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SXSW Film Reviews: 'The Punk Syndrome'

REVIEWED BY PATRICK COURTNEY, FRI., MARCH 15, 2013

The Punk Syndrome succeeds where countless before it have failed: It delivers a heartfelt and earnest feel-good documentary without any manufactured melodrama or beat-you-over-the-head proselytizing. Directors Jukka Kärkkäinen and J-P Passi follow the rise of Finnish band Pertti Kurikka's Name Day, a group of four men with developmental disabilities who have built a cult following with their brash, candid punk music. The film consists primarily of intimate shots of the musicians as they experience struggle and triumph on and off the stage, and there's no irritating narration to detract from the pure joy and utter heartbreak we experience alongside them. Like the musicians, the directors aren't afraid to confront the audience with difficult truths, and the camera never shies away during the painful moments. And like the band's songs (e.g., "I need a little respect and dignity in my life"), this film is challenging and breathtaking in its directness. See this film.