

Not a Band, An Idea: Music, Society, and My Chemical Romance

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My Chemical Romance (MCR) began as a reaction to the tragedies of the September 11 2001 attacks on New York City.¹ They evolved into a band which received international acclaim for their music and became known for popularizing the “emo” genre globally. As the posterboys of the emo movement, they became associated with all aspects of emo, their music transcending audio and becoming a cultural milestone. This effect was only exemplified when they broke up in 2013, clarifying that “[My Chemical Romance] is not a band- it is an idea.”² However, despite this break up, their popularity remains as strong as ever as a new generation discovers their music. This has been shown by their unexpected reunion in October of 2019, where their reunion show sold out in a matter of minutes³ and was live streamed to hundreds of thousands of fans globally.⁴

For my thesis, I tried to answer the question: Why is MCR still relevant despite being inactive for years? I answer this question in two parts: “Band,” or what made their music longlasting; and “idea,” or their long term societal impact. I conclude that MCR remains relevant due to a message of hope in a time of existential fear.

¹ *My Chemical Romance: Life on the Murder Scene*, directed by Greg Kaplan (2006, Reprise/ Warner Brothers (2006): iTunes (2014).

² Gerard Way, *A Vigil, On Birds and Glass*, TwitLonger, March 25, 2013.
http://www.twitlonger.com/show/n_1rjdh4f

³ Suzy Exposito, “My Chemical Romance Marches On Again at Los Angeles Reunion Show,” December 21, 2019. Date Accessed: April 6, 2020.

<https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-live-reviews/my-chemical-romance-reunion-show-los-angeles-928097/>

⁴ Ibid