



Supporting Joy Division, 1980

Transcription of excerpt from an interview with
Kevin Jenkins of The Primal Screamers (2018)

Kevin: We got to support Joy Division at the Winter Gardens. So it was quite a meteoric rise. And that was the highlight of our career really, was playing with Joy Division. And they were lovely, a really, really nice band. And they shared all their backstage food and drink with us. They just cut it in half, all the pallets of beer, they just cut them in half and took them into our dressing room. They bought their own support band because they didn't realise that Cherry Red were going to supply a support band, and the manager came over to us and he said, "Oh, well we didn't know you guys were going to be here. Do you mind if these other guys play?" And we were totally, we were just 18 years old, we didn't know which way was up, didn't have a manager or anything, and we just said, "Well, as long as we can play our full set we don't mind." And he said, "Oh no, Joy Division have agreed to reduce their set so you can--," which was like unheard of. And so the other guys went on first and did their bit, and then we went on and did ours. And I think it was sell-out crowd for Joy Division. And there had been a lot of stuff about us in the local press in the *Malvern Gazette*, so there was a.. and we had a really good time. We started to rehearse for the gig and, I can't believe now how hit and miss we were, because most of the songs had only been written, you know, for six weeks or something like that and we'd get together and have a practice, we practiced once a week, come what may. And I think, certainly from my point of view, I was only worried about whether my bass guitar was loud enough. And I'd gotten hold of a proper Rickenbacker bass by then as well, 'cause I had a copy before, and we were just hammering it out. So approaching that gig it was very worrying. And the day came, it was a Saturday, and we thought we had a lot of kit, you know, we had guitar stacks, and Gary had loads and loads of keyboards, and a stack of amps for his. We had a, er, Rick had bought a Rogers

double bass drum kit like Brian Downey out of Thin Lizzy, and we cockily took all our stuff into the Winter Gardens, and we put it in front of the stage. And much--, we were there in the morning, you know, and we were just waiting and waiting for the Joy Division guys to arrive, and they eventually rolled up with two sort of articulated lorries. And it was like our stuff looks like match boxes. And they'd bought this PA in, it was like the size of a house either side. And we said, our kit, we just moved it out of the way in the end because it was just in the way of all these trolleys they were bringing in. And they built these edifices of speakers at the front, either side of the stage, and the floor monitors went down, and there was, oh, I don't know how many of them. And then they had a side-fill PA as well, on the stage, which we'd never, well we'd never had floor monitors before let alone side-fill PA. And they set it all up, they did their sound check and they came and asked us if it would be okay, you know, if the other played as well. So we've done all the sound check and it's all done, and we're just waiting and waiting. I remember the fish and chip shop then on Graham Road was called the Golden Kitchen, and we all went over to the Golden Kitchen for something to eat. And then the time came to go on, and I got so nervous, and I just want it over with. You got so tense. And we got on the stage, and so the girls went up said, "Hey, we're the Primal Screamers," you know, "We hope you have a good night" or whatever, and we kicked into the first song. And once we started going it was great. And it was kind of auto pilot. And we had a really good response from the crowd, very supportive. But one of the things I remember most, there's two things, the first thing I remember they had these spotlights on the stage between the monitors, and I think they're like aircraft lights or something, and there was one just to my left. And I remember it coming on, and I'm looking at the fret board of my guitar and it was so bright I couldn't see the guitar. So that was one thing. And then two lads started spitting at us, 'cause as they thought we were a punk band, and they were dancing around like mad, and they all had the chains on and all the gear, and they were having a fantastic time. And they were spitting, and it felt like people were chucking buckets of it, and it was horrible, it was just dreadful. And we hated it, we absolutely hated it. And I don't know how they summoned up so much spit. And we were on for nearly, oh, a good three quarters of an hour. And so we finished our set and we just ran off covered in this stuff. And we actually, we were told, Richard Jones came back, he said, "You

had an encore," but we didn't go back, we just, we'd had enough of it. And then we all had a drink and calmed down. And I can't remember taking the gear home, I can't remember anything about the aftermath of it. But we're still talking about it now. And it's, you know, a claim to fame, so I can always say, well we supported Joy Division, and people of an age are always like, "Never!" So it was just brilliant.

*Transcript of the full interview is available from Rock Around the Hills
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