

## PERSONAL STATEMENT

I am standing here in a crowd of well over 350 people. One single line of sweat is rolling down my face and seamlessly free-falling only to stain the front of my My Chemical Romance concert tee. Packed tightly into the mosh pit, surrounded by hot sweaty bodies, packed in so tightly that if not for the insanely loud music, I would be able to hear everyone's heart beat. Everyone's jumping up and down, pushing, shoving, even fist fighting all to the tune of Emory. As the song ends, the lead singer steps up to the mike only to announce the end of their set and the beginning of Hawthorne Height's set. So psyched, full of angst, and full of the over-priced four dollar caffeinated drinks, many people slowly make their way to the bathrooms to relieve themselves or to the concession stands to purchase cds filled with the music they love. I myself see this as a moment of opportunity, the opportunity to quickly make my way to the front of the stage before more people come into the mosh pit. As a backdrop is slowly lowered behind the instruments with the words Hawthorne Heights displayed on it, the attention of every single person in the venue, workers and concert goers, is drawn to the stage at once.

All of a sudden there's an electric surge of energy as over 350 excited people begin to yell and scream in a pleased response. At that moment everything else is forgotten as the people in the bathrooms and concession stands rush through what they are doing to full on run back to the mosh pit to get a good spot at the front of the stage. Guys leave their girlfriends at the soda bars drinking sprite, girls leave their BFF's (best friends forever) in the bathroom applying makeup, and one poor guy leaves his "If Only You Were Lonely" cd at the concession counter after he has already paid for it. A hush falls over the venue as the lights dim and all eyes are averted toward the stage.

What happens next is like magic, it is like the band appears out of nowhere on a cloud of smoke. The whole scene is so luminous, daunting, and beautiful. From the first lyric of "Nikki

FM" to the last guitar riff of "Breathing in the Same Sequence" the thin air of the venue is filled with an electric energy (not to mention cigarette smoke) that circulates and captivates each and every person in the room. People who had just met for the first time are interacting and finding a common bond with one another. We all sing along to "Light Sleeper" and held up our hands as band members stage dived. It was great to be united with a room of people for about five or six hours who were so different in their everyday walks of life.

By day some of us are high school or college students, bankers, McDonald's workers, and probably some of us are still living at home with our parents, but that night we are all Hawthorne Heights fans. But the concert doesn't end with the last verse of "Saying Sorry," it goes on for at least another two hours at the back door of the venue. That's where over 350 fans stand in the brisk bone-chilling November air waiting for the bands to file into the tour buses. There we stand cd's, posters, shirts, and camera's in hand waiting for a single glimpse, a single touch, even one autograph from these people we adore so much. It's safe to say that everyone goes home that night feeling like they are on top of the world and not wanting the night to end. This is one of the most exciting and breath taking experiences of my life.

As my head hits the pillow I came to a realization, music is a very important part of my life. Because of music I have confidence, individuality, strength, and a shared experience with strangers I wouldn't otherwise bond with. You see, the concert experience is more than just a good time that's over after a few hours. This experience is so much more than that, it's where the Wall Street banker can come and stand next to the unemployed slacker or where the preppy, conservative, future senator can come to rock out with the chic, laid back, goth kids. I don't just leave this experience behind me when I wake up and go to school the next morning. I carry it with me in my everyday life by wearing the band insignia, spreading the song's messages, and by donating my last five dollars to the Music Saves Lives or Save The Music Foundation.

I live this lifestyle to the best of my ability each and everyday. Because of how I feel so empowered by female rockers I plan on naming my first daughter Evanescence. Based off my personal role model's, Amy Lee, band. Also because of the band tee's I wear, people will come up to me on the street and we'll have a long conversation about how much they love my shirt and that particular band. If not for music I wouldn't be able to make such a connection with a complete stranger. Music is a part of my everyday experience and because of it I have excitement, confidence, a place in this world, the strength to follow my dreams, and a bond with people I wouldn't have otherwise met.