



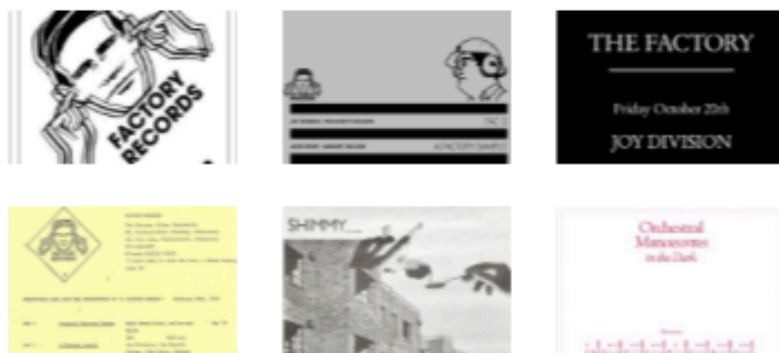
Courtesy of the Use Hearing Protection: FAC 1 - 50 / 40 exhibition

Eight objects that tell the story of Factory Records' early days

The curators of a new exhibition, Use Hearing Protection: FAC 1 - 50 / 40, highlight items from the legendary Manchester label

Factory Records

8 IMAGES



At the beginning of the 1970s, Manchester was in industrial decline: bombsites were still being cleared, unemployment was at an all-time high, overpopulated slums plagued the city, workplaces were closing, and Manchester had nothing of its own to dance to.

And then a Factory opened.

When he started Factory Records, Anthony H Wilson was already an institution on local news programme *Granada Reports*. He was not your run-of-the-mill local news reporter: he'd been hosting his own local music show, *So It Goes*, since 1975, giving the Sex Pistols, the Clash, and Siouxsie their TV debuts. When the show was cancelled, he decided to be more proactive. Inspired by the Buzzcocks sticking a firework up the Manchester music scene, he founded the label, taking its name from Warhol's art collective in New York. The first Factory night was on the May 26, 1978, and by the following month, he had booked a local band called Joy Division to perform.

Over the subsequent decades, Joy Division would morph into New Order, and in turn spawn Electronic; all three would release records through Factory. The label also put out everything from UK reggae by X-O-Dus (whose debut 12" took one day to record and ten months to mix, with a four-month delay for Peter Saville's artwork) to electro-funk and jazz by 52nd Street, taking Factory out of its post-punk and new wave comfort zone. James, of "Sit Down" fame, were briefly signed, before jumping ship to a major label. House music was given its first dedicated space in the form of the ill-fated Hacienda nightclub; it was here that Mike Pickering, one of the resident DJs, handed Tony Wilson a demo tape from a Salford band called The Happy Mondays.

Over 40 years later, this history is being celebrated in a new exhibition, *Use Hearing Protection: FAC 1 – 50 / 40*, curated by Jon Savage and Mat Bancroft, running at Chelsea Space at London's Chelsea College of Arts. Below, we look at eight of the items being exhibited, and use them to explore the unique history of Factory Records.

'USE HEARING PROTECTION' LOGO STICKER (PETER SAVILLE, 1978)

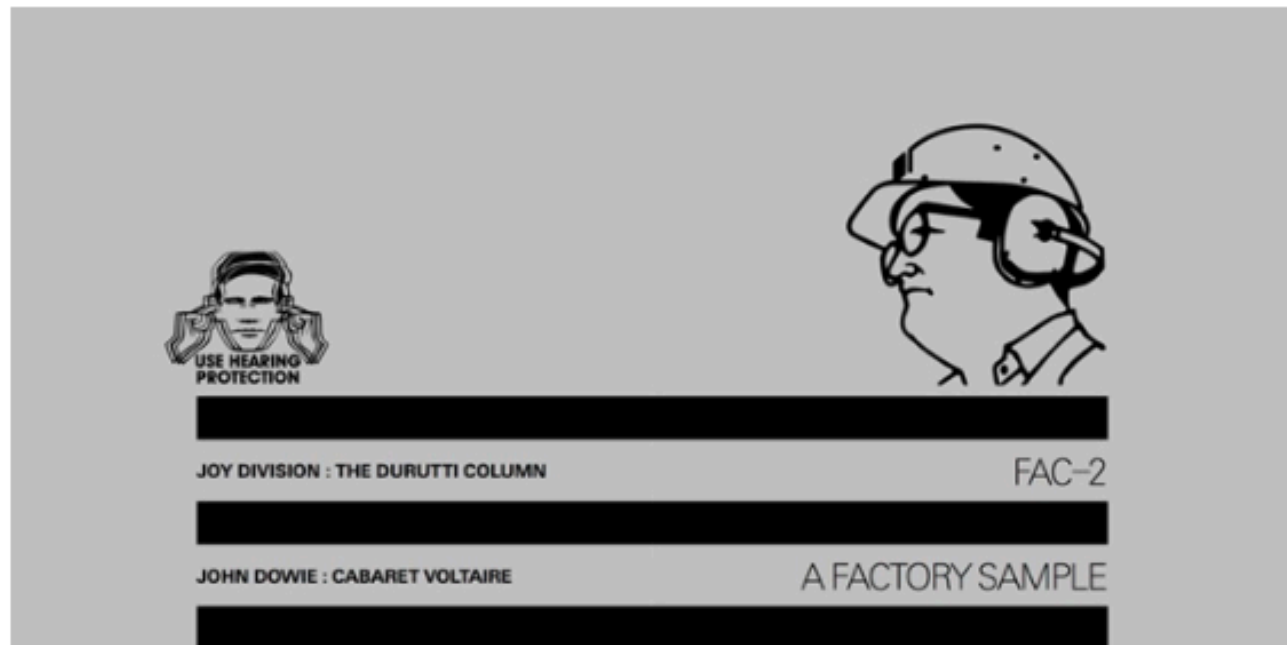


'Use Hearing Protection' logo sticker, 1978 Courtesy of the Use Hearing Protection: FAC 1 – 50 / 40 exhibition

This logo, which has since become synonymous with Factory Records, was first designed by Peter Saville for a poster used to promote the Factory night at the Russell Club in Moss Side. Wilson had a sense of history and posterity, and saw it as important to not only document Factory's output, but also its artefacts, by giving everything to do with the label a catalogue number – this poster was the first catalogued Factory item, FAC1, but later catalogued items included a lawsuit, FAC61, and a cat, FAC191. 'Use Hearing Protection' was Saville's first use of the industrial aesthetic that would come to define the company.

It wasn't the label's first piece of publicity, however. Tony Wilson had designed his own artwork for an earlier Factory night at the PSV in Hulme to promote the Durutti Column – a tear-out of a Situationist cowboy comic. "The Durutti Column poster would become a touchstone for Wilson, who arranged for very large blow-ups of the image to be printed during 1979," says Jon Savage, the curator of the *Use Hearing Protection* exhibition. "He left no account of how he knew about the image and the name."

FAC2, A FACTORY SAMPLE (PETER SAVILLE, 1978)

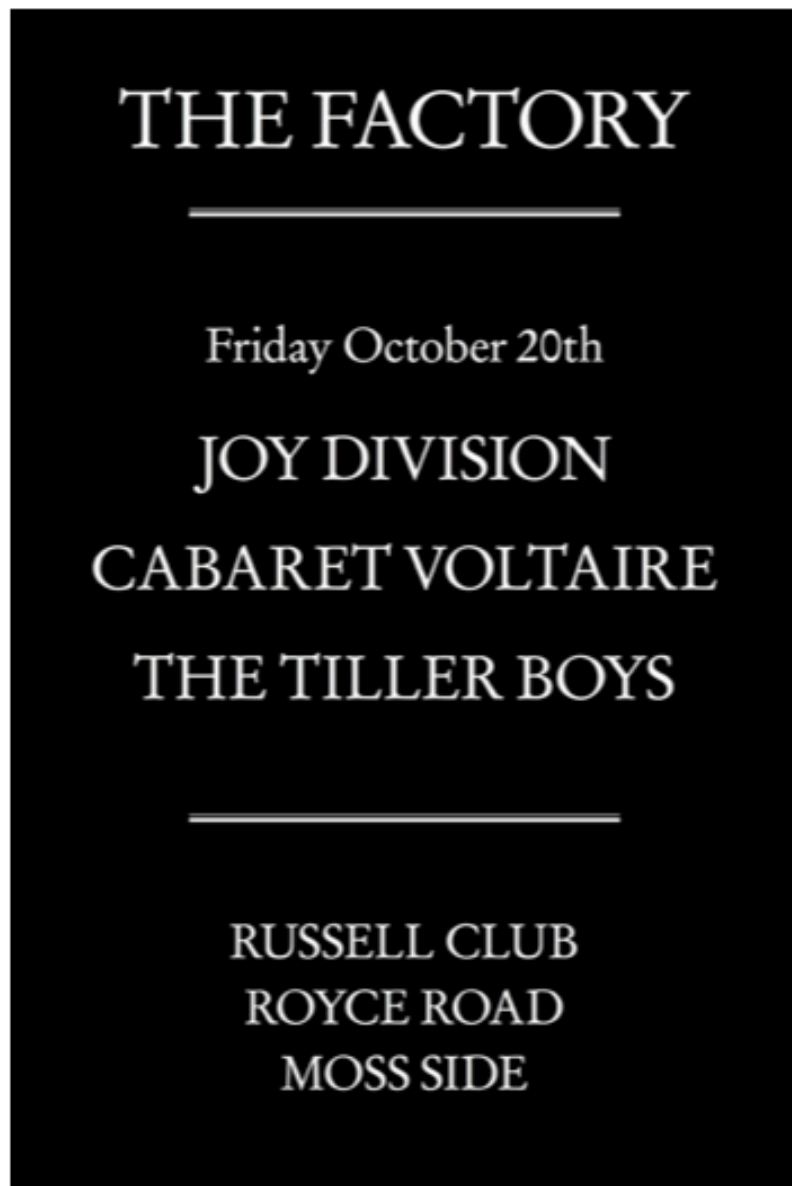


FAC2, A Factory Sample, 1978 Courtesy of the Use Hearing Protection: FAC 1 – 50 / 40 exhibition

The first release by the Factory Records label, *A Factory Sample's* double 7" sleeve was like nothing else being produced at the time, shunning the cardboard of a normal record sleeve for rice paper and dyed silver, and coming sealed inside a thin plastic bag. What Saville had started with FAC1 had now truly taken hold. "FAC1 (was) the seed-bed of the whole Factory aesthetic as it is now understood," says Savage. "Almost immediately, Saville's cool, modern typographically-led approach became associated with the Factory brand. Out of the first ten FAC numbers, Saville designed all but two."

Factory's tradition for using unusual techniques, high concept, and non-standard materials peaked with the record sleeve design for FAC73, New Order's "Blue Monday". The Saville design, inspired by a then-cutting edge floppy disc, famously cost £1.10 to make... and sold for £1 in shops. Nobody at Factory expected it to sell; it ended up going platinum in the UK.

FAC3, THE FACTORY POSTER (PETER SAVILLE, 1978)



FAC3, The Factory poster, 1978 Courtesy of the Use Hearing
Protection: FAC 1 – 50 / 40 exhibition

"The third Factory poster strips away any imagery and uses typographical design only," says Mat Bancroft, *Use Hearing Protection's* co-curator. "Peter Saville moves the aesthetic on from the industrial design accents of the first poster and *A Factory Sample* to produce a classical design in a serif font."

Joy Division signed to Factory Records around this time, turning down huge offers from London labels. Infamously, the band made Wilson write the contract in his own blood: "The musicians own everything, the company owns nothing. All our bands have the freedom to fuck off." This was typical of Wilson's business practice, but ultimately this ethos would prove the undoing of the label in 1992. "We made history, not money," Wilson later reflected.

FACTORY NEWSLETTER (1979)



FACTORY RECORDS

The Factory, Hulme, Manchester
86, Palatine Road, Didsbury, Manchester
45, Town Lane, Charlesworth, Derbyshire
061-434-3876
Glossop (04574) 62479
'I don't want to rock the boat, I wanna fucking
sink it'

PRODUCTION LINE FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF 'A FACTORY SAMPLE' February 28th, 1979

FAC 1	<u>Original Factory Poster</u>	Quad Crown, black, yellow and white 300 Sold out	May 78
FAC 2	<u>A Factory sample</u>	Joy Division, the Durutti Column, John Dowie, Cabaret Voltaire 2.E.P. 33 1/2 7in 1,000 Sold out	Jan 79 (24) Mar 79 (1)
FAC 3	<u>Factory Poster</u>	Double Crown, Tiller Boys, Cabaret Voltaire, black and white 200 Sold out	Oct 78
FAC 4	<u>December poster</u>	Black and white, asymmetric development 250 Sold out	Dec 78
FAC 5	<u>A Certain Ratio</u>	'All night party!' 'Strain!' 'Thin Boys!' 7in 45/33 1/2 5,000	Apr 79
FAC 6	<u>Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark</u>	'Electricity', 'Almost' 7in 45 5,000	Apr 79
FAC 7	<u>Factory Paper</u>	Red and silver Grid system	Mar 79
FAC 8	<u>Factory Fax Timer</u>	Monthly Abacus, wood and metal construction with gauze and blood. Menstrual Art(Linder) 100	May 79
FAC 9	<u>Factory Flick</u>	What the soundtrack's for; 10 mins Super 8 Colour	Apr 79
FAC 10	<u>Joy Division (no title yet)</u>	12 tracks 12inch 33 1/2 Produced, Martin Zero.	May 79 (1)

Factory Records, 1979 Courtesy of the Lesley Gilbert, Benedict Gretton, and Laura Gretton for the Use Hearing Protection: FAC 1 - 50 / 40 exhibition

"This is a Factory newsletter, or 'shareholders analysis', as they were often known," says Bancroft. The yellow paper on which it's printed was the standard communications paper stock used at Granada TV, where Tony Wilson worked as a reporter, presenter, and then a news anchor for almost the entire time he was running Factory. "This is a very early one - maybe the first? - dated Feb 28, 1979," adds Bancroft. "Written and typed by Tony Wilson, it states the plans for forthcoming releases or items already released and the current sales position. These were regularly produced during the early years of Factory and sent to journalists, connected parties, etc. Nearly always typed and put together by Tony Wilson."

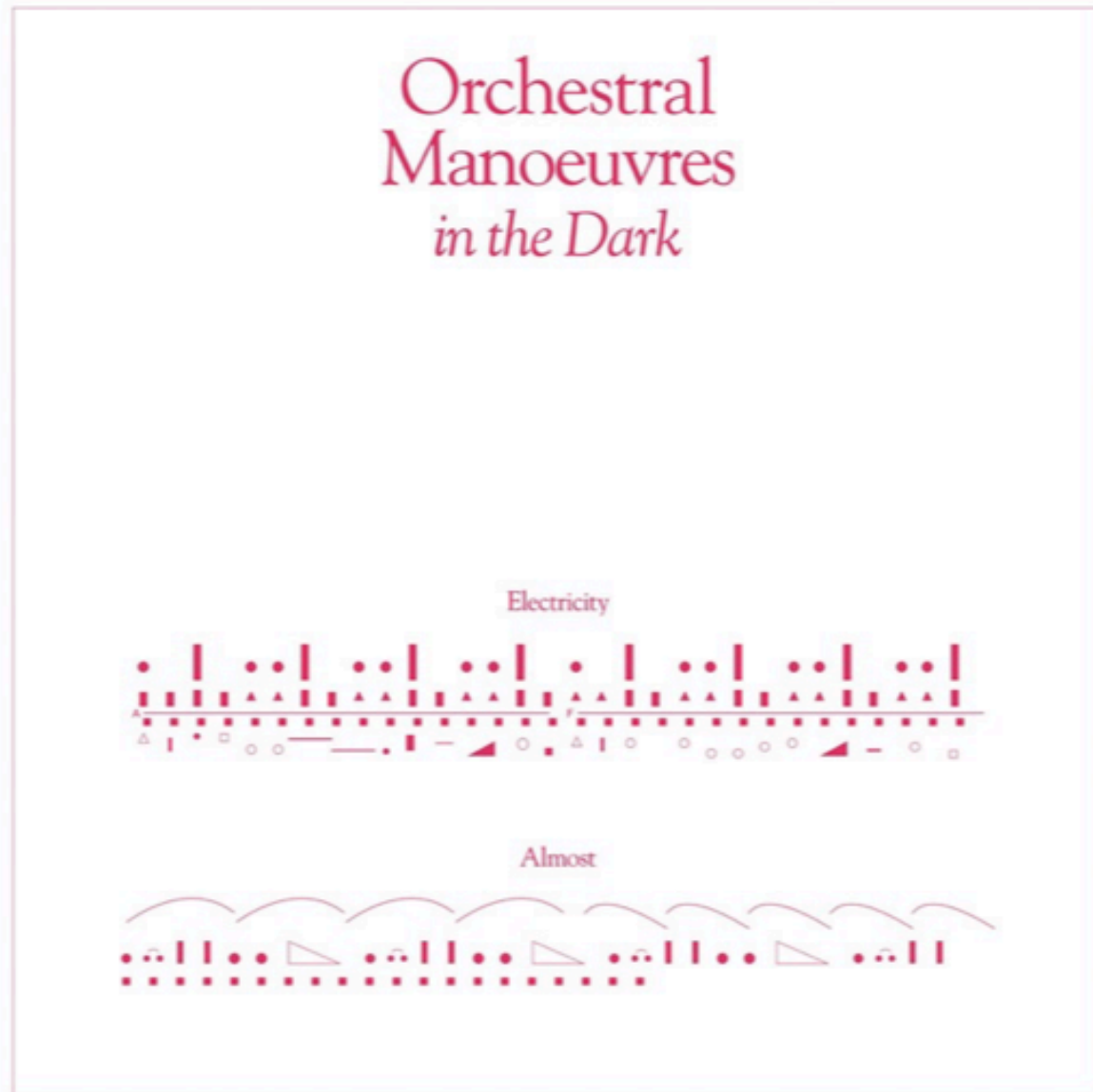
'SHIMMY...' POSTER (JON SAVAGE, 1979)



Shimmy... poster, 1979 Courtesy of the Use Hearing Protection:
FAC 1 – 50 / 40 exhibition

Incorporating situationist design tropes - which mixed elements of Dada, Surrealism, Lettrism, and collage - this was a poster for what would be Joy Division's first performance at the now-legendary Factory in Hulme, following the release of FAC10, their first LP, *Unknown Pleasures*. Wilson, a great enabler and believer in the autonomy of artists, gave Savage free rein to come up with whatever he wanted. Peter Saville called it "autonomous opportunity". "I didn't get paid, but I got the satisfaction of seeing the Shimmy montage pasted up on walls around Manchester – and the show was fantastic," Savage told *The Guardian* in 2017.

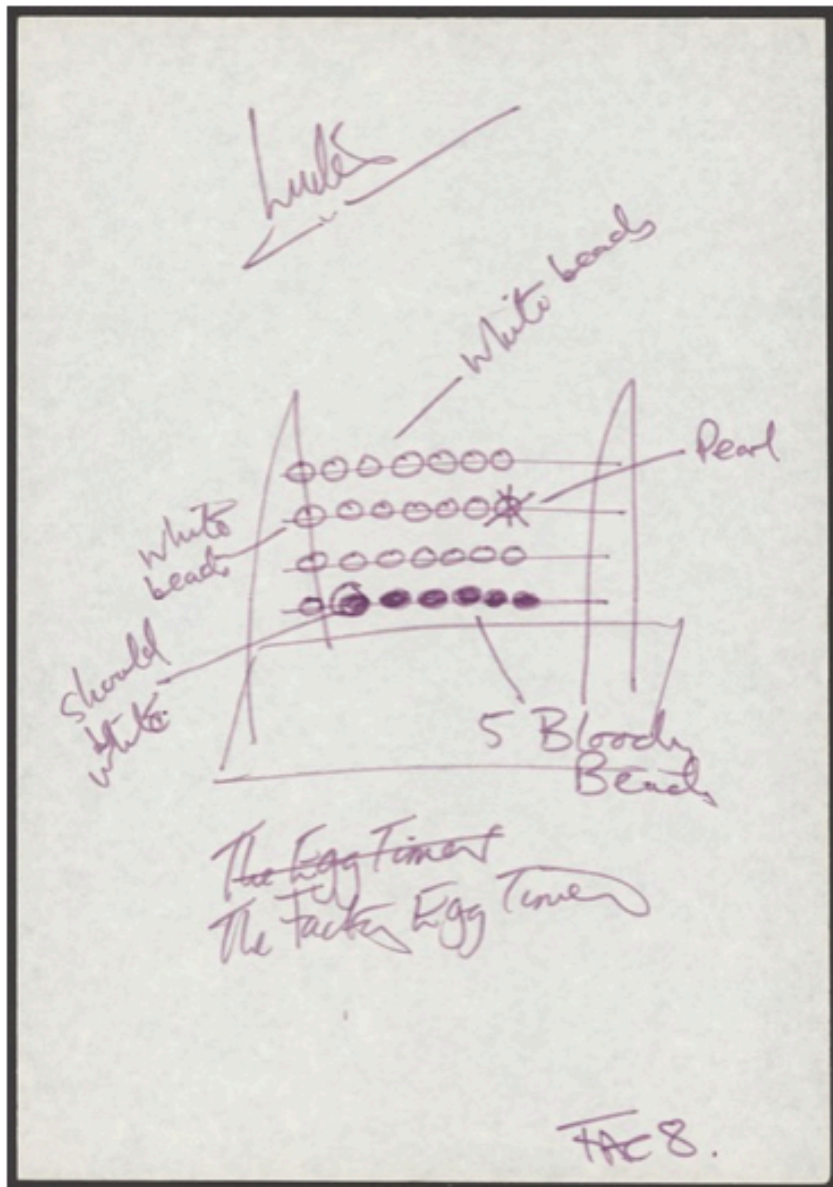
FAC6, "ELECTRICITY" BY OMD (Peter Saville, 1979)



FAC6, 'Electricity' by OMD, 1979 Courtesy of the Use Hearing Protection: FAC 1 – 50 / 40 exhibition

Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark took full advantage of the 'right to fuck off', and signed to DinDisc after just one single with Factory. They're not the only artists Factory let slip through its fingers: they would have signed The Stone Roses, only Wilson didn't get on well with the rival club owner who managed them, and they also turned down The Smiths. "Having watched (OMD) perform at The Factory, Tony Wilson was reportedly not keen on signing them," says Mat Bancroft. "It was Wilson's partner, Lindsey Reade, who pushed him to listen again to the demo of the track and consider recording and releasing it."

FAC8, FACTORY EGG TIMER (LINDER STERLING, 1979)

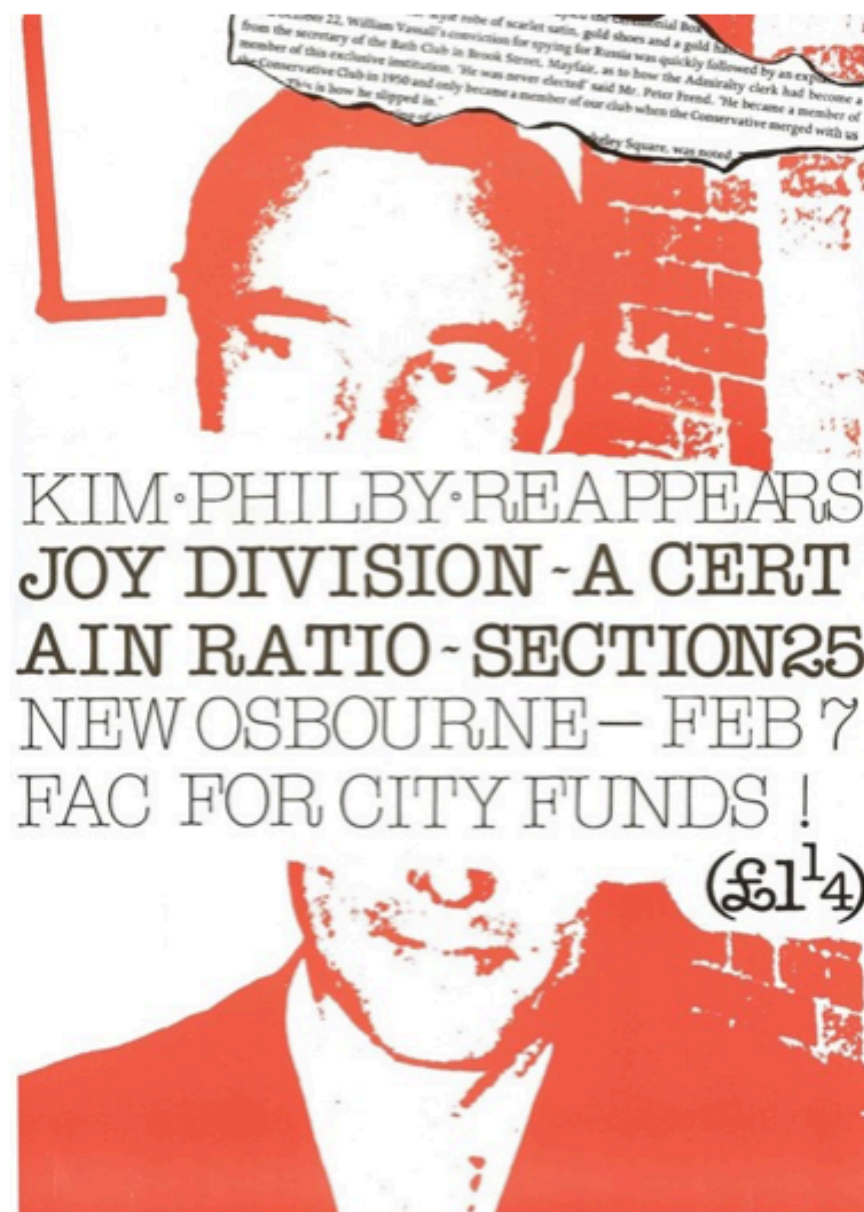


FAC8, egg timer design, 1979 Courtesy of the Use Hearing Protection: FAC 1 – 50 / 40 exhibition

Like other rock'n'roll business experiments, such as the Beatles' Apple Corps, Factory often indulged the whims and experiments of artists that the owners were fans of. Linder Sterling's band, Ludus, played several Factory nights, and the performance artist also designed the cover for the Buzzcocks' single "Orgasm Addict", and in Factory's September 1979 newsletter, titled "History Lesson" and written by Tony Wilson, space was given to showcasing an egg timer designed by Sterling.

"Factory egg timer; menstrual art, designed by Linder (secret public, Ludus, Orgasm Addict montage)," the newsletter read. "Still on drawing board; A four bar Abacus; 7 beads to the row final five, blood soaked lint; looking for a manuFACTORer. Perhaps on sale in inaccessible places by Christmas." Sadly, you can't buy replicas of the egg timer today – it only ever existed as a drawing on a napkin.

'KIM PHILBY REAPPEARS' POSTER (JON SAVAGE, 1980)



'Kim Philby Reappears' poster, 1980 Courtesy of the Use Hearing
Protection: FAC 1 - 50 / 40 exhibition

This was a poster for a benefit concert arranged by Factory for *City Fun* magazine (Iggy Pop played the Manchester Apollo on the same night, so attendance was low). Reviewing the gig for *City Fun*, writer 'Paul H' concluded that "After 'Transmission' the audience stood shouting for more for about ten minutes but the band did not reappear. I was glad because after such a stunning set any more would have been anti-climatic."

The real-life Kim Philby was a Soviet double agent and defector. In the lore of Factory Records, he appears both in this poster and at FAC51, the Hacienda, where one of the bars was named after him (his co-conspirators, 'Hicks', and 'The Gay Traitor', after Anthony Blunt, lent their names to two other bars).

This wasn't Joy Division's last gig. That honour goes to Birmingham University's High Hall on May 2, just a fortnight before singer Ian Curtis died by suicide. Curtis's death marked the end of the first act of Factory records; the subsequent two acts, New Order's electronic pop, and the Happy Mondays' baggy, dance and drug-infused technicolour indie, would come to define the aesthetic and sound of the 80s and early 90s respectively.

Factory was and is an extraordinary moment in British cultural history, and the FAC(t)s above feed into the story and substantiate the myth – but, to quote Anthony H Wilson, “When forced to choose between the truth and the legend, print the legend.”

Use Hearing Protection: FAC 1 – 50 / 40 runs until October 26, 2019 at London's Chelsea Space, Chelsea College of Arts. A Use Hearing Protection boxset is out October 11, while Factory: Communications 1978-92 is released November 8