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Tuesday, December 12, 2006

Music DVD Review: *LoudQUIETLoud: A Film About The Pixies*

By Nik Dirga

"The Pixies Sell Out," the tour was called. Alternative rock legends The Pixies, who roared through the late '80s and early '90s with a handful of highly influential albums and a clattering loud-soft dynamic that influenced countless bands, decided to reunite for a brief worldwide tour in 2004.

It was probably mainly about the money for the band, but also maybe a chance to try and heal lingering wounds over the breakup. For fans, it was an unbelievable chance to see the band behind "Monkey Gone To Heaven," "Gouge Away," "Debaser" and many more grinding classic pop rock songs.

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-- [Connie Phillips](#), [Blogcritics.org](#) music editor

In their bittersweet documentary *LoudQUIETLoud: A film about the Pixies*, directors Steven Cantor and Matthew Galkin got remarkable access to the Pixies during the course of their reunion tour – catching in their intimate portrait not just the clash and bang of their concerts, but the nervous moments in between gigs, the never-ending slide show of roadside scenery, a sense of the personalities behind the Pixies.

Many rock documentaries focus on the out-of-control antics, the ego-mania. What's surprising about this is that it's a quiet, bittersweet movie about a very loud rock band who have settled into the strange uncertainty of aging. They're all in their late thirties or early forties, a bit battered – the three men are all bald, all of them are a bit heavier than the old days.

Bassist Kim Deal is a tentative recovering alcoholic who insists her twin sister Kelley chaperone her on tour, guitarist Joey Santiago misses his family, frontman Charles "Frank Black" Thompson is still uncertain how he relates the Pixies to the rest of his life and drummer David Lovering is a bit of an overall wreck whose grip on sobriety seems very faint. All four are shown to be kind of stunned at the Pixies' growing fame since their breakup, unsure if this band is how their lives will be defined in the end. But they're willing to give it another go.

Yet when they get on stage, the old magic still erupts. I caught the Pixies reunion tour at an April 2004 show in Thompson's hometown of Eugene, Oregon, and they were on fire – blasting out feedback and rage and melody like there'd been no hiatus. The only thing that seemed a bit off about the gig was how serious and professional they all were – there were a few smiles, some gentle stage patter, but no real sense that there was a bond of love between bandmates. Raw and fiery as the music was, the band themselves seemed strangely staid. In their excellent concert footage, Cantor and Galkin show the contrast between the ferocious band onstage and the

repressed, restrained four individuals off stage.

LoudQUIETLoud makes it pretty clear that despite the force they were together, the four Pixies have little in common these days. They don't hate each other – but there are an awful lot of moments of uncomfortable silence shown here, the awkward attempts to connect with someone you knew when you were young and wilder.

"We don't talk to each other that much," says Thompson. "It's not because we don't like each other, it's just the kind of people we are." At one point, Kelley Deal tells her sister Kim that she's never seen four less communicative people in her life. It's still uncertain if the band tour will actually result in a lasting reunion, or any new albums.

The curious thing is how four such very ordinary people — the once hard-partying Deal sisters now do crafts, Thompson is expecting a child, Santiago works providing music for documentaries — could make such revolutionary music. That might be the one spark *LoudQUIETLoud* lacks – there's no real insight into what made the band tick, or why their legacy struck such a chord for so many. (It's notable that many of the concert fans seen here seem to be way too young to have gotten into the Pixies during their first go-round.)

A favorite moment here shows a pre-teen young girl who plays in a Pixies tribute band finally meeting her idol, Kim Deal. You can see Kim uncertain of how to deal with the idolatry fame brings, yet graceful about it.

But then again, that kind of introspection isn't really how the Pixies seem to work – if anything, *LoudQUIETLoud* is a portrait of a band with an impossible legacy trying to figure out what it all means. The DVD includes an extra half-hour of deleted scenes and director commentary, along with an essay and photo-packed booklet.

For any fan of the Pixies or strong music documentaries, this inside look is a must.

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