

# Showbiz

Editor **Bill Pierce**  
bill.pierce@sunmedia.ca  
416-947-2270



## More Michael

Check out photos from around the world celebrating the life of Jackson.

THE DAILY **DISH**

# The King's long goodbye

## Mixed emotions as BET celebrates Jackson legend

LOS ANGELES — While the world waits for official word on what killed Michael Jackson, three days following the music legend's death, he was honoured with a tribute fit for a king ... of pop.

At the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles yesterday, site of the Black Entertainment Television Awards, the mood was a mixed bag. Celebratory, melancholy or mourning, take your pick.

In the wake of Jackson's death, the awards show was dedicated to the late King of Pop and singers including Beyonce, Kanye West, Maxwell, Ciara, Ne-Yo, Soulja Boy and Jamie Foxx all changed their performances at the last minute to honour him. The event was even prolonged by 30 minutes to accommodate the revamped program.

The biggest surprise of the evening was likely an appearance by Jackson's father, Joe, on the red carpet before the start of the show.

"The family is doing great," he told CNN. "It's tough; we just lost the biggest star in the world. He's bigger than ever (now). I just wish he was here to see and hear all this."

At one point, one of his friends got up on the stage to promote his record company. Joe Jackson appeared confused while admitting he had his suspicions as to what happened the day of his son's death.

The stars, meanwhile, put self-promotion aside to talk about their idol. "He influenced us to break the rules and the barriers, he influenced the way I sing," Alicia Keys said.

"I'm devastated."

Added P. Diddy: "He changed the way African-Americans are perceived. He's our hero. He changed

my life (and) made me believe in magic, especially when I saw him moonwalk. Let's keep dancing, that's what he wanted us to do."

Jackson fan Kim Cox, 39, said she had been waiting across the street since noon in hopes of getting a glimpse of the red-carpet arrivals.

"I might cry tonight," she admitted. "He was a phenomenon; no one will ever grace the stage like him."

Cox's friend came all the way from Arkansas for the event.

"I wanted to be here to see this," said Fleezy, sporting a single white glove. "My family and I cried when we heard the news."

Security at the awards show was tight and included at least eight doors with metal detectors on the red carpet. The neighbourhood surrounding the auditorium was closed to traffic.

Michael Jackson last appeared at the BET awards in 2003 as part of a surprise tribute to James Brown, with the Godfather of Soul and the King of Pop performing a duet together.

Throughout the day, Jackson fans continued to hold a vigil at his family home in the L.A. suburb of Encino. At least 16 satellite trucks remained parked along Hayvenhurst Ave., which remained completely blocked off.

The makeshift memorial has doubled in size since Saturday and a huge garden of flowers decorates the road. A police officer at the scene estimated the memorial would likely last for at least another week.

As Jackson's parents came and went throughout the day, photographers climbed on cars to try to get a shot.

As the mourning continues, it

is still unclear who is looking after Jackson's three young children or when and where any funeral will take place. It is believed the family will be getting together with Rev. Al Sharpton to discuss funeral arrangements, something that fans hope will be open to the public.

In Bel-Air, members of the media were still camped out in front of the enormous mansion that Jackson had been renting for \$100,000 per month. Many fans also remain in the area.

On Hollywood Boulevard, the number of fans paying their respects around Jackson's star has continued to increase since his death on Thursday. Some fans even had their pictures taken with a Jackson lookalike.

As the saga continues, many people who were close to Jackson have begun to speak publicly.

Debbie Row, Jackson's ex and mother of his two children, told *News of the World* that Jackson wasn't the children's biological father and that she had no interest in becoming their guardian.

Grace Rwaramba, the children's former nanny, told the *London Times* that she had seen Jackson abusing medication on several occasions.

"He was mixing prescriptions and was hardly eating," she told the *Times*. "I had to pump his stomach many times."

There is also the book by Montreal writer Ian Halperin, which is expected to be released in the coming days. In the *London Daily Mail on Sunday*, Halperin said his book would reveal, among other things, that Jackson was gay and anorexic. He also revealed that Jackson left behind a catalogue of 100 unreleased songs to benefit his children.

mj.parent@sunmedia.ca



Marie-Joelle Parent  
IN LOS ANGELES



Beyonce makes another one of her stunning arrivals last night on the red carpet at the BET Awards in Los Angeles.

DAN STEINBERG/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

**MICHAEL JACKSON** 1958-2009

