

## Music's Impact on My Life

by Christina Luna

The summer before my first year of high school was the first time I realized how much music really meant to me. I realized how I couldn't live without it and I learned how horrible the silence really was.

At the time, things were breaking apart at home. I could always make all the pain and anger go away by listening to music. Although I'm a teenage girl, I listen to a lot of jazz music. I wanted school to start so badly, just so I could concentrate on my music, and so I would at least have a trumpet to play. Near midsummer, my world was destroyed. My younger brother and sister and I were taken away by social services and put into a place called, "Kids Kottage." SILENCE. There was so much silence. Just a bunch of unwanted and abused kids put together in an area where we were isolated from the rest of the world. I felt as if I would lose my mind. I would replay all the jazz music that I could remember in my head. Over and over again, just to rid myself of the pain and that awful silence.

Once school began, I was the happiest that I could ever remember being. I was put into a class where most of the musicians were seniors. I didn't want to quit, but I could see how annoyed my band teacher was because I didn't know all the music scales or that I missed a note or forgot to look at the key signature. Although my freshman year in high school was a hard and frustrating time, I would still take my trumpet "home" every single day. Although I wasn't allowed to play because of my roommates, I would still practice the fingerings and go over the melodies in my head. I was

still much less experienced and by the end of my first semester, I had come to hate my music teacher, who always seemed to single me out. It felt as though he wasn't even giving me a chance. By the middle of the school year, I was thrown into a foster home, which only seemed to make things worse.

My foster "family" would always comment on all the "noise" I was making. They would repeatedly mention how the neighbors would complain if I didn't keep it down, and comparing me to their son (who had stopped being part of the high school band). After just a few days of actually being able to practice at the foster home, I was told that I wasn't allowed to play my music anymore. I wasn't even allowed to listen to CDs or anything music related. I felt like a lifeless doll. The flow of life had been stopped when music was taken away from me.

By the time summer came around again, I was released. My brother and sister and I returned home. Everything was different. I had been disconnected from my life source. How could I possibly continue to love music as much as I had before all this had happened? I returned to school, the same band teacher, and to the same feelings of failure. I was now in concert band, and although I could understand all the music with only a bit of difficulty, I was given fourth chair. I wanted to die of shame. How could it be that these freshmen were third and fourth when we didn't even audition for chairs? I started to give into my failure, this time cutting my life source of music myself.

I knew I didn't want to completely give up, so I continued. Halfheartedly play my part in the band. I wasn't really alive without music. I had given up so much that I knew I wouldn't be returning to that school for my junior and senior year. Once summer came again, I was questioning myself everyday on whether or not I should even take band class at my new school,

Hug High. I really felt on the verge of death. I continued to question my love for music and how far it actually went.

I had heard from some of my friends that went to Hug, that the band director was an awesome musician and teacher, and that his instrument was also the trumpet. I was still questioning whether or not music was my life or if my love for it had died. I chose to try one more time to reconnect with my first love, and I chose to take music as a zero period (jazz band) and as an elective. After school my friend who is also in the band, took me to meet my new band director. When I finally got through the other students who were meeting him, I told him where I used to go and what instrument I played. He quickly smiled and said, "So I guess you're all about the music, good." I froze for a moment. Trying to think of what those words really meant. I slowly replied, "I guess."

Through my junior year, I slowly started binding with my lost love. My trumpet, who I had abandoned, reconnected with me. We were becoming one again. I began to get better and better, learning new scales and memorizing note names. My band teacher helped me whenever I would ask him for advice, leading me forward with his help and knowledge. I started trying again. All the pain and silence from my past disappeared into music notes and rhythms. Suddenly I realized how much I had missed music. It was so peaceful and liberating. All the nonsense from the last couple of years was fading away. I could feel it leaving me. I wasn't angry anymore and I wasn't a nuisance. I finally felt complete.

Music is my life. I can confidently say that. My high school band isn't the biggest, but we're definitely one of the most dedicated. Our lives and futures are greatly impacted every day by music and the wonderful people who take the time to teach us what music really is. Throughout my life music has kept me going forward towards a brighter tomorrow. The silence is gone now and only music remains.