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Total Film

I Need That Record! DVD review (tbc)

Anachronism in the USA. Indie music in decline...

[I Need That Record! homepage](#)

BY: Total Film Aug 23rd 2010 FILED UNDER: [DVD](#)

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Independent record shops used to be fearfully cool places to hang out.

Invariably owned, managed and staffed by hipsters with unimpeachable taste in music, these shopkeepers would stand coolly by rolling their cigarettes as genuine customers failed to negotiate their way past the unemployable regulars discussing the merits of coloured vinyl Camps singles.

Thanks to this decidedly lax approach to doing any actual business, indie stores were places where serial truants could mix with would-be guitarists to form rock'n'roll bands and albums by Chrome and Metal Urbain filled valuable browsing space never once contaminated by Michael Jackson's Thriller.

Yet, despite a stoic refusal to entertain mainstream tastes, the indies survived thanks to the combination of a music hungry marketplace and a distinct lack of retail-savvy competition. Then came the retail chains, the supermarkets and the internet.

The fact that indie record shops are going out of business (which they are, and continue to do so on a daily basis) should come as no surprise. If anything, it's a miracle they've lasted so long.

Brendan Toller's *I Need That Record!* – sadly, if appropriately, boasting similar production values to the average indie seven-inch single – chronicles this retail counterculture's ongoing demise.

While it's clearly a labour of love on his part, he's no Michael Moore or even Morgan Spurlock and there's little crossover appeal. Those who browse in HMV before buying their music online will wonder what all the fuss is about...

It doesn't help that it's filmed from an American perspective.

While Rough Trade still boasts a clientele of eyeliner-splattered, rail-thin, indier-than-thou waifs who inhabit a living, breathing scene, Toller's doomed store owners (all unavoidably reminiscent of *The Simpsons'* comic-book guy) clearly haven't followed fashion since Geffen poached Nirvana from Sub Pop.

They talk a lot of a doomed 'community', and while you cannot help but feel sorry for them, there is a sense of inevitability about the whole thing.

The sound is poor and the core interviews with US indie royalty like Ian MacKaye and Sonic Youth's Thurston Moore are stretched to two-hour-plus dullness as 'special features'.

In short, it's all a bit boring, a bit too pleased with itself and terribly, terribly worthy. We're sure the gas-lamp lighters were absolutely gutted when electricity came in. Times change, get over it.

DVD Extras:

Eight interviews
Subtitles

Verdict:

A distinctly American bent to this documentary means a potentially cool subject is hijacked by nerds.

Film Details



Release Date Aug 9th 2010

Certificate tbc

Genre [Documentary](#)

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