

Dusty Hill (1949-2021)

Dusty Hill, bass player with one of the greatest of American rock bands, has died aged 72 at his Texas home. Hill and the other members of power trio ZZ Top can be seen in this photograph from thirteen years ago.



They are lead guitarist Billy Gibbons and drummer Frank Beard. Gibbons is in the middle; it was a standing joke that Frank Beard was the one without the beard.

Joseph Michael Hill was born at Dallas on May 19, 1949; his elder brother Rocky, who died in 2009, was also a musician. Hill first “sang for money” at the age of eight with Rocky. Although like most musicians he had played in other bands during his youth, he spent his entire professional career with ZZ Top along with Gibbons and Beard. While principally a bass player on stage, Hill also played keyboards and contributed occasional vocals. While Gibbons was initially the principal songwriter, he also co-wrote with Hill, and increasingly the trio produced group compositions.

Their first real taste of success came in 1972 when they opened for the Rolling Stones in Honolulu, and later that same year with their million seller third album *Tres Hombres* which included the blues number *Jesus Just Left Chicago*, the uptempo *Beer Drinkers & Hell Raisers* - on which he and Gibbons shared the vocals, and *La Grange*, a song about a notorious

“house” that became kind of notorious in its own way. You can read about that [here](#).

It wasn't until 1983 though that the band really broke through with their massive *Eliminator* album which went quadruple platinum in both Australia and the UK as well as diamond in the US.

Away from music, in 2000, Hill was diagnosed with Hepatitis C which led to the band cancelling their European tour. In 2002, he married long time girlfriend Charlene McCrory with Frank Beard as his best man. Hill had a daughter, Charity, from a previous relationship. His death [was announced](#) by the surviving band members; they were currently on tour. No funeral details have yet been announced.

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