



SUMMARY

As Michael Jackson, MJ, rehearses for his 1992 *Dangerous* tour, he is interviewed by a fictional MTV reporter. Through the interview and rehearsal journey, MJ recalls significant moments in his life and career: from child performer with the Jackson 5 to solo artist, navigating the waves and pains of success, doubts, freedom to decide for himself, racism, family trauma, and his imperfect coping strategies. MJ's humanitarian efforts and profound talent are celebrated while highlighting some of the personal challenges he faced. Many songs from MJ's canon of music, as a soloist, to music made with The Jackson 5 and The Jacksons, his brothers, are the musical foundation of this musical, accompanied by choreography inspired by some of MJ's most notable performances and choreographers.

CHARACTER GUIDE

MJ: One of the most illustrious singers, songwriters, and dancers worldwide, dubbed the "King of Pop." Jackson is portrayed as a child, a teen, and an adult by three different actors.

Rob: MJ's choreographer for the *Dangerous* tour.

Joseph Jackson: Michael's strict, often harsh father and manager for many years, whose own musical dreams did not materialize, but knows the potential in his children.

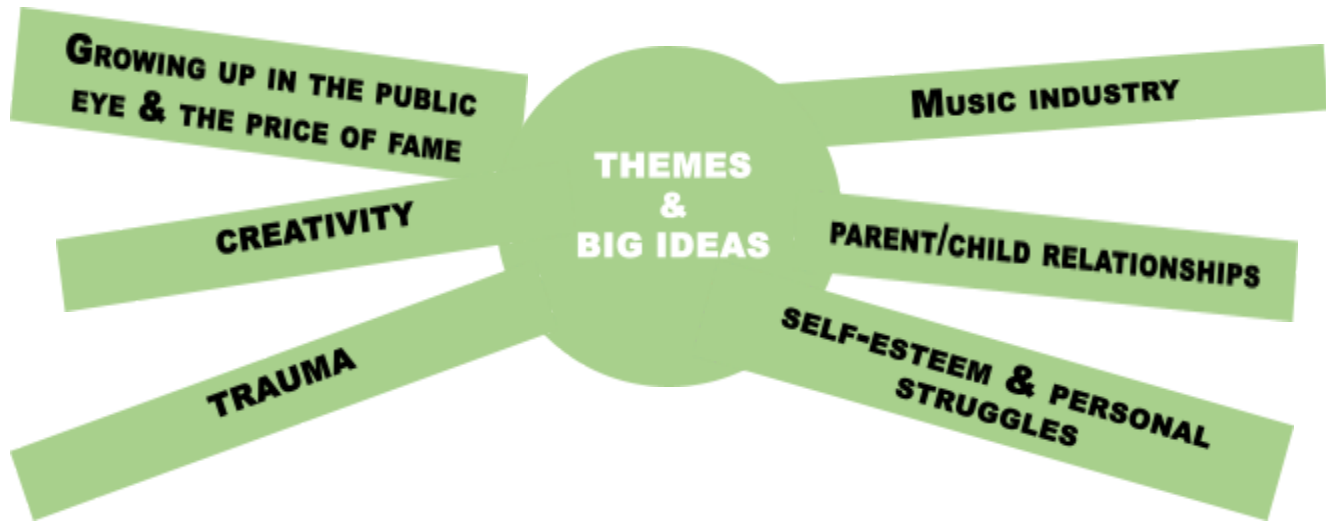
Rachel: A fictional MTV reporter who wants Jackson to open up and address rumors and struggles.

Katherine Jackson: MJ's beloved mother, who often consoles and encourages her children throughout their careers. She's much warmer and caring than her husband.

Alejandro: Camera person working with Rachel.

The Jackson 5: The Motown group Michael was part of as a child, which consisted of him and his talented brothers. As young adults, they changed their name to The Jacksons.

Tour dancers: Dancers performing on the *Dangerous* tour. Many double as other important characters in MJ's journey during the flashbacks, such as his dance influences, Quincy Jones, and Berry Gordy.



EXERCISES & ACTIVATIONS

Writing

"Everything is your instrument," said Quincy Jones to MJ in the show. Listen to "Wanna Be Startin' Somethin'," which is the final song in the show. From this listening session, improvise some of your own musical lines, creating rhythms with different parts of your body, and making sounds that feel good.

Embodying

MJ says, "Onstage, I feel alive." Through dance and his imagination, MJ soared. Create three still images in response to the phrase "I feel alive." What does your most alive self feel like in your beautiful body? Add a transition in each image that is a slight two-step, like in *Soul Train*. If it makes you smile, play "Blame It on the Boogie" as you feel alive!

Context

In the scene exploring Michael's dance inspirations, Fred Astaire told Michael, "You're an angry dancer." What do you think Fred Astaire meant by that? What experiences in Michael's life may have contributed to his anger as a dancer? Compare Fred Astaire's understanding of the world to Michael's experiences. How do time, identity, and race impact the careers of both of these legends? Seek out one to two songs of Michael's that may explain if and why he's angry. Play and listen to those songs.