

PARAMORE

Singer Hayley Williams is just being honest about her ascension to rock-star status

STORY BY TROY L. SMITH
troys@rochesterinsider.com

A sea of girls, barely old enough to drive, sporting orange and yellow layered hair as they frantically jostle for position all the while screaming at the top of their lungs — “I got him where I want him now!”

It can only mean one thing — you’re smack dab in the middle of a Paramore concert and newly crowned emo-princess Hayley Williams is rockin’ the mic like a 1995 version of Gwen Stefani (back before Gwen got all “Hollaback Girl” on us).

“The fans have been ridiculous,” says the 18-year-old Williams, whose band’s album *Riot!* and single “Misery Business” have made Paramore one of 2007’s most successful acts. “It’s definitely a trip, seeing little clones of yourself in the crowd. This year has been amazing.”

Darien Lake experienced the Hayley phenomenon in August, when thousands of Paramore T-shirt-wearing teens flocked to the Warped Tour to see Williams and her bandmates — bassist Jeremy Davis; and brothers, guitarist

Josh and drummer Zac Farro — rip through a 30-minute set in front of, by far, the biggest crowd any of the 50-plus acts had that day — it wasn’t even close.

Things have really picked up for you guys in '07. When you started this year's Warped Tour were you expecting such a huge following to be there?

Actually, I would say the most drastic change for us was from '05 to '06, because we went from playing The Shiragirl Stage the first year and then moved up to The Hurley.com Stage. None of us could have prepared for that, coming out every day and seeing 1,000 or 2,000 kids. The last memory we had of Warped Tour before '06 was playing for 50 to 300 kids daily.

In June, “Misery Business” just blew up. I mean, the song and video were just everywhere. Did you expect anything like that?

I don’t really think now, in music, if those types of things can be predicted. But we did fight really hard for the song and we believed in it. There was always an energy about it that was just contagious. When we played it for our friends and for people that we respected in other bands, it always seemed to catch on and people really enjoyed it. I definitely didn’t

PARAMORE LIVE

WHEN: 7 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 25

WHERE: Town Ballroom, 681 Main St. Buffalo

WITH: The Starting Line and The Almost

COST: \$25 at the door

DETAILS: www.paramore.net

expect this, but I knew there was something to it, something special.

I read a quote where you said it was the most honest thing you've ever written.

For sure. That’s definitely what motivated me to push forward and fight for it. It was a little shameful at first, because there were parts of myself that I thought were really ugly that were in that song, and obviously the song is a little bit bitchy, or a lot bitchy (laughs). It’s the honesty of the lyrics. I think people need something like that, especially with radio now. The fact that the song is crossing over and being played on Top 40 stations is awesome. If there can be more artists

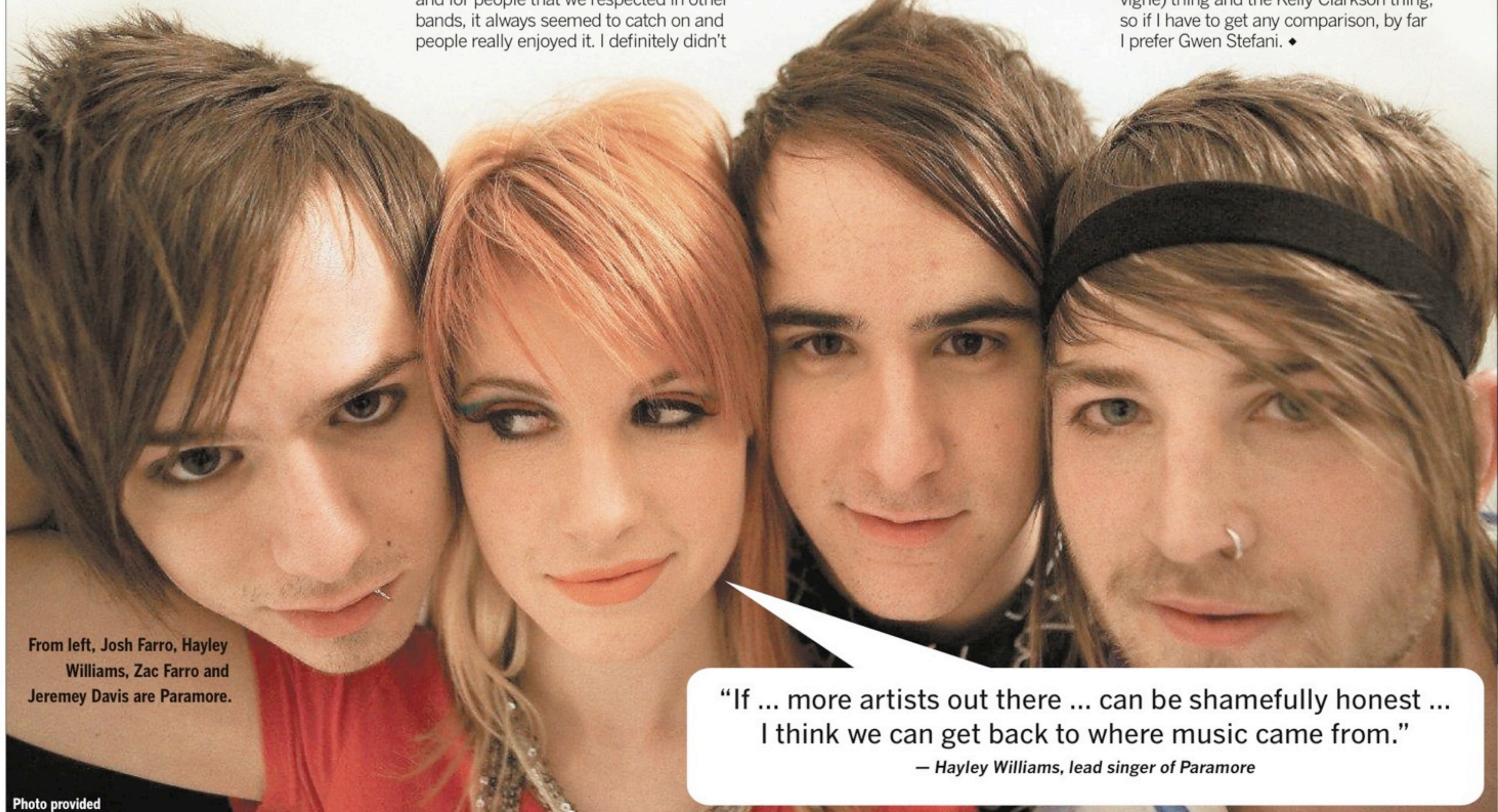
out there that can be shamefully honest and put themselves out there, I think we can get back to where music came from.

People like to play up the fact that you guys are so young (their ages range from 17 to 22). Does that get annoying?

Yeah. I feel like it wouldn’t be such a big deal if a lot of our fans weren’t as young as we are. Our fan base is pretty much our age, some older and younger. We don’t focus on it. We ignore that and the fact that most people think at first look we’re just a female-fronted band. We ignore those, because they don’t get you anywhere.

Yeah. The female-frontwoman thing does seem to be a major focal point. Are you flattered by comparisons to Gwen Stefani and other female singers?

Yeah, of course it’s flattering. No Doubt has done so much for music, just the fact that they came from a place that was very organic and went on to be one of the biggest acts when I was growing up. As far as just the Gwen comparison, I would hope that people were referring to more who she was in the band, but it’s definitely flattering. We get the Avril (Lavigne) thing and the Kelly Clarkson thing, so if I have to get any comparison, by far I prefer Gwen Stefani. ♦



From left, Josh Farro, Hayley Williams, Zac Farro and Jeremy Davis are Paramore.

Photo provided

“If ... more artists out there ... can be shamefully honest ... I think we can get back to where music came from.”

— Hayley Williams, lead singer of Paramore