



## Rob Lowing



A slice of working-class Manchester ... "I see this as a story of a city."

# The drama behind the Joy

## JOY DIVISION

Rated: M

Critic's warning: Language, adult themes.

Critic's rating: **8/10**

Sneak screenings today; releases  
Thursday.

IT WILL be a shame if the documentary film *Joy Division* is overlooked by everyone but admirers of the band because, as legendary club manager Tony Wilson notes, "I see this as a story of a city."

However, if you are too full of Joy after seeing *Control*, the recent excellent drama about the band's singer Ian Curtis, make a note to see this well-made British documentary on video.

The feature's big lure is its candid photos and home-movies of early performances (of the band, the Sex Pistols and others) and interviews with surviving members and friends.

The notable exception is Curtis's widow but that may have been due to privacy issues, rather than a contractual obligation. (*Control* was based on her book but the film's director, Anton Corbijn, is interviewed here.)

You can usually trust veteran musicians, unlike ageing movie stars, not to sugar-coat the past. It's a credit to Joy Division members that they replay the alcohol-fuelled pranks and disasters of a band whose members were in their early 20s when they became famous.

The music, of course, is stupendous; make sure your cinema plays it loud. Admirers will wish that there was more on the post-Joy Division era, when remaining members formed the successful New Order.

However, movie buffs will appreciate a film that painstakingly tries to capture the late-1970s and 1980s post-punk, Margaret Thatcher-era in working class Manchester – or Madchester as it was known later in that other great dramatised rock scene biography, *24 Hour Party People*.