

MIKE RUDD'S 1ST BASE

#1

It was in 2009 at the Mt Beauty Music Muster that Spectrum's Mike Rudd was in a bar having a chat with accordion-*meister* George Butrumlis, when George casually mentioned that one day he'd like to have a crack at some of Mike's songs.

At that stage Mike wasn't considering an outfit with piano accordion, but he kept it in the back of his mind for future reference. The possibility of putting together an acoustic-style band gained momentum after his long-term musical companion and co-founder of Spectrum, bassist Bill Putt, died suddenly in 2013.

Finally, mid-way through 2016, Mike decided the moment had arrived. As well as being partial to piano-accordion, Mike's always favoured the sound of a double bass - and then he remembered running into ace bassist Jeremy Alsop when Jeremy was working on a project with harpist/singer Mary Doumany. Although Jeremy's reputation is principally as a jazz-fusion bassist, (he was co-founder of the fusion band Pyramid), Mike gritted his teeth and put the proposition anyway – and, to his delight, Jeremy readily agreed to be involved.

Ist BASE's repertoire is drawn from the occasionally confronting, often witty, but never less than intriguing catalogue of songs penned by Mike Rudd (and his alter-ego My Crudd) from the early '70s to the present day. There are the singles of course, like the most famous of all Rudd's songs, *I'll Be Gone (Someday I'll have money)*, followed by Murtceps' *Esmeralda* and Ariel's *Jamaican Farewell*, but most of the material is drawn from the albums, such as *Spectrum Part One* and *Milesago*, Spectrum's alter-ego band The Indelible Murtceps' *Warts Up Your Nose*, Ariel's *A Strange Fantastic Dream* and *Rock & Roll Scars*.

There are even newer songs too, and now Mike has a new palette to play with in 1st BASE, perhaps we can anticipate new era of Rudd-songs to emerge. In the meantime you can enjoy watching and listening to Mike Rudd's evolution from a well-established rock artist to singer/songwriter/raconteur playing an accessible version of his inimitable *oeuvre* with a couple of the best musicians around.

MIKE RUDD'S 1ST BASE

#2

Mike Rudd's 1st BASE sees piano accordionist George Butrumlis (Black Sorrows, Zydeco Jump, The Purple Dentists and Raga Dolls) and bassist Jeremy Alsop (Ron Charles Band, Allan Zavod, The David Chesworth Ensemble) joining Spectrum's main man, Mike Rudd, in an acoustic-skewed reappraisal of his previously all-electric output.

Mike Rudd is best known for writing Spectrum's 1971 national number one hit single, *I'll Be Gone*, (Someday I'll have money), but he also wrote the majority of the material in the subsequent 20th century albums produced by Spectrum, *The Indelible Murtceps*, *Ariel*, *Mike Rudd & the Heaters* and *WHY*, which amounts to a considerable legacy.

More recently there have been other projects, including the Mike Rudd & Bill Putt's *Living on a Volcano* CD and the *Breathing Space* series of EPs that saw the re-adoption of the grand old Spectrum monicker bringing us to the present day.

For 1st BASE, Mike has chosen songs from his solo repertoire that respond to being stripped back and reworked and that have a story to tell. Of course, Rudd is inclined to make a fascinating commentary about the songs he's playing and the bands that originally played them, so there are stories all round.

Butrumlis' lyrical piano accordion in place of Spectrum's Hammond organ is not as implausible as it sounds, and Jeremy's double bass lines are all about restraint and intelligence, and so you can easily imagine the pair's instrumental combination with Rudd's nylon-string guitar, blues harp and even recorder playing, is sublime.

George (and occasionally Jeremy's) vocal harmonies are a bonus and serve to sweeten Rudd's idiosyncratic vocal style. Rudd's lyrics are, perhaps for the first time in a band context anyway, clear and understandable, giving even more impact to some of his famously audacious themes.