



Freddy Fender



This is an **old revision** of this page, as edited by [2605:e000:9143:7000:3832:5234:5ba4:7db6 \(talk\)](#) at 19:15, 5 December 2017 (*radio = broadcast/performance; tv = appearance/broadcast*). The present address (URL) is a **permanent link** to this revision, which may differ significantly from the **current revision**.

Freddy Fender (born **Baldemar Garza Huerta**; June 4, 1937 – October 14, 2006) was an American Tejano, country and rock and roll musician, known for his work as a solo artist and in the groups Los Super Seven and the Texas Tornados. He is best known for his 1975 hits "Before the Next Teardrop Falls" and the subsequent remake of his own "Wasted Days and Wasted Nights".

Early years

Fender was born in San Benito, Texas, United States to Margarita (Garza) Huerta and her Mexican immigrant husband Serapio Huerta. He made his debut radio performance at age 10 on Harlingen's radio station KGBT, singing a then-hit, "Paloma Querida".^[1]

Fender dropped out of high school at age 16 in 1953, and when he turned 17, he enlisted for three years in the U.S. Marine Corps.^[1] He served time in the brig on several occasions because of his drinking, and he was court martialed in August 1956 and discharged with rank of private (E-1). According to Fender, he later received a letter from the U.S. Department of the Navy saying that he had been wrongfully discharged dishonorably because of alcoholism, and he was given a general discharge.^[1] He returned to Texas and played nightclubs, bars, and honky-tonks throughout the south, mostly to Latino audiences. In 1957, then known as El Bebop Kid, he released two songs to moderate success in Mexico and South America: Spanish-language versions of Elvis Presley's "Don't Be Cruel" (as "*No Seas Cruel*") and Harry Belafonte's "Jamaica Farewell". He also recorded his own Spanish version of Hank Williams's "Cold Cold Heart" under the title "*Tu Frío Corazón*".

Freddy Fender

File:Freddy44.jpg

Background information

Birth name	Baldemar Garza Huerta
Also known as	El Bebop Kid Scotty Wayne
Born	June 4, 1937 <div> <u>San Benito, Texas, United States</u></div>
Died	October 14, 2006 (aged 69) <div> <u>Corpus Christi, Texas, United States</u></div>
Genres	<u>Tejano</u> , <u>country</u> , <u>rock</u> , <u>swamp pop</u>
Occupation(s)	<u>Singer</u> , <u>guitarist</u>
Instrument(s)	<u>Vocals</u> , <u>guitar</u>
Years active	1957–2005
Labels	<u>MCA</u> , <u>ABC</u> , <u>Arista</u> , <u>Reprise</u>
Website	<u>FreddyFender.com</u> (<u>http://www.freddyfender.com/</u>)

He became known for his rockabilly music and his cool persona as Eddie con los Shades. In 1958, he legally changed his name from Baldemar Huerta to Freddy Fender. He took the name Fender from the guitar and amplifier, and Freddy because the alliteration sounded good and would "sell better with Gringos!"^[2] He then went to California.

Initial success

In 1959, Fender recorded the blues ballad "Wasted Days and Wasted Nights". The song was a hit, but he was beset by legal troubles in May 1960 after he and a band member were arrested for possession of marijuana in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. After serving nearly three years in the Angola prison farm, he was released through the intervention of then-governor Jimmie Davis, also a songwriter and musician. Davis requested that Fender stay away from music while on probation as a condition of his release. However, in a 1990 NPR interview on *Fresh Air with Terry Gross* (rebroadcast October 17, 2006),^[3] Fender said that the condition for parole was to stay away from places that served alcohol.

By the end of the 1960s, Fender was back in Texas working as a mechanic, and attending a local junior college, while playing music only on the weekends.

Number one on pop and country charts



Freddy Fender performing in 1977

In 1974, Fender recorded "Before the Next Teardrop Falls". The single was selected for national distribution and became a number one hit on the *Billboard* Country and Pop charts. It sold over a million copies and was awarded a gold disc by the RIAA in May 1975.^[4] His next three singles, "Secret Love", "You'll Lose a Good Thing", and a remake of "Wasted Days and Wasted Nights", all reached number one on the *Billboard* Country charts. Between 1975 and 1983, Fender charted 21 country hits, including "Since I Met You Baby", "Vaya con Dios", "Livin' It Down", and "The Rains Came". "Wasted Days and Wasted Nights" became Fender's second million-selling single, with the gold disc presentation taking place in September 1975.^[4]

Fender also was successful on the pop charts. Besides "Before the Next Teardrop Falls" reaching number one on the pop charts in May 1975, "Wasted Days And Wasted Nights" went into the pop top 10 and "Secret Love" into the top 20. "Since I Met You Baby", "You'll Lose A Good Thing" (his last pop top 40), "Vaya con Dios", and "Livin' It Down" (his last to reach the pop top 100) all did well on the pop

charts.

While notable for his genre-crossing appeal, several of Fender's hits featured verses or choruses in Spanish. Bilingual songs seldom hit the pop charts, and when they did, it was because of novelty. Bilingual songs reaching the country charts were even more unusual.

Swamp pop influences

Fender was heavily influenced by the swamp pop sound from southern Louisiana and southeast Texas, as is shown by his recording swamp pop standards on his 1978 album *Swamp Gold*. One of his major hits, "Wasted Days and Wasted Nights", has a typical swamp pop ballad arrangement. Fender associated with swamp pop musicians such as Joe Barry and Rod Bernard, and issued many recordings on labels owned by Huey Meaux, a Cajun who specialized in swamp pop. As music writer John Broven observed, "Although Freddy was a Chicano from Texas marketed as a country artist, much of his formative career was spent in South Louisiana; spiritually, Fender's music was from the Louisiana swamps."^[5]

Later years

Texas Tornados

In 1989, Fender teamed up with fellow Tex–Mex musicians Doug Sahm, Flaco Jiménez, and Augie Meyers to form the Texas Tornados, whose work meshed *conjunto*, *Tejano*, R&B, country, and blues to wide acclaim. When the Texas Tornados went to audition for Warner Bros. Records, Fender did not think that the group was strong enough, so he brought his own band. The audition was nearly a bust, because he played country music and that was not what the executives were looking for. Fender was persuaded to play some vintage rock and blues numbers which was what the executives were looking for, and was subsequently given a record contract. After being a solo act, Fender was not sure if signing with a group was a good thing, but according to Fender, he "just wanted to record for a major label."^[6] The group released four albums and won a Grammy in 1990 for Best Mexican American Performance for the track "*Soy de San Luis*". Fender described the group in this way: "You've heard of New Kids on the Block? Well, we're the Old Guys in the Street." Following the death of Sahm, the Tornados' production slowed. A live 1990 appearance on TV's *Austin City Limits*, one of three the group made, was released in 2005 as part of the *Live From Austin, Texas*, series.^[7]

Los Super 7

In the late 1990s, Fender joined another supergroup, Los Super Seven, with Los Lobos' David Hidalgo and Cesar Rosas, Flaco Jiménez, Ruben Ramos, Joe Ely, and country singer Rick Trevino. The group won a 1998 Grammy in the Mexican American Performance category for their self-titled disc.^[7]

Later work

In 2001, Fender made his final studio recording, a collection of classic Mexican *boleros* titled *La Música de Baldemar Huerta* that brought him a third Grammy award, this time in the category of Latin Pop Album. Rose Reyes, who worked with Fender in 2004 for a Texas Folklife and Austin tribute titled "Fifty Years of Freddy Fender", said of the album, "When he did Mexican standards at that point in his career, I expected it to be good because he's a perfectionist. But that record is so beautifully recorded; his voice is perfection. I was so proud it was coming back to his roots."^[7]

Death and legacy

On March 13, 2001, Freddy Fender was erroneously reported to be dead by *Billboard*. He laughed off the magazine's error.^[8] He underwent a kidney transplant in 2002 with a kidney donated by his daughter and underwent a liver transplant in 2004. Nonetheless, his condition continued to worsen. He was suffering from an

"incurable cancer" in which he had tumors on his lungs. On December 31, 2005, Fender performed his last concert and resumed chemotherapy.

He died in 2006 at the age of 69 of lung cancer at his home in Corpus Christi, Texas, with his family at his bedside. He was buried in his hometown of San Benito.^[9]

He had said in a 2004 interview with the Associated Press that he wished to become the first Mexican American inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame.^[9]

A Freddy Fender Museum and The Conjunto Music Museum opened November 17, 2007, in San Benito. They share a building with the San Benito Historical Museum. His family maintains the Freddy Fender Scholarship Fund, and donates to philanthropic causes that Fender supported.

Film credits

In 1988, Fender played the mayor of a small New Mexico town in the Robert Redford-directed film *The Milagro Beanfield War*. Fender also appeared as Tony in the prison movie *Short Eyes*, a 1977 film adaptation, directed by Robert M. Young, of the Miguel Pinero play. Fender played the role of Pancho Villa in 1979's *She*

Came to the Valley (later released as *Texas in Flames*). The movie was directed by Albert Band and based on the book by Cleo Dawson. Fender also appeared as himself in an episode of the television series *The Dukes of Hazzard*.

Discography

Albums

Year	Album	Peak chart positions			Certifications	
		<u>US Country</u>	<u>US</u>	<u>CAN</u>	<u>RIAA</u>	<u>CRIA</u>
1974	<i><u>Before the Next Teardrop Falls</u></i>	1	20	10	Gold	Gold
1975	<i><u>Recorded Inside Louisiana State Prison</u></i>	—	—	—	—	—
	<i><u>Are You Ready for Freddy?</u></i>	1	41	34	—	—
	<i><u>Since I Met You Baby</u></i>	10	203	—	—	—
1976	<i><u>Rock 'n' Country</u></i>	3	59	—	—	—
	<i><u>Your Cheatin' Heart</u></i>	—	—	—	—	—
	<i><u>If You're Ever in Texas</u></i>	4	170	—	—	—
1977	<i><u>The Best of Freddy Fender</u></i>	4	155	—	—	—
	<i><u>If You Don't Love Me</u></i>	34	—	—	—	—
	<i><u>Merry Christmas / Feliz Navidad</u></i>	—	—	—	—	—
1978	<i><u>Swamp Gold</u></i>	44	—	—	—	—
	<i><u>His Greatest Recordings</u></i>	—	—	—	—	—
1979	<i><u>Tex-Mex</u></i> ^A	—	—	—	—	—
	<i><u>The Texas Balladeer</u></i>	—	—	—	—	—
1980	<i><u>Together We Drifted Apart</u></i>	—	—	—	—	—
1982	<i><u>The Border Soundtrack</u></i>	—	—	—	—	—
1991	<i><u>The Freddy Fender Collection</u></i>	—	—	—	—	—
	<i><u>Favorite Ballads</u></i>	—	—	—	—	—
2001	<i><u>Forever Gold</u></i>	70	—	—	—	—
2002	<i><u>La Musica de Baldemar Huerta</u></i>	—	—	—	—	—

- ^A*Tex Mex* peaked at No. 6 on the *RPM* Country Albums chart in Canada.^[10]

Singles

Year	Single	Peak chart positions							Certifications (sales threshold)	Album
		US Country	US ^[11]	CAN Country	CAN	CAN AC	NZ	AUS		
1960	"Holy One"	—	107	—	—	—	—	—		—
1975	"Before the Next Teardrop Falls"	1	1	1	6	18	2	1	▪ US: Gold ^[12]	<i>Before the Next Teardrop Falls</i>
	"Wasted Days and Wasted Nights"	1	8	2	6	14	1	9	▪ US: Gold ^[13]	
	"Since I Met You Baby"	10	45	—	52	—	—	—		<i>Since I Met You Baby</i>
	"Secret Love"	1	20	1	38	7	10	33		<i>Are You Ready for Freddy?</i>
1976	"The Wild Side of Life"	13	—	—	—	—	—	—		<i>Since I Met You Baby</i>
	"You'll Lose a Good Thing"	1	32	—	—	—	24	—		<i>Rock 'N' Country</i>
	"Vaya con Dios"	7	59	1	—	48	—	—		
	"Living It Down"	2	72	1	—	—	—	—		<i>If You're Ever in Texas</i>
1977	"The Rains Came"	4	—	1	—	—	—	—		<i>Rock 'N' Country</i>
	"If You Don't Love Me (Why Don't You Just Leave Me Alone)"	11	—	16	—	—	—	—		<i>If You Don't Love Me</i>
	"Think About Me"	18	—	10	—	—	—	—		
1978	"If You're Looking for a Fool"	34	—	—	—	—	—	—		
	"Talk to Me"	13	103	10	—	—	—	—		<i>Swamp Gold</i>
	"I'm Leaving It All Up to You"	26	—	20	—	—	—	—		
1979	"Walking Piece of Heaven"	22	—	13	—	—	—	—		<i>Tex-Mex</i>
	"Yours"	22	—	23	—	—	—	—		<i>The Texas Balladeer</i>
	"Squeeze Box"	61	—	—	—	—	—	—		
1980	"My Special Prayer"	83	—	—	—	—	—	—		
	"Please Talk to My Heart"	82	—	—	—	—	—	—		<i>Together We</i>

										<i>Drifted Apart</i>
1983	"Chokin' Kind"	87	—	—	—	—	—	—		—
"—" denotes releases that did not chart										

Honors

- Academy of Country Music (1975) - "Most Promising Male Vocalist"
- Country Music Association (1975) - "Single of the Year" for "Before the Next Teardrop Falls"
- Grammy nominations in 1975, 1976, and 1997
- Tejano Music Hall of Fame (1987)
- Inaugural Balls - Presidents Bill Clinton and George H.W. Bush
- Grammy Award for Best Mexican/Mexican-American Album (1990) - for the Texas Tornados
- European Walk of Fame (1993) - in Rotterdam, the Netherlands
- Freddy Fender Lane (1994) - dedicated in his hometown of San Benito, Texas
- Hollywood Walk of Fame (1999)
- Texas Music Hall Of Fame (1999)
- Nashville Sidewalk of Stars (1999)
- Grammy Award "Best Mexican/American Performance" (1999) - for Los Super Seven
- Louisiana Hall Of Fame (2001)
- Grammy Award "Best Latin Pop" (2002) - for *La Musica de Baldemar Huerta*
- Annual Freddy Fender Humanitarian Award



Fender's star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame

See also

- Hispanics in the United States Marine Corps



Footnotes

- Kasten, Roy (2002, March/April). "The Ballad of Baldemar Huerta." (<http://archives.nodepression.com/2002/03/the-ballad-of-baldemar-huerta/>) *No Depression*, 38.
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- "Remembering Freddy Fender" (<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=6283208>). NPR. Retrieved 2015-08-27.
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5. John Broven, *South to Louisiana: The Music of the Cajun Bayous* (Gretna, La.: Pelican, 1983), pp. 281-82. See also Shane K. Bernard, *Swamp Pop: Cajun and Creole Rhythm and Blues* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1996), 64-65.
6. Hurst, J (July 19, 1991). " "Winds of Change" Chicago Tribune". *newspaper*.
7. Tarradell, Mario. "Singer Freddy Fender dies at age 69" (<http://www.dallasnews.com/sharedcontent/dws/dn/obituaries/stories/101506dntexfender.3aa74e12.html>), *The Dallas Morning News*, 15 October 2006.
8. Fernandez, Sara Lee (March 16, 2001). "Qué pasó: Despite magazine report, Fender's OK" (<http://web.archive.org/web/20140502232321/http://web.caller.com/2001/march/16/today/localnew/20398.html>). *CC Caller Times*. Archived from the original (<http://web.caller.com/2001/march/16/today/localnew/20398.html>) on 2 May 2014. Retrieved 2 May 2014. {{cite news}}: Unknown parameter |deadurl= ignored (|url-status= suggested) (help)
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10. "RPM Country 25 Albums" (<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/films-videos-sound-recordings/rpm/Pages/image.aspx?Image=nlc008388.4736&URLjpg=http%3a%2f%2fwww.collectionscanada.gc.ca%2fobj%2f028020%2ff4%2fnlc008388.4736.gif&Ecopy=nlc008388.4736>). *RPM*. May 26, 1979. Retrieved September 29, 2015.
11. Whitburn, Joel (2011). *Top Pop Singles 1955–2010*. Record Research, Inc. p. 308. ISBN 0-89820-188-8.
12. "RIAA - Gold & Platinum - April 11, 2011: "Before the Next Teardrop Falls" certified awards" (http://www.riaa.com/goldandplatinumdata.php?table=SEARCH_RESULTS&artist=Freddy%20Fender&title=Teardrop&format=SINGLE&go=Search&perPage=50). Recording Industry Association of America. Retrieved April 11, 2011.
13. "RIAA - Gold & Platinum - April 11, 2011: "Wasted Days and Wasted Nights" certified awards" (http://www.riaa.com/goldandplatinumdata.php?table=SEARCH_RESULTS&artist=Freddy%20Fender&title=Wasted&format=SINGLE&go=Search&perPage=50). Recording Industry Association of America. Retrieved April 11, 2011.

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- Tucker, Stephen R. (1998). "Freddy Fender". In *The Encyclopedia of Country Music*. Paul Kingsbury, Editor. New York: Oxford University Press. pp. 170–1.
- John Broven, *South to Louisiana: Music of the Cajun Bayous* (Gretna, La.: Pelican Press, 1983).
- Shane K. Bernard, *Swamp Pop: Cajun and Creole Rhythm and Blues* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1996).

External links

- Official website (<http://www.freddyfender.com/>)
- Freddy Fender Museum (<http://www.freddyfendermuseum.com/>)
- Allmusic (<https://www.allmusic.com/artist/p75556/biography>)
- "Remembering Freddy" (<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=6283208>), National Public Radio, *Fresh Air with Terry Gross*, October 17, 2006. A remembrance of Fender and his music with other links.
- Freddy Fender (<http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GSln=Fender&GSfn=Freddy&GSbyrel=all&GSdyrel=all&GSob=n&GRid=16174412&df=all&>) at Find A Grave

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