

The Soundtrack of My Life

I leaned my head against the cold glass window and watched the world fly by at 70 miles per hour as the soothing tones of stringed instruments and a dancing guitar line melted into Emm Gryner's voice. I was 6 years old, riding in the backseat of my parent's station wagon on a 4 hour road trip for our annual mountain biking trip. The song was "Stereochrome". A few years pass, and we are met with the 10-year-old me. I was in my bedroom, reading a "Magic Tree House" book, as my floor vibrated with a pulsating rhythm from the bass roaring downstairs. I was trying to focus on my book, but my dad's band was inconceivably loud, as I still remember the muffled sound of a belting woman's voice finding its way into my room. That song was "Son of a Preacher Man". Before I even realize it, I'm an emotional 13 year old middle schooler and I am sobbing into my pillow, while the sound of Morrissey's voice speaks to me through my earbuds, muting every other sound in the world. "Asleep" was the title. By the next year I am 14, listening intently as I hear the sound of my bassoon echoing off my living room's walls, approaching my second hour of practicing. A few hundred hours of practicing later, I am 16. "The practice room isn't small anymore" I think to myself as the sound of my bassoon resonates throughout the acoustics of the Kennedy Center, echoing across the hall and touching even the back row of the crowd. Now, I am 17 years old, standing in a tailcoat on a cold metal podium positioned at the 50 yard line of a football field as hear the roar of 200 instruments belting Shostakovich.

It seems like music has always been there for me, whether I was just listening, or playing, or even directing. It has become an integral part of who I am- melodies ingrained into my mind, chords and harmonies locked into memories. Music has become my passion, each and every style adding to that rich and vibrant web of art. I treasure the creativity and freedom expressed in jazz, the emotions and energy poured into rock n' roll, the rhythmic intricacies and thumping bass inside of funk that just makes you want to get up and dance. However, my true love will always be classical music. While most students use classical music as a background noise for studying or as a soundtrack to fall asleep to, dozing off is the

last thing I will ever do when listening to classical music. The music just captures me in a way, I become completely encapsulated in the intertwining melodies between the various instruments and the ever-changing sonic pallet, giving each sound a certain color. I feel the way that various chords trigger different emotions, ranging from complete despair to intense joy, and it fascinates me and pulls me further and further into the music. Classical music can tell stories and convey emotions more powerfully than any amount of words could. That is why music has been a constant source of happiness in my life, acting like an anchor as people come and go like waves in the ocean. I wish that other people have the opportunity to experience music like I do, and that is why I started the charity drive "Save the Sounds" to provide method books and instruments to local elementary schools' music programs that are struggling due to budget cuts.

My love and passion for music is indescribable and cannot possibly be condensed into a mere essay. My passion is what fueled the hours every day I spent practicing. It is what allowed me to play first chair in the All-State concert band my sophomore year. It is the reason I play principal bassoon in the American Youth Philharmonic, the reason why I was able to perform on the stage of the Kennedy Center, and why I was drum major of the Lake Braddock Marching Band for two years. It is the reason why I am here right now, still standing in front of my 250 person band, the show coming to a close. I keep the tempo driving forwards, building the excitement until finally closing my fists, cutting the sound off. I throw my fists down in pride and watch the band snap their horn's down in time with me, subtly breaking attention with a smile I can't hold back. The show has just ended, and another song has just been added to the soundtrack of my life- another song, and another memory to go with it.