



Michael Jackson's Dangerous (33 1/3)

By Susan Fast

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Dangerous is Michael Jackson's coming of age album. Granted, that's a bold claim to make given that many think his best work lay behind him by the time this record was made. It offers Jackson on a threshold, at long last embracing adulthood-politically questioning, sexually charged-yet unable to convince a skeptical public who had, by this time, been wholly indoctrinated by a vicious media. Even though the record sold well, few understood or were willing to accept the depth and breadth of Jackson's vision; and then before it could be fully grasped, it was eclipsed by a shifting pop music landscape and personal scandal-the latter perhaps linked to his assertive new politics. This book tries to cut through the din of dominant narratives about Jackson, taking up the mature, nuanced artistic statement he offered on *Dangerous* in all its complexity. It is read here as a concept album, one that offers a compelling narrative arc of postmodern angst, love, lust, seduction, betrayal, damnation, and above all else racial politics, in ways heretofore unseen in his music. This record offered a Michael Jackson that was mystifying for a world that had accepted him as a child and as childlike and, hence, as safe; this Michael Jackson was, indeed, dangerous.

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Editorial Review

Review

“As a musicologist [Fast] is quite capable of writing about the complexity of Jackson's music, offering a clear insight into his process. By placing the work in a cultural context: racism, politics, gender and sexuality, she also offers the non-musician an excellent read and good critical insight. Mostly because she makes crystal clear that Jackson knew exactly what he was doing as a writer and performer, his versatile voice and body combining high and low art to convey a serious message. Fast's analysis also makes it clear that Jackson was able to ingeniously communicate his message through the compilation of the album itself. This book offers a much-needed in-depth analysis of Jackson's music and art...Highly recommended...”

?Karin Merx, *Cultural Studies*

“Susan Fast's new monograph on Michael Jackson's Dangerous album is an utterly compelling, utterly intelligent reassessment of Jackson's oft-maligned record of 1991 and a challenge to anyone who thinks that they have a grasp on Jackson's controversial art. Fast has an arsenal of literary theorists to help her support her claim (Gates, Foucault), but her writing style?like the Jackson album that is her subject?is dangerous. I can't think of a 33 1/3 book that's written with so much verve, so much life that the deployment of tough theory and philosophy is swept away in the author's passionate prose.” ?Paul Gleason, *Stereo Embers*

“Virtually all of his creative moments were moments of transition, and Ms. Fast makes a strong argument that "Dangerous" was among his most disruptive. In this book, the 100th entry in Bloomsbury's 33 1/3 series, each one devoted to a single album, Ms. Fast employs close readings of lyrics, musical production choices and video presentations to underscore little discussed aspects of Jackson's creative output. So she breaks "Dangerous" into thematically rich sections: Jackson breaking with his old self, then switching to familiar modes to make bold political statements and then coming full circle.” ?Jon Caramanica, *The New York Times*

“Listed on Buzzfeed's '14 Books From 2014 Every Music Lover Needs To Read”” ?BuzzFeed

“Fast's book focuses on the Dangerous album which was released in 1991. Admittedly, it is not my favourite album by Jackson and when listening to it I will often skip ahead to my favourite tracks ... Yet it is all there. There are songs that are an expression of anger over events that have taken place and songs that almost scream at you for making snap and often wrong judgements. It is more than just an album. I can honestly say that after reading *Michael Jackson's Dangerous* by Susan Fast I will never listen to the album in the same way ever again. This is a truly fascinating book for fans of Michael Jackson and social historians.”

-LisaTalksAbout.com

About the Author

Susan Fast is Professor in the Department of English and Cultural Studies at McMaster University, Canada, where she teaches and writes about pop music and culture. She is author of *In the Houses of the Holy: Led Zeppelin and the Power of Rock Music* and co-editor of *Music, Politics, and Violence*.

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