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I Need That Record DVD Review

Published on July 24, 2010 by [Christina Zawadiwsky](#) · No Comments

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At the end of the **I Need That Record – The Death – Or Possible Survival – Of The Independent Record Store** documentary, released on DVD on July 27, 2010 by Unsatisfied Films/MVD, we hear The Kinks singing “I’m not like everybody else!” and remember the many, many times music makers, record store owners, musicians and record and CD buyers have mourned the sense of community they felt in small (now-closed) independent record stores, where people from all walks of life could meet, exchange stories and music talk, and just hang-out, in this movie. And it’s true: when’s the last time you had a long discussion with someone about music that you’d just met at Walmart, the now-leading Big

Box store for selling CDs? No, large lonely spaces aren't conducive to communication (where people feel like strangers) as the small rented spaces of the indie music stores were (with 3,000 of them going out of business recently, giving way to MP3s on computers and technology-driven big corporations who don't care about music as much as they care about money).

Brendan Toller, the writer, creator, director and narrator of *I Need That Record*, is to be commended for his extensive research while employing quick cuts during interviews and entertaining us with animations, thus holding our rapt attention. One record store, Trash American Style in Danbury, Connecticut, had to vacate immediately after 17 years, and a customer there, John the Bomb, told us

“Now you've got to go to the Mall and get spoon-fed garbage.....not the kind of music that's interesting and stimulates your mind, like in this store.” Ian Mackaye of Fugazi and Dischord Records says, “I can assure you, the people who own the labels, all they care about is money,” and it seems to be the label corporations who now own most of the distribution (Sony, EMI, Universal and Warner Brothers), with indie stores sometimes even buying their stock from Best Buy because the label corporations are too expensive! And, “When you get accountants running the record companies you're not going to get very good music,” says Legs McNeil, a music author (*Punk Magazine*, *Please Kill Me*). Glenn Branca, a composer and guitarist, goes even further to say that “the moment you start talking about money you're talking about – to be brutally honest – crime – criminals, thieves and bastards are attracted to money.”

Brendan Toller continues to lead us down the path of musical corruption with information about radio. From the 20s to the 50s DJs in America could play what they liked, until in the 50s payola – bribes – came about and Alan Freed, accused of payola, drank himself to death. Nowadays an entire generation isn't listening to radio, as Ian Mackaye tells us, “When I got into punk rock I turned the radio off forever” and “with such a vast pool of music, the history of music, why leave it to people who only want profit?”

MTV and MP3s and Big Boxes Walmart, Target, Barnes And Noble and Best Buy had a disruptive effect on record and CD purchasing in America, and Mike Watt of The Minutemen tells us, “This idea that there's only one music, one ‘hip,’ is so dangerous!” Celebrated author and activist Noam Chomsky remembers the same thing happening in the US in the late 40s as supermarkets replaced small grocery stores (with more products and cheaper prices) so that people no longer met in small places to talk about their lives, and he believes that this was an intentional ploy to separate people and make them more efficient consumers. Composer and guitarist Glenn Branca even believes that “We're not going to be going to stores anymore, of any kind” in the future!

Brendan Toller has done an excellent job in editing together articulate comments from members of all parts of the music industry for us to understand what we are losing (and it's hard to believe that he made this film while still a film student!). Never throughout the entire 77 minutes of the duration of this documentary was I left bored or uninterested, and to find out so much more (I've only been able to touch on a small part of the information in this review) be sure to buy the DVD *I Need That Record* and show it to all of your friends!

Grade: A

Total Running Time: 77 minutes

Unrated Documentary

Directed by Brendan Toller

With Noam Chomsky, Ian Mackaye, Mike Watt, Thurston Moore, Lenny Kaye, Chris Frantz, Glenn Branca, Patterson Hood, Pat Carney, Legs McNeil, Bob Gruen, BP Hellium and owners and buyers in many indie record stores across the USA

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