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I Need That Record! (MVD Visual)

Written by Gaz E

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'I Need That Record! The Death (Or Possible Survival) Of The Independent Record Store' proved to be a four year labour of love for filmmaker Brendan Toller, playing at over twenty five film festivals worldwide.

For this, the film's debut DVD release (on a region free NTSC disc), he made sure that it was a disc packed out with extra content, culminating in over two hours of extra interview footage of the various musicians and music business aficionados that feature throughout the documentary itself. Sonic Youth's Thurston Moore, Ian MacKaye of Minor Threat, Fugazi and Dischord Records, Mike Watt of the Minutemen, Lenny Kaye from the Patti Smith Group, Pat Carney of the Black Keys and Patterson Hood of Drive-By Truckers are among those featured on a disc released to indie retailers on April 17th of this year, which was, of course, Record Store Day. Everywhere else gets it on July 27th.

When faced with the question of why over three thousand independent record stores have closed in the US over the past decade, I'm guessing that you all have a valid reason on the tip of your tongue. And every one of those reasons is discussed at length here on this incredibly engaging documentary. Greedy record labels, homogenized radio, digital downloads and 'Big Box' stores all get their share of the running time, with some moments of real frustration burning holes in the series of facts that are laid out for us all to see.

Take radio for example. With all of the major record labels having to, at some point, pay out over 'Pay To Play' lawsuits - \$17,000 gets the latest Good Charlotte single 250 radio plays - the stats don't lie; Clear Channel owns 1200 radio stations in America, that's one in every ten, 99.9% of the top 250 markets, with the same songs being played 73% of the time. All individuality and attitude stripped from radio by corporate cancers.

Cancers that grow when the topic switches to the so-called 'Big Box' stores. Walmart, today, sells one in every five albums in the US. With 'loss leader' prices to get customers into their stores to sell more of other product, the indies have little chance of winning this battle in such an unfair market place. Walmart are a company that stocks only a small percentage of the total number of albums that are released over the course of a year, and then decides, on the grounds of taste, what the good people of a country are allowed to buy. And yet the moron majority lap it up - these are still 'convenience' stores....

The inflated album prices that were forcing independent record stores out of business were also forcing something else - the movement of music buyers, disillusioned with record labels, bland superstores and music television, towards the digital revolution and the easily accessible mp3 format. While this shift in the business of music created many new issues - footage of Lars Ulrich and Chuck D verbally squaring up in a TV appearance on the rise of Napster is great viewing - the main issue was that independent record stores were being attacked from all sides and something had to give. The footage of punk author Legs McNeil in the extras section talks bluntly yet sensibly about record stores, like blacksmiths, like porno theatres, simply being killed by the birthing of new technologies....and you would, of course, be foolish to disagree. But you know and I know that no series of zeros and ones, no trip to a bland and brain dead shopping mall will ever replace the feeling of community that was housed in a 'real' record store.

The footage of the coolest looking indie stores stripping their premises and preparing to close for the last time are soul destroying, with both employees and customers on the verge of tears as their lives are turned upside down.

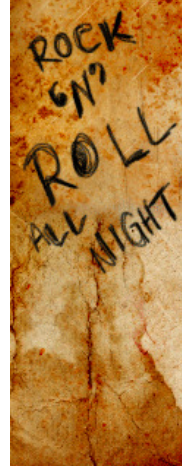
As you are reading this, I'll take a cultured guess and say that you are the kind of music fan who, like the rest of us Über Röckers, will look at the demise of these indie stores with sadness. If I'm right then this documentary is for you. It will make you angry, it will make you think but, most of all, it will break your heart....

Buy it [here!](#)



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