

P&A FUND – CASE STUDY

# SOUND IT OUT

Distributor: independently released by Glimmer Films

Release date: Thursday 3 November 2011 with gala launch screening

# SOUND IT OUT

The very last record shop in Teesside, UK

A documentary by JEANIE FINLAY [WWW.SOUNDITOUTDOC.COM](http://WWW.SOUNDITOUTDOC.COM)

"Wonderful" ★★★★★ - Empire

"Hilarious and incredibly heartwarming" - NME



Illustration by amyblackwell



**Synopsis:**

SOUND IT OUT (75 mins) is a documentary portrait of the very last surviving vinyl record shop in Teesside, North East England. A cultural haven in one of the most deprived areas in the UK, SOUND IT OUT documents a place that is thriving against the odds and the local community that keeps it alive. Directed by Jeanie Finlay, who grew up three miles from the shop.

A distinctive, funny and intimate film about men, the North and the irreplaceable role music plays in our lives.

**Background:**

During 2010 a proportion of the production and post-production costs associated with SOUND IT OUT were crowdfunded using the IndieGoGo platform, raising a total of \$9,563 against a target of \$8,000. SOUND IT OUT was completed in December 2010.

In addition to finance the crowdfunding campaigns galvanised an audience for the finished film and, amongst other supporters, brought on-board the people behind Record Store Day (RSD) who made SOUND IT OUT the Official Film of RSD 2011.

SOUND IT OUT received its world premiere at SxSW in March 2011 followed by UK premieres at Sheffield Doc/Fest and Edinburgh International Film Festival.

***“Sound It Out was the unexpected pure pleasure of this year’s indie documentaries at SXSW.” MSN Movies***

***“One of the most vital and innervating films of SxSW.” Cinematical***

Following these festival screenings the team behind the film (Jeanie Finlay (Director) and Sally Hodgson (Producer of Marketing and Distribution)) planned a small theatrical release across approx. seven cinemas before independently releasing a boutique version of the DVD which would be sold from the film’s website and, it was hoped, would mirror the successful release of a limited number of DVDs in April 2011 to celebrate Record Store Day.

The award from the BFI’s P&A Fund enabled the release to expand to over 25 cinemas and covered the costs of classification, transfer to digital, online promotion and enhancements to web presence. The award came with an added clause; a final crowdfunding campaign to support theatrical costs.

**Crowdfunding – strategy and outcomes:**

Part of the strategy for crowdfunding included finding a way to connect to the film’s secondary audience who were described as follows:

‘Between 25-40 years, 50/50 gender split, early adopters, seeks out the alternative, digital in approach to music and film consumption, gravitates towards the crafty, homemade and unique, enjoys discovering and sharing with friends – likes to be regarded as someone who brings ‘cool’ new things to their friends/fans/followers, things that are authentic are important and have value, enjoys cinema with added value e.g. the Secret Cinema audience, enjoy being a part of the experience – active engagers rather than passive viewers.’

Careful consideration was given to the perks on offer in this final crowdfunding campaign with the aim of opening up the campaign to a more music-focused audience than previous campaigns.



## CUSTOM PERKS FOR BACKERS

The perks included:

- Crosley Radio portable turntables (not available in the UK)
- Tatty Devine vinyl-inspired jewellery (bespoke designs)
- Copies of 7" vinyl EP (four tracks from the film on baby blue vinyl)
- Copies of SOUND IT OUT DVD (boutique version in gatefold sleeve)

In addition to the film's online social network profiles what was considered key to attracting this audience was securing coverage within online blogs/music publications and also linking to young independent record labels. The P&A award provided the finance to start working with a specialist music PR to reach this identified audience.

Every crowdfunding backer was thanked on the film's Facebook page with a personalised music video linked to his or her own Facebook profile. In addition, and as with previous crowdfunding campaigns, individual emails were sent to each backer asking them a number of questions:

- First record bought
- Favourite record store
- Which cinema will they visit to watch SOUND IT OUT
- Reason for donating

A list of all backers plus their responses were posted on the SOUND IT OUT website. The crowdfunding campaign ran from September to October 2011 with a target of \$10,000, the final amount raised was \$10,826.



INDIEGOGO FINAL SCREEN AT END OF CAMPAIGN

# \$10,826

RAISED OF \$10,000 GOAL

0

TIME LEFT

Sponsored by:

**Perks for your contribution:**

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**Especially for you: \$10**

A very special online **thank you** and **personal video dedication** on our website, Twitter and Facebook.

(\$10 = £6.18 August 2011)

23 Claimed

("visible" funders)



**Theatrical release - strategy:**

The strategy surrounding the theatrical release was to make each screening like a party, so the screenings included some surprises, plenty to keep guests entertained and something to take away as a memento...



THE CHAPMAN FAMILY PLAY LIVE AT HYDE PARK PICTURE HOUSE. LEEDS

Therefore each screening of SOUND IT OUT featured a Q&A with the filmmaking team plus pop-up record shops, vinyl karaoke, live bands, DJs and special guests.



INSTORE AT TATTY DEVINE – FAIRY CAKES, RECORDS AND STICKERS

Stickers were individually handed out by either Jeanie or Sally at the start of every screening, bringing the filmmakers in direct contact with the film's audience and finally a photo was taken at every screening and added to the film's Facebook page with encouragement to 'tag yourself' in order to maintain a connection with the audience after the 'party' finished.



REQUEST A SCREENING MAP

A bespoke 'Request A Screening' function was built and integrated within the existing SOUND IT OUT website to monitor and record audience 'hotspots'. On the back of the data collected a number of additional screenings were booked in key cities, including Manchester.



“YOU SOUND IT OUT” DJ VINYL EVENT, PRESS PLAY FESTIVAL, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE



TOM AND JEANIE ON BBC BREAKFAST

Traditional routes were also followed to promote the theatrical release. Director Jeanie along with Tom Butchart (owner of Sound It Out Records) appeared on the BBC Breakfast sofa the week before the start of the tour (significantly boosting the number of likes on Facebook) and a national press screening for SOUND IT OUT resulted in some fantastic reviews:



The film's existing online networks were also an integral part of the promotion of the theatrical tour. Events and adverts across Facebook were shared and promoted by the film's existing community and posting photos from screenings helped to build an audience one city at a time.



FACE BOOK REACH – 57,000, FRIENDS OF FANS 1,210,766



SOME OF OUR AUDIENCES IN CINEMAS AND A RECORD SHOP

Every screening on the tour resulted in mini reviews across Twitter (using the film's handle) from audience members and some famous faces at a number of screenings coupled with PR connections resulted in tweets from influential people across the music industry.

**Tim Burgess** @Tim\_Burgess

*A Charlatan I. Noble & wild. Hustlin' for tricks, to make you feel loved. My autobiography Telling Stories is out on Penguin on 26th April (25,151 followers)*

Just watching @Sounditoutdoc - thanks @jeanieFinlay it's amazing. Done with such love and warmth. You have to watch it everyone. Come round!



DIRECTOR JEANIE FINLAY AND BILL BAILEY AT CAMEO, EDINBURGH

**Huw Stephens** @huwstephens

*DJ on BBC Radio 1, Radio Cymru (ar hyn o bryd), www.swnfest.com curator, www.musicsoundsbetterwithhuw.com My Views, not the BBC's views. (69,611 followers)*  
Sound It Out -The Very Last Record Shop in Teeside. Incredible film. Beautiful.  
<http://www.sounditoutdoc.com> @SoundItOutDoc

**dBridge** @dBridge

*Head of record label Exit Records. (15,263 followers)*  
Just watched a cool documentary about the last surviving record shop in Teeside  
<http://www.sounditoutdoc.com/> @Hyperdub gets a mention.

**Dave Seaman** @daveseaman

*Dave Seaman is an international DJ, the former editor of MixMag and has also produced for the likes of Kylie, Take That & Pet Shop Boys. (18,004 followers)*

← Just watched Jeanie Finlay's great Sound It Out documentary about the last remaining record shop in Teeside. Funny & sad in equal measures.

Other music and culture influencers who name-checked the film across Twitter include:

Bill Bailey

Scroubious Pip

Miranda Sawyer

Karen Krizanovich

Daniel Kitson

Stella Vine

Colin Hanks – son of Tom Hanks, actor and documentary maker

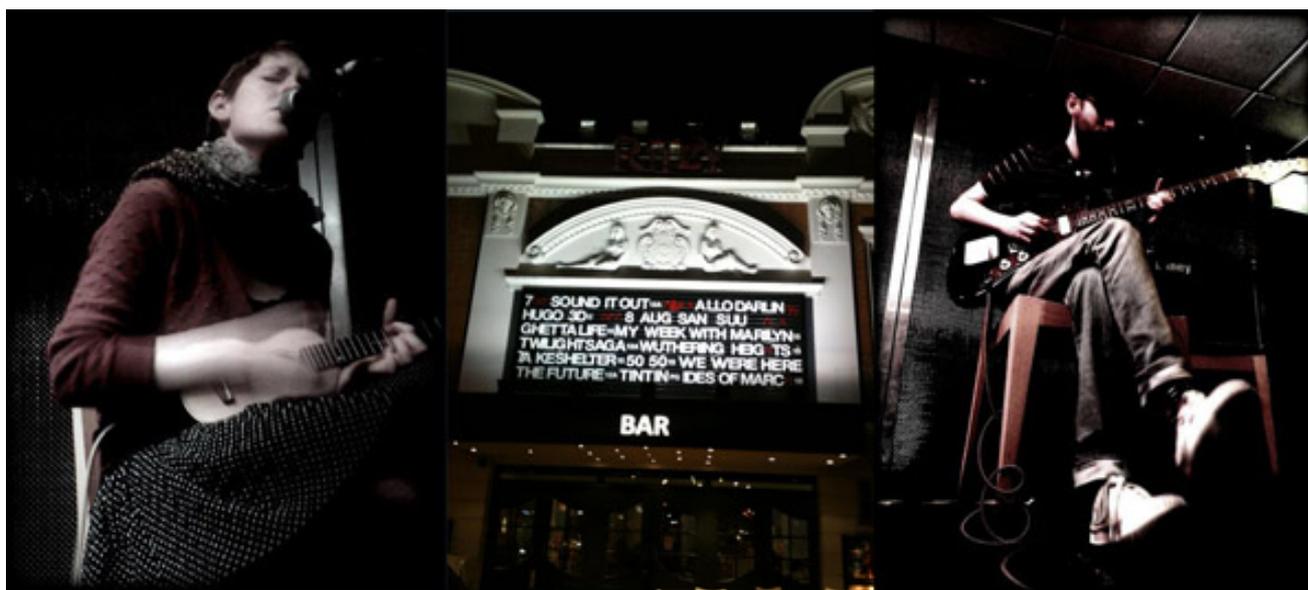
Paul Smith - Maximo Park

Jesus Jones

#### **Partners:**

The film was booked into cinemas centrally by the team at Picturehouse Docs and the filmmakers also worked directly with cinemas and the East Midlands PBQ Network of cinemas to book in screenings.

Freeman PR, a music industry public relations specialist was brought on to secure coverage for the crowdfunding campaign in the music press and across music blogs – this activity brought onboard a number of celebrity backers.



ALLO DARLIN" PLAYING LIVE AFTER SCREENING AT BRIXTON RITZY

### Costs/theatrical release budget:

Crowdfunding target was \$10,000, final amount raised was \$10,826 from 171 backers.  
SOUND IT OUT's P&A award: £18,036

The overall release costs were £36,396, split into the following areas:

- Classification costs - £894
- Digital masters and copies of the film - £5,268
- Access costs - £470
- Advertising - £720
- Publicity, PR, talker screenings and special add-on events - £14,600
- Publicity material design and print costs, DVDs, vinyl EP and website build - £14,442

### Evaluation:

SOUND IT OUT's crowdfunding campaigns coupled with a UK theatrical release has helped to build a significant groundswell of fans for the film. Fans who are both engaged with the film and active on social networks. These fans have helped to further build the Facebook community for the film through regular posts, likes and importantly shares and have turned into customers, purchasing the film on DVD and buying posters and merchandise from SOUND IT OUT's online store. The number of people on the film's mailing list doubled during the theatrical tour and these people were contacted with the opportunity to pre-order the boutique version of the DVD with baby blue 7" vinyl soundtrack from the film, which they did in their hundreds.



PHOTOS SENT IN BY FANS OF THE SOUND IT OUT DVD AND VINYL IN THEIR HOMES

The theatrical tour of the film had some definite highlights. The week-long run at the ICA kicked off with a strong weekend. Word-of-mouth was encouraged through a ticket offer; the Friday night audience could pass on their special SOUND IT OUT sticker so their friend could get a discount on Saturday and Sunday screenings.

The ICA's weekend box office of £1,249.60 compares favourably with other documentary releases the same week:

- We Were Here (Peccadillo Pictures): £1,213 from two screens
- An African Election (Dogwoof): £806 from one screen

(Box Office figures: The Guardian)

**Conclusions:**

When adventures in crowdfunding are successful the benefits are obvious; bringing onboard both finance and fans for your project. However, as important as raising finance is, building and developing these fans is just as vital. These are the people who will hopefully follow the project from the early stages of development and production, they will become advocates for the finished work and eventually customers of the finished product. Keeping them onboard requires a number of elements, and in the case of SOUND OUT IT this meant delivering a film with integrity, providing platforms to share thoughts and reviews of the film, offering a range of options to watch the film and perhaps most importantly acknowledging and thanking support.

SOUND IT OUT is very much a grassroots style of film – it looks at a small community of people with a shared passion and has a homemade feel to its aesthetic. These themes were carried right through all aspects of production and distribution, from posting music video dedications on the film's Facebook page (community) to creating hand-drawn artwork for publicity materials (handmade). Staying true to the ethos of the film across marketing and publicity has helped to keep the film's original supporters on-board while attracting a steady stream of new fans as the film continues into other forms of distribution and exhibition.

**Lessons:**

Promoting a series of one-off film screenings in cities throughout the UK is tough but linking into relevant groups and communities helps to build a crowd for the screening. With a grassroots marketing campaign through record stores, online promotion and the support of national press coverage the film attracted good audience figures, comparing favourably with other big film releases backed by national marketing campaigns, a strong distributor and big name actors. Audiences for documentary films are out there, what's vital is to tap into the right channels in order to tell them about the film and also to set up mechanisms for advocacy and word-of-mouth, whether that's through online or offline communities.

Being able to release the film much widely than initially anticipated has of course offered more people the opportunity to watch the film but has also put the team behind SOUND IT OUT directly in touch with its audience and associated supporters in each city, such as record stores and publications. SOUND IT OUT's activity for Record Store Day 2012 benefited from these new contacts and of course the film's fan-base.



STAFF OF SOUND IT OUT RECORDS, RSD 12, THEIR MOST SUCCESSFUL DAY EVER

Within an eight-week window after the end of the theatrical tour, and while the film was still being discussed and shared across social networks, a boutique DVD of SOUND IT OUT was released by the filmmakers and simultaneously a standard edition DVD was released by Dogwoof, the film also became available on iTunes.

One particular mention on Twitter spoke volumes about the effectiveness of SOUND IT OUT's direct to audience marketing and promotion and the strength of the distribution strategy...

**Rachel @\_RachelC\_**

It's something I haven't done for a long, long time but when [@sounditoutdoc](#) is released on DVD, I am going to legally buy it, not download.

Rachel ended up buying 'the whole shebang' of DVD, posters, stickers and badges from the SOUND IT OUT online store.

Sally Hodgson  
 Producer of Marketing and Distribution  
 April 2012

**MORE THAN MUSIC**  
 The record shops that changed our lives [Add your story](#)

**ABOUT**  
 MORE THAN MUSIC is a worldwide memory bank of the record stores that changed our lives. It's a place to express the sentiment at the heart of the film SOUND IT OUT that records hold memories and it's about so much more than music. An artwork by Jeanie Finlay in collaboration with Gareth Howell

**BROWSE**  
 Over the last five years over 500 record stores have closed in the UK alone. Celebrate the shops that are still going strong or mark the passing of your favourite shop by making sure your iconic record store is included. Each record icon represents a shop. Browse the map and read about the shops and what they meant to people.

**FIND A SHOP**  
 Navigate the map above by clicking and dragging zoom in to see more, out to cover more ground and see where stories have been submitted. If your shop is missing please add your story.

**ADD YOUR STORY**  
 Tell us about the music you bought there, the sounds you fell in love with and the memorable characters you met. Share your stories and memories, both big and small, and help us document the important places record stores hold at the heart of our communities. Add a photo of the shop, of you or the records you bought there. Add a video clip of a song you bought there. It's really simple to take part. [Add your story](#)

**FEATURED SHOP AND STORIES**

**SELECTADISC**  
 Nottingham, UK  
 When I moved to Nottingham in the 90s there were three mighty Selectadisc shops in Nottingham. My favourite was the album shop and I never left empty handed. It was always surprising and overwhelming in terms of size and scale. I had a brief career as...

**PETER'S RECORDS**  
 Easton, England  
 Growing up in the 70s and 80s, pretty much everybody I knew in the Easton / Normanby / Grangetown sprawl bought their first ever record from Peter's Records... his 50p clearance section was always a bit of a treasure trove; some of my...

**ALAN FEARNLEYS**  
 Middlesbrough, UK  
 I grew up in Teesside and moved to Middlesbrough to go to the art college there. Alan Fearnleys was simply the destination record shop for me when I was a teenager. The records I bought there, in particular anything by The Smiths made me think...

LEGACY: MORE THAN MUSIC - THE RECORD SHOPS THAT CHANGED OUR LIVES. WEBSITE  
COMING SOON.