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## Joy



Dir **Grant Gee**, co-written by Jon Savage (M), featuring Bernard Sumner, Peter Hook, Stephen Morris, Tony Wilson

★★★★★

Usually documentary is the drier, less imaginative cousin of the flighty feature film but this new doco from English filmmaker Grant Gee (Radiohead's *Meeting People Is Easy*), proves just the opposite.

After Anton Corbijn's beautiful feature film about the brief glory of the band Joy Division, you would imagine Gee's effort would pale in comparison. Corbijn had a powerful young actor in the lead, and a compelling story based on *Touching From a Distance*, Deborah Curtis's biography of her husband Ian.

But what Corbijn recreated by building sets and shooting on location, Gee revisits through archival footage and analogue remembrance. He is not obliged or even tempted to build the blue room Ian Curtis decorated in his flat. There can be a poignancy to information that comes through old fashioned storytelling, which is at odds with the digital fetish for simulating 'reality'.

Gee's doco, co-written by British music savant Jon Savage (*England's Dreaming: Anarchy, Sex Pistols, Punk Rock, and Beyond*), also works around any one person's interpretation of the events. There are interviews with all the band members, the band's record cover artist, their producer, their manager. And even, for the first time on record, Annik Honore, Curtis' extramarital girlfriend, who was shuffled back to Belgium after Curtis' premature death, to avoid a confrontation with friends and family.

But the real triumph is the evocation of something far more ephemeral than the facts. *Joy* unearths the mood of Manchester in the 1970's, a grim post-industrial metropolis in which the rage of punk married with the landscape to produce a unique sci-fi-afflicted poetry with a new arsenal of rhythms and sounds. *RH*