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This time, away with the Pixies is a peaceful trip

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You will know the work of the Pixies even if you've never heard them. That may be their legacy and their curse.

One of the enduring cliches of rock is that while Lou Reed's '60s iconoclasts the Velvet Underground sold relatively few copies of their albums, everyone who heard them went on to form a band. And those bands subsequently sold many more copies than Reed and friends could ever have dreamt of.

A more recent equivalent would be Boston's Pixies who, while lauded in the British music press, never had a hit in their homeland. They broke up in 1993 amid internal rancour and mainstream indifference, despite a series of impressive albums which mixed surf, rock and crunchy pop music with science fiction, biblical and oft-disturbing medical references.

Fans in this country can now get a look at their financially and critically successful reunion tour of 2004, captured in the film *LoudQUIETloud*, out on DVD.

The Pixies could have ended up as a music history footnote but of the dozens of bands who had been paying attention, one, Nirvana, became one of the most important and imitated acts of the '90s. Nirvana's front man, Kurt Cobain, happily admitted that the band's first hit, *Smells Like Teen Spirit*, was him "basically trying to rip off the Pixies".

"We used their sense of dynamics, being soft and quiet and then loud and hard," Cobain said.

The reunion tour was considered extremely unlikely, right up until the first note was played on stage.

But, as seen throughout the film, even the two most fractious members, singer-songwriter Charles Thompson and bass player Kim Deal, were getting along. Not exactly bosom buddies bonding over a post-gig beer (Deal was fresh off drugs and drink for a start, while drummer Dave Lovering seemed on a private over-the-counter medication trip of his own), but not threatening to kill each other, either.

However, Joey Santiago, the guitarist who was as important to the band's sound as Thompson's songs were, seems surprised we ever doubted.

"We got along, of course we did," he says after his customary long pause and "aah" preamble. "We would not have put that much time and effort into touring if we didn't get along. After each show we still do our own separate thing. That's good, too. Occasionally, we'll run into each other at a coffee shop, have a drink at the bar, whatever."

No one says a bad word to or about the others on film. It must be love. "Yeah, well," Santiago chuckles. "I think if they [had] documented us when we were together [the first time] they would have captured the same thing."

Which is probably true because as Kim Deal's sister, Kelley, says in the film, these are the four worst communicators she's seen. Brooding silences were usually the order of the day. Was she right?

"Aaah, no, we talk about it," Santiago says, before a pause. "Just not on film."