

## Sydney, Australia Arrival

*Date confirmed in "The Daily Telegraph" ("arrived in Sydney yesterday [November 12, 1996])"*

### "Herald Sun" (1996)

There are entrances: and then there are entrances, Michael Jackson style.

The King of Pop was intent on making a monster return to Australia last night, yet Michael Jackson's entrance was surprisingly free of the usual hype.

Twice, Jackson broke with tradition to embark on an important mission: to reach out and touch his Australian fans.

And he did. The Michael Jackson Fan Club--which inadvertently sabotaged the superstar's plan to arrive on time--turned up to Sydney airport in their thousands.

Jackson, emerging from his specially fitted Boeing 707 jet, dressed from head to toe in black and red and wearing a mask, happily obliged. He moved slowly through the crowd, occasionally reaching into the throng for a hand that couldn't quite make it.

Covered in flowers, gifts, posters and packages, Jackson moved quickly to his Tarago, speeding to the city center under police escort.

Again, as the entourage approached his hotel, Jackson stopped the car, got out, and walked. The street was lined with green and yellow balloons, thousands of faces, and a fierce media turnout more in line with a royal tour.

Jackson shook hands with fans, talked and laughed, and took their presents, their tears, and hysteria.

Outside the Sheraton on the Park Hotel, Jackson was officially greeted by The Bangarra Dance Theatre. The singer stood spellbound as the group performed a piece relating to the sea, distance, and travel.

A few steps away, schoolchildren nervously awaited their time with the star.

Indoors: more children, more welcomes. The Redfern Public School Choir sang "My Island Home", a Neil Murray song.

Jackson listened carefully, apparently moved by the lyrics.

"He said it was beautiful", choir leader Uma Pitkeathly said.

Jackson moved quickly and quietly to his luxury suite overlooking the harbor city. There was no sign of the woman carrying his child, Debbie Rowe.

"How did you like the welcome?" a reporter asked Jackson. "I loved it", Jackson said. "It's great to be here."

Meanwhile, Melbourne will know today if a 20-meter statue of Jackson will be put up during the visit.

Last night, Jackson's concert organizers said they were so happy with the Sydney welcome they would add a similar ceremony to Jackson's arrival into Melbourne next week.

Jackson's hotel was being watched over by 52 security staff. Minders say the star was "thrilled by his Australian welcome and is keen to cram in as much sightseeing as possible".

### "The Daily Telegraph (November 13, 1996)

...The pop star arrived in Sydney yesterday wearing a black surgical mask and his trademark hat and faux military coat.

He was then mobbed by hysterical fans.

Scores of fans threw themselves at Jackson's tour van as it left the airport--forcing the cavalcade to stop.

...Chaotic scenes also greeted Jackson when he arrived at the Sheraton on the Park Hotel.

Crowds swamped his Tarago, causing a scuffle to break out.

Jackson stayed inside the vehicle while bodyguards formed a human barricade around it.

As the crowd screamed his name, Jackson pointed to a blonde teenager behind the barricades.

A security man opened the car door and he motioned her inside.

"She was very shocked but on cloud nine", said a security man. "The girl who is about 19 got in and Michael kissed her on the forehead--she couldn't believe her luck."

Some fans have waited outside the hotel since 9am yesterday to catch a glimpse of the superstar--and he didn't disappoint them.

He greeted his fans, signing autographs and shaking hands. He hugged one little boy who pushed through a barrier.

He received a colorful welcome from the Aboriginal dance troupe Bangarra, and was presented with a belt of bush strings and feathers.

Jackson fan Abbey Axis from Auburn, Sydney said, "I adore him. I've been here for hours but it's been worth the wait.

Friend Patricia Vilegan, IT, from Handwick, said: "I've waited for this moment all my life--he's like air--I can't live without him."

Lookalike Michael Downs, 20, from Bondi Junction and Clara Samuelian, 18, from Pachete, both dressed up in sequined jackets and Jackson hats and gloves.

Mr. Downs said: "My parents told me I'm getting too old for this, but who cares. My mom made my clothes, and I'll treasure this moment forever.

"We've touched him and he's signed autographs for us."

Loretta Telmay, 23, said: "I've loved him since I was nine years old.

"I've taken two weeks off to go to three shows in Sydney and in Brisbane. My parents think I'm mad, because I was booked on a holiday to [fly?] with them, but I cancelled it when I realized Michael was coming. I got his autograph."

...Once inside the foyer, Jackson was met by a multicultural choir from Redfern Primary School.

The children sang Christine Ana's "My Island Horse" while Jackson listened patiently, a young boy companion wearing a Beta basketball cap.

"He said it was beautiful and he asked me who wrote the song", choirmaster Usua Pikeathy said. "I told him it was a Torres Strait Island song.

"Then he kissed me on the forehead."

Jackson also kissed two of the children on the forehead after they presented him with flowers.

With that, Jackson and his security entourage headed for his room.

The aide also said Jackson wanted his first meal in Australia to be Thai cuisine, his favorite.

Jackson's Australian tour has grossed \$20 million, with 250,000 tickets sold for nine shows.

"The expenses are astronomical", promoter Paul Dainty said. "This is not looked at as a money-making exercise. You gross a lot of money, but it costs a fortune to stage."