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JOY DIVISION

Arriving on the coat tails of Anton Corbijn's dramatized *Control*, Grant Gee's doco *Joy Division* was actually made beforehand but there was some tussling about separate release dates that meant that *Joy Division* arrives in the wash up of pretty universal praise for the splashy feature.

As good as *Control* was, there is nothing quite like hearing from the group themselves about their finite time together under the banner of Joy Division, before Ian Curtis committed suicide and Bernard Sumner, Peter Hook and Stephen Morris morphed into New Order. After all, *Control* was adapted from Ian Curtis' widow's book and so concentrated on the personal journey of Curtis, and the effect of his career and health issues on his marriage.

This is the first time the group have discussed the heady days of the late '70s. They relive that time in 1976 when four working class lads from the monochrome industrial city of Salford in Manchester – a place so devoid of nature or beauty that Sumner didn't sight a tree until he was nine – met at the Sex Pistols gig on their infamous Anarchy Tour and realized that just maybe they too could pick up an instrument and get on stage. Each of the band members are quite different characters, and as such their memories of the time concentrate on

different aspects of this period. Sumner is most visibly affected when talking about Curtis, his grand mal seizures and his failure to take heed of the dark Nietzschean tone of his friend's lyrics. Hook revels in the chemistry that was generated on stage, and how they went from no-talent to an incredibly tight live outfit. Hook tends not to look at the subtext of the music they were playing; he just wanted to knock the audiences' heads off. He also makes clear that producer Martin Hammet did a fantastic job helping creating the Joy Division sound but perhaps took too much credit. After all, he was not part of the group. Morris recalls his angry reaction to news of Curtis' suicide.

The footage unearthed and anecdotes revealed for the first time, are extraordinary. But there are also a few sad notes with the film. Factory Records owner and all round cultural guru Tony Wilson is interviewed and gives us a few pearls of wisdom about why these four made such an indelible mark on pop culture history. Sadly Wilson died last August and unfortunately there is legal action pending with Hook and New Order, who split up last year. However, the music lives on and has influenced untold musicians who like their heroes were saved from a more miserable future after hearing their music.

From Thursday 7 February on a limited release