

POP MATTERS

EXCLUSIUELY FROM



Features | Columns | Blogs | News | Music | Film | TV | DVDs | Books | Comics | Multimedia | Events | PopComix | Front
 about contributors submissions book imprint advertising contests PopShop Media Center

CALL FOR WRITERS: *PopMatters* has openings for **music critics** and **music feature writers**. Deadline for submissions

Pixies

Loudquietloud: A Film About the Pixies [DVD]

US release date: 7 November 2006

by **Jake Meaney**

[Email](#) [Print](#) [Write to the editor](#)

Been Tryin' to Meet You

Author's note: The following in no way is meant to disparage the Pixies, or their strange, beautiful music, in any manner whatsoever. My disappointment with loudQUIETloud (hereafter LQL) has nothing to do with the band, and everything to do with the filmmakers' chosen aesthetic for the film they made covering the overwhelmingly successful reunion of one of the seminal American bands of the late '80s and early '90s. As I'm sure is common with many of my age cohort (late 20s/early 30s), the Pixies effected a seismic shift in my musical education. If they aren't my single favorite band of all time, they definitely share the top of the roost. So, then, this criticism, born of love, devotion, and disappointment.

Question: What is the film loudQUIETloud about?

Well, from its subtitle, this is a film about the Pixies. This is both true and untrue. Ostensibly, the film follows the band's improbable 2004 reunion tour (which, really, was such a fantastical event, right up there with the Red Sox winning the World Series the same year, that I still have a hard time believing it really happened)—from the early rehearsals and warm-up gigs through to their five night stand in NYC to close out the year. In actuality, the film is much more about the four disparate individuals who've grown too far apart to ever reignite the spark that brought them together initially. It's about the unbridgeable quiet between friends now drifted apart, and the noise that cannot reunite them. I think the emphatic "QUIET" is capitalized and sandwiched between "loud" in the title not as some analog to the musical dynamic of a Pixies song, but more as an indicator that the overwhelming silence between the band mates has taken precedence, drowning out the beautiful sound.

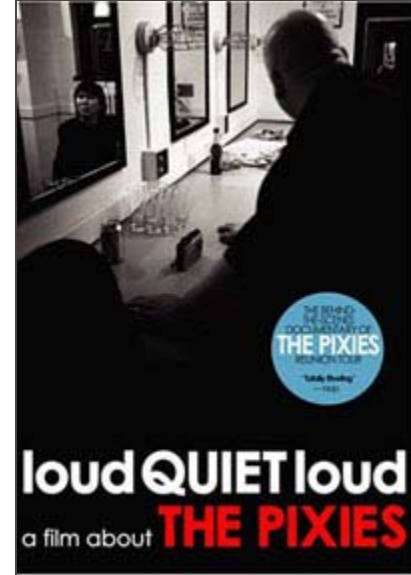
This is not to say that the tour and its concerts weren't exciting, triumphant, and (especially for those of us who never saw them the first time around) transcendent. While on stage, the Pixies still manage to obliterate any doubt that they aren't still relevant and capable of running rings around most current bands. But in LQL, the songs are few and far between, and mostly cut short. This is not a concert film, but a barebones, verite travelogue, the journey between the concerts and of diverging lives. What we see behind the scenes is often in direct contrast to what fans saw on stage: general listlessness, awkwardness, and lingering resentments.

Question: Why did the Pixies decide to reunite?

This is never answered directly by the band. In a phone interview with an



Pixies - LoudQUIETloud: A Film About the Pixies



[AMAZON](#)
[AMAZON UK](#)

FEATURES

[Thank Y](#)
[Louise E](#)

COLUMNS

[QUEER, ISN'](#)
[VARIATIONS](#)
[Use of Bac](#)
[\(Part 2\)](#)

[BLOGS | re](#)
[MARGINAL U](#)
[SHORT END:](#)
[November](#)
[CRAZED BY](#)
[PERIPATIC P](#)

MUSIC | re

[The Pre](#)
[Staind:](#)
[Dona Di](#)
[Age Vol. 3](#)
[Kahil El'](#)
[M: A Tribu](#)
[IV Thiev](#)
[Strange](#)
[Oswaldc](#)
[Chico H](#)
[Romp/ He](#)

EVENTS | r

[Ratdog](#)

FILM | rec

[Fast For](#)
[Casino I](#)
[Bobby](#)

DVDS | rec

[Reds](#)
[Pixies: I](#)
[Populati](#)

BOOKS | r






[I Shoul](#)
[That Strik](#)

MULTIMEDI

[N3: Nin](#)

NEWS | re

[INTERVIE](#)
[you'll adg](#)
[INTERVIE](#)
[Bond girl](#)
[a return to](#)
[INTERVIE](#)
[plots](#)
[INTERVIE](#)
[the pen](#)
[Changir](#)
[expect a v](#)

Shop at	Price
	\$13.27
	\$15.99
	\$16.35
	\$11.61
	\$15.96
Compare Prices for All 10 Sellers (\$11.61 -)	

powered by
PriceGrabber.com

10 ITEMS OR LESS

series premiere nov 27
mondays 11/10c

tbs very funny.



click here to check it out

Welcome to Greens & Grains grocery store. Where the employees are fried and the management is scrambled.

NME reporter, head Pixie Charles Thompson (aka Black Francis, aka Frank Black) matter of factly relates that he spoke to guitarist Joey Santiago about the possibility, who mentioned it to drummer Dave Lovering. Not too sure who told Kim Deal. There was obviously some trepidation and initial nervousness, but from scenes of early practices and shows, it seemed like everyone thought it was a good idea going in. As the tour rolls along, and they become more comfortable together musically, the personal comfort and investment seems to wane.

But investment is key. Interviewing a queue of British fans, Kelly Deal (Kim's twin sister and confidant) asks first "Why did the Pixies break up?" The coy, but idealistic answer by most: they were just too good (maybe, but the more mundane reason was that old standby "creative differences", between Thompson and Deal). But when asked why the Pixies got back together, the consensus is overwhelming: money.

Now, if that's not entirely the truth, I am not going to begrudge them this mercenary motive. If any band deserves to finally reap the spoils of its catalog and reputation (which has grown exponentially over the last decade and a half), it's the Pixies, who went out a cult act forever on the cusp of big time success. As with many such eccentric American bands that have come up from the underground, they were bigger in England than they ever were in the States. That their reunion turned out to be a runaway success warms the heart, in a way (most shows sold out in minutes, and tickets were going on Ebay for hundredsof dollars), because sometimes the good guys do get what they deserve in the end. And at least it's honest, and not spurred on by some grand dream of reclaiming the top of the perch with a rushed and misguided reunion album.

Question: Speaking of which, are the Pixies going to record any new material?

In a *Rolling Stone* interview late in the film, Thompson plays his cards close to his vest. He doesn't dismiss the idea, nor does he seem overly enthusiastic about it. He merely hints that his creative impulse is unceasing, and it could easily be channeled into a new project with his three bandmates.

Kim Deal, though she never speaks on the matter, seems to dismiss it out of hand, by continuing to write and record songs for a new Breeders album. However, a week or two back of this writing, word leaked out that the Pixies are staying together and now do have plans to record a new album.

One Thing I Learned About Each Pixie from Watching LQL:

Since the dissolution of the band, drummer Dave Lovering has found a new (albeit struggling) career as a magician, which just seems totally appropriate and awesome.

Kim Deal really used to be married to a John Murphy. Silly me never bothered to research this, but always assumed it was some cryptic joke that she listed herself as Mrs. John Murphy on the Pixies albums. I thought it was cute, and kind of wish I didn't know this, now. But their backstage reunion at a Boston gig is one of the few highlights of the film—too bad it was relegated to the deleted scenes on the DVD.

Lead guitarist Joey Santiago is the proud father of two ridiculously cute little kids. I mean just over the top, unbearably cute.

Charles Thompson, if it wasn't evident before, is very, very large.

Question: Who is this film for?



In bold are

- CD REV**
- [A Nor](#)
- [Afric](#)
- Charge**
- [Alice](#)
- [Giul](#)
- Andrews**
- [Annu](#)
- [Beed](#)
- [The E](#)
- [Willie](#)
- [Linds](#)
- Buckinghar**
- [John](#)
- [The C](#)
- [Cerro](#)
- [Enign](#)
- [Evanc](#)
- [Mark](#)
- [Fiam](#)
- [The I](#)
- [Osva](#)
- [Gome](#)
- [Chic](#)
- [Georg](#)
- [Skip I](#)
- [The I](#)
- [Hot 1](#)
- [IV Th](#)
- [JoJo](#)
- [Kahil](#)
- Ritual Trik**
- Billy Ban**
- [Patti](#)
- [Linds](#)
- [Luom](#)
- [Mara](#)
- [Branf](#)
- [The M](#)
- [Paul I](#)
- [My Cl](#)
- Romance**
- [My L](#)
- [Joan](#)
- [The N](#)

This is the one I've been wrestling with. New comers to the Pixies will be utterly confounded as to what all the fuss was ever about. The film offers no real background of the band, and very little context for the tour. The best introduction, of course, is still their three masterpieces—*Come on Pilgrim*, *Surfer Rosa*, and *Doolittle*—but, as *LQL* shows, their history is still to be written.

Initiates and fans will be similarly frustrated, if for different reasons. One of the main draws of the Pixies was this inchoate mystery and aura of sinister danger lurking in their songs. Thompson's lyrics are cryptic, opaque and terrifying; the music a cacophony of disparate influences that somehow clang together in an often inexplicable perfection. They were a band that emerged *sui generis* and seemed to simply evaporate back into whatever void they rose from. So, perhaps some fans (like myself) want a little peek behind the curtain, a few answers that tantalizingly raise new questions, just a hint of what it all might mean.

The film and its directors never give us this, and this was in fact a very conscious and deliberate decision. In their commentary track, they make it very clear that they decided from the get go NOT to delve into the past, NOT to make a sort of glowing hagiography of a band lost to time. They wanted to concentrate solely on the present, and on the regenesis of the band on the reunion tour. Going for a sort of *cinema verite*, fly on the wall honesty, the directors conduct no direct interviews with the band, and totally eschew the whole "talking head" (i.e., interviews with rock critics, fans, fellow musicians, etc.) approach of other music documentaries. They aver that they wanted to maintain the air of mystery surrounding the Pixies and their music.

Now, while I don't take explicit exception to this approach, it's only chance of working is if there is enough drama, conflict, or just *something* to hold the viewer's interest—some overarching theme or thesis that emerges while the cameras roll. But, unless you count Dave Lovering's increasing reliance on Valium and alcohol following the midtour death of his father, there is very little of note that happens when the stage lights go down. The bandmates generally go their own way and talk very little, they seem genuinely uncomfortable around one another, and manifest this discomfort with large patches of silence or inconsequential stuttering banter. There's a lot of dead air.

The result is a listless and dull film about a very exciting band composed of rather ordinary, middle aged individuals who never seem to really cohere back into what made them great in the first place. If any feeling emerges out of these long shots of mostly nothing going on, it's a general melancholy and wistfulness, or never being able to truly go back, find home again, reclaim your youth. And this is not how I want to feel about a band who, 18-plus years later, sounds as vital and exciting and dangerous on record (and live) as they were when they emerged seemingly out of nowhere in the late '80s. This is not the film the Pixies or its fans deserve, and it's just a colossal disappointment.

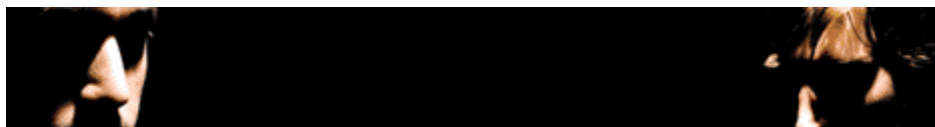


loudQuietloud: A Film About the Pixies trailer

RATING: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

— 17 November 2006

DEL.ICIO.US DIGG REDDIT NEWSVINE



[advertising](#) | [about](#) | [contributors](#) | [submissions](#) | Hosted by OCS Solutions
 © 1999-2006 PopMatters.com. All rights reserved.
 PopMatters.com™ and PopMatters™ are trademarks of PopMatters Media, Inc. and PopMatters Magazine.