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Urbanite

One year later, the King of Pop loved more than loathed

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In death, there is more good than “Bad.”

Michael Jackson died a year ago Friday, setting off an avalanche of tributes mixed in with salacious scrutiny of his personal life.

But the Kind of Pop today is remembered more for his extraordinary talent than all the scandal, his untimely death returning his magical music to the forefront, culture experts and image analysts said. And that good has translated into lots of green -- The Gloved One's estate earned nearly \$1 billion since his passing, according to Billboard.com.

“His legacy as a musician is secure,” said Robert Thompson, a pop culture expert at Syracuse University. “You’ll hear his songs at weddings and karaoke bars for years to come.”



Commemorations of the pop icon started Thursday, with a Jackson plaque unveiled in London and impersonators performing his classics at a Hong Kong mall. On Friday, Rev. Al Sharpton will call for a moment of silence in the city and the Apollo Theater will hold a tribute concert Tuesday.

“I loved him. There will never be another one of him,” said Darlene Cornish, 52, as she walked around Harlem, where people have been wearing and selling Jackson T-shirts for days.

Jackson's death introduced the 13 Grammy Award-winner to younger generations. “You listen to his music and it puts you in a good mood,” said Ndeye N'Diaye, 16, of the Bronx.

Still, the sordid aspects of his life and the sad circumstances of his death — from an overdose of propofol, a powerful anesthetic — turned him into a modern-day Judy Garland, James Dean, and, of course, Elvis Presley, culture experts say.

“It becomes part of the legend,” said Elayne Rapping, a pop-culture expert at the University of Buffalo. “His personal life was obviously tragic. If he wasn’t so wealthy, he could have been institutionalized.”

But Jackson is rightly legendary for his dancing and performing, which even Fred Astaire admired, Rapping said. His creative team is still together pumping out music and commercials, and megastars such as Lady Gaga have taken a page out of his book, said Michael Sands, a Hollywood image consultant.

“Michael Jackson is ageless,” Sands said. “His legacy just keeps building.”

Alison Bowen and the AP contributed to this story

[< back to article](#)