

Beat: Music

Album of unheard Michael Jackson songs to be released in May

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USPA News - An album containing eight previously unreleased songs by pop star Michael Jackson will be released in May, nearly five years after the "King of Pop" and the world's most successful entertainer of all time was found dead at his mansion in Los Angeles. Record label Epic Records, which is owned by Sony Music Entertainment, said the album - titled "XSCAPE" - will be released on May 13 in conjunction with the Estate of Michael Jackson.

The new album will feature eight new recordings that were never released before, and the album's Deluxe Edition will include a selection of the recordings in their original form. "After mining by the Estate of Jackson's archives, [Epic Records Chairman and CEO] L.A. Reid was granted unlimited access to the treasures spanning four decades of material on which Jackson had completed his vocals," the record label said in a statement on Monday. "Reid then teamed up top producers to `contemporize` the songs while retaining Jackson's essence and integrity, creating the best music you've never heard." Epic Records said the list of producers include Timbaland, Rodney Jerkins, Stargate and John McClain. It said the album name was chosen to honor the pop star's naming process, as he always chose a song from the album to name his projects and - beginning with "Thriller" - used only one word titles. "Michael was always on the cutting edge and was constantly reaching out to new producers, looking for new sounds. He was always relevant and current," said John Branca and John McClain, co-executors of the Estate of Michael Jackson. "These tracks, in many ways, capture that spirit. We thank L.A. Reid for his vision." Both the standard and Deluxe Editions are available for pre-order on iTunes and elsewhere starting on Tuesday. Jackson, commonly called "the King of Pop" and recognized by Guinness World Records as the most successful entertainer of all time, died on June 25, 2009, at the age of 50. He was found unconscious in bed at his rented mansion in Los Angeles and was later pronounced dead at Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center. The Los Angeles County Coroner ruled Jackson's death a homicide, mainly caused by the powerful anaesthetic Propofol which was given to him by Dr. Conrad Murray, Jackson's personal physician. Prosecutors charged Murray with involuntary manslaughter in February 2010, alleging he unlawfully but without malice killed Jackson in the commission of an unlawful act. During the high-profile trial, which began on September 27, 2011, prosecutors argued that Murray was grossly negligent by administering a high dose of Propofol to help Jackson sleep as he prepared for 50 concerts that were scheduled to take place at The O2 Arena in London as part of his major comeback. Defense attorneys claimed Jackson himself administered the fatal dose of Propofol, but Dr. Steven Shafer, who wrote the drug's guidelines, told jurors that it was impossible for the pop star to have caused his own death by swallowing the drug. Murray was convicted in November 2011 and sentenced to four years in county prison, but he was released in October 2013 after serving just half of his sentence due to good behavior and a program designed to alleviate chronic overcrowding in California's prison system.

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