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DOCUMENTARY: JOY DIVISION



This is not the story of a pop group, we are told, but the story of a city. It's a city that gave birth to the industrial revolution and led the modern world, before going into decline. Director Grant Gee shows how the powerful, haunting and serious sounds of the iconic post-punk band emerged out of – and perhaps because of – the bleakness of post-industrial Manchester. Bernard Sumner of Joy Division recounts, "I don't think I saw a tree 'till I was about nine... you were always looking for beauty, because it was such an ugly place." The history of the group is superbly detailed, from their early days and first forays into gigs and recordings, right up to the jolting end. Besides interviews with the surviving band members

(who went on to form *New Order* and sell over 20 million records), there is unseen live performance footage, personal photos, and newly discovered audio recordings. The electrifying music is shown to be an interpretation of Manchester with its coldness, bricks, concrete, grey skies and factories, also parallel with Curtis' depression. Contemporary shots of the landmarks that defined Joy Division's history show how much Manchester has changed (again) in the past three decades. A timely release after interest in the band was generated by legendary rock photographer Anton Corbijn's celebrated recent Ian Curtis biopic *Control*, this film makes for a perfect counterpart. A well-crafted documentation of an incredible band and era, though probably just for the fans. (Amelia Groom)