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Movie Review

## "loudQUIETloud": Pixies fans new and old — here comes your band

By Ted Fry  
*Special to The Seattle Times*

When the Pixies were making super-cool rock 'n' roll from 1986 to 1993, they represented what was probably the definitive example of college radio. That's not to say that only college kids liked them or they were heard only on the airwaves of college-run stations. It's just a good explanation of their appeal as progressive post-punk rock gods whose influence became universal to a huge but specific audience.

And it wasn't just a generational thing. The Pixies have held sway for original fans, as well as for those turned on to them secondarily.

By way of summary, the excellent, exceptionally well-informed documentary "loudQUIETloud" starts with a quote from Kurt Cobain, who told Rolling Stone magazine that in writing "Smells Like Teen Spirit" for Nirvana, "I was basically trying to rip off the Pixies."

What Cobain was talking about and what the title captures so cleverly is the signature device that made the Pixies' brand so distinct: the structure of quiet

verse/loud chorus/quiet verse that pretty much defined their songwriting technique.

In the many enthralling performances from the Pixies' 2004 reunion tour the movie follows, that sound still resonates and has the same impact on devotees new and old.

**Movie review** ★★★

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**"loudQUIETloud: A Film About the Pixies,"** a documentary directed by Steven Cantor and Matthew Galkin. 85 minutes. Not rated; suitable for mature audiences. Grand Illusion.

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The Pixies reveal that rare ability to create musical timelessness. As it is when reacquainting with close friends with whom we've lost contact, the intervening years disappear and we pick up exactly where we left off.

The filmmakers and band members are elusive about the Pixies' acrimonious split, though it's widely acknowledged that bad feelings between leader Charles Thompson (aka Black Francis, aka Frank Black) and bassist Kim Deal led to Thompson's surprise announcement during a radio interview that the band would be no more.

The movie is equally ambiguous about why they decided to try it again a decade later, but clearly they've made peace and fall back into a groove that sells out even the largest venues within hours. Collectively they are still the band that remains immortal in pop-music history, though a lot has changed for them individually.

Thompson maintains an erratic recording career (lately as Frank Black and the Catholics). Deal, recently out of rehab, is working on resurrecting her post-Pixies band the Breeders with twin sister Kelly. Guitarist Joey Santiago does film scoring and plays music with his wife. Drummer Dave Lovering stages a goofy nightclub magic act when he's not collecting royalty checks and bumming around the beach.

They're all friendly, but not necessarily friends. Thompson and Santiago are serene family men with kids. Deal is confidently dealing with difficult life issues while Lovering is still suffering with his own, some of which also involve substance abuse (leading to the only bout of onscreen confrontation). All of this separate and collective intimacy is observed with great affection and modesty. What's unabashedly brash is the music, magnificently captured in crystalline high-definition picture and sound.

"We don't talk to each other that much," says Thompson. "Not because we don't like each other, it's just the kind of people we are." "LoudQUIETloud" proves that kind of thing doesn't change between people, but it also proves that the Pixies' music will forever remain the same.

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