

## "Jackie" Magazine Interview

*Date range assessed by the fact that "The Wiz" film was released on October 24, 1978, and that the interview most likely took place a few months before the print date (March 17, 1979), which would most likely fall under Winter 1978.*

["Jackie" magazine \(March 17, 1979\) \(cover archived\)](#) (Images 001-002)

Although American star Michael Jackson, now starring in "The Wiz", has been a performer as long as he can remember, he's a long way from getting tired with it.

"I've been singing in public with The Jacksons--my brothers--since I was five, but I still enjoy it", he told us. "In fact, I think I enjoy singing in front of an audience more than ever because we've learnt so much and know more what we're doing.

"I think we understood", Michael went on, "even when we were little, what was going on--we'd rehearse carefully and go out to give a show, not just do it without thinking."

Of course, having been a star when he was very young leads to some funny moments.

"A lot of people are surprised when they meet me", Michael grinned. "They still have an image of a little boy and then when they see me, they're saying 'Oh, gee! Yeah, I forgot, you've got older, haven't you!'"

But while they were growing up, and touring, The Jacksons' education wasn't neglected either.

"We had tutors all the time; they used to come on tour with us when we were at home", Michael explained. "We never took that many exams, but I guess I don't mind too much.

"I think we learnt a lot that other kids don't have the chance to learn from simply traveling the world and meeting people."

But Michael went on to say that there is one drawback in touring so much.

"I get homesick! Not for anything in particular, just for that feeling of being at home with all your family and friends", he admitted.

"At least we have each other, though. We've been together a long time, but we're still a family first and a group second, and so we support and look after each other."

And in between touring the world, making films, and being with his family (if that leaves any spare time!) I wondered what Michael liked to do--any hobbies?

"I don't really have holidays, somehow we never got into them when we were growing up and I guess it's a sort of habit--if you don't start you don't go on", he said.

"When I do have some free time, I like to watch video tapes of old movies--mostly the great musicals. 'Singin' in the Rain', 'West Side Story', that sort of thing."

Recently, too, of course, Michael's appeared in his first film musical--"The Wiz".

"The Wiz' is a musical version of the 'Wizard of Oz'. I play the scarecrow who is searching for a brain--not really because he hasn't got one, but because he doesn't realize he has one.

Eventually, though, he learns to believe in himself.

"I was working with people like Diana Ross, Lena Horne, great artists like that--which makes it a terrific experience, even though it took me away from the group for six months."

The other thing Michael does, when he has free time, is to spend as much of it as possible with children. "One thing I've always wanted to do, and that's work with children in some way", he told me. "I think children, especially the young ones, have a special magic and it's great to be around that.

"One day, I think I'd like to be a teacher, or a social worker. Anything, really, that involved children."

Including, one day perhaps, some of his own?

"I'm not married and haven't got any plans to marry, though I expect I will eventually!" Michael grinned, "If I do, I'd like a family, but in a way I think I'd like to adopt."

"It would be marvelous to be able to help kids who otherwise would know poverty and despair in their lives. I guess that's about the greatest thing you can do, save someone from a bad life and help to give it some meaning."

"We've seen children all round the world who have a hard time, and you really want to help everybody."

"We do our best, we do a lot of benefits for causes like blind children, go to hospitals, and, of course, visit and play in schools."

"I don't think the teachers like it all that much. I know that before we arrive, they always give their lecture, saying, 'Now, you've got to behave properly and sit quiet', but when we get there, the kids forget all that and go crazy."

"They let go, have a good time and jump all over everything--still, I don't think it does any harm to anybody, and since the kids buy our records, but can't always afford to come to the concerts, it's great that they get a chance to see us and we get a chance to see them."

More normally, though, it's in much larger places that The Jacksons perform.

"We appear, usually in really big venues--up to thirty thousand seats--and it's terrific!" Michael says, "That's the greatest buzz of all, walking out on stage in front of that many people."

"I love it. As far as I'm concerned, the bigger the better! A lot of people might seem to be too many to handle, but once things get going they become one big unit--a mass unit, but still united."

"It's a feeling you get, it's in the air, the sharing of what we're doing, and it's the most exciting thing I know."