

# Falling star?

## Michael Jackson faces charges as well as public doubts

By JAMES DOOLITTLE  
Collegian Arts Writer

In the kingdom known as "Pop," there is no doubt that Michael Jackson is king. In a land full of court jesters, Jackson has risen to the top of the pop world during the last 20 years with record-shattering album sales and constant media attention centering on his often quirky personality.

If there is anyone who can fill the mold of the "troubled pop star" today, Jackson is it. At 35, he remains an electrifying performer onstage, whose life offstage is all the more interesting because of the many rumors surrounding his private life — especially the current child molestation allegations he faces.

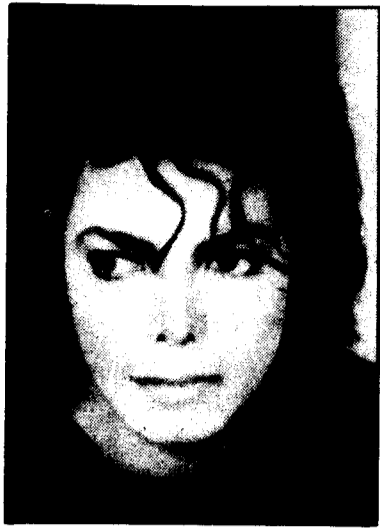
And those charges have asked the general public — even here in State College — to take a side. Brian Camps (senior-operations management) said he believes the charges are false, created by people out to get some of Jackson's money.

"I think he's innocent," Camps said. "I just can't see Michael Jackson doing anybody any wrong. It's just because Michael Jackson is so big."

According to the civil suit filed in September, a 13-year-old boy alleged that the entertainer performed oral sex on him, among other sexual acts. A criminal investigation into the alleged activities is currently being conducted by the Los Angeles Police Department, although no criminal charges have been filed. The civil case is currently scheduled to go before the L.A. Superior Court March 21.



Michael Jackson  
the singer before the allegations



Michael Jackson  
the singer after the allegations

Local reaction to the allegations has tended to side with Jackson, although there seems to be room for suspicion. Jay Williams, assistant manager at Blue Train Compact Disc, 418 E. College Ave., said too many of Jackson's actions in the past seem to incriminate him.

"The way he looks, the way he hangs out with little kids, I mean he's 35 years old," Williams said. "I don't know whether he did it or not, but he's definitely weird enough to have done it, I guess."

Dave Dallow, program director at WBHV-FM (B-103), voiced a similar opinion.

"He hasn't been found guilty yet, but a small percentage of the public has already decided that he is guilty, and that's because of his past and the way he's dealt with children," Dallow said.

Patrick Trimble, instructor of integrative arts, said he believes the media and the population at large see a threat in Jackson because the allegations are against someone whose world and views are geared toward a younger generation.

"Michael Jackson's world is so clearly associated with childhood," Trimble said, adding that our culture is very protective of children. "What we have here is a Pied Piper who may be sleeping with his mice."

Since the allegations first surfaced in August, Jackson has received more than his share of public humiliation. After the civil suit was filed, Jackson soon canceled his Dangerous world tour and checked into a London hospital because of an addiction to painkil-

lers, supposedly brought on by the allegations.

Jackson has also been faced with plenty corporate back pedaling. A greatest hits compilation of Jackson's work was pushed back by his label, Sony. Pepsi, his long-time sponsor, also pulled out of its relationship with Jackson.

But John Fredrickson, general manager of B-103, believes that if the charges were to have been brought up against any other entertainer, the trouble would have probably blown over by now.

"I think the story has stayed this hot simply because he is who he is," Fredrickson said. "I think with a lot of other artists it would have come and gone very quickly."

Trimble added that much of the concern lies in the fact that Jackson remains such a mysterious character — a Peter Pan figure who is trying to recapture a childhood lost while living a rather solitary lifestyle.

"We've taken Michael Jackson, brought him into the center, idolized him and now we must dismiss him," Trimble said.

Williams said he could see Jackson's future musical releases suffering as well.

"If he is found guilty, I would say his name would be mud in terms of selling anything in the future, even from his back catalogue," Williams said.

As for Jackson's future, Fredrickson said everything hinges on the outcome of the civil suit and the current criminal investigation. But no matter the outcome of either, Fredrickson believes Jackson's career is forever tainted.

"It will be part of the Michael Jackson legend no matter what."

## Penn State dancers move to world beat

By NAINA NARAYANA  
Collegian Arts Writer

A group of dancers on campus gets the chance to perform songs and dances from another country and at the same time learn about that country's culture, history and religion.

Then they put all of that into a performance.

The Penn State International Dancers exists to show people all of the qualities and personalities about different countries through song and dance.

The group, which started in 1978, performs pieces from almost any area of the world, said Elizabeth Hanley, the group's assistant/artistic director. Hanley said the group's repertoire includes songs and dances from Eastern and Western Europe, Asia and the United States.

When practicing, Hanley said members learn a lot about the country whose dances and songs they are performing. She said viewers can see culture through costumes, music and particular dance steps. A country's religion can also be seen through performances such as Indian temple dances, Hanley added.

Although many of the cos-

tumes worn by the group are no longer present in the countries represented, Hanley sees the dancers as recreating history on stage.

Assistant dance director Donna Nester agreed. "I think a lot of it is cultural awareness through dance, songs ... with our costumes from different countries," she said.

Nester said the group usually performs the same dances over the years to perfect them; they only learn one or two dances a year because of possible cultural confusion.

For the most part, the group does line dances rather than partner dances because of the group's shortage of male members — one of its biggest challenges is recruiting more male dancers. Keith Krahulik (senior-electrical engineering) is one of only nine men in the 31-person group.

"I think a large part of it is that a lot of people are intimidated by it," Krahulik said. Krahulik said the type of dancing they do is far from easy. But he added that new people are usually successful at learning the dances.

In addition to dancers, there are eight voices on stage while the dancers perform. Carrie Rupert, assistant director for singing, said the singers perform just about anything, including Ukrainian, Bulgarian, American and Asian songs. This spring, they will learn German and possibly Filipino songs, Rupert (senior-environmental resource management) said.

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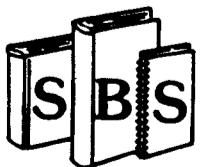
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