 2011 , Patrick Stump covered the song in an a cappella mash @-@ up tribute to Jackson along with several other songs over pre @-@ recorded backing vocals .

= = Legacy = =

" Billie Jean " aided Thriller in becoming the biggest selling album of all time and has been referenced by performers such as Justin Timberlake , Chris Brown and Usher . The Guardian reflected that " more thought went into the production of this single than would go into the entire recording careers of Axl Rose , Coldplay , Shania Twain or Gwen Stefani . " The song and accompanying performances contributed to Jackson 's status as a legendary pop icon .

It was popularly believed that " Billie Jean " was an autobiographical song , referring to someone who claimed Jackson was the father of her child . Based on this theory , Lydia Murdock wrote the song " Superstar " , which was a minor hit in 1983 , intending this song as a criticism of Jackson 's purported denial of paternity .

Frequently listed in magazine polls of the best songs ever made , " Billie Jean " was named the greatest dance record of all time by BBC Radio 2 listeners . In a list compiled by Rolling Stone and MTV in 2000 , the song was ranked as the sixth greatest pop song since 1963 .

Rolling Stone placed the song at # 58 on its list of The 500 Greatest Songs of All Time (2010) . Billie Jean was voted number 2 in the ' The Nation 's Favourite Number 1 Single " , a British TV programme airing on ITV on 21 July 2012 . The British public had to choose their favourite number one from the past 60 years of music . " Bohemian Rhapsody " by Queen was voted the favourite . In a similar poll in 2015 the song was voted by the British public as the nation 's second favourite 1980s number one , being beaten to first place by " Every Breath You Take " by The Police .

In 2013 , WatchMojo.com ranked " Billie Jean " as the best Michael Jackson song . Users of the site cast their votes online . According to the host Rebecca Brayton she commented , " Its perfect blend of dance , pop and R & B cemented Jackson 's place in music history while its video helped popularize MTV and shatter racial boundaries . "

In an interview , Pharrell Williams stated that " Billie Jean " was one of his favorite songs . " It is hard to say if there is a greater song than " Billie Jean " . I think there will never be a song like this one again , with this bassline , with this kind of effect , this eternalness , this perfection . " The song has featured in the film Charlie 's Angels and the 2002 video game Grand Theft Auto : Vice City . When re @-@ released as part of the Visionary campaign in 2006 , " Billie Jean " charted at No. 11 in the UK . It remained in the top 200 for over 40 weeks and was the most successful reissue by some distance . To this day , " Billie Jean " is still in heavy rotation ; it is played on over 90 % of the world 's radios and receives more than 250 @,@ 000 spins per week in clubs around the world .

= = Personnel = =

Michael Jackson ? songwriting , composition , vocals arrangement , rhythm arrangement , lead vocals , background vocals .

Leon Ndugu Chancler ? drums

Louis Johnson ? bass guitar

David Williams ? guitar

Michael Boddicker ? E @-@ mu Emulator

Greg Smith ? synthesizer

Bill Wolfer ? synthesizer and synthesizer programming

Jerry Hey ? string arrangement

Jeremy Lubbock ? string conducting

Bruce Swedien ? mixing

= = Charts and sales = =

== Weekly charts ==