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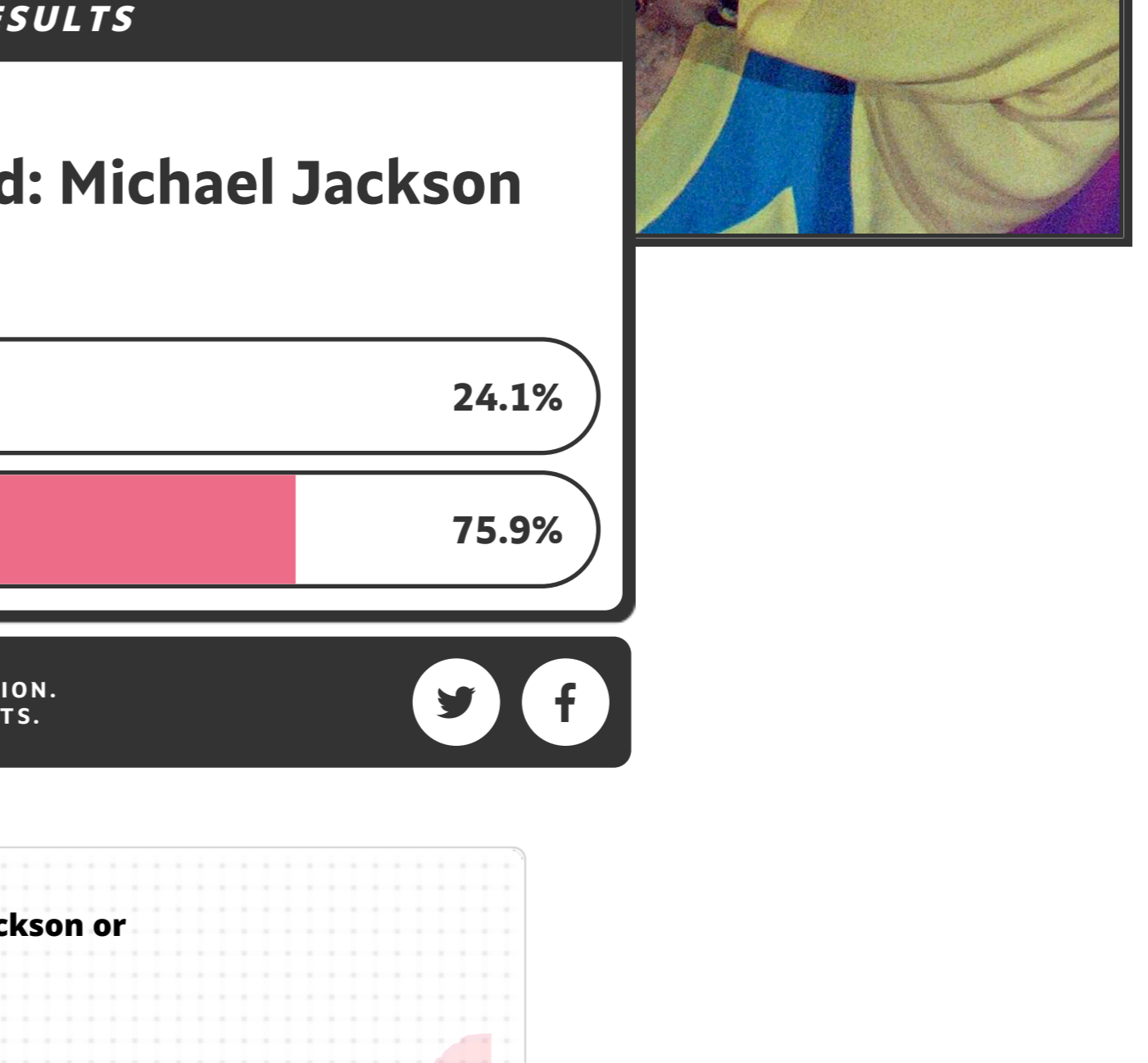
# More iconic pop legend: Michael Jackson or Prince?

The King of Pop and the Purple One dominated pop music in the '80s. Michael Jackson and Prince were often **pitted** against each other. Their similarities and differences might have caused a **rumored pop rivalry**—but no one denies the genius of either. MJ broke color barriers with "Thriller," **the second best-selling album of all time in the U.S.**, while it remains **the best-selling album globally**. Prince pushed the envelope with his sexuality and won **an Oscar** for arguably the most iconic soundtrack, "Purple Rain." **Whose influence is greater?** 🎵🎶

*Updated to clarify "Thriller" remains the most commercially successful album worldwide, while the LP is currently the second best-selling in the U.S.*

By **Deron Dalton**  
Published 4/20/20

- Music
- Pop Music
- Michael Jackson
- Prince

**FINAL RESULTS**

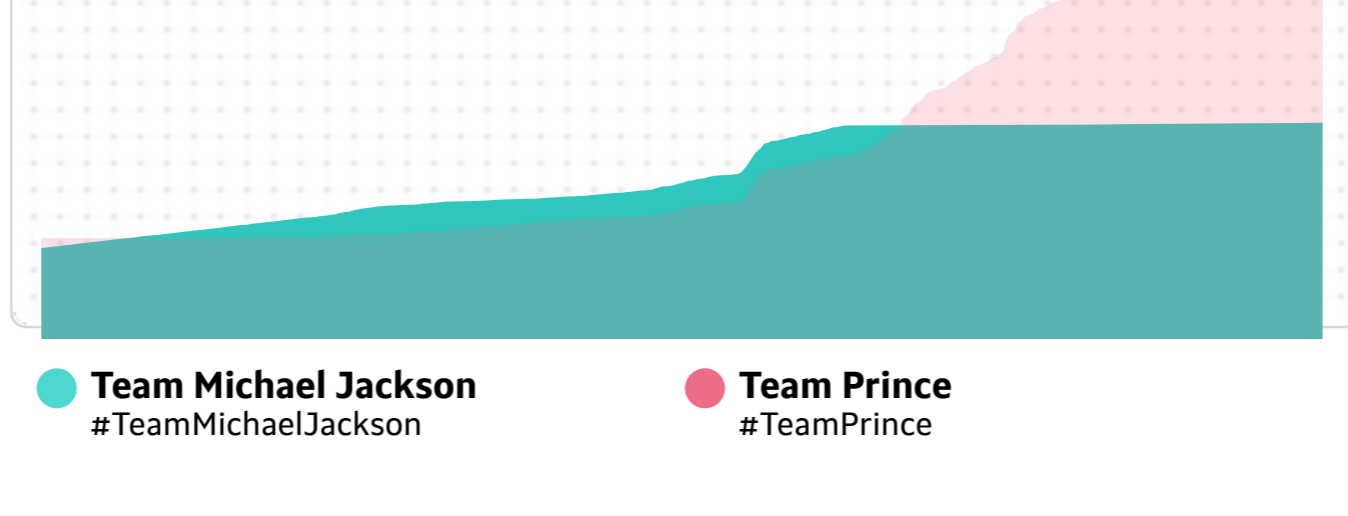
ENTERTAINMENT

## More iconic pop legend: Michael Jackson or Prince?

Team Michael Jackson	24.1%
Team Prince	75.9%

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This isn't the first time Prince and Michael have faced off, and it won't be the last.

Both artists produced two of the greatest albums of all time in the '80s—MJ's "Thriller" and Prince's "Purple Rain." Both of these stars are legends. They dominated the '80s with multiple successful albums, many more hit singles, sold-out tours, iconic fashion, signature originality, and cultural impact. Music had legends before the '80s, but MJ and Prince cemented the definition of "the pop icon" as an honorific title.

<https://web.archive.org/web/2021030161114/https://revolt.tv/stories/2016/06/29/prince-michael-jackson-rivalry-holy-grail-pop-9c1d24c304>

### Team Michael Jackson

Vote on social media using the hashtag: [#TeamMichaelJackson](#) f 🐦

Michael Jackson literally ruled the '80s. He kicked off the decade by carrying over his success from "Off the Wall," which was released in August 1979. "Off the Wall" was a groundbreaking, top-selling funk and disco-pop album, but underrated compared to what came next—and that's "Thriller" (1982).

Nothing preexisting or succeeding could top "Thriller." In fact, MJ reigned over pop culture in the '80s well after the album dropped. "Thriller" won eight Grammys in 1984, but that only captures a bit of the album's critical and financial success.

<https://web.archive.org/web/2021030161114/https://giphy.com/gifs/billie-jean-YPaV4qZlhrU1a>

### Team Prince

Vote on social media using the hashtag: [#TeamPrince](#) f 🐦

If anyone gave MJ some serious competition, it was Prince.

Many would argue that Mr. Prince Rogers Nelson was a bigger icon than MJ. Yes—we said it. Prince might NOT have moonwalked at "Motown 25" but the brother could move. He had the range. He played instruments and led his own band, The Revolution. And he composed his own music. Prince not only had all the talent of MJ, but he went where Michael couldn't go. His pushed the envelope with his ambiguous sexuality, and androgynous fashion and style. Some might even say what he did was for shock value, but it was Prince—and it was so damn artistic.

Prince was making hits from the late 1970s well into the early '80s. Then he created one of the greatest soundtracks of all time from the semi-biographical music drama "Purple Rain." Prince not only won seven Grammys, but a Golden Globe and Oscar for "Purple Rain." Prince became an unstoppable pop culture phenomenon that gave MJ a run for his money (and, at times, beat the King of Pop).

<https://web.archive.org/web/2021030161114/https://giphy.com/gifs/prince-hot-s33IE5ZiQfha8>

### Team Michael Jackson

Vote on social media using the hashtag: [#TeamMichaelJackson](#) f 🐦

But Michael broke the color barrier on MTV with his music videos "Billie Jean," "Beat It" and "Thriller." Not only that, but his music broke color barriers around the world. He's arguably the one artist that could unite people from many different races, ethnicities, cultures and backgrounds from all over the world. And he did it with the power of his music. He has the album sales to prove it!

[https://web.archive.org/web/2021030161114/https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zi\\_XLOBD0\\_Y](https://web.archive.org/web/2021030161114/https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zi_XLOBD0_Y)

### Team Prince

Vote on social media using the hashtag: [#TeamPrince](#) f 🐦

Watch the music video for "When Doves Cry"—a mega hit intertwining parental issues with a love affair (just like in the film), and you'll see how much Prince dominated the world with his sexuality. He pushed sexual barriers. He let weird kids of color know it's OK to be weird, unique and fucking awesome! Prince was more than a "just-as-great alternative" to the King of Pop, and he knew it!

<https://web.archive.org/web/2021030161114/https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UG3VcCAIUgE>

### Team Michael Jackson

Vote on social media using the hashtag: [#TeamMichaelJackson](#) f 🐦

It's impossible to top "Thriller." But MJ made another great album in the '80s. "Bad" is one of the best-selling albums of all-time. No album can really top "Thriller" in sales (well, other than the Eagles' "Their Greatest Hits (1971-1975)"). "Bad" was a close second. The album garnered five #1 Billboard Hot 100 hits—"I Just Can't Stop Loving You," "Bad," "The Way You Make Me Feel," "Man in the Mirror" and "Dirty Diana" (plus a legendary Bad World Tour).

<https://web.archive.org/web/2021030161114/https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dsUXAEzaC3Q>

### Team Prince

Vote on social media using the hashtag: [#TeamPrince](#) f 🐦

Before "Purple Rain," Prince blessed us with his iconic third and fourth albums—"Controversy" and "1999," respectively. And after "Purple Rain," he continued his success with acclaimed albums "Around the World in a Day," "Parade" and "Sign o' the Times." And we got hits like "Kiss," which is arguably his most signature and sexiest hit.

The song became his third of five singles to top the Billboard Hot 100. Prince died in 2016—but his legacy will forever live on. He was clearly the man in the '80s because classics "Kiss," "1999," "Little Red Corvette," "Let's Go Crazy," "When Doves Cry," and "Purple Rain" re-entered the Billboard Hot 100, following his death.

<https://web.archive.org/web/2021030161114/https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H9tE7vflsDyo>

**FINAL RESULTS**

ENTERTAINMENT

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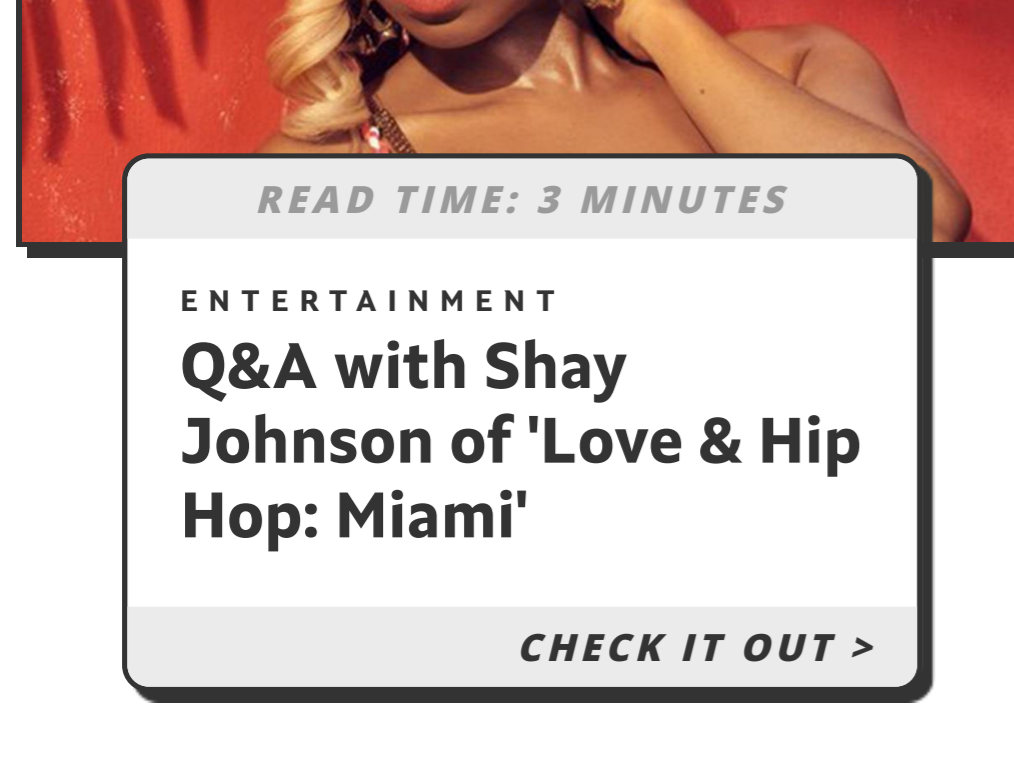
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READ TIME: 3 MINUTES

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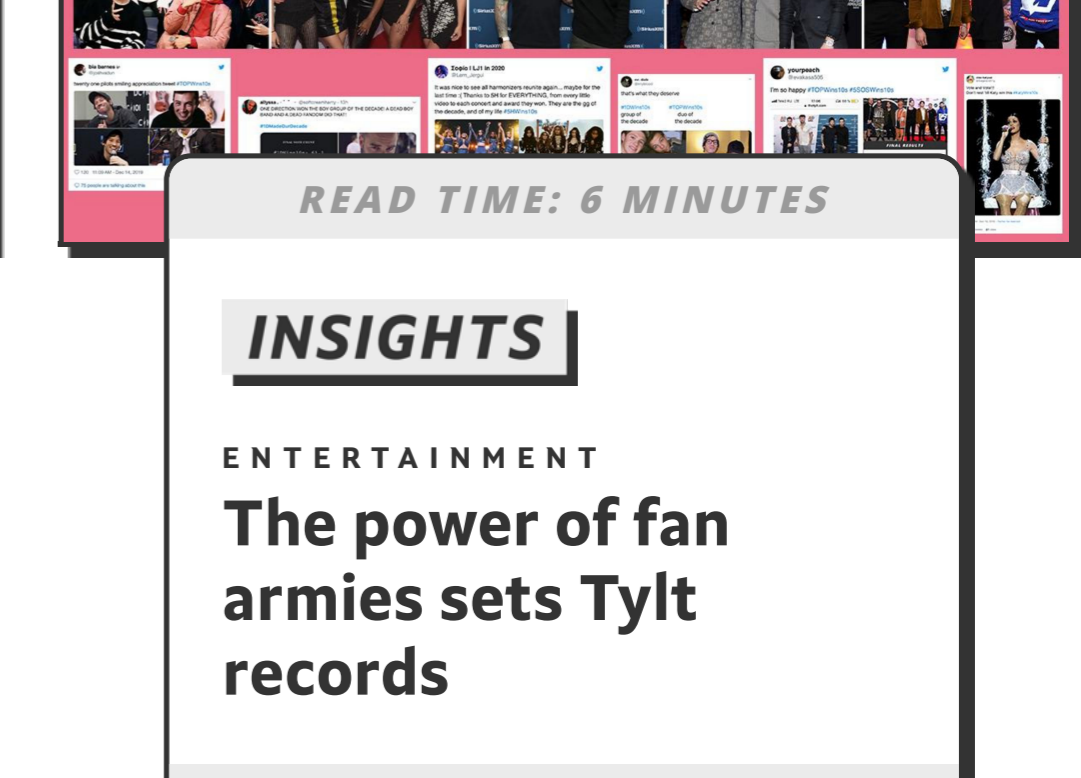
LISTEN TIME: 58 MINUTES

**PODCAST**

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10 Years of One Direction and Directioners

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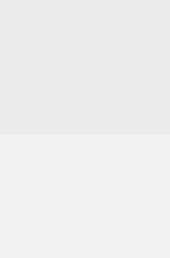
READ TIME: 6 MINUTES

**INSIGHTS**

ENTERTAINMENT

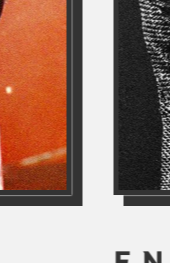
The power of fan armies sets Tylt records

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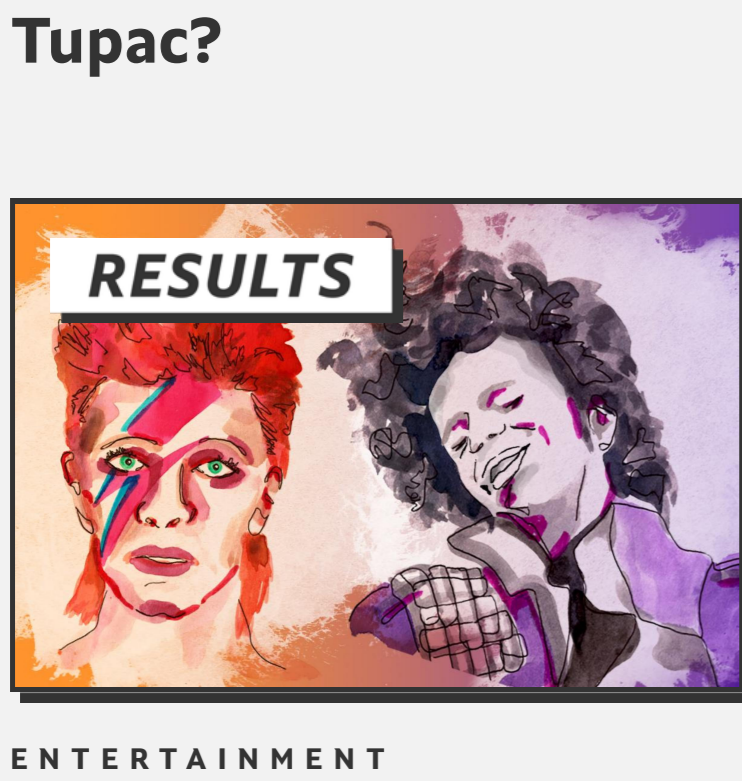
## WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW

- Girl Power Anthems
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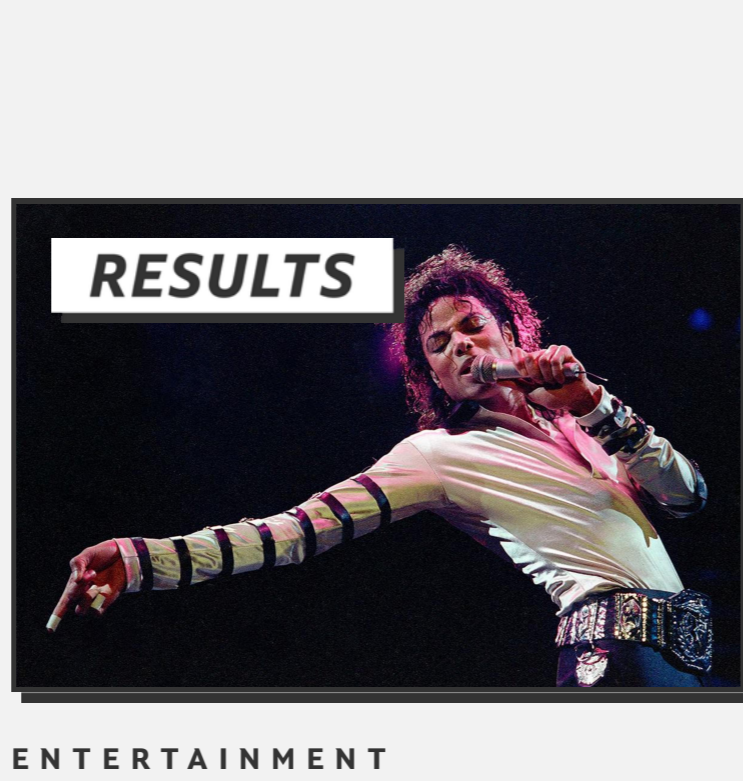
**RESULTS**



ENTERTAINMENT

Who deserves to be in the Hall of Fame more: Janet Jackson or Tupac?

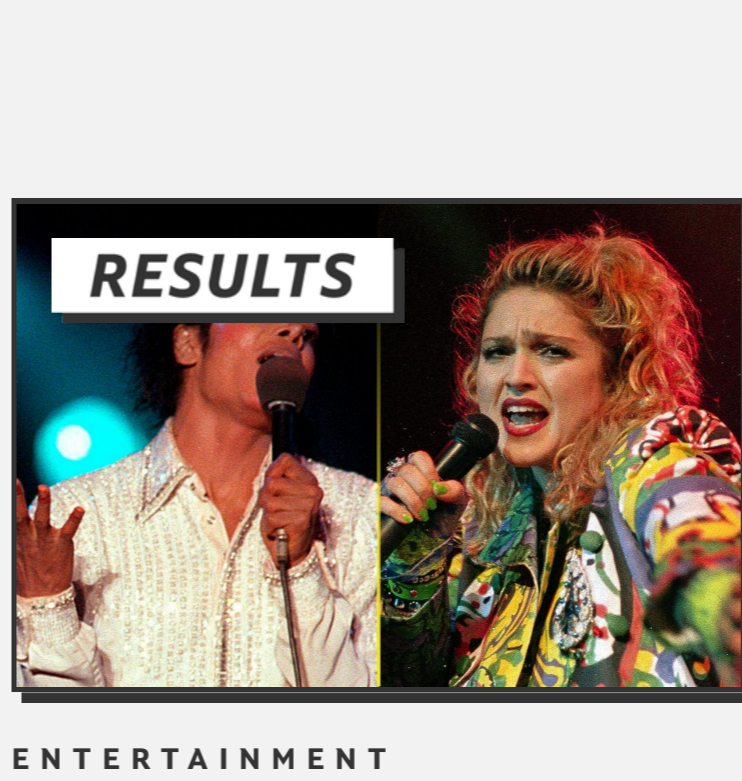
**RESULTS**



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'Purple Rain' vs. 'Thriller': Which album is better?


**RESULTS**



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Who is the greatest '80s pop icon: Michael Jackson or Prince?

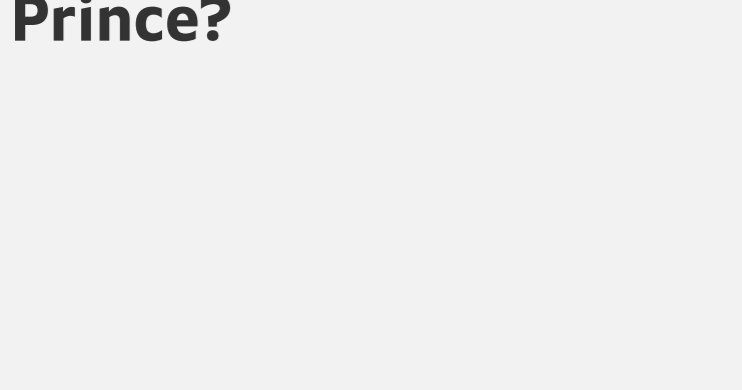
**RESULTS**



ENTERTAINMENT

Which classic is Michael Jackson's best album after 'Thriller'?


**RESULTS**



ENTERTAINMENT

Most influential androgynous music icon: David Bowie or Prince?


**RESULTS**



ENTERTAINMENT

Which classic album is Michael Jackson's best after 'Thriller'?


**RESULTS**



ENTERTAINMENT

Most influential pop music icon: Michael Jackson or Madonna?

**RESULTS**



ENTERTAINMENT

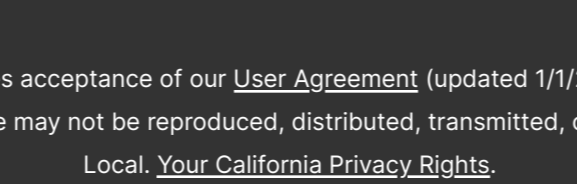
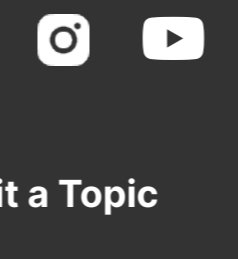
Greatest GRAMMYs Album of the Year: 'Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band' or 'Thriller'?

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