

## Boomertown

A blog about Houston boomers and the people and issues that make them tick

### Moving Sidewalks bring reunion show back home

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Moving Sidewalks in New York: Dan Mitchell, Don Summers, Billy Gibbons and Tom Moore. (Photo by Robert Caplin, New York Times)

Saturday night when the [Moving Sidewalks](#) take the stage at the Bayou Music Center, it will be a moment for which many Houstonians who grew up in the '60s have waited a long time. In fact, it will have been 44 years, 2 months and 24 days since the Sidewalks last played in their hometown.

The Sidewalks — guitarist [Billy Gibbons](#), organist Tom Moore, bassist Don Summers and drummer Dan Mitchell — are headlining the 12th annual [Deacons of Deadwood](#) charity ball Saturday, Sept 28, with Houston's [Fab 5](#) opening for them. The show, with tickets priced at \$225, is sold out.

The Sidewalks, a little older and a little funkier than they were when they last played on July 4, 1969, staged their reunion show at [B.B. King's Blues Club and Grill](#) in New York back in March. The show celebrated the release of their compilation album, [The Complete Collection](#), which was released late last year on Rock Beat Records. The reunion was a big enough event on the national scale that it drew reviews in the [New York Times](#) and [Rolling Stone](#).

The reunion show was a long time coming. The idea was born five or six years ago when the Sidewalks gathered in Austin to sign a photo of them taken with [Jimi Hendrix](#). Mitchell said the first thing Gibbons said when they walked into the dressing room that afternoon was, "What do you think about putting the band back together?" Mitchell said: "Yeah, let's go for it."

"And then we never heard anything more about it from him," Mitchell added.

"The real catalyst was when the reissue of the old album came out. It started attracting attention from people all over the United States," Mitchell said. "Of course the first thing they wanted to know was 'when are you going to play?'"

It was difficult to find a hole in Gibbons' schedule to prepare for and do a show, Mitchell said. Gibbons wanted a

month to rehearse since the band had not played together for so long. After six to eight months of back and forth between Mitchell and Cavestomp! promoter Jon Weiss, the Sidewalks booked their first gig since 1969.

The reception was amazing, Mitchell said. When they got off the plane in New York, there were people waiting to get their autographs. "When we got to BB King's that afternoon for the sound check there were people lined up outside," he said. "It was sold out."

A lot of people from Houston went up for the show, Mitchell said, adding, "We had people from all over that came to see us. It was really, really neat."

A month later, they took the stage again — at the Austin Psyche Festival.

One of Texas top psychedelic bands in the late '60s, the Moving Sidewalks are pretty rare in that they broke up without animosity. In 1969, the U.S. Army took a toll on the band, taking Moore first, then Summers. Gibbons and Mitchell, along with keyboardist Lanier Greig formed ZZ Top later that year. (Greig died earlier this year in Austin.)

Along with current members Dusty Hill and Frank Beard, Gibbons has ridden Top to international stardom.

"We never really weren't friends," Mitchell said. " We just didn't see each other very often. Tom and I stayed close the whole time, pretty much. Don lived in a different city (in the Dallas area). And Billy was on the road all the time so we didn't talk to him much. ... He'd invite us to shows every once in a while."

Now, the Sidewalks are in the middle of a new album — their first since the release of "Flash" in 1969. They have seven songs ready — "actually 7½," Mitchell said. The band has had two sessions at Gibbons' Foam Box Recordings studio, Mitchell said, and "really accomplished a lot in that short period." With Gibbons back on the road for three months, the album is on hold for now. "The next break he gets, I think we're going to concentrate on that," Mitchell said.

Mitchell said the Deacons of Deadwood show won't be the last, but nothing is solid for now. "There are offers on the table, but we haven't confirmed any of them," he said. "They want us to do all kinds of stuff. There's talk about us going on the Hendrix Experience Tour. People are offering all kinds of things: cruises and all kinds of weird things."

Here are a couple of videos from the Cavestomp! show at B.B. Kings': [On the Green](#). [Red House](#).

Looking back: Here are two stories I did five years ago on the Sidewalks: "[Concert was a blast](#)" and "[Sidewalks go AWOL](#)."

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(Courtesy of the Moving Sidewalks)