

*Frame & Canvas* is a landmark. Released in April of 1998, Braid's third studio album and first full-length with Polyvinyl wasn't their first nor last important statement, but its urgency, precision, and non-stop rush of innovative ideas lined up perfectly with the time it was created in to effect a profound shift. In the small but growing circles of Midwestern emo of the late '90s, and all that would eventually ripple outward and upward from those circles, nothing was quite the same after this record. We celebrate 25 years of *Frame & Canvas* with the first proper re-release of the album, not just newly remastered, but remixed from the original tapes.

By the time they were ready to track their third album in late 1997, Braid had become an unstoppable machine. The band hit the ground running upon forming four years earlier, churning out new material as fast as it could be put to tape and sharpening their performance chemistry with constant, nearly compulsive touring. On one of their many runs of shows, the band crossed paths with Jawbox's J. Robbins, a presence in the Washington D.C. scene known not just for his bands, but for his stellar work as an engineer and producer. When this group of self-professed Jawbox superfans meekly asked Robbins if he'd be interested in producing their next album, his agreement lit an even bigger fire to the creative engines of a band already in hyperdrive. True to their road-dog work ethic, Braid booked a tour that routed them to D.C. and back, working in the middle for just five blurry days at the legendary Inner Ear Studios, walking away with *Frame & Canvas*.

These twelve songs were not just the culmination of everything the band had been building up until that point, but an energized advancement. Guitarist/vocalists Chris Broach and Bob Nanna, and bassist Todd Bell had recently been joined by new drummer Damon Atkinson, but even less than a year into this new configuration, Braid was locked in and making some of their most inspired work. The heightened frequency the band was operating at is immediately apparent with the way "The New Nathan Detroits" charges out of the gates, opening the album with a barrage of speedy, dissonant hooks that hit like an orchestrated car crash. Throughout the album, the band masterfully balances intensity and control. Songs like "Consolation Prizefighter" lean into dynamic math rock construction, while the band's restless melodicism guides "Killing A Camera" and slower moments like the yearning, twin-guitar beauty of "Never Will Come For Us." Listening closely to "Collect From Clark Kent" is head-spinning, not just in trying to decode its intricate construction, but hearing it played with an effortlessness that sounds second nature. There are moments on every song that reflect the excitement and possibility of youth that the members of Braid were actively living at this point. These were four friends living, breathing, and constantly finding their way together with their music. With *Frame & Canvas*, they reached a new apex.

In September of 2021, J. Robbins received a message from Inner Ear founder Don Zientara, letting him know that the studio was closing and scheduled to be demolished soon, and inviting him to stop by to see if there was anything there he wanted to salvage before the bulldozers started showing up. As Robbins was rummaging through the studio, he was surprised to find the original 2" tape reels *Frame & Canvas* was tracked to so many years earlier. Discovering these tapes got the ball rolling for ideas about the upcoming 25th anniversary of the record. Budget constraints severely limited the band's time in the studio back in December of 1997, but now Robbins was able to take his time crafting an entirely new mix from the excavated tapes. This

new mix is given the perfect finishing touch with fresh mastering from Dan Coutant at Sun Room Audio. These careful and detailed revisions bring a new clarity to the album without sacrificing any of the original spirit or intention.

For those already well-familiarized and imprinted with *Frame & Canvas*, this updated rendering offers a new way to hear an evergreen classic, and in doing so, perhaps find some new layers of meaning, new angles of remembering the people we were when these songs first became a part of our lives. For those lucky souls hearing the album for the first time, this is a perfect entry point to Braid's world of explosivity and self-searching. The renovated *Frame & Canvas* is the brightest articulation of a document that's been an inextricable force of influence and inspiration since it arrived 25 years ago.