A subterranean New York record store and the salsa culture that surrounds it are the subject of a fantastic new two-CD compilation, writes Andy Battaglia

The twisted innards of New York's Times Square subway station do not make for a particularly pleasant place to go shopping. It's not an altogether dreadful environment, but neither is it conducive to the life of leisure. The main objective for most who walk these thoroughfares is to get out or get on as quickly as possible.

Nevertheless, there are a select few stores scattered through this inferno, each with their own individual charm. Just one stop north of Times Square lies a store that encapsulates an altogether dreadful environment: Record Mart.

Record Mart became the centre of a network materializing around different forms of pan-Latin music in New York, where the clash and clang of people and things give you the style that, at least in their prime, can't help but sound so good. The store, which did not make the cut in Subway Salsa's first track, Costa My My, is an eight-clas chain that turns its energy into kinetic energy to present a whole new vibe set in motion. The precision scatters everywhere, a base line works to try out any conceivable note that might brighten its mood. Bass boxes blend with the intensity of a fanfare from a war that is somehow exceedingly festive and fun. And that is a random three-second fusion to the brilliant theme song thrown in near the middle. In deed, it's odd.

Oddly, Record Mart neither offers a马上 sleepy air for romanticising. On display in its windows is a motley mix of modern consumer ephemera, from candy-coloured sets of Beats by Dr Dre headphones and disposable cameras to voltage adapters for phones and computers. It's not make for a particularly pleasurable experience, but neither is it conducive to the life of leisure. The main objective for most who walk these thoroughfares is to get out or get on as quickly as possible.

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