

A Fireside Chat with ZZ Top...



Known around the world as "that little ol' band from Texas", ZZ Top is one of the most successful and long-lived rock and roll bands in music history. For over thirteen years, the group — with a line-up unchanged since their formation in 1969 — has recorded a string of top selling LPs, including *Tres Hombres*, *Fandango* and *Tejas*, plus the smash singles, "La Grange" and "Tush". Meanwhile, their electrifying live show has attained legendary status with international audiences.

ZZ Top — guitarist Billy Gibbons, bassist Dusty Hill and drummer Frank Beard — was formed from two seminal Texas groups: Houston's Moving Sidewalks, featuring Billy Gibbons, and the Dallas-based American Blues, which included Dusty Hill and Frank Beard. As ZZ Top, the trio played the Houston area, garnering a fervent local following before releasing their first two

LP's, *ZZ Top's First Album* and *Rio Grande Mud*, on London Records in the early Seventies. They were followed by such million-sellers as *Tres Hombres* (featuring the group's first hit, "La Grange") and *Fandango* (home of "Tush"). *Tejas*, released in 1976, spawned both the hit single, "Arrested For Driving While Blind", and one of the most spectacular live rock and roll shows ever mounted. The worldwide road show featured a stage set with longhorn steers, buzzards, buffalos and rattlesnakes. It played, predictably, to capacity crowds in cities around the globe.

After eight years, three platinum albums and a concert tour that left four continents shaking, ZZ Top suddenly dropped out of sight. In 1977, the group stopped touring and nothing was heard from the threesome until 1978 when it was announced they had signed an exclusive contract with Warner Bros. Records, bringing their entire London catalogue with them to Burbank.

Their two subsequent LP's, *Deguello* and *El Loco*, quickly joined the band's precious

metal catalogue and follow-up tours re-established them as a major concert attraction.

On the eve of the release of their current Warner Bros. album, *Eliminator*, the group took time to pause and reflect around a cheery fire in their Houston headquarters. The occasion was the band's 13th anniversary.

First of all, are those Dura-Flame logs you're burning there?

BILLY GIBBONS: Yeah, we like the colours. Let's put another one on the fire.

A lot of us who've seen ZZ in concert over the years are still amazed that you can get a whole stadium's worth of sound out of just three pieces. How do you explain that?

FRANK BEARD: We use Red Kryptonite.

DUSTY HILL: At last it can be told.

When you first got started and were playing in smaller venues was the intensity the same as it is today?

BILLY: Maybe more so. We play hard ... as hard as we can and we play the same way in

smaller rooms. I guess you could call it concentrated.

FRANK: More Red Kryptonite.

Was the recording of this album any different from your two previous efforts?

DUSTY: We've kind of gotten back to a *Tres Hombres* kind of sound. After we took our big break we were happy to be back together, so we started trying to make some different kinds of music. We'd all been in different places around the world, so it came as kind of a strange mix. On *El Loco*, we even did a couple of softer things but, with this one, we decided we wanted to play some of our original style rock and roll. Going directly into the studio after our last tour, it was easy getting back into the feeling we had on *Tres Hombres*, which was also the result of a lot of hard road work.

Where was this album recorded?

FRANK: Mostly in Memphis, you know, down around Beale Street, where they sing the blues.

BILLY: The only blues left on Beale Street are

Listed below are 28 TOPNEWZ terms associated with the boys in beards. Look carefully into the diagram to find each one.

In 28 words or less, complete the sentence "ZZ TOP look best in beards because ..."

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Send completed entries in with your name and address to:

ZZ Top Competition Name
 WEA Records
 PO Box 2915 Address
 Auckland.

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|----------------------------|----------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Francine | 11. ZZ Top | 21. Dust My Broom |
| 2. Blue Jean Blues | 12. Beard | 22. Pearl Necklace |
| 3. Mexican Black Bird | 13. Gibbons | 23. Fandango |
| 4. Jesus just left Chicago | 14. Eliminator | 24. First Album |
| 5. Waiting for the Bus | 15. Tejas | 25. Brown Sugar |
| 6. Lone Wolf Productions | 16. Dusty | 26. Hill |
| 7. Shard Dressed Man | 17. Tush | 27. Houston |
| 8. Gimme all your lovin | 18. Texas | 28. Arrested For Driving while blind. |
| 9. Heaven Hell or Houston | 19. Billy | |
| 10. Rio Grand Mud | 20. Frank | |

ZZ Top Word Search Quiz

Z	Z	T	C	O	Q	T	Z	I	R	K	H	E	A	V	E	N	H	E	L	L	O	R	H	O	U	S	T	O	N	C	T	R	P		
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Great Prizes to be Won!