



Director and producer Danielle Beverly filming at Chicago's Dusty Groove record store.

DANA LEONARD

Selling Your Record Collection To Move On In Life The Focus Of New Documentary Based At Dusty Groove

"It's really not about how cool records are or the resurgence of vinyl, it's really about people who are letting go of the things that once defined them."

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WEST TOWN — A new documentary about West Town's Dusty Groove records is a lot more than a story about vinyl.

The film, “Dusty Groove: The Sound of Transition,” is Chicago filmmaker Danielle Beverly’s look at several people at a transition in their lives, often opting to sell their record collections to move on to their next phase.

But Beverly provides enough footage of record culture to satisfy the vinyl lovers.

“If someone loves vinyl records and record stores, they are going to love this film. The vinyl nerds are going to get their fix. But it’s really not about how cool records are or the resurgence of vinyl, it’s really about people who are letting go of the things that once defined them,” Beverly said.

Beverly is a professor at Northwestern University who teaches documentary filmmaking both in Evanston and at the school’s campus in Qatar. She recently moved back to Chicago from Qatar.

The idea for her film came to her when she met up with her friend of more than 20 years, Rick Wojcik, owner of Dusty Groove at 1120 N Ashland Ave. about 9 years ago.

“I had just finished buying a record collection from a woman named Jazzy Joyce, who was one of the first female hip-hop DJs in New York,” Wojcik recalled. “This was like 2010 and Joyce was just ready to start the next chapter of her life. And as with everybody when I buy these records, hers was just a fascinating story.”



Dusty Groove record store owner Rick Wojcik digging for records.

DANIELLE BEVERLY

Beverly was looking for ideas for new projects and approached Joyce after learning about her from Wojcik. Joyce declined the offer.

“Danielle was disappointed but I told her there was a million stories. I’m always hearing the life story of all these people,” Wojcik said, explaining that one of his main duties is to go look at record collections of people who are thinking of selling them to him.

Once Beverly discovered more, she was convinced it would make for a riveting film. She said that while Dusty Groove may seem like merely the setting for the film, it couldn’t be done with another record store because of Wojcik’s expertise and access to the record sellers.

“He provides access, and in documentaries we have no film without the people in front of the camera. Rick is walking into people’s private spaces, they are giving him their trust, and in the same sense they are giving me their trust,” Beverly said.

As for the stories in the film, viewers get a glimpse of characters such as Chicago jazz drummer John Jarrett and his wife, who are selling their large collection to help their grandson; a man whose father worked for MGM and would bring home records, which turned him into a collector; Chicago saxophone player Grady Johnson, who is 92 and facing stage IV cancer; and others who are looking to part with collections for various reasons ranging from creating more space in their apartments to starting a new chapter in their life, or both.



DANIELLE BEVERLY

92-year-old Grady Johnson, one of Chicago’s first Black pharmacists, contemplates selling his records to Dusty Groove owner and used vinyl buyer, Rick Wojcik.

Several of the people could have been the focus of their own film, but Beverly was able to strike a balance and incorporate them all into her 83-minute project.

There is also a segment of the film focused on JP Schauer, Wojcik's former business partner and current employee who made his own transition coming out as a gay man.

Among the most poignant segments is a jazz DJ "battle of the alley" that happens in the street next to Dusty Groove's store during an anniversary celebration. The "battle" is a recreation of a little-known Chicago tradition of jazz DJ's bringing their equipment to an alley near 51st and South St. Lawrence Avenue in the 1960s in 1970s to "battle." Each DJ is allowed six records: four up-tempo tracks, one medium-tempo or vocal and one big-band tune.

The film, currently making the rounds on the festival circuit, will be in shown at the Chicago Cultural Center as part of the Department of Cultural Affairs' Year Of Chicago Music. Wojcik, who is serving on the department's music legacy working group for The Year of Chicago Music, said a date for the screening has not been announced yet.

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