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Hawthorne Heights Talk the End of Warped Tour, *Bad Frequencies*, and Longevity

By M.J. Rawls [@viewtifulj21](#) · On May 16, 2018

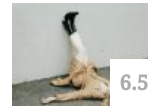
For 17 years, **Hawthorne Heights** have been a mainstay within the post hardcore genre. *Bad Frequencies*, their first album in five years, plays like a moving diary of lessons learned and adventures on the road. We talked to singer/guitarist **JT Woodruff** about their newest record, the end of Vans Warped Tour, and how the band has maintained their longevity.

The end of Warped Tour is near. You guys made a mini-documentary chronicling your experiences there. I've been to many Warped Tours and seen you guys play. How does that feel with that chapter coming to an end?

I kinda equate it to how much you actually enjoyed going to school. Maybe when you were inside it, you didn't enjoy it as much. When you graduated high school, you thought you were free, but you're actually free of all your friends and everything you were doing up until that point. I think a lot of people are wondering what the next step is if you don't have that to look forward to. That's definitely a bummer.

It makes me worried for the next generation of bands. What are they going to have to do every summer because Warped Tour was such an instrumental part of the music scene. A lot of bands built their careers out there every summer. Working hard, driving a lot of miles, and sweating in the summer sun. For us, it's a big end of an era because we all went to Warped Tour in the 90's and when we got to play it in the mid 2000's and on, it's been a pretty big part in our career. Hopefully it will stick around in some sort of format. I think it's one of those things where the spirit will live on one way or another. I think it's too impactful

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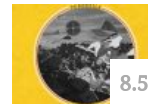
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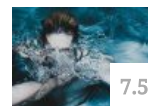
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to the music scene to let it entirely go away. It just goes to show you that nothing lasts forever and nothing is safe. That we should work on protecting the things that we love.

I wanted to talk about the new album, *Bad Frequencies*. From what I read, it was the longest writing process from the band so far. It touches on things like going away and getting older. Did those feelings you spoke about with the end of Warped Tour leak into the DNA of this album?

We were writing before Warped Tour started – the early part of the year. Then, we were writing during Warped Tour. I was writing lyrics the entire time. I was just trying to capture as many memories, emotions, and feelings that you could. When we got done with Warped Tour, it was that feeling. That sinking feeling of “man, this is over. We had an incredible time all summer.” Then, about a month after, we got the news that Warped Tour was doing its final cross-country trek. That builds a lot more memories which creates a lot more inspiration.

If you listen to the song, “Edge of Town,” that song is rooted and inspired by the news of Warped Tour going away. The chorus is built on losing something that you’ve been apart of for so long.

The album has a fire metaphor that goes throughout, especially in “Pink Hearts” and the closer “Pills.” Was a big part of *Bad Frequencies* releasing things?

We always like to tell people that we concentrate on moving forward. A lot of times, you have to turn the page. You have to get to the next chapter. Maybe even switch to a new book. Sometimes you have to burn it all down and get rid of all the bad habits. Sometimes you have to shut out all the negativity in your life and continue to move forward. That’s what a lot of this album is about. Even though there might be a situation you messed up looking back, you think about the great times within the situation. There’s a lot of moving on, but it’s more like moving forward. It’s about progressing within the adult years of our lives. Looking back at our youth and realizing that you can maintain that youth going forward. Writing songs and playing music should still be fun, but you try not to get burned out on it after all these years.

As many years as Hawthorne Heights have been together and what the band means to people, how do you maintain that youthful outlook when it comes to making music? The music industry is always changing and some bands get jaded as they go on.

You only want to concentrate on things that you can control. I can’t make people buy \$20 CDs again, so, I don’t worry about that. We just want to get our music out as much as possible with however people listen to it. You just work on writing the best album that you can. You focus on those songs and you try to make people want to listen to what you’re saying. That’s about all you can do. It’s more about thinking within our circle and not thinking outside of it. You don’t worry about negativity from anonymous people on the internet. I think a lot of people get burned out and jaded because of things like that. There’s toxic people everything. There’s toxic people at everybody’s workplace. You just move on and move forward.

“Just Another Ghost” starts the aggressive side to the album. There’s a lyric there that says “do you need me?/do you see right through me now?” Having been in a band for so long, I would imagine that friendships and relationships get hard. You guys did over 150 shows in 2017 alone. Is it hard keeping that line where you have this career, but still try to keep relationships strong?

It’s always difficult where you have a career that keeps you away from home vs being at home. That’s a very difficult balance for anybody. You do your best and you kinda make sure your friends and family are on the same page with you. The most important thing is when you are home, you try to be there 100%.

If we didn’t have supportive people in our lives, this would be impossible. We try to always be honest and upfront about everything that’s happening. Sometimes, our plans get laid out before us and there isn’t a lot of choice. That tends to be

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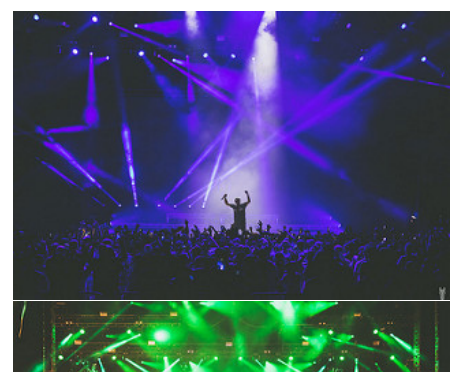
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harder. With that being said, we just maintain a positive look on everything and realize how much of a blessing what we get to do is. Our friends and family understand that this opportunity doesn't happen to everybody. We appreciate the fans that stuck by us throughout the years. It's easier to maintain if you think about things like that.

Two songs that stuck out to me on the album are the title track and "The Suicide Mile." Once you get to the latter, there's the message of "it's bigger than you and me." You guys have been open and honest in relation to mental health and songs like these mean a lot to fans. How does that fan relationship keep you guys going? How important is that conversation of good and bad things?

It's extremely important. To be honest, it's what keeps us here and keeps us doing what we do. We are pretty hands on with our fans. We like to go out and meet them, talk to them, and see what's going on. We don't just play the show and leave. When you get done playing the show and talk to the people that are there – the people that are nice enough to come see you on a Monday night or something like that. You want to spend time with them. You get to hear these stories and hear about what's going on in their lives. Just for an hour, you can help them not focus on some of this stuff. To me, that's very powerful.

There are subjects that you write about and inspire you on a healing level. We're all going through the exact same thing. It might be a different story. We're all going through bad times. We're all going through good times. We all have peaks and valleys through our lives throughout our careers. We all have fear. We all have anxiety. We understand that music is very therapeutic. It's very therapeutic to us. If you were going through a bad time and you put on a great song, it immediately changes your mood. There's something special about that.

Pick up Hawthorne Heights newest album, *Bad Frequencies* on [CD/Vinyl](#) and [Itunes](#).

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Hawthorne Heights "Just Another Ghost" Official Music Video



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M.J. RAWLS

Journalist, Self-published author, and photographer since 2014, Murjani "MJ" Rawls is always looking to stretch his capabilities of his creativity and passions, Rawls has as a portfolio spanning through many mediums including music, television, movies, and more. Operating out of the New York area, Rawls has photographed artists spanning many genres from Slipknot, Kendrick Lamar, Marc Anthony, Zac Brown Band to name a few.

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