

Charlie is a seventeen-year-old junior attending Mountain View High school. He always has a silent smile upon his face and as he likes to say, “I don’t really do that much except for play music and go to school.”<sup>i</sup> Charlie’s first dream, like most adolescent boys, was to be a professional athlete. He looked up to Barry Bonds and Michael Jordan as tales of fame filled his mind on replay. But his life took a dramatic turn. In the 5th grade, as his little fingers touched cold steel strings and his tummy the dark cool wood of a base guitar. Charlie’s passion became music. Writing, playing, listening, recording, even to be near anything that relates to music just does it for him. His dreams are endless; He wants to open a recording studio, an extracurricular music lesson facility, or to just take that one tour around the country that would hopefully change his life, as he knew it.

Charlie knows music, he knows that the industry is vast and hard, but he isn’t afraid to get started in the career of his passion. “I don’t think that it’s ever too young to get started.”<sup>ii</sup> He is trying to get as much experience as he can in a hands-on business. He promotes local bands at his city’s YMCA, takes bass lessons one or two times a week, practices choir with his church, and plays with The Glass Gesture. His band is “my biggest priority, well except for school I guess...”<sup>iii</sup> He juggles this secret interest with full-time school, actually two schools, his regular high school and a communication arts and technology academy 9am to 4pm Charlie will, “Um sit through school, which is not so nice,

kind of unmotivating.”<sup>iv</sup> Motivating or not, Charlie still has to deal with what most teenagers dread: high school. It isn’t always easy when all you want to do is, “just go blow off homework all the time to just go play music.”<sup>v</sup>

You might think that Charlie is the same as any other high school band guy that you sat next to in math class, the guy you secretly had a crush on because he reminded you of a young Steven Tyler. But he is not like many of the others because Charlie’s infatuation is pure. “I’m not looking to hit it big as much; I am just lovin’ to do it.”<sup>vi</sup> You will not only see Charlie playing his bass guitar in his spare time, and wishing for his band (that he hangs out with 24/7) to get a record deal, but he goes above and beyond just for the sake of music. Charlie works with mainstream recording software to enhance his knowledge of music, “I’ve got some software, like Reason and ProTools, that I’ve been messing with, which is like professional software for audio engineering and stuff like that. So I’ve been kinda learning how that works, kind of on my own.”<sup>vii</sup> Charlie is even attempting to construct his own bass, “it’s not a bass yet. My aunt gave me a bunch of this exotic African wood. I’ve put it into the body of a base and I got a neck for, but I haven’t put it all together yet...I have invested so much in that project.”<sup>viii</sup> He invests so much into every aspect of music. Playing on average three shows a month with his band at some of his favorite venues like Slim’s. “Slim’s is a club in San Francisco where I usually see my favorite bands, so taking that stage was really incredible.”<sup>ix</sup> It doesn’t matter to

Charlie what he is doing as long as it has to do with music. During the Slim's show, he was performing under some of the worst conditions he had ever played in before, but it made the performance that much better. "I couldn't hear the drums or guitar or vocals, all I could hear was myself, like I was really nervous. I was playing on an amp that wasn't mine, the drum set wasn't Evan's (band mate) drum set, and it was a really bad deal; we only had twenty minutes to play but all I could think about were all my favorite members of the band that stood on the left side of the stage and kinda where I was... the adrenaline was going, it was a pretty incredible experience."<sup>x</sup>

Not only does Charlie know that he loves music, others can see it through the emotional aspect he brings while playing, and it rubs off on others to bring music into their lives. After the Slim's show many of the attendees commented on Charlie's charisma when it comes to music, "For being such, a quiet and soft spoken guy, he just really comes alive while performing. His body language talks to you as he moves to the flow the music he makes" said Elizabeth Sweeny (a friend of Charlie's). Also from an anonymous viewer, "When Charlie plays music I just look up at him on the stage and he closes his eyes so tight, that you know that it is just empowering him. You can tell that he loves it so much, and it means everything to him." Not only did everyone who knew Charlie run up in a crowd to congratulate, compliment, and thank him for an amazing show, others that never knew him wanted to do the same, "It is

really rewarding to see, to meet new people that come up after you play shows and say that they liked it, well nobody says that they don't like it, but you know I am sure people don't like it.”<sup>xi</sup> After he played I had to wait at least fifteen minutes just to get sight of him to thank him for letting me take pictures for my documentary.

Charlie has a dream, and that dream is music. He is certain that this is the exact reason that he is on Earth for. He lives, breathes, and sleeps music, as cliché and that might be, but it's true. “Not for the money because you hardly get paid, it's not for the popularity because almost like so few bands or so few writers become famous. He said that the, if you really know you should write or you should play music in this case, is when your writing or playing music you feel like you have to do it. And right now, I kinda feel like I have to do it, I dunno really why I do it, it's just like, it's what I love most and I kinda feel like that's what you should do.”<sup>xii</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> Cohen, Charles. Personal Interview. 12 Mar. 2007

<sup>ii</sup> Cohen, Charles. Personal Interview. 12 Mar. 2007

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<sup>v</sup> Cohen, Charles. Personal Interview. 12 Mar. 2007

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