

Tony Pedroza & The King Brothers

In 1997 when veteran Sydney blues band the Foreday Riders staged a huge 30th anniversary party at the city's premier music venue The Basement, one of the best-received performers at the night was Tony 'Pedro' Pedroza, who had fronted the band on guitar and vocals from the late 70s to the mid-80s. Like many former front men of the band, Tony had moved on to lead his own outfits, also working with other Sydney blues and R & B bands, but showed at the basement that his special touch with the Riders was very much intact.

Tony has now linked up again with original Riders Ron and Jeff King, on harmonica and guitar respectively, to work as a trio, a format that the King brothers have utilized as an adjunct to the band since the early 90s (previous trio members have been Phil Colson, Damon Davies, Wayne Jury and current Riders front man Ray Beadle). Up to now the trio has been acoustic, but in this case Tony is using electric guitar as a contrast to Jeff on acoustic guitar and Dobro, creating an interesting and dynamic combination which gives the trio a tougher, more flexible and urban sound.

Tony Pedroza, well remembered by Riders followers for his time with the band, has been a professional musician since working as a backing guitarist for international acts on England's club and university circuit during the highly competitive years of the British blues boom in the 60s. While not styling himself on any particular player, he kept his ears open during that exciting era, absorbing the musical approaches of the big names of the day, such as Eric Clapton, Peter Green and Alvin Lee; he was also partial to the U.S. blues greats, as well as the 50s rock'n'roll icons like Little Richard, Fats Domino and Elvis Presley. By the time he arrived in Australia in 1974, all of these influences had been drawn together in a style which was a pleasant surprise to the Riders when they came across 'Pedro' in the late 70s. He was on hand at that time when the Rider's were in need of a front man, and after an impressive debut, continued to gig solidly with the band for the next half-decade.

The trio has drawn on Tony's repertoire with the Riders from that period, necessarily stripping many songs down to a more 'back porch' style, also adding recent material from both Tony and the Riders. There's also a batch of completely new tunes.

The 'no passengers' requirement of the trio format has meant re-thinking much of the repertoire, and has called for a fresh approach to even very familiar material. So with the musical format keeping the players on their toes, and life on stage with Pedro always being full of surprises, anyone attending a show by this trio can bank on getting as much fun out of it as the performers.



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