

The Fray Album Reviews

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The Fray broke out in 2005 with their major label debut album, "How to Save a Life." They followed it up in 2009 with their self-titled album. This album showed major growth for the band, both lyrically and musically. This is a band with a lot of strengths that include song writing, musical diversity, and creativity. Lead singer Isaac Slade also showed fans what he was capable of vocally with his unmistakable falsetto. This CD allowed the band to exercise these strengths and come out with a cohesive and impressive sophomore record.

The album starts out on a positive note with the song, "Syndicate," which would later become a single. The song features the characteristic piano, along with drums and guitar. The beginning of the song is upbeat, but the music slows down as the lyrics begin. The music picks up again with the chorus where the beautiful background vocals really bring the song together. This is an encouraging song about relying on others. The lyrics "we are closer," are repeated frequently throughout the song.

Following Syndicate is the song, "Absolute," which is more on the rock side. It begins with the guitar and the drums kick in before the chorus. This song features some really interesting instrumentals and once again, the band shows their strength in background vocals. "Absolute" is repeated over and over and interspersed between the other lines in the chorus. The meaning is a bit ambiguous, but the chorus asks, "Is this all it takes to be absolute?" It's about a relationship that doesn't quite have the magic it's supposed to. "Quiet but I'm sure there is something here/Tell me everything cause I want to hear." They're waiting for something that never really comes.

The next track is probably the song The Fray is known best for. "You Found Me," was the first single off this album and went on to become extremely successful. The lyrics focus on a creative concept. It's really a question to God asking, "Where were you/when everything was falling apart?" It's a question many of us have wondered, but it has never been expressed quite this beautifully before. The second verse is sung louder and angrier, with Slade's voice gradually rising until the chorus. The angry tone reaches its full peak at the bridge where Slade shows off his powerful voice. The song takes a dramatic turn at the end when the tone changes from angry to sad and confused. The last words are, "Why'd you have to wait/To find me?"

Next comes two of the strongest tracks on the record, "Say When," and "Never Say Never." "Say When" begins slow and mysterious. The music and Slade's voice build toward the chorus. It's a comforting song about being in a relationship and letting that person know you're there for them. Slade sings, "Say When and my own two hands/ will comfort you tonight." The second half of the song is louder and faster. There is an instrumental break after the second verse, followed by a long bridge. The guitar comes in and the voice gets louder and louder until he's demanding, "Say When." Tone becomes very important in this song due to the different emotions involved.

"Never Say Never," is a somewhat sad, yet hopeful song. Everything attempts to tear these people apart and, at the end, they manage to stick it out and last. There is little music at the beginning of the chorus, allowing Slade to really showcase his voice. The chorus once again lets the listener see what Slade can do with the falsetto. The music video is also very unique and creative, featuring an Armageddon theme. The world is ending, destruction is all around, but these two people are together in the end. The repetition of the words, "don't let me go," make this a very emotional song.

"Where the Story Ends" is probably one of the most upbeat songs on the album. It begins with a mixture of drums and piano, giving the track a really good beat. The song starts out as mid-tempo, but picks up and reaches its climax with the chorus. The song focus on the pain caused by long distance relationships and how difficult they can be. Slade sings, "All we know is distance/we're close and then we run/kiss away the difference/I know you hate this one." This song has really great diction and the words flow well together to create a catchy song.

The album slows down with the next two songs, "Enough for Now," and "Ungodly Hour." "Enough for Now" is a sad song about family dynamics. It's about a dysfunctional father/daughter relationship and probably the saddest lines in the song are, "Sixty years of sorrow he got five or six of bliss/Left my mother's mother without so much as a kiss." This is a piano focused song that remains fairly slow, though it does speed up a bit at the end. The phrasing in the song is really great, and the live version is absolutely beautiful. This song has feelings of remorse, regret, and sympathy, which flows into the next track.

"Ungodly Hour" is the slowest song on the album. It starts out with a slow drum beat and has a jazzy feel. The instrumentals are a big part of the song, and it should be noted that the musicians in this band are very talented. The Fray is genius when it comes to mixing up beats and musically arranging their songs. Slade is an incredible vocalist and pianist, but the other guys in the band show how talented they are as well. This is a song about a relationship that isn't working out, and encompasses feelings of guilt, especially in the lines, "And I am short on words knowing what's occurred/She begins to leave because of me." The relationship is falling apart, yet he does nothing. In the chorus he sings the words, "I wish that I could carry her/but this is our ungodly hour." The chorus is very simple, but it's drawn out to show the emotion. There is a repetition of "Ungodly Hour," where Slade shows his vocal range and trademark falsetto.

"We Build Then We Break," is different from most of the other songs. There is an echo in the vocals, which makes the song stand out. This is probably the angriest song on the record. The song is basically a threat to a guy who has hurt a girl. The chorus says, "Cause I will be two steps behind/You will not know what's got you/Oh so you're sorry now/All is not well, it's not ended." The song shows a different side to the band. The chorus is very weird, but in a good way. It sounds like bells and includes even more of Slade's falsetto than the other songs. This was a risky song for this band because it is so different, but it works and adds diversity to the album. The music on this song is also very impressive. It includes more guitar and less piano, and features a drum solo. There are a lot of up and down vocals that make it seem like a difficult song to sing, but Slade pulls it off.

The album ends with the song, "Happiness" which isn't necessarily a happy song. Happiness is the topic of the song, but happiness can be a blessing and a curse. It's a very different view of happiness. The best lyrics in the song probably come in the second verse. "Happiness is a firecracker sitting on my headboard/Happiness was never mine to hold/Careful child, light the fuse and get away/Cause happiness throws a shower of sparks." Happiness can also cause sadness. If you constantly chase after it, happiness won't come. It can't be forced. The instrumentals on this song simpler, leaving the focus on the lyrics. This is a fairly mellow song, but does end with some nice glory notes.

With their second album, The Fray used their strengths to create a great sophomore record. Everything about this album was perfect, from the vocals to the music, to the lyrics. It all fit together and the format of the tracks flowed well. It would be impossible to name the best songs on the record because they were all incredible. It's clear that this band cares not only about creating great music, but also challenging themselves and growing as a band, and as individual artists. This CD allowed the band to tour the world, gaining even more success and establishing themselves as seriously talented musicians. They took risks and it paid off, showing the world that The Fray is a band to look out for.

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