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Pick up *I Need That Record* DVD on Record Store Day April 17



screengrab from *I Need That Record*

Glenn Branca in *I Need That Record*

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By [Bret McCabe](#) | Posted 4/16/2010

Vinyl junkies, CD collectors, music heads, and, casual music buyers: Don't forget tomorrow, April 17, is national [Record Store Day](#)—that third Saturday in April intended to celebrate and promote the American independent music store that has been so vital to so many of us for most of our adult lives. And this year's day offers an little extra incentive to patronizing your friendly neighborhood independent record store—besides, you know, supporting a local business that wants to turn you on to new tunes: Starting tomorrow, director Brenden Toller's documentary [I Need That Record!: The Death \(and Possible Survival\) of the Independent Record Store](#) will only be available on DVD at independent record stores until its June 27 wide release.

Refreshingly, the glimmer of hope suggested by the title's parenthetical is carried over into the doc itself. [Toller](#) runs through the by now familiar reasons why the independent record store faces challenges in today's marketplace, charting that music-industry commercialization path that starts with the homogenization of radio in the 1950s through the rise of MBAs taking over the major labels in the 1980s and on through the Telecommunications Act of 1996 that enabled concentrated media ownership, the emergence of online music trading and distribution, and the rise of the big box stores that

has turned Wal-Mart into the largest retailer in American, even though CDs sales represent less than 2 percent of list revenue.

"No one at Target is going to recommend Hawkwind's *Space Ritual* live to you," offers one of the two clerks from [Culture Clash](#) in Toledo, Ohio, interviewed in the movie. "But I will recommend Hawkwind's *Space Ritual* to you." He's responding to the rise of big-box stores as music retailers, but this candid moment represents what *I Need That Record* gets so right. Toller frames his documentary by introducing two record stores closing: Record Express in Middletown, Conn.—the store Toller says he grew up with—and independent institution [Trash American Style](#), where after 18 years in its Danbury location, its landlord maneuvered owner Malcolm Tent out of his space. And in making the story personal to him, Toller taps into the independent record store as local cultural hub.

That aspect is what so many of Toller's interview subjects—Thurston Moore, Ian MacKaye, a blithe Glenn Branca, Chris Frantz, Legs McNeil, Mike Watt, Patterson Hood, photographer Bob Gruen, and Noam Chomsky—remark on, and what so many record store owners recognize about their establishments, whether its Mike Dreese of [Newbury Comics](#) or the good people at [Grimey's](#) in Nashville, Tenn. The record store isn't just some mercantile space where you go to exchange money for goods; it's where you go to recharge your batteries with the good things in life.

And *I Need That Record* exudes the same sort of playful attitude. Toller tells his music-industry story in a collage of found footage and cut-out animation by Matt Newman, which lends the doc an insouciant edge. Music industry trackers and store owners aren't going to learn anything new, here, but with *I Need That Record* Brendan Toller offers an entertaining reminder as to why the independent record store should matter to anybody who, you know, professes to like music.

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