



DVD Review – ‘loud QUIET loud: A Film About The Pixies’

11/18/2006

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In 1986, singer-songwriter Charles Thompson (aka Black Francis), guitarist Joey Santiago, bassist Kim Deal, and drummer Dave Lovering came together in Boston to form The Pixies. While enjoying moderate commercial success, they were pegged as one of the primary bands to lead alternative rock music into the mainstream and a surefire “next big thing.” Six years and five albums later, still relatively unknown outside of college radio and as Nirvana was about to change music forever with an album Kurt Cobain once said was an “attempt to rip off The Pixies,” the band broke up in 1992 “amidst acrimony and anger.”

Twelve years later, having since been hailed by critics as one of the most influential bands of all time, the band announced they were getting back together – an announcement as astonishing as the announcement of their breakup was unthinkable.

Loud Quiet Loud tells the story of The Pixies’ 2004 reunion tour and follows the group and its members from the warm-up gig in Minnesota through the final show in New York City. Within the documentary, in addition to the linear storyline of the tour itself which includes how the member deal with newfound arena rock status as legendary pioneers, Lovering’s drug addiction, and Deal’s neurotic, needy behavior, each member’s



life outside the band is visited and seven live concert numbers are performed periodically throughout the film, including “Where is My Mind?”, “UMass”, “Caribou”, “Gouge Away”, “Bone Machine”, “Hey”, and “Monkey Gone to Heaven.”

The question of why this critically acclaimed band broke up in 1992 is never really answered. Creative differences and tension between Thompson and Deal are cited, and all four members seem content to leave it at that and not delve too deeply into the details. It’s clear that this was no Van Halen/David Lee Roth-sized blowup. Rather, it seems to be a quiet case of petty jealousy, bruised egos, and mismatched personalities who simply grew tired of being around each other.

Reasons for the unlikely reunion twelve years later are less mysterious. It didn't seem to be an attempt to relive any magic the group once had and it certainly wasn't because they had missed each other. Instead, the band's getting back together appeared to be a strictly financial move motivated by more need than greed. Other than minor post-Pixies success for Deal (The Breeders, with twin sister Kelley) and Thompson (recording and touring under the name Frank Black), the members of the band had not been setting the world on fire. Santiago, married with children with another on the way, was eking out a living scoring documentary films and performing in shopping malls with his wife. Lovering had since quit the drums to pursue other passions like magic, metal detecting, pill-popping and occasional homelessness. Deal had survived rehab, moved back to her parents' home in Dayton, Ohio and was involved in, according to her mother, "poetry, making snowflakes, her crafty little stuff... and sleeping all day." Thompson, the group's frontman and reunion initiator, found himself about to become the head of a ready made family (complete with minivan and trips to corn mazes with his pregnant fiance's kids), and was also finding his past work with The Pixies completely overshadowed every thing he did as a solo artist. In short, this group could really use the money presently that they missed out on before by breaking up seconds before the alt-rock explosion of the early-nineties.

Video/Audio/Extras

The DVD is presented in widescreen in 5.1 surround. The documentary is 85 minutes long with 33 minutes of additional bonus footage/deleted scenes. A commentary feature with directors Steven Cantor and Matthew Galkin and editor Trevor Ristow is also on the disc, which includes a 16-page booklet with directors' notes and an essay by Ben Sisario.

Final Thoughts

For fans of The Pixies this is a no-brainer. While the film is somewhat deflating in the sense that this is a mostly joyless reunion which leaves little hope that the band might someday get its act together long enough to record new music again, and the tour's sense of impending doom that "it will all end in tears, anyway," it's also a very fascinating look at four very different people with different passions, fears, attitudes, motivations, and hopes for the future of the band. For the same reasons, *Loud Quiet Loud* will appeal to the uninitiated non-Pixies fan as well. If nothing else, the film will serve as an introduction to a truly great, hip rock act. That said, the soundtrack and concert selections are a bit disappointing. While the concert numbers selected are solid choices, there are some glaring omissions (really, what is a Pixies documentary without "Debaser"?) and there definitely could have been more of them.