



## **FILM**

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### **loudQUIETloud: A Film About the Pixies ★★★1/2**

The Pixies' lyrics were so weird and cryptic that, in contrast to heart-on-sleeve singer-songwriters, it was nigh impossible to get a bearing on what sort of people the Pixies actually were. (Well \$ apart from maybe "weird and cryptic.") This documentary follows the Pixies on their wildly successful 2004 reunion tour, revealing a more personal view of the band. (Well \$ sort of.) There's substantial vulnerability captured here, as directors Steven Cantor and Matthew Galkin did an amazing job of maintaining an invisible presence. The documentary subjects seem to be living life as if they weren't being filmed. That makes loudQUIETloud consistently engaging, as does its stylish editing and camerawork that successfully avoids feeling forcibly artsy.

Among what we learn about the Pixies is how relationally flawed, warmly down-to-earth, commendably humble, and brilliantly funny and charming they all are. But at the end, we still really don't know much that's uniquely personal about these people. We're actually given broad archetypes instead of deep, distinctly individual character profiles — e.g., folks struggling to make a living, a recovering addict and her bond with her sister, a son grieving his father's death, fathers raising young children, etc. But that's in no way a shortcoming, nor is the fact that this film arguably understates the crazed buzz and scope of the reunion tour. Nor is it problematic that it offers no assertion or explanation of the Pixies' over-the-top influential-band status alongside the likes of the Beatles or the Velvet Underground. The gentle way in which loudQUIETloud depicts fans is more engaging than a bunch of gushing hype. That approach works well with the limited but universal portrayal of the band members' humanity to cultivate a lasting, warm sweetness that's otherwise generally lacking in rockumentaries. And that ain't all: There are several knockout Pixies reunion tour performances. — Michael David Toth