

# Throwback: Michael Jackson: Got To Be There



"Got To Be There" is Michael Jackson's first solo single and it was recorded and released in 1971 months before his debut solo album, also titled *Got To Be There*, came out. Jackson was still a member of his family's group and would be until the Victory Tour in the '80s. The Jackson 5 were teen stars on the Motown label but Michael and Jermaine launched solo careers around the same time. Jackson's brothers provided background vocals for the album. "Got To Be There" shot to number one soon after it was released in October of 1971. Michael's voice had not changed yet at age 13 but his natural ability to sing ballads was more advanced than his years. There was no

question that his role as the frontman of The Jackson 5 was well deserved but his performance of "Got To Be There" revealed a supernatural talent to emotionally connect with all kinds of listeners. The single and album were a preview of the kind of artistic power and popularity Jackson would have in the future.

*Got To Be There* was a top ten entry on the charts and the second single, "Rockin' Robin," hit the number four spot. Jackson achieved his first solo hit with "Got To Be There" and was on his way to making more history with his brothers and as a singular artist over the next decade. Jackson had recorded a classic song that would later be covered by The Miracles, Black Ivory, Chaka Khan, George Benson, and Boyz II Men. *Got To Be There* was remastered and reissued in 2009 as a three-disc compilation called *Hello World: The Motown Solo Collection*.