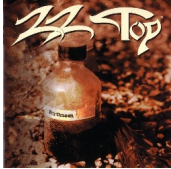


ZZ Top – Rhythmeen (1996)

Written by bluesever

Friday, 07 October 2011 08:37 - Last Updated Thursday, 25 July 2013 16:10

ZZ Top – Rhythmeen (1996)



1. "Rhythmeen" (Billy Gibbons) 3:53 2. "Bang Bang" (Gibbons) 4:28 3. "Black Fly" (Gibbons) 3:31 [play](#) 4. "What's Up with That" (Gibbons, Joe Hardy, Ingram, Rice) 5:19 5. "Vincent Price Blues" (Gibbons, Dusty Hill, Frank Beard) 6:04 6. "Zipper Job" (Gibbons, Hill, Beard) 4:14 7. "Hairdresser" (Gibbons, Hardy) 3:48 [play](#) 8. "She's Just Killing Me" (Gibbons, Hill, Beard) 4:55 9. "My Mind Is Gone" (Gibbons, Hardy, Gary Moon, Wonder) 4:06 10. "Loaded" (Gibbons, Hardy) 3:47 11. "Pretty Head" (Gibbons, Hill, Beard) 4:37 12. "Hummbucking, Pt. 2" (Gibbons, Hill, Beard) 5:13
Musicians: Billy Gibbons – guitar, vocals Dusty Hill – bass, keyboards, vocals Frank Beard – drums, percussion

ZZ Top's long-awaited return to the blues finally arrived in 1996, well over a decade after they abandoned their simple three-chord boogie for a synth and drum machine-driven three-chord boogie. Like Antenna before it, Rhythmeen is stripped of all the synthesizers that had characterized the group's albums since Eliminator but the key difference between the two albums is how Rhythmeen goes for the gut, not the gloss. It's a record that is steeped in the blues and garage rock, one that pounds out its riffs with sweat and feeling. Though ZZ Top sounds reinvigorated, playing with a salacious abandon they haven't displayed since the '70s, they simply haven't come up with enough interesting songs and riffs to make it a true return to form. For dedicated fans, it's a welcome return to their classic "La Grange" sound, but anyone with a just a passing interest in the band will wonder where the hooks went. --- Stephen Thomas Erlewine, allmusic.com

This sturdy American blues-rock trio from Texas consists of Billy Gibbons (guitar), Dusty Hill (bass), and Frank Beard (drums). They were formed in 1970 in and around Houston from rival

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bands the Moving Sidewalks (Gibbons) and American Blues (Hill and Beard). Their first two albums reflected the strong blues roots and Texas humor of the band. Their third album (Tres Hombres) gained them national attention with the hit "La Grange," a signature riff tune to this day, based on John Lee Hooker's "Boogie Chillen." Their success continued unabated throughout the '70s, culminating with the year-and-a-half-long Worldwide Texas Tour.

Exhausted from the overwhelming workload, they took a three-year break, then switched labels and returned to form with Deguello and El Loco, both harbingers of what was to come. By their next album, Eliminator, and its worldwide smash follow-up, Afterburner, they had successfully harnessed the potential of synthesizers to their patented grungy blues groove, giving their material a more contemporary edge while retaining their patented Texas style. Now sporting long beards, golf hats, and boiler suits, they met the emerging video age head-on, reducing their "message" to simple iconography. Becoming even more popular in the long run, they moved with the times while simultaneously bucking every trend that crossed their path. As genuine roots musicians, they have few peers; Gibbons is one of America's finest blues guitarists working in the arena rock idiom -- both influenced by the originators of the form and British blues-rock guitarists like Peter Green -- while Hill and Beard provide the ultimate rhythm section support.

The only rock & roll group that's out there with its original members still aboard after three decades (an anniversary celebrated on 1999's XXX), ZZ Top play music that is always instantly recognizable, eminently powerful, profoundly soulful, and 100-percent American in derivation. They have continued to support the blues through various means, perhaps most visibly when they were given a piece of wood from Muddy Waters' shack in Clarksdale, MS. The group members had it made into a guitar, dubbed the "Muddywood," then sent it out on tour to raise money for the Delta Blues Museum. ZZ Top's support and link to the blues remains as rock solid as the music they play. A concert CD and DVD, Live from Texas, recorded in Dallas in 2007 and featuring a still vital band, were both released in 2008. --- Cub Koda, Rovi

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