

## Waukesha North graduate in VH1 competition

Freeman, The (Waukesha, WI) – Wednesday, June 11, 2014

*Section: Local News*

WAUKESHA— 2004 Waukesha North High School graduate Tony Memmel is in New York City to compete in the VH1 / Republic Records Make a Band Famous competition.

Mommel and his wife, Lesleigh, are fighting for a top spot today and Thursday against 24 other top picked performing acts.

Out of 2,700 plus acts, the duo was chosen by VH1 to be one of 60 bands to continue through the process.

From there, tens of thousands of fans voted via Twitter in favor of the Memmel couple. Their large, loyal fanbase kept them in first place for the majority of the competition.

“Our fans have really followed behind us,” Tony said. “We’re competing for more than ourselves.”

Tony Memmel’s strong base of fans not only loves his musical talents, but also his ability to overcome adversity. Tony has lived his entire life missing a forearm and hand, yet is still successful in playing different instruments.

Tony recognizes his time at local public schools as having a strong impact in planting his interest in a music career. He started choir and band under the direction of Mark Helgert at Butler Middle School.

“Mark Helgert was a fabulous influence for the students,” Tony’s mother Katie Memmel said.

Tony continued working with instruments as a member of the marching band in high school under the direction of James Doepke. He was also active in choir and said his director there, Margaret Jenks, had the most musical influence on him growing up.

Outside school, Tony was a member of a garage band that won four Battle of the Band titles.

Tony spent almost all of his career in southeastern Wisconsin, performing at Summerfest and other local popular venues, until recently. That’s when he and his wife moved to Nashville to share their music and expand their fan base.

To catch the local star, tune into VH1 tonight at 7 p.m. Fans can vote right now via Twitter using the hashtags #tonymommel #MABF.

– **Jordyn Noennig** , Special to The Freeman