



Re-releases

24 Hour Party People

24 Hour Party People

Directed by: Michael Winterbottom

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Presented by: The Film Consortium,
United Artists Films

Presented in association with: Film Council,
FilmFour

Production Companies: Revolution Films,
Baby Cow Productions

Executive Producer: Henry Normal

Producer: Andrew Eaton

Assistant Producer: Fiona Neilson

Co-producer: Gina Carter

Line Producer: Robert How

Unit Manager: Sally Maynard

Production Co-ordinator: Candice Fonseca

Production Accountant: John Eccleston

Location Manager: Sam Taylor

Post-production Consultants: Steve Harrow,
Steeple Post Production Services Ltd

Post-production Supervisors: Neil Grimshaw,
Jackie Vance

Post-production Supervisor: Clare Oliver *

Production Secretary: Sarada McDermott

2nd Unit Director: Tom Bruggen

1st Assistant Director: Mike Elliott

2nd Assistant Director: Nic Shearer

3rd Assistant Director: Anthony Wilcox

Casting: Wendy Brazington

Screenplay: Frank Cottrell Boyce

Director of Photography: Robby Müller

Camera Operators: Jane Rousseau, Marcel Zyskind

Hovercam: Philip George

Camera Assistant: Chris Greenwood

Gaffer: John Colley

Unit Photographer: John Shard

Special Effects Director: David Bryan

Editor: Trevor Waite

1st Assistant Editor: Martin Corbett

2nd Assistant Editor: Llyr Wynn Jones

Production Designer: Mark Tildesley

Supervising Art Director: Paul Cripps

Stand-by Art Director: Mark Digby

Set Decorator: Lucy Howe

Draftsman: Rod Gorwood

Property Master: Catriona MacMillan

Costume Designers: Natalie Ward, Stephen Noble

Make-up Designers: Jill Sweeney, Janita Doyle

Prosthetics: Neil Gorton

Main Titles/Captions/Credits:

Central Station Technicolour

Music Supervisor: Liz Gallacher

Music Co-ordinator: Liz Moscrop

Music Editor: Joakim Sundström

Sound Recording: Stuart Wilson

Sound for Hacienda: Tom Piper

Re-recording Mixers: Aad Wirtz, John Falcini

Supervising Sound Editor: Zane Hayward

Stunt Co-ordinators: Gareth Milne, Nick Hobbs

Special Consultant: Tony Wilson

Pigeon Mar: Simon Wilson

Special Thanks to: Paul Ryder, Roy Barraclough,

Christopher Eccleston, Peter Hook, Shaun Ryder,

Johnny Vegas, Tony Wilson, Bernard Sumner,

Chris Auty, Luke Bainbridge, Julie Baines, Bez,

Clint Boon, James Cartwright, Gillian Gilbert,

Dave Haslam, Trevor Johnson, Martin Moscrop,

Mike Pickering, Vini Reilly, Rowetta

Cast:

Steve Coogan (*Tony Wilson*)

Keith Allen (*Roger Ames*)

Rob Brydon (*Ryan Letts*)

Enzo Cilenti (*Pete Saville*)

There can be few more defunct currencies in cinema than nostalgia. Films that trade in the past without yearning for its unreachable pleasures are so rare that when one does arrive, it may feel as collectible as a newly minted coin.

24 Hour Party People is one such picture. Its director Michael Winterbottom has some experience of rescuing period pieces from the nullifying furnace of history: his two Thomas Hardy adaptations, *Jude* (1996) and *The Claim* (2000), a version of *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, shared an immediacy that refused to recognise distinctions between past and present. The case of *24 Hour Party People* is slightly more complicated – this is history so close you can smell it, touch it and, if you're of a certain age, even remember how you participated in it. Beginning in 1976 with a Sex Pistols gig in Manchester which apparently inspired the foppish television presenter Tony Wilson to establish Factory Records and open the Hacienda, and ending in 1992 with the demise of both enterprises, the film has a unique advantage over other music biopics: it immortalises an era so recent that, unlike punk or jazz, it has not yet acquired the protective shell that can form after decades of memoirs, documentaries and reunion tours. In other words, the rules are waiting to be written.

That might account for the film's jubilant tone, which suggests a smash-and-grab raid on a period that was never intended to be preserved for posterity. Frank Cottrell-Boyce's catch-all screenplay and Winterbottom's direction, which veers between *cinéma vérité* and a kind of knockabout, Richard Lesteresque irreverence, don't work towards that sense of definitive truth that is commonly sought by biopics. At times they actively undermine their own film's authenticity. When Wilson (a mixture of fond impersonation and character assassination by Steve Coogan) finds his wife Lindsay (Shirley Henderson) having sex in a toilet cubicle with the Buzzcocks' Howard Devoto (Martin Hancock), the camera drifts over to a cleaner, played by the real Devoto, who bluntly assures us that the incident we have just witnessed never happened. Vacillation is not something associated with the biopic. Nor does the genre commonly countenance wilful oversights, such as the moment late in the narrative when Wilson introduces the eight-year-old son he had forgotten to tell us about earlier in the film.

Audiences look to the biopic genre to see legends being systematically authorised by cinema, as in *Ali* (2001), or to watch the dirt being dished, as in *Mommie Dearest* (1981) or *Tina: What's Love Got to Do with It?* (1993). At the very least they expect that the information they are presented with will be dependable. An unreliable narrator does not preclude an audience's identification, but when that volatile element is introduced into a biopic, the assumption of truth implicit in the genre is jeopardised. Does a biopic that plays games with its audience's trust forfeit its right to be recognised as part of that genre?

If so, then the makers of *24 Hour Party People* will not be unduly perturbed. The picture is interested in Factory, not facts; it evokes the general spirit of the era, and if that means absorbing into its fabric all the folklore, gossip and self-aggrandisement inherent in any atmosphere of fierce creativity, then the conventions of the genre will just have to suffer. This makes the movie sound organic, puritanical even, but of course it's more calculated than that. The film

Ron Cook (*Derek Ryder*)
 Chris Coghill (*Bez*)
 Paddy Considine (*Rob Gretton*)
 Danny Cunningham (*Shaun Ryder*)
 Dave Gorman (*John the postman*)
 Sean Harris (*Ian Curtis*)
 Shirley Henderson (*Lindsay Wilson*)
 Lennie James (*Alan Erasmus*)
 Peter Kay (*Don Tonay*)
 Ralf Little (*Peter 'Hooky' Hook*)
 Kate Magowan (*Yvette Wilson*)
 Paul Popplewell (*Paul Ryder*)
 Rowetta (*herself*)
 Paul Ryder (*Pel*)
 Andy Serkis (*Martin Hannett*)
 John Simm (*Bernard Sumner*)
 John Thomson (*Charles, Granada TV producer*)
 Raymond Waring (*Vini Reilly*)
 Nigel Pivaro (*actor at Granada*)
 Martin Hancock (*Howard Devoto*)
 Mark Windows (*Johnny Rotten*)
 Mark E. Smith (*punter*)
 Naomi Radcliffe (*twitchy girl*)
 Tim Horrocks (*Steve*)
 Howard Devoto (*cleaner*)
 Collette Cooper (*Sadie*)
 Tracy Cunliffe (*other girl in nosh van*)
 Duncan Whitworth (*Jez*)
 Michael Mitchell Jr (*Simon*)
 Claire Lever (*assistant*)
 Neil Bell (*aspiring singer*)
 Aidan Cross (*Goth*)
 Simon Pegg (*journalist*)
 Elizabeth Kelly (*Ian's gran*)
 Darren Tighe (*Mike Pickering*)
 Anna Tyborczyk (*Gillian*)
 Peter Gunn (*farmer*)
 Dan Hope (*Mark*)
 Nick Clarke (*Gaz*)
 Margi Clarke (*actor in corridor*)
 Mani (*sound engineer*)
 Smug Roberts (*railway guard*)
 Clint Boon (*2nd railway guard*)
 Toby Salaman (*Sir Keith Joseph*)
 Conrad Murray (*Bailey Brother*)
 Martin Coogan (*Chris Nagle*)
 Kieran O'Brien (*Nathan McGough*)
 Roger Kennedy (*Doorman Sam*)
 Sean Cernow (*Little Pel*)
 Fiona Allen (*cloakroom girl*)
 Helen Schlesinger (*Hilary*)
 Joshua McNicholas (*Oliver*)
 Anthony H. Wilson (*Granada TV studio director*)
 Dino, Mr A. Bowser, Gary Roberts (*wise guys*)
 Shaun Ryder (*Ryder's father*) *
 Christopher Eccleston (*tramp offering advice*) *
 Dave Haslam (*Hacienda DJ*) *
 Kenny Baker (*magician's assistant*) *
 James Cartwright (*Morrissey*) *
 Martin Moscrop (*New Year's Eve partygoer*) *
 Trevor Johnson (*Ben Kelly, architect*) *
 Mark Tildesley (*TV producer*) *
 Mike Pickering (*Hacienda DJ*) *
 UK 2002
 117 mins
 Digital 4K

An Altitude re-release

* Uncredited

has at its disposal an element that is guaranteed to stem or at least compromise any flow of nostalgia. It's called irony.

This quality does not in itself make Winterbottom's film unique – recent comedies such as *The Brady Bunch Movie* (1995) and *The Wedding Singer* (1997) have scrutinised their decades of choice through a gauze of irony and kitsch that relegates the filmic experience to the level of flicking through an old student yearbook to laugh at the tassled corduroy jackets, the crimped fringes. What distinguishes *24 Hour Party People* is that it mixes its dollops of irony and nostalgia on the same palette, on the same brush, creating vivid new tones. The irony prevents the nostalgia from blurring into sentimentality; there's always an outlandish touch – like the flying saucer that descends to herald the arrival of Happy Mondays' resident bug-eyed dancer Bez, or God appearing to Tony Wilson in the form of Tony Wilson to act as a distancing device. And when the opposite effect is required, as during the funeral of Ian Curtis (Sean Harris), the Joy Division singer who committed suicide, a compassionate glow temporarily defrosts the film's crisp layer of cool. As they gather around the open casket, Curtis's grandmother commends Wilson on being so well dressed whenever he appears on television, before Wilson plants a kiss on the dead man's forelock, a striking counterpoint to the brittle relationship he enjoyed with him in life.

In the assumed hierarchy of artforms, cinema is still some way above pop music, and when the two are fused there can be a thrilling frisson in that meeting between 'high' and 'low' art, whether it's an experimental exercise like Godard's *Sympathy for the Devil* (aka *One Plus One*, 1968) or a narrative one such as *Velvet Goldmine* (1998). Unlike film, music has always been regarded as a disposable artform, and when its practitioners are captured on celluloid, a process of authentication takes place – cinema confers a stamp of approval that is pleasantly at odds with the nature of the material, the value of which has always been assessed largely by the individual consumer, or in the pages of the *NME*. Once it has been adopted as a fitting subject for a movie, the music ceases to be something played on hi-fis in the bedrooms of taciturn teenagers, as Joy Division predominantly was, and takes its place in a less ephemeral roll call.

The process of putting the Manchester scene on film is therefore an important act of validation. It places those bands in the company of other musicians who have been endorsed by cinema – Glenn Miller, Charlie Parker, the Beatles, the Doors. To anyone who brooded over Joy Division's *Unknown Pleasures* (1979), or did their homework to The Durutti Column's *The Guitar and Other Machines* (1987), or let down their hair, parted in curtains, naturally, to Happy Mondays' *Pills 'n' Thrills and Bellyaches* (1990), an edifying transformation will have taken place. The fact that it has been effected in a film that largely rejects the emasculating power of blind nostalgia is reflected by the choice of music over the closing credits: a New Order song, yes, but a new composition ('Here to Stay', 2002) rendered, for added freshness, in a Chemical Brothers remix. Did any film about the past ever lean so affectionately towards the future?

Ryan Gilbey, *Sight and Sound*, April 2002

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