

REVIEWS BY AMOS LASSEN

"LAST SHOP STANDING"— The Beginning, the End and the Resurgence of Record Shops

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"Last Shop Standing"

The Beginning, the End and the Resurgence of Record Shops

Amos Lassen

Nearly 2000 record stores have disappeared in the United Kingdom and this film shows us what happened. In the 1960s, 70s and 80s record shops were on the upswing and then vinyl was finished and replaced by CDs. This was also the time of technology and three shops a week closed. Based on the book of the same name by Graham Jones, we get a look at exactly what happened. In the film we hear from over twenty shop owners, music industry leaders and musicians including Paul Weller, Johnny Marr, Norman Cook, Billy Bragg, Nerina Pallot, Richard Hawley and Clint Boon and we learn that the shops were part of their musical education as well as a place to find new bands and new music.



The film is split into three sections. First we hear about the beginnings of independent record shops and are reminded that there were once 45 rpm vinyl records. In part two we then get a look at 70's punk and 80's hip hop. Then we learn about the demise of record stores and this section is full of surprises. Finally in part three, we learn about the rebirth of record shops as people look for vinyl.

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What we hear from the shopkeepers and from the musicians is fascinating and we hear discussions about where everything went wrong. Of course the internet destroyed many sales and we know that it is impossible to compete with Amazon. Downloading has really hurt but the fate of record stores had already been set. The CD was crucial to the decline and then supermarkets began selling them.



It is interesting that this film was funded by music fans and then it was made quickly. This is not meant to be a trip backwards in time because what it really does is show us the seediness of independent shops and of chart-hyping scams. The aim of the film seems to me to be that these shops are important and that we must continue to support them now or we will lose them again.

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