



A drawing created by Michael Jackson at the age of 13 has the outstretched arms that would later become one of his trademark poses

Book draws on unseen Jackson images

400-page biography had star's personal approval

Adam Fresco

The ink outlines may be crude, the style impressionistic at best, but for fans of Michael Jackson the pose struck by the figure in the foreground is unmistakable.

The picture, drawn by a 13-year-old Jackson in 1971 as a protest against the Vietnam War, shows troops taking a hill, backed up by blazing aircraft. It is to be included in a new book documenting the singer's life and can be published for the first time today.

Although he drew and signed it while still a pupil at Walton Elementary School, in California, the outstretched arms of the figure would later become one of Jackson's trademark poses. Along with a portrait he produced during his *Bad* tour in 1988, it is among thousands of pieces unearthed for inclusion in the *Michael Jackson Opus*, a 400-page tome that is the only new biography sanctioned by his estate.

Plans to publish the 26lb book had been made before Jackson died. This month, a judge in Los Angeles ruled that the project could go ahead given that Jackson had already approved it. His body is due to be buried on September 3 at Forest Lawn cemetery in Los Angeles, after his family were forced to delay the ceremony from August 29 — the day that he would have turned 51.

Court documents released this week show that he died from a lethal dose of propofol, an anaesthetic, leading police to focus an investi-



A drawing by Jackson on the Rome leg of his 1988 tour signed "Boyhood MJ 88 Italy"

gation on Conrad Murray, his personal doctor.

Two dozen researchers have begun sifting Jackson's personal papers for the book and hope to include lyrics, notes and drawings that have never been seen before. A picture of a boy's face quickly drawn by Jackson on the Rome leg of his 1988 tour, signed "Boyhood M.J. 88 Italy", has been found and a picture of Jackson in Minneapolis in May 1988 that he told friends was one of his favourite performance photos will also be included. A note he left to a Parisian artist he had commissioned

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will be seen by some fans as an eerie portent. Quoting Michelangelo, he wrote: "I know the creator will go, but his work survives, that is why, to escape death, I attempt to bind my soul to my work." He adds: "Dedication, Will, Belief creates all things MJ."

The book, handbound in leather in a silk clamshell case, is being produced by Opus Media Group, whose other books include one on Manchester United that sold this year for £1 million. Jackson apparently made it clear that he wanted his to be affordable for most fans.

Even Lennon didn't think he was the Messiah

Phillip Hodson
Commentary

I was 21 before I stuck a poster up on my college door saying "No!" to America's Vietnam War. Michael Jackson managed the equivalent at 13 when others his age would still have been playing with Lego. This cartoon not only reveals a political consciousness in advance of his years but an appreciation of the sheer intensity of the bombing by the B52s as they defoliated the landscape, aided by machineguns and helicopters.

But what of the most significant addition

to his composition? Dominating the foreground is a peacemaker, depicted as an angel or a guerrilla but probably the pop star himself, in redeemer pose, telling the world that he is there to save it.

At about the same time, John Lennon wrote *Imagine*, calling for an end to war — but even he never purported to be the Messiah. Liverpool versus Los Angeles; grounded feet versus solipsism from Hollywood.

The second outline portrait, depicting a cross between an underage matelot and a quattrocento choirboy, focuses on the eyes — again redolent of Jacko's own — in a pose that practitioners of neurolinguistic programming would recognise as auditory

recall, a "remembered sound". Is boyhood, then, as conceived by this Peter Pan of popular culture, to be understood as the age when we first grasp the power of music to capture us in space and time and abolish the difference between the two? Could the boy be recalling some eternal hymn to innocence, or even the Pied Piper's pipes?

It is striking to know that the performer who wished never to grow up demanded narcotics and anaesthetics to keep his mind in a state of perpetual childlike fantasy. Proust he wasn't. But nostalgia is his swan song.

Phillip Hodson is a Fellow of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy — www.bacp.co.uk