

ely
film
society

may
2016

the
notes

**IMPORTANT -
CHANGE OF VENUE!**

This month's film has been moved at short notice from the Old Palace due to exams.

Control will be shown in the **DANCE STUDIO** (behind the Hayward Theatre). We have used this space before. Signs and EFS committee members will redirect you.

Control

Anton Corbijn, UK 2007

Screenplay by Matt Greenhalgh from the book *Touching From A Distance* by Deborah Curtis

Sam Riley Ian Curtis
Samantha Morton Debbie Curtis
Alexandra Maria Lara

... Annik Honore

Joe Anderson Peter Hook
James Anthony Pearson

... Bernard Sumner

Harry Treadaway Steve Morris
Craig Parkinson Tony Wilson

Toby Kebbell Rob Gretton

Andrew Sheridan Terry

Robert Shelly Twinny

Richard Bremmer

... Mr. Curtis - Ian's Father

Tanya Myers Ian's Mother

Martha Myers Lowe Ian's Sister

Matthew McNulty Nick

David Whittington

... Chemistry Teacher

Margaret Jackman Mrs. Brady

Mary Jo Randle Debbie's Mother

Ben Naylor Martin Hannet

John Cooper Clarke himself

James Fortune MC

Angus Addenbrooke Colin

C*ontrol*, one of the most perceptive of rock music biopics, has been made by two people who knew him very well. It is based on a memoir by his wife Deborah (played by Samantha Morton), a teenager when they married, and directed by the photographer Anton Corbijn, whose early photos helped establish Curtis' image as young, handsome and sorrowful. The title of Deborah's book, *Touching From a Distance*, could describe all his relationships.

There is irony in the band name

Joy Division, because Ian seems to experience little joy and much inner division, as an almost passive participant in his own career. Listen to the two albums the band made, and you hear his lead vocals as relentless complaints against --what? The melancholy that prevents him from feeling the emotions expressed by his words?

The movie is quietly, superbly photographed and acted. It is in black and white and gray, of course, and we sense Ian was a man who





dreamed in shadows, not colors. He is played by Sam Riley, who makes him seem always alone. There is a lot of performance footage, but Riley sees Ian not so much performing as functioning. His bandmates sometimes look at him with that inward expression people get when they wonder if they have enough gas to get to the next gas station.

Ian's marriage is, of course, a focus of the film, since his wife was not only its source and co-writer but co-producer. He was clearly not ready for marriage. She was younger but more balanced and competent. Ian had an affair with Annik Honore (Alexandra Maria Lara), a Belgian, and the movie deals with that straight on, not painting her as a homewrecker but as another of the enablers Ian used. For him, I suspect, love meant not so much what he felt for a woman as what she felt for him.

Early in the film, Ian and Deborah attend a Sex Pistols concert, and Ian has his ideas altered about what a band is and what music is. His stage style with a microphone resembles a shy, introverted Johnny Rotten. We meet key players in the pivotal Manchester music scene of the period, including the entrepreneur Tony Wilson (Craig Parkinson), immortalized in Michael Winterbottom's *24 Hour Party People*, a film about the same time and place.

Ian Curtis suffered from epilepsy, a condition which I'm not sure he fully understood. It seems to have come upon him around 20, and sometimes during a stage performance, we see him moving spasmodically and wonder if performing triggers episodes. Unlike epilepsy as

experienced by, say, Prince Myshkin in Dostoyevski's *The Idiot*, Ian's does not seem to involve a transition through an ecstatic state. He grows agitated, blanks out, regains consciousness, is confused and depressed. His body has betrayed him.

The extraordinary achievement of *Control* is that it works simultaneously as a musical biopic and the story of a life. There's no rags-to-riches cliché-mongering, because for Ian, even the riches were sackcloth. And since his early death is so well-known, the movie consists of a progression, not a progress. The emotional monitor is always Deborah, patient, loyal, worried; Morton, who is 30, is absolutely convincing as a plucky teenage bride. The shots with which Corbijn leads up to and out of Ian's suicide are meticulously modulated. They do not sensationalize or romanticize. They look on from a certain distance, as we do, as everyone did, while this life moved helplessly toward its close.

Roger Ebert.

ANTON CORBIJN



Born 1955, Strijen, Netherlands

This showing falls in National Epilepsy Week 15th to 21st May

Ian Curtis, like most people with epilepsy, tried to manage his epilepsy while living a normal, everyday life (albeit a slightly more exciting one than usual!)

For many people, living with epilepsy gives rise to challenges, to various degrees, at school, in the workplace and in their personal lives and relationships. Consequently, epilepsy also affects the employers, teachers, families and friends of the person with epilepsy.

Despite there being 600,000 people with epilepsy in the UK alone, a lack of awareness and misconceptions about the condition continue to result in a degree of stigmatisation. Although epilepsy is controlled by medication for some, others experience poor seizure control. Side effects of medication can also impact on day-to-day living.

Charities such as Epilepsy Action who state "we exist to improve the lives of everyone affected by epilepsy", provide much-needed advice and information, run campaigns to improve epilepsy healthcare and services, locally, UK-wide and internationally and facilitate support groups. Details of the services that Epilepsy Action provide can be found at www.epilepsy.org.uk

epilepsy action

NEXT MONTH'S FILM IS
PLAYTIME
(Jacques Tati, France 1967)
Monday 20 June

www.elyfilmsociety.com

www.meetup.com/ely-film/

meetup