**THE SPILL CANVAS – CONDUIT BIO**

In recent years, nostalgia shows have really taken off. Bands who haven’t made music for a while get back together and play some shows in celebration of whatever album of theirs is having an anniversary. It’s not a bad thing. Those gigs can be great, and reconnecting with the records that had an impact on you – or with the fans, if you’re an artist – is a wonderful feeling. For The Spill Canvas’ Nick Thomas, however, that wasn’t enough. The band had done 10 year anniversary tours for both 2005’s third album, *One Fell Swoop*, and 2007’s follow-up *No Really, I’m Fine* (which was released on Warner and reached the number 2 spot on Billboard’s Top Heatseekers chart), but they didn’t scratch the itch Thomas felt to actually make music – the band’s last full-length was 2012’s *Gestalt*, while Thomas’ 2014 solo album *Shadowars* was essentially just repurposed Spill Canvas songs. But now the band has returned with *Conduit*, its first full-length in almost a decade.
“It feels amazing,” says Thomas. “We’d seen all these bands doing resurgence nostalgia tours for 10, 15, even 20 year album anniversaries, but I wanted to know if any of them were still putting out new music, because writing has always been what I love most. I’ve been waiting for this new album for nine years.”

To be fair, the band dabbled with new music a few years before, releasing a three-song EP called *Hivemind* in 2018. But listening to these 10 songs it’s clear that *Conduit* is more than a new Spill Canvas album. Rather, it’s the start of a second phase for the band. Now completed by longtime bassist Landon Heil, drummer Bryce Job and lead guitarist Evan Pharmakis from Vanna/Wind In Sails, together they reached deep into Thomas’ heart and soul to create something that bristles with the earnest, emotional urgency that was always at the band’s core, but which also reflects who Thomas is now and everything that made him into that person. That includes his struggles with addiction, getting married, being diagnosed with schizoaffective disorder and the death of his mother. All those things flow through these songs, but rather than let them get the better of him, Thomas instead confronts them – and the many chaotic, conflicting feelings they induce in him – head on. As he sings on the intense, slow-burning near-rapture of “Cost”: *‘I revel in this turbulence/I love to hate myself.’*“That line is very much at the core of what the record is about,” chuckles Thomas, “because you kind of *do* revel in this turbulence. That’s what it feels like to have nine years’ worth of things to write about! Obviously, I don’t enjoy the pain, and I don’t *actually* love to hate myself. It’s very much tongue-in-cheek, but at the same time it captures everything that’s been going on – it speaks directly to my dual diagnosis of being a poly substance addict, to the schizoaffective disorder, to the severe imposter syndrome I feel and my really bad body and physical appearance dysmorphia. I mean, I just had so much to write about.”

Interestingly, despite all that inspiration to draw from, Thomas found himself questioning his ability to do so. “Blueprints”, for example, is a beautiful and poignant tribute to his late mother, but it also finds the singer wrestling with the idea that a song isn’t enough to capture his grief. ‘*This is a poor attempt at moving on*,*’* he sings with very audible resignation. The irony is that self-awareness – the admission that the song can’t do his mom justice – makes it all the more powerful. In fact, it ensures that it does do her memory justice. That kind of emotional gravitas permeates this record. “Akathisia” is named after a condition experienced by Thomas after switching medications for his schizoaffective disorder and serves as an apology to his wife for what she has to go through because of it, while “Gallon” details his frustration at how, because of his disorder, performing the simplest tasks can become incredibly difficult. *‘Cyclical, queasy / Nothing is easy / I hear myself / Convince myself to try,’* he sings over one of the album’s most gentle, tender melodies before admitting: ‘*Yet still, I kinda wanna die.’* It’s a remarkable moment of honesty, but one he doesn’t want to be misconstrued.
“Sometimes, these tiny, insignificant moments and things add up and incapacitate me,” he explains. “It’s ridiculous, because like I overcame a heroin addiction, so how am I that strong yet I still struggle with everyday things like trying to write an email while the dogs are barking at the mailman? But while I’m telling the truth when I sing that ‘I kind of want to die’, it’s not suicidal thoughts. I just want the onslaught of normal life to stop sometimes, to not exist for a moment. It’s a grey area that I’m trying to kind of bring a little humor to – which likely comes from my addiction treatment experience. I tend to embrace humor within darkness because it shines a spotlight on difficult subjects, which in turn gets it out in the open, where it can’t hold the same power over you.”

Yet there are also moments of pure joy on *Conduit.* Both the up-tempo, electro-tinged “Calendars” and the beautiful, ethereal “Molecules” – which features backing vocals from Eisley’s Sherri Dupree Bemis – were written for Thomas’ wife. They’re as much declarations of love as a way to thank her for being there for him through everything, and they serve as a perfect antidote to the turbulence and troubles that pervade the rest of the album. With the exception of the latter song – which came together remotely during the pandemic – *Conduit* was recorded at Soundmine Studios in the Pocono Mountains in Pennsylvania. Self-produced by the band with help from their manager John Rupp, it was mixed by Soundmine Studio owner Dan Malsch and then mastered by GRAMMY Award-winning mastering engineer Emily Lazar, who’s worked with Beck, the Foo Fighters, Coldplay, Haim and The Killers, to name a few.

The result is a collection of rich, full songs that, while still recognizable as The Spill Canvas, certainly highlight Thomas’ intention for this to be the start of something new. At its heart, though, the purpose of the band remains the same as it always was – to write songs that move people and to be able to connect with them.
“I hope our old fans enjoy it, while gaining an appreciation for our new direction,” says Thomas, ““but I also aim to gain new fans. During the height of our previous success, the music industry was wildly different from today, and *Conduit* is a way of proving to myself that we still have something viable that people can, and want to, connect with. I don’t seek to be some massive arena act, although that'd be rad, my hope is more so getting as many new ears to listen and resonate with it so that they’re like ‘I am now a fan of this band for life.’ That's the dream."