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[I Need That Record! The Death \(or Possible Survival\) of the Independent Record Store](#)

I don't know about you, but in recent years I have become addicted to collecting vinyl records. And the reason is simple: some of the music that was recorded on vinyl will never make it to the CD format, making vinyl records our own small treasures, something that, maybe, in the future, will be recognized as such. So, when I watched the incredibly absorbing and illuminating "I Need That Record! The Death (or Possible Survival) of the Independent Record Store," I knew I was in heaven. I know this territory well – been there, done that, if you will.

The documentary covers many areas of recorded music at the same time. It smartly alternates the current state of the music industry with the history of recorded music. It tells us right away that 3,000 independent record stores have closed in the US in the past decade. Director Brendan Toller, who also wrote and edited the film, knows his turf really good, and goes around several stores which are barely surviving or are about to close – some closed during production --, and interviews their owners. Their stories give us a clear picture of the problem. We are told, for example, that there is no artist development anymore, and that it is more about the profit for the labels. We also learn that since the fifties, when payola was introduced, music was affected because the labels hired independent promoters to play the singles on the radio. We are informed, for instance, that 63 spins of a JLO single go for \$3,600. Interestingly enough, too, is the fact that Clear Channel, according to the filmmakers, owns 1,200 radio stations, and that a study shows that some radio stations play the same song 73% of the time. Toller goes on and explains the impact of the so-called "Big Box" stores (Wal-Mart, Target, Borders, etc.) on the independent artists and music in general. He also examines the birth of MP3s, iPods, and the current resurgence of vinyl. Of course, he also delves into the 2004 suit that the RIAA filed against 4,769 music downloaders. The film is also aided with the participation of musicians Chris Franz (Talking Heads), Thurston Moore (Sonic Youth), Lenny Kaye (Patti Smith Group), as well as writer, historian, and linguist, Noam Chomsky.

When you are done watching this unforgettable documentary, you are left with a feeling of sadness and nostalgia, especially those of us who have seen better times. Perhaps the feeling was captured best by one of the clients at Trash American Style, one of the many independent stores that closed down during the production of the film, when he said, "The kind of music that is interesting and stimulates your mind is at this store, not at the mall." In addition, Chomsky reminds us that "local stores provided a sense of community." "I Need That Record! The Death (or Possible Survival) of the Independent Record Store" is powerful, a true testament of our times. The DVD also includes more than two hours of extras, with extended interviews. (USA, 2009, color, 77 min plus additional materials). Reviewed on December 6, 2010. **MVD Visual**