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SURFING THE WAVES OF POPULAR CULTURE
BY MICHAEL GILTZ & FRIENDS

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R.I.P. NYCD

The record store is dead. A recent business story said the top four music stores were Wal-Mart, Best Buy, iTunes and Amazon.com. Not a music chain in sight among them. And of course Tower Records has shut down, leaving a hole in my heart. New York City holds some eight million people. If I want to go to a record store and browse, I have literally TWO choices: Virgin MegaStore in the midst of all the tourists in Times Square or the slightly preferable Virgin MegaStore in Union Square. That's it. You can find a few used CD stores in the East Village, while most of the specialty stores like Footlights, have disappeared.

My favorite record store NYCD shut down its physical location a while ago. And now the guys have closed shop at their office location, where they tried to go all-Internet (piggybacking on Amazon, mostly) and finally just gave up the ghost. They had almost no competition on the Upper West Side by either major chains or indie stores or used CD stores, with the closest real competitor being Tower Records at 65th St. (They were in the high 70s.) But rising rents forced them out of a tiny location on Amsterdam and sent them up a block or two and around the corner to a basement location. It might as well have been the moon, as so many customers failed to follow them. They had every advantage in some ways: New York magazine highlighted them in its Best of New York edition, their weekly email newsletter about new releases was also singled out for praise in the media and went out to thousands of customers. Their switch from a physical store to an online presence was written about in the LA Times. They gave interviews, wrote liner notes, sponsored shows, played in bands, posted on Huffington and of course even had their own blog.

And yesterday it came to an end. Rob -- who has the twin loss of no new Grateful Dead records to ever look forward to -- is I think moving in with his Mom. Sal -- who has the twin loss of his second home New Orleans to incompetence and indifference -- is I think selling blood.

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