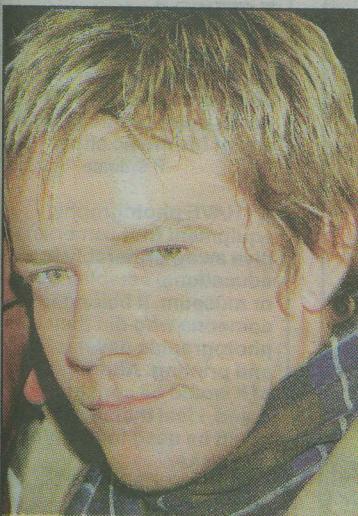


Who'll play tragic Ian?



■ MANCUNIAN ... Max Beesley



■ FAVOURITE ... Jude Law



■ OUTSIDER ... Colin Farrell

Law is top tip for new film on Joy Division frontman

HOLLYWOOD heart-throb Jude Law is set for a return to Manchester – to play tragic Joy Division frontman Ian Curtis in a film about the celebrated singer.

Producers of the biopic say they have lined up a "huge name" to play the lead role.

And ex-Joy Division star Peter Hook says he believes 32-year-old Law, who was in Manchester to film a remake of *Alfie* last year, is the front-runner to play the role of Curtis.

US-based production company Claraflora is producing the as-yet-untitled film.

It is based on the book *Touching From A Distance*, written by Curtis's widow Deborah.

Claraflora was unavailable for comment.

Producer Todd Eckert would only say that the company was talking to an actor who was "huge" and also

BY BRIAN LASHLEY

bore a physical resemblance to Curtis.

The guessing game to identify the actor who will take the role in the Manchester-based production is now in full swing.

Eckert gave one further clue to his identity by saying the actor in question has just finished a couple of films and the only music he listened to was Joy Division and New Order.

Hook, the bass guitarist who formed Joy Division with Curtis in 1976, told the *Manchester Evening News*: "The whisper I've heard is that Jude Law will probably play the role. It's not a bad choice."

"The film is being made by Hollywood, but what's important is that they get the story right."

"I don't know why the guy who played Ian in *24 Hour Party People* can't do it, because he was absolutely brilliant. When our drummer Bernard and I saw him we were gobsmacked."

Sean Harris – who played Curtis in *24 Hour Party People* – has not been approached to play him again in the forthcoming film.

Suitable

Other possible contenders for the role could be Irish-born bad boy actor Colin Farrell, Star Wars heart-throb Ewan McGregor or Mancunian Max Beesley, from Burnage.

But Hook said he didn't think any of them would be suitable for the role.

Eckert told the BBC: "We are speaking with an actor who is huge and looks rather a lot like Ian."

"He has just finished a couple of films in which the only thing he listened to was Joy Division and New Order."

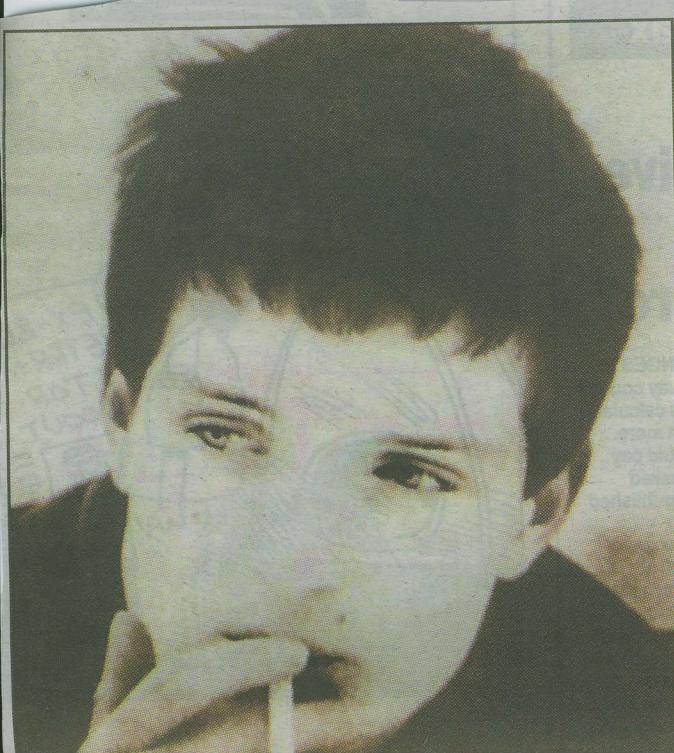
"Should this guy ultimately agree that he is going to play Ian, it would make it a much bigger film."

"Ian Curtis is one of the most important figures in the history of music."

Producers say the film would be made in Manchester.

Curtis killed himself in 1980, and members of Joy Division, including Hook, went on to form New Order.

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■ BIOPIC ... Joy Division singer Ian Curtis, who killed himself in 1980, is subject of a new film