



loudQUIETloud: A Film about the Pixies

review by [Risë Keller](#)

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The Pixies take center stage

loudQUIETloud: a film about the Pixies opens with a quote from Kurt Cobain about his band Nirvana's album, *Smells Like Teen Spirit*, now considered a classic: "I was basically trying to rip off the Pixies." This hints at the kind of influence the Pixies enjoyed in their ten years and six albums.

Spanning the Pixies' 2004 reunion tour, the rockumentary tries to get behind the scenes; but after an hour and a half with the group, it's not so hard to see why they could not get along.

After starting to play together in Boston in 1986 and enjoying a few years of moderate success, the Pixies split up. A few years later, the money was running out. Drummer David Lovering was living in hotels and sleeping on friends' couches while he pursued his hobbies, magic and metal detecting. Lead guitarist Joey Santiago had been "eking it out," scoring a documentary for a friend. Bassist Kim Deal had completed drug rehab, moved back home with her mother, and had enjoyed some success with her band The Breeders, which she fronted with her sister Kelley. Charles Thompson (aka Black Francis, aka Frank Black) had, like Santiago, started a family and had recorded and toured on his own.

When the opportunity to play on a reunion tour came up, despite their past acrimony, all agreed that the reunion tour "could not have come at a better time." One of the band members titled the tour shirts "Pixies Sellout" because when tickets for the tour went on sale, all of the tickets for the tour sold out within a few minutes. Saying that the band reunited for the money might not be so far off the mark, whatever their fans may want to believe.

Before their first show on the reunion tour, a nervous Kim Deal frets about whether she'll be able to remember how to play the songs and imagines people's reactions before she goes onstage: "There's a lot of people, it's sold out, you'd think the bitch would have learned the song."

The tensions that broke them up in 1992, reflects Santiago, "revolved around Kim and Charles.... Kim all of a sudden turned into this darling. Big darling. It mighta crimped his ego."

"We don't talk to each other that much. It's not that we don't like each other," Thompson clarifies, "It's just the kind of people that we are."

In the next scene, Kelley Deal says to her sister, "You know, I've never seen four people not be able to talk to each other. You guys are the worst four communicators ever. *Ever!*"

The filmmakers don't draw big conclusions about the band, perhaps because there isn't much material to draw from. The members of the Pixies don't talk with each other much. Mostly we see the band's day-to-day lives backstage, in their hotel rooms, and in the bus or van (one of the funniest moments is Charles in his bunk on the bus listening to a tape and repeating, "I have a positive mental attitude. I can do it. I am cute!").

The tensions surge over drug use after Lowering spins out of control on the drums at a performance one night. Santiago condemns Lowering's Valium use since the death of his father during the tour. Charles recommends "therapy and a ... psychiatrist who can prescribe. Not so much because of what he or she is going to prescribe to you, but because he or she can assess what you have been prescribing yourself." "Hear hear," Kim agrees. Lowering is quick to assent, agreeing to curtail his drug use.

The film's title comes from the quiet verse/loud chorus structure of the Pixies' songs, but it might be hard to understand their tremendous appeal unless you are already a big fan of the band's music.

Yet everyone wants to know what the future will bring for this band.

Kelley Deal asks her sister, "I've heard you talk about how you wouldn't mind going to do some festivals next year."

Kim responds noncommittally, "It seems that if there's the demand and people are really excited to see us, and they can have shows booked, it always seems like fun. But if it's like it's peaked and nobody wants to see us, and we're going to have to struggle to show up someplace, then it wouldn't be fun."

By the end of the film, the question of the hour is whether the band's next step is record a new album. But as with most other topics, they never take this one up as a group.

"We should really just start over, with a different name. That's the only way we could keep it honest," Charles says in an interview with a *Rolling Stone* reporter. "Just go start playing clubs. Start all over, from scratch."

"Are we doing another album? I don't know. I don't think so. This tour hasn't really been about that at all," says Kim to her sister.

And so the financially successful tour comes to its end, with each of its members steeped in their own ideas and the group having achieved some comfort with one another but no intimacy. All of which add up to a somewhat entertaining but less-than-satisfying filmic package for anyone but the die-hard Pixies fan.

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