

January Release

No Manifesto: A Film About Manic Street Preachers

Director: Elizabeth Marcus

Starring: James Dean Bradfield, Nicky Wire

Running time: 95 mins

On limited release from Jan 30th



A long time in the making, Elizabeth Marcus's *No Manifesto* provides an all-access insight into 90s rock sensations the Manic Street Preachers, covering their honest origins and the speed bumps that punctuated their colourful career. Due to conflict around the rights to the music heard in the film, the release date of Marcus's work has been delayed and speculated upon for years, screenings of her 'work in process' viewed as far back as the Sheffield Film Festival in November 2008.

Forming a strong dialogue with the fans, Marcus interviews many people about the impact of the Manics for her film, focusing on their rejection of hypocrisy, inspired largely by the frustrations of growing up in a Thatcherite era. When asked about the 80s as a time of inspiration for the Manics, guitarist Nicky Wire comments, 'We realised that politics can be glamorous, and can be entertaining.'

The bond between the bandmates began as far back as primary school. Wire fondly describes his first impressions of a five-year-old James Dean Bradfield as 'a young Woody Allen', and their mutual interest in literature and 80s punk sparked from the boredom of living in a small industrial town in South Wales. Before long, Richey Edwards joined Bradfield, Wire and classically trained drummer Sean Moore, helping pen the majority of their earlier tracks.

The Manics garnered a large underground following throughout the late 80s and early 90s, but instead of inspiring alcohol binges or smoking habits, the Manics inspired education. As Turner Prize Winner Jeremy Deller comments, this set the Manics apart from other musicians of the time; quotes from famous artists such as Gaudi are interspersed throughout the documentary and reflect the inspiration that the Manics used and, in turn, gave to their fans.

Sean, Nicky and James discuss the permanent, tragic change to the band's dynamic following the disappearance of creative innovator Edwards in February 1995. It caused the remaining trio to broaden their sound, using strings for the first time on smash hit *A Design For Life*, followed by 1998's *This Is My Truth Tell Me Yours*, the Manics' first album to hit number one in the UK.

Despite their eccentricities on stage and the political statements in their songs, Marcus's film exposes the remaining trio as a product of where they came from, not their success. Regardless of their fame, the Manics still seem somewhat anonymous in nature and, well, normal. A fantastic piece of film, both enjoyably personal and full of 90s nostalgia.

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Charlotte Ross