

Brainwashed - In Boston, There Is No Other

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As last week's issue of "The Brain" went live, the folks at Other Music were moving all the stock from the Boston store back to NY. The unannounced departure of Other Music Boston is about as bittersweet as their shocking arrival, 16 months ago.

While it was great to have a local store which carried everything I liked, people like me aren't necessarily the general public. Most experienced record retailers know that the profit margin is so low in this business that numerous peoples tastes really need to be catered to if you're going to have an expensive operation. Unfortunately between Twisted Village and the other eight record stores within the .5 square mile known as Harvard Square, there wasn't a whole lot that Other Music carried that was different.

Obsessive music fans are Other Music's market, but obsessive music fans are addicts, and will dig through a number of places to save a dollar or two here and there. Heck, save \$2 on seven CDs and you've just bought an eighth! It's sad to see them go, despite the inherent mentality that they could operate a store in Boston with a New York attitude (overpriced space, overpaid workers, shabby return policies and a larger employee to customer ratio than necessary). On the other hand, I'm happy that Twisted Village won't live in their shadow, as it felt like this tiny mom-and-pop-op around-the-corner-and-in-the-basement seemed to be susceptible to a drop in sales when the Other place moved in.

Unfortunately for OM, and a number of obsessive music addicts, they skipped town before realizing how to do it right, and most likely have abolished any hopes of ever returning to the area. Hopefully it's not a sign of the times that in the economic downturn, a downfall of independent labels, bands and distributors is on the way.