

Findlay Brown bio

Findlay Brown gives the singer-songwriter back the edge that made the likes of Bob Dylan and Paul Simon more than just bardy entertainers. His ambitious music is intimate, bare, and sensitive. Vitally it's also courageous, triumphant, challenging and otherworldly. Emotionally-driven, psychedelic, spiked with wit, blessed with a cidery traditionalism and foiled with subtle, yet contrastingly modern, production from Simian's Simon Lord, Findlay's work is truly a blend of acoustic pop and 'alternative folk'.

Findlay describes his style as "more influenced by sixties music in turn influenced by folk". Crosby, Stills and Nash, The Band, and cult auteur Jackson C Frank (whose autonomous album was produced by Paul Simon) are his own points of reference. As a DJ he plays psychedelic and krautrock records at clubs and parties on London's underground.

Growing up in a very small village outside of York, the plan was to join the army and as a child he even took part in Gypsy bare-knuckle boxing contests. One of his friends' dad was a blacksmith who did a lot of work for the local gypsies and fought with them as well, so they'd put the kids in the ring too.

It was around that time Findlay started getting into music. He went around to someone's house and they were playing Electric Ladyland by Jimi Hendrix. That was a kick in the head – he didn't even know it was a guitar making those noises. He and his pals went from "having a few Pet Shop Boys singles to listening to Iron Butterfly, Love, Spirit, Family, Kaleidoscope... really trippy bands alongside lots of krautrock".

Findlay decided at this time to give singing a go and learn to play the guitar. His granddad, a successful chef who'd lived through Swinging London, had bequeathed him a set of the Beatles' autographs. He sold them to buy guitars. His first guitar was a Gibson 335 with a Fender Twin, copying John Lennon's set-up.

He then made the move to London and did stints in various experimental bands but soon realised that he could write a 'Blackbird'-type song in a day, whereas a ripping upbeat Stooges number would take him a month. So he thought he'd play to his strengths and do something really personal from the forefront of his mind. Inspiration for his debut solo record came from a tempestuous relationship with his long-term Danish girlfriend Marie. He started writing songs to finally win her back after distance had rendered them apart, and he dispatched the songs to Denmark in CD cases packed with dried flowers. Marie has been Findlay's muse ever since.

Whilst many songs on the LP do examine Findlay and Marie's relationship, impetus also comes from other complex factors such as male pride, Findlay's love/hate relationship with his rural upbringing, and other aspects of his childhood. In an age where vapid sentimental balladeers and robotic manufactured pop represent two overwhelmingly prevalent but distinctly unappealing extremes, Findlay Brown is a defiantly unorthodox presence.