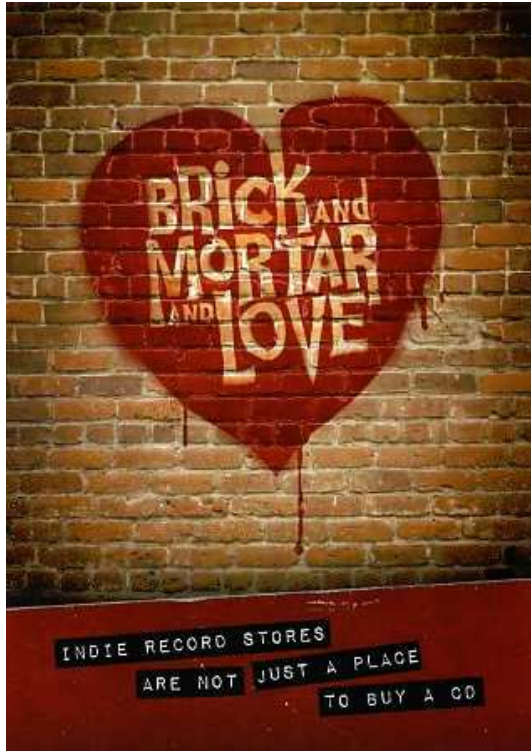


FAME Review: Scott Shuffitt, director - Brick and Mortar and Love (DVD)

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[Brick and Mortar and Love](#)

Scott Shuffitt, director

[MVD Visual](#) - MVD5697D (DVD)

Look for this at your local Brick and Mortar record store.

A review written for the Folk & Acoustic Music Exchange
by **Mark S. Tucker**
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MVD forwarded a couple Record Store Day DVDs to celebrate the event, but, um, er, well, I was avalanched by work (the end of April and all of May are crunch times for we tutors) and wasn't able to get to them until after the hallowed day came and went... BUT...even though that hellpit of work was sheerest necessity, I'm averring instead that the entire interlude was a diabolical plan of mine all along, a covert ploy to allow kindred FAME readers to extend the fete to its proper limits: 24/7/365!!! That's right, as far as we misfit collectors and aficionados are concerned, every damn day is Record Store Day, certainly every weekend, and if you stumbled into my house in SoCal, you'd swear you'd time-warped into a combination record store / comic book shop / library / art gallery from the 70s. I used to throw parties years ago, and people would spend more time going through my vinyl (I stopped counting at 30,000 albums ten years ago) than drinking or hooting 'n hollering. Beyond the LPs, I have thousands and thousands of DVDS, CDs, cassettes, reel-to-reel, and even 8-tracks...and I'm not even going to mention all the comix and books (and if you think Batman, William Burroughs, Shakespeare, and Jack Vance don't go together, well, I can only say ya haven't lived right, Jethro). Thus, ya know I have to get my stash somewhere, I gotta!, and, when local record shop owners see me walk in, seraphic smiles wreath their faces.

Getting the idea why **I'm** the cat to laud *Brick and Mortar and Love*?

This film is on the MVD label and is a paean to a legendary shop, Ear X-tacy in Louisville, Kentucky. The owner, John Timmons, is exactly the kind of guy you expect to find at such places, an anti-preppie, anti-yuppie, middle-class zhluk like you and me, but he fell in love with music and the very idea of selling it, thus going from record shop worker to selling vinyl out of his house to showing up at record conventions to finally owning the Ear X-tacy emporium...which, dammit!, he finally had to shut down. You know the story, I know the story, times is tough, but here you get a more intimate peek behind the curtain as well as an outpouring of gratitude and wistfulness at the continuing shrinkage of what has become simultaneously a belated recognition of the anthropocentric value of such small businesses and the wounds left behind as they fade into the sunset.

An Ear X-tacy staffer notes that, in 2002, there were 7,500 record stores in the U.S. and that, by the time Timmons announced a possible closure at a Feb. 10, 2010, press conference, less than 2,000 had survived the continuing economic malaise. That's a dramatic plunge, and that's a hell of a lot of collectors suffering...but hey, those people listening to I-pods? They are NOT collectors, okay? They shag their asses to malls and buy 1 CD maybe; we collectors feel like shit if we can't sprint back home with at least 10 items, preferably 50. There IS a difference in true music buyers, and a customer who dropped in to Ear X-tacy from Wash. DC as the shop closed in one location to move to another put it best: "There's no thrill of discovery when you're buying on-line".

Exactly damn right! I can't tell you how many times I've found the coolest gems while combing through the racks at used record/CD/DVD shops, stuff I never in a million years expected to find. That's what collectors are eternally athirst for: their own little grails, week after week, month after month, year after year. It's a mania, it's a delightful sickness, and it's the lifeblood of modern aesthetes. If the shop owner and staff are hip enough to know what's what—and mom 'n pops are the ONLY places where that happens, everyone else hires idiots—then an oasis amid the chain store madness settles in and rescues we freaks from anomie.

After we see Ear X-tacy successfully transition from its old premises to the new, the film zones in on customers, musicians, and store owners around the country lauding it and the newly erupted Record Store Day, singing the praises of collecting. HOWEVER, things rapidly get a bit desperate once again, Timmons appears on a video to once more appeal to people to support the store, and, this time, unlike the time he'd done it before, things get ugly. Certain musicians and some other record store owners bare their fangs and start carping some pretty ignorant petty shit, but local bands were eager to throw in and help out with benefit shows and such. Didn't help, though, and in Oct. of 2011, Timmons closed the doors permanently after a 26-year run. Pretty damn good, all told, 'cause very very VERY few businessmen can make such an enterprise last even half that long, but pretty damn bad, too, because an important adjunct of the passionate life is lost in such deaths, and I hate to ponder what a culture without record stores would be like.

But I mentioned a second DVD, and that one ends on a positive note while this one presages a coming era I don't want to even think about, thus, for another look at this phenomenon, for the Brit side of things, head in a book written specifically to address it

think about, thus, for another look at this phenomenon, for the Brit side of things based in a book written specifically to address it, see the review for *Last Shop Standing* ([here](#)) as well.

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