

## **Heavy Load Documentary, IMA, March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2010**

Thanks to my affiliation with ArtsWORK Indiana, I recently had the opportunity to see a sneak preview of the documentary *Heavy Load*, at the Indianapolis Museum of Art (thanks IMA!). This documentary is being screened on March 13<sup>th</sup> as part of a daylong event for Indiana Disability Awareness Month.

The documentary starts out with depressed *Heavy Load* director Jerry Rothwell deciding to follow a Brighton punk band, also named Heavy Load, to try and capture some of their happiness. It seemed to Rothwell the band members genuinely loved what they were doing, without all of the ego problems other bands deal with. In some respects, we've all heard the story: friends form band, band tries to make it "big", band disagrees on the future, band comes to a crossroad, etc. But this band is much different than most; this band is made up of musicians with and without disabilities.

The interaction between the band members is priceless, both in terms of creative collaboration and the laid-back chi which envelopes them. I loved how the non-disabled band members (Paul & Mick) did not stifle the creative spirit of the developmentally delayed members; especially when lead singer Simon frequently and joyfully used curse words in place of the actual lyrics to the songs they were covering. It was refreshing to see the band members really believe in the group, as Paul demonstrated when he said "In my mind, we're a great rock band."

The film also made me fall in love with the subjects of Heavy Load, especially drummer Michael White. My heart ached for Michael as he requested a move to a bigger city, only to be turned down by the administrators of his group home. And when Michael led the band members in a campaign for the rights of the disabled, you felt the vibrations of the punk movement not only in their music, but in their lives and community, as well.

Did the director end up finding the elusive happiness he was searching for? I don't want to spill all of the twists and turns of the documentary, so I'm just going to say this: GO SEE THIS FILM. You won't be sorry. It's playing on March 13<sup>th</sup> at 3:30 p.m. at the Indianapolis Museum of Art. For more information on the daylong event, visit <http://www.imamuseum.org/film/double-shot-music-documentary-day-ima>.

- Laura Frank