

Willie Nelson – Bio

Willie Hugh Nelson was born in Abbott, Texas on April 30th 1933. The youngster was given his first guitar, a Stella, at the age of six. After his parent's divorced Willie and his older sister Bobbie Lee were raised by their paternal grandparents who encouraged the interest the siblings showed in music. Growing up with a deep affection for country and western swing music, Nelson first penned songs at the age of seven. Aged ten Willie became a part-time member of John Raycjeck's Bohemian Polka Band. In 1952 Willie joined the US Air Force and spent some time in Korea, but a recurring back problem curtailed his service career. Returning to Texas Nelson enrolled at Baylor University in Waco where he studied agriculture and business. The following year he began performing in Texas bars and clubs. By 1955 based out of Vancouver, Washington State he hosted a radio show that regularly included a 30 minute live set by Nelson and his band. Nelson made his first recording "No Place For Me"/"Lumberjack" in Portland, Oregon and sold 3000 copies via his radio show and gigs.

In 1958 Nelson returned to Houston, Texas and continued his career as a dj. Two years later Nelson and his family relocated to Nashville and Willie began hanging out at the famous Tootsie's Orchid Lounge with fellow writers Kris Kristofferson, Mel Tillis and Roger Miller. Hank Cochran helped Willie gain a song publishing deal with Pamper Music and Patsy Cline went on to score a Country # 1 single and a Pop # 9 with Nelson's "Crazy." In 1963 Liberty Records released Nelson's debut album **"...And Then I Wrote."** On November 28th 1964 Nelson made his debut at the Grand Old Opry opening for Roger Miller. When Liberty closed down their Country office Nelson's subsequent solo albums, up to 1975, were released by Monument, RCA and Atlantic. When his Nashville home burned to the ground on December 23rd 1970, Willie heeded the omen and moved his family back to Texas.

Nelson held his first "Fourth of July Picnic" in 1972 at Dripping Springs, just west of Austin. They continued, annually, until 1980, and have been revived, from time to time since then, at different venues throughout the state. Between 1963 and 1975, Nelson's albums and singles charted regularly, but in lowly positions. That said Nelson was acknowledged as a hit writer, for other acts, and in 1973 he was inducted into the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame. Two years later Nelson signed a world-wide record deal with CBS Records and his first release, **"Red Headed Stranger,"** was a concept album. It reached # 1 on the Country charts and spawned a string of hit singles. Thus began a fourteen-year run during which Nelson entered the Country charts with at least one new album [and countless singles] each year, in the process scoring numerous Country Music Industry awards and Grammys.

In 1978 Nelson began a duo recording partnership with the late Waylon Jennings that saw them make a number of albums together. Two years later Willie starred in the Robert Redford/Jane Fonda movie **"The Electric Horseman"** and in the ensuing decades he has appeared in a number of other movies, some made for television. Generally they have had a musically themed story line. In 1985 Nelson and Jennings were joined by Johnny Cash and Kris Kristofferson, and the superstar quartet took the name The Highwaymen. Their debut recording, the first of a trio the quartet made, became an award winning Country chart # 1 album. Earlier that year, in association with John Cougar Mellencamp, Nelson helped organise the first of an almost annual series of Farm Aid concerts, to assist small farmers in the States. Apart from his work with Jennings, Nelson went on to make duo albums with guitarist Jackie King, Ray Price, Leon Russell, Roger Miller and many others.

On November 9th 1990, the US Internal Revenue Service seized Nelson's bank accounts and property in settlement of a \$16.70M tax debt. A few months earlier Billboard magazine had voted Nelson's version of "Always On My Mind" as the Country Single of the Eighties. One day you're at the top, the next you have to start over again. The tax bill was finally settled at \$9.00M in 1992. In October 1993 Nelson was elected to the Country Music Hall Of Fame. After nearly two decades, the following year, Willie's association with CBS ended and since then he has recorded for a number of labels including, ironically, Liberty, as well as Justice, Island and Lost Highway. CBS issued a 3 CD career retrospective in 1995, **"Revolutions Of Time.....The Journey 1975 –1993."** A couple of years earlier Rhino Records issued **"The Classic, Unreleased Collection"** a 3 CD set that contained rare and unreleased material.

"Across The Borderline" produced by Don Was, featured Bob Dylan, Bonnie Raitt, Paul Simon, Sinéad O'Connor David Crosby and Kris Kristofferson. Following his debacle with the IRS, the album received strong reviews and became a Country chart hit. It also became Nelson's first solo album to appear in the Pop charts since 1985. Nelson continued to tour, almost relentlessly, as well as record at least one album per year through the close of the twentieth century, and into the new millennium. Produced by Willie and Kimmie Rhodes, and

engineered by Joe Gracey, the pair cut a ten-song duet album titled **“Picture In A Frame”** and it was released in the Spring of 2003.

Selective Discography : **“...And Then I Wrote”** [1963] ; **“Here’s Willie Nelson”** [1965] ; **“Country Willie : His Own Songs”** [1966] ; **“Country Favourites, Willie Nelson Style”** [1966] ; **“Live Country Music Concert”** [1967] ; **“Make Way For Willie Nelson”** [1967] ; **“The Party’s Over”** [1968] ; **“Texas In My Soul”** [1968] ; **“Good Times”** [1969] ; **“My Own Peculiar Way”** [1970] ; **“Both Sides Now”** [1970] ; **“Laying My Burdens Down”** [1971] ; **“Yesterday’s Wine”** [1971] ; **“Willie Nelson & Family”** [1972] ; **“The Willie Way”** [1972] ; **“The Words Don’t Fit The Picture”** [1973] ; **“Shotgun Willie”** [1974] ; **“Phases & Stages”** [1974] ; **“Red Headed Stranger”** [1975] ; **“Willie Nelson Live”** [1976] ; **“The Sound In Your Mind”** [1976] ; **“The Troublemaker”** [1976] ; **“To Lefty From Willie”** [1978] ; **“Waylon & Willie”** with Waylon Jennings [1978] ; **“Stardust”** [1978] ; **“Face Of A Fighter”** [1978] ; **“Willie And Family Live”** [1979] ; **“Electric Horseman”** Ost. [1979] ; **“Sings Kris Kristofferson”** [1979] ; **“One For The Road”** with Leon Russell [1979] ; **“Pretty Paper”** [1980] ; **“San Antonio Rose”** with Ray Price [1980] ; **“Honeysuckle Rose”** Ost. [1980] ; **“Blue Skies”** CBS compilation [1981] ; **“Greatest Hits (And Some That Will Be)”** CBS compilation [1981] ; **“Somewhere Over The Rainbow”** [1981] ; **“The Winning Hand”** with Brenda Lee, Dolly Parton & Kris Kristofferson [1982] ; **“WWII”** with Waylon Jennings [1982] ; **“Poncho & Lefty”** with Merle Haggard [1982] ; **“In The Jailhouse Now”** [1982] ; **“Old Friends”** with Roger Miller [1982] ; **“Always On My Mind”** [1982] ; **“Tougher Than Leather”** [1983] ; **“Without A Song”** [1983] ; **“Take It To The Limit”** with Waylon Jennings [1983] ; **“Portrait In Music”** [1984] ; **“Angel Eyes”** with Jackie King [1984] ; **“City Of New Orleans”** [1984] ; **“Songwriter”** Ost. with Kris Kristofferson [1984] ; **“Highwaymen”** with Cash, Jennings & Kristofferson [1985] ; **“Me And Paul”** [1985] ; **“Half Nelson”** duets with various artists [1985] ; **“Brand On My Heart”** [1986] ; **“Partners”** [1986] ; **“The Promiseland”** [1986] ; **“Island In The Sea”** [1987] ; **“Seashores Of Old Mexico”** with Merle Haggard [1987] ; **“What A Wonderful World”** [1989] ; **“A Horse Called Music”** [1989] ; **“Highwaymen II”** The Highwaymen [1990] ; **“Born For Trouble”** [1992] ; **“The IRS Tapes : Who’ll Buy My Memories....”** [1992] ; **“Moonlight Becomes You”** [1993] ; **“Across The Borderline”** [1993] ; **“Six Hours At Pedernales”** with Curtis Potter [1994] ; **“Christmas With Willie Nelson”** [1994] ; **“Healing Hands Of Time”** [1995] ; **“The Road Goes On Forever”** The Highwaymen [1995] ; **“Just One Love”** [1995] ; **“Pancho, Lefty And Rudolph”** [1996] ; **“Spirit”** [1996] ; **“How Great Thou Art”** [1997] ; **“Hill Country Christmas”** [1997] ; **“Storytellers”** with Johnny Cash [1998] ; **“Teatro”** [1998] ; **“Me And The Drummer”** [1998] ; **“Night & Day”** [1999] ; **“Memories of Hank Williams Sr.”** [2000] ; **“Clean Shirt”** with Waylon Jennings [2000] ; **“Milk Cow Blues”** [2000] ; **“Rainbow Connection”** [2001] ; **“The Great Divide”** [2002] ; **“Stars & Guitars”** [2002] ; **“Crazy : The Demo Sessions”** [2003] ; **“Picture In A Frame”** with Kimmie Rhodes [2003] :

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