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The Rise and Fall of the Independent Record Store



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Recently I received a copy of the DVD documentary film 'I Need That Record! The Death (Or Possible Survival) Of The Independent Record Store' from MVD Entertainment Group. I requested a copy of this DVD being a fan of the locally owned music stores that I frequented often in my 10+ years living in Grand Rapids, MI. I watched many of my favorite stores, like Radio Kilroy, disappear into the ether when the economy got bad and people stopped shopping.

Even now, another one of my favorite store, Beat Goes On, is on the way out. If they close, then how does "the beat go on". Mario Leon, the owner of this store, has toughed it out for years in a sad economy. Now, once again he says goodbye to a music store, just like Believe In Music, that he worked from prior to their going out of business. Mario ran Beat Goes On out of one of the old buildings that one of Grand Rapid's two Believe In Music

Stores originally ran out of. It's sad to see him go, but how can one hold on when there seems to be no hope?

Another locally owned record store that still manages to survive is Vertigo Music, located on Division in downtown Grand Rapids. I asked the store owner, Herm Baker, how he has managed to stay in business all of these years. He had this to say; "We have survived because of the recent explosion of vinyl LP sales. It's that simple. Many labels now offer a download code with the purchase of a vinyl record... this helped tremendously. A decent percentage of the population still want a physical format".

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