

FINDING FAVOUR

United by a distinct sense of purpose and bonded by passionate creative spirit, the members of Finding Favour have discovered music and friendship can be powerful tools for change. “We definitely love to share the message that God is walking with us,” says lead singer Blake NeeSmith. “We’re going to go through hard times. Bad things are going to happen. But God has a moving plan for us and we just have to know that we have to strive to move forward that His plan will unfold. We want to connect with people in a way that people would say, ‘All right, I’m not alone. God is with me.’ That’s what we want to do. That’s what our message is.”

On the heels of the band’s acclaimed debut self-titled EP, the momentum continues with their first full-length album titled *Reborn*. It’s a collection of potent anthems and insightful ballads that leave an imprint on the listener like a soul tattoo, colorfully enhancing the view of God’s mercy and grace.

Skillfully and enthusiastically sharing that message has garnered Finding Favour a devoted legion of fans, including Grammy winning and five time RIAA Gold Certified selling solo artist and record label president TobyMac, who signed the foursome to his label Gotee Records in 2012. The band, consisting of NeeSmith, bassist Dustin Daniels, guitarist Allen Dukes and drummer Josh Duckworth, can trace their roots to Vidalia, Georgia. One night NeeSmith and Dukes were performing at a local hang out when they noticed an enthusiastic audience member who was really getting into the band’s music. “This guy was in front of the stage jumping up and down,” NeeSmith recalls. “After the show, he came up and said, ‘That was awesome man! My name’s Dustin. I’m up from South America. I just moved here.’ After that we got to hang out with him a little bit.”

The members of Finding Favour draw on a diverse array of musical influences that have helped shape the group’s sound. “I listen to all kinds of music and many different things move me,” NeeSmith says. “Anything that moves me, anything that I can feel in my bones, that’s what I listen to. Honestly, our whole team’s like that. We’re not just like, ‘Well, we only like this kind of music,’ or ‘We’re only inspired by this type of music.’ I remember listening to an R&B group called K-Ci & JoJo. I love listening to Jason Crabb and Third Day. I’ve always been more inspired by great songs, no matter what the genre of music.”

Growing up in South America, Daniels was influenced by Latin sounds and was also an avid fan of dcTalk. Then after moving to Georgia, he admits there was a little musical culture shock. “Everything was country music! I’m like, ‘What is this music? I like that too.’ In our band there are so many influences. We’ve got country, rock ‘n roll and R&B. We all grew up with all genres of music that we definitely apply to what we do today.”

Produced by Casey Brown (Love & the Outcome, Building 429, Blanca), *Reborn* is a compelling collection of well-written songs, performed with unbridled strength and conviction. “We have songs with a country flavor like “Tiny Town” and “Feels Like the First Time,” and then we have songs like ‘Refuge’ that really reach out to a younger crowd,” says Daniels. “We feel like there’s a great message in this album and it’s going to touch a lot of people. We share a message of hope to people who struggle, people who grew up feeling not worthy, not pretty or not loved. These songs tell them we have a savior who has taught us we are worthy of love, mercy and salvation.”

NeeSmith’s lead vocals have a buoyant passion that draws the listeners into the lyrics as the music washes over them like a sea of encouragement. The lead single, “Cast My Cares,” acknowledges the challenges in life, but reminds us of God’s grace and sovereignty. “We wanted to connect with people in a way that people would say, ‘I’m not alone. God is with me.’ It speaks louder than the music,” NeeSmith says. “That’s what we want to say. That’s what our message is. He holds our future.”

NeeSmith says the message of the song resonates strongly with him. “To be honest, this hits my life right now,” he sighs. “It’s been weighing on my shoulders for the last two years. My wife and I just had our first child, a girl named Harper. The unknown haunts me every day, like where will I be next year? Will I provide for my family? I tell you right now that’s no way to live. God has a purpose and a plan, but so often we try to do things our own way. We have the best of intentions, but we need to trust Him with our lives.”

One of the things that makes *Reborn* such a powerful album is that the songs are so very personal to the band, yet the concerns, prayers and emotions they share are universal to us all. “Be Like You” is a poignant ballad that will touch the heart of every parent. “I actually wrote that song for my little girl,” NeeSmith says. “I was scared to death. There’s a lot of things I messed up in my life. There are a lot of mistakes and I said, ‘This is not going to be one of those things.’ This song is a prayer for me that I can sing every night.”

“After people listen to this album, I want people to feel like they serve an Almighty God that can heal, that can love, that can give them everything that they desire in that moment,” NeeSmith says. “I want them to go on the rollercoaster ride of their life and just really experience God in an incredible way.”

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