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1 of 2 7/29/2010 10:43 AM

DVD REVIEWS

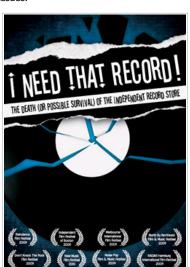
Speaking on the Record: 'I Need That Record!' on DVD



Early in his documentary "I Need That Record!" Brendan Toller cites a startling statistic: In the last 10 years, more than 3,000 independent record stores across the country closed. For Toller, this development is cause for grave concern. Independent record stores — locally owned and staffed with knowledgeable clerks — are important "community spaces," he says.

Toller's argument is sympathetic, and his cause noble. Yet, "I Need That Record" is too rambling, too broad and too unfocused to be persuasive. He buys into a generational attitude about independents as noble heroes and corporations as evil ogres, without acknowledging that the truth is more complex.

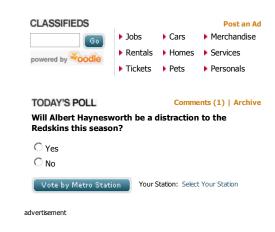
It's a stance born out of punk rebellion, and especially with so many of his elder-statesmen interviews (Thurston Moore, Lenny Kaye, Mike Watt, Ian MacKaye), it has all the force of received wisdom. This major oversight severely limits Toller's argument to one perspective, rendering it more a state-of-the-field summary than a probing dissection of important contemporary issues.



The interviews with store owners unintentionally portray most of these businesses as passive, so set in their ways that they can't adapt to change at all. Only Connecticut store Trash American Style seems to have much of a plan: The owners take the store on the road. It's a bold business model, perhaps not as secure or as lucrative as having a brickand-mortar store, but Trash American Style is still a presence in its community.

And here's perhaps the biggest shortcoming of this documentary: It doesn't live up to that hopeful parenthetical aside in its subtitle. Toller fails to examine what makes certain stores so successful

in this steep downturn. Why are the Sound Garden in Baltimore or CD Cellar in Arlington or Crooked Beat in Adams Morgan (just to name a few local examples) going strong when 3,000 other stores have closed? What makes them exceptional, and what can be learned from their examples? While they











Win Stuff



2 of 2 7/29/2010 10:43 AM