

= Clay Walker =

Ernest Clayton " Clay " Walker , Jr . ( born August 19 , 1969 ) is an American country music artist . He made his debut in 1993 with the single " What 's It to You " , which reached Number One on the Billboard Hot Country Singles & Tracks ( now Hot Country Songs ) chart , as did its follow @-@ up , 1994 's " Live Until I Die " . Both singles were included on his self @-@ titled debut album , released in 1993 via Giant Records . He stayed with the label until its 2001 closure , later recording for Warner Bros. Records and RCA Records before joining his current label , Asylum @-@ Curb Records , in 2007 .

Clay Walker has released a total of 11 albums , including a greatest hits package and an album of Christmas music . His first four studio albums all achieved platinum certification in the United States and his greatest hits collection and fifth studio album were each certified gold . He has charted 30 country singles , including six Number Ones : " What 's It to You " , " Live Until I Die " , " Dreaming with My Eyes Open " , " If I Could Make a Living " , " This Woman and This Man " , and " Rumor Has It " . His most recent album , *She Won't Be Lonely Long* , was released in mid @-@ 2010 .

= = Biography = =

Ernest Clayton Walker Jr. was born on August 19 , 1969 in Beaumont , Texas to Ernest and Danna Walker . The oldest of five children , Walker lived in Vidor with his father , who gave him a guitar when he was nine years old . Walker began entering talent competitions at age fifteen . After leaving his shift as nighttime desk clerk at a Super 8 Motel , he stopped at a local radio station to deliver a tape of a song that he had written . Although the morning disc jockey told him that the station 's policies prohibited playing self @-@ submitted tapes , he played Walker 's song and said that it was " too good to pass up . "

After graduating from Vidor High School in 1986 , Walker began working at a Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company plant . At nineteen , he also began touring as a musician , playing various local clubs and eventually finding work as the house singer at a bar in Beaumont called the Neon Armadillo . In November 1992 , he was discovered by James Stroud , a record producer who was also the president of Warner Music Group subsidiary Giant Records . Walker signed to Giant late in the year .

= = Musical career = =

Walker released his self @-@ titled debut album in 1993 under Stroud 's production . Its first single was " What 's It to You ; " written by Robert Ellis Orrall and Curtis Wright , this song reached No. 1 on the Billboard Hot Country Singles & Tracks ( now Hot Country Songs ) charts and number 73 on the Billboard Hot 100 . Its followup " Live Until I Die " ( which Walker wrote ) , was released late in the year and became his second consecutive No. 1 in early 1994 . After those two singles came the number 11 " Where Do I Fit in the Picture " , which was originally the B @-@ side of " What 's It to You . " The album accounted for a third No. 1 hit in " Dreaming with My Eyes Open " , a song that was also featured on the soundtrack to the 1994 film *The Thing Called Love* . An additional cut from the album , " White Palace , " charted at number 67 on the country charts without being released as a single .

Clay Walker was certified platinum by the Recording Industry Association of America for shipments of one million copies . It peaked at number 8 on Top Country Albums , number 2 on Top Heatseekers and number 52 on the Billboard 200 . Larry Powell of Allmusic gave the album a four @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half star rating , saying that Walker had a " high @-@ energy " voice reminiscent of Conway Twitty . Walker also received two award nominations in 1994 : Star of Tomorrow award from TNN / Music City News and Top New Male Vocalist from the Academy of Country Music .

= = = 1994 ? 96 : If I Could Make a Living and Hypnotize the Moon = = =

If I Could Make a Living was the title of Walker 's second album , released in 1994 . It produced two more No. 1 singles in the title track ( co @-@ written by Alan Jackson , Keith Stegall , and Roger Murrah ) and 1995 's " This Woman and This Man " . The latter song spent two weeks at No. 1 , becoming his first multi @-@ week No. 1 hit . Then came the number 16 " My Heart Will Never Know " . If I Could Make a Living went platinum in May 1995 , reaching number 2 on the country albums chart . Gordon Ely of the Richmond Times @-@ Dispatch gave a favorable review , saying that " Walker has broken loose from Nashville 's most recent crop of carefully crafted cowboys . " Walker also began touring in 1995 as a headlining act , in support of the album .

Late in 1995 , Walker released his third studio album , titled Hypnotize the Moon . Although none of its singles reached No. 1 , Hypnotize the Moon produced two consecutive number 2 hits in " Who Needs You Baby " ( which Walker co @-@ wrote ) and the title track , followed by the number 5 " Only on Days That End in ' Y ' " and the number 18 " Bury the Shovel " . Hypnotize the Moon was certified platinum in 1996 , making for Walker 's third consecutive platinum album . This album received a four @-@ star rating from Stephen Thomas Erlewine , who said that it was his " most assured , cohesive album to date " and that he gave a " consistently excellent performance . " Alanna Nash of Entertainment Weekly thought that Walker did not show a distinct musical personality , but considered the song selection strong and gave it a B + . Richard McVey II of Country Standard Time considered it a " throwback " in sound to Walker 's debut , while USA Today said that it lacked the " verve " of that album .

= = = 1996 ? 97 : Rumor Has It = = =

Having just completed the tracks for his fourth album in 1996 , Walker was playing basketball with a friend , when he began to experience numbness , facial spasms , and double vision . Magnetic resonance imaging revealed that he had multiple sclerosis ( MS ) . Walker subsequently began changing his diet and treating the disease with a daily injection of Copaxone , sending his MS into an arrested state .

Also in early 1996 , Nu Millennium Media released Self Portrait , which included five of Walker 's songs in an interactive CD @-@ ROM format and 30 minutes of video footage . He then released his fourth album , 1997 's Rumor Has It , which he co @-@ produced with Stroud . Its title track , the first single , became his sixth and final No. 1 single that year . Other singles from the album included the number 18 " One , Two , I Love You " and the Top 5 hits " Watch This " and " Then What ? " at number 4 and number 2 , respectively . The latter also reached number 65 on the Hot 100 , making for his first entry on that chart since " What 's It to You . " As with his three previous studio albums , Rumor Has It was certified platinum . Larry Stephens of Country Standard Time gave this album a mostly @-@ negative review , calling the songs " cookie @-@ cutter " outside " I Need a Margarita " . Thom Owens of Allmusic also thought that it was formulaic , but said that Walker was " able to make even mediocre material sound good " , rating it three stars out of five .

= = = 1998 ? 2000 : Greatest Hits and Live , Laugh , Love = = =

In April 1998 , Walker charted with a live rendition of Earl Thomas Conley 's 1983 single " Holding Her and Loving You " . This rendition spent nine weeks on the charts and peaked at number 68 . One month later , he debuted his sixteenth single , " Ordinary People " . Peaking at number 35 , it was one of two new songs included on his Greatest Hits album ; the other new track , " You 're Beginning to Get to Me " , made its debut in August 1998 and peaked at number 2 on the country chart and number 39 on the Hot 100 in January 1999 , the same month in which Greatest Hits was certified gold . Also in 1998 , Walker performed a sold @-@ out show at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo .

Doug Johnson , who succeeded Stroud as Giant Records ' president , produced Walker 's 1999 album Live , Laugh , Love . Regarding its production and promotion , the label 's senior director of marketing Connie Baer said that she wanted to raise Walker 's profile as an artist , as both she and

Johnson thought that he did not have the same level of recognition as other artists with similar album sales and chart success . This album was led off by the number 16 country and number 74 pop hit " She 's Always Right " , which was co @-@ written by Lonestar 's lead singer Richie McDonald . After this song came the title track at number 11 country and number 65 pop . " The Chain of Love " , written by Rory Lee Feek and Jonnie Barnett , was the album 's third and most successful single , reaching number 3 country and number 40 on the Hot 100 . Both it and " Once in a Lifetime Love " , the fourth single , first charted from unsolicited airplay received while " Live , Laugh , Love " was climbing the charts . " Once in a Lifetime Love " , upon its release , became his lowest @-@ peaking single release , reaching number 50 . The album also included a studio version of the Earl Thomas Conley cover .

Erlewine gave the album three stars on Allmusic , where he wrote that it " never really distinguishes itself from its predecessors " but " has its moments . " Brian Wahlert of Country Standard Time also thought that the album was inconsistent , saying that " She 's Always Right " , " The Chain of Love " , and the Conley cover were its strongest tracks , but that the rest " treads no new ground . " Deborah Evans Price of Billboard was more favorable , saying that it showed the energy of his live shows , and that he " cut loose " with soul singing on " This Time Love . "

In late 2000 , Walker recorded two tracks on Believe : A Christmas Collection , a multi @-@ artist Christmas music album released by Giant . These two tracks ? a cover version of Elvis Presley 's " Blue Christmas " and the original song " Cowboy Christmas " ? both made appearances on the country chart , reaching number 51 and number 70 , respectively .

= = = 2001 ? 02 : Say No More and Christmas = = =

Walker released his twenty @-@ third single , " Say No More " , for Giant in early 2001 . It was the first single release from his sixth studio album of the same name , peaking at number 33 on the country chart ; the only other single , the Jerry Kilgore co @-@ write " If You Ever Feel Like Lovin ' Me Again " , reached number 27 . The latter song was promoted by Giant 's parent company , Warner Bros. Records Nashville , as Giant had closed in late 2001 . Walker co @-@ produced the album with veteran producers Byron Gallimore and Blake Mevis , and session guitarist Brent Mason . The album also included a song that Walker wrote in high school , and a cover of Ritchie Valens 's " La Bamba . " Maria Konicki Dinoia of Allmusic rated it three stars , with her review saying that " the sensitivity on this album is so expressive that it makes you want to run right out and hug the one you love . " Country Standard Time critic Mike Clark considered it a transition to a more country pop @-@ oriented sound , describing the album as being " full of bad lyrics and overwrought production clichés . "

In 2002 , Walker wrote and recorded a song for the National Football League 's expansion team , the Houston Texans . Titled " Football Time in Houston , " the song was used as the team 's official fight song during its inaugural season . In an interview with CMT , he said that he donated the song to the city of Houston , and that he sings " The Star @-@ Spangled Banner " at the team 's opening game every season .

Although he had left Warner Bros. for RCA Records ' Nashville division in May 2002 , Warner Bros. released a Christmas music album entitled Christmas in September of the same year . It included a cover of José Feliciano 's " Feliz Navidad " , which Walker took to number 49 on the country chart in January 2003 .

= = = 2003 ? 04 : A Few Questions = = =

Walker 's first single release for RCA , " A Few Questions " , debuted in April 2003 . The song spent twenty @-@ seven weeks on the country charts and peaked at number 9 , making for his first top ten entry since " The Chain of Love " three years previous . This was the first single from his only RCA album , also titled A Few Questions , which he produced with Jimmy Ritchey . Its second single , " I Can 't Sleep , " also peaked at number 9 in early 2004 . This song featured backing vocals from Chely Wright , with whom Walker wrote it . The third and final single was the number 31 " Jesus

Was a Country Boy " , which Walker wrote with Rivers Rutherford . A Few Questions accounted for his second @-@ highest peak on the country albums charts , reaching number 3 .

Erlewine rated this album two @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half stars out of five on Allmusic . He considered the album more country pop @-@ oriented than Walker 's work for Giant , saying that this change in sound made it not " feel like a Clay Walker album . " Dan McIntosh gave a mostly @-@ negative review for Country Standard Time , where he wrote that " even his passionate singing cannot rise above this album 's predictable lyrics and lame arrangements . "

= = = 2005 ? 08 : Fall = = =

Walker was signed his third record deal in July 2005 , this time with the Asylum @-@ Curb division of Curb Records . His first single for the label , " ' Fore She Was Mama , " reached a peak of number 21 in March 2007 . It was included on his album Fall , which was produced by Keith Stegall . The album 's title cut , " Fall , " was written by Clay Mills along with former Mercury Records artist Shane Minor and former Exile member Sonny LeMaire . It was the second single release from Fall , going to number 5 on the country charts and number 55 on the Hot 100 . The album 's third and final single was " She Likes It in the Morning " , with a number 43 country peak . Fall also included a duet with Freddy Fender , the first duet of Walker 's career , on a cover of Fender 's debut single " Before the Next Teardrop Falls . " Walker and Fender recorded this duet in early 2006 ; Fender died of lung cancer in October of the same year .

Erlewine gave a three @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half star rating , saying that Stegall 's production gave it a more traditional sound in comparison to A Few Questions , and that , despite having some " sappy " songs , it was his " most enjoyable collection in some time . " Engine 145 reviewer Brady Vercher rated it three stars out of five , praising Walker 's vocal performance but saying that the song selection " seemed to be lacking in everything but fluff . " Country Standard Time reviewer Jeffrey B. Remz wrote that Walker showed " a very pleasant country voice with a good sense of emotion " and that the production was more country @-@ sounding than most mainstream acts , but said that it had several " generic " songs .

= = = 2009 ? present : She Won 't Be Lonely Long and Best Of Clay Walker = = =

Walker 's second album for Asylum @-@ Curb was first announced in June 2009 . Its first single , " She Won 't Be Lonely Long " , was given an official release date of December 2009 , although it had already entered the country charts in late November . In advance of his ninth album , Walker released an extended play titled She Won 't Be Lonely Long . The album , also titled She Won 't Be Lonely Long , was released on June 8 , 2010 . It includes a cover of Alabama 's 1980 single " Feels So Right " with a backing vocal from Alabama 's lead singer , Randy Owen . Allmusic reviewer Thom Jurek praised the album for its " straight @-@ up , mainstream contemporary country " sound but said that it did not reflect a change in sound from Fall .

" She Won 't Be Lonely Long " peaked at number 4 on the country chart in mid @-@ 2010 . The album 's second single , " Where Do I Go from You " , was released to radio on August 2 , 2010 , with " Like We Never Said Goodbye " following in late 2011 . The album 's fourth single , " Jesse James " was released in 2012 under Curb 's Sidewalk Records imprint .

The first compilation album for Asylum @-@ Curb titled Best Of Clay Walker was released in February 2014 . It contains 10 songs , 7 of them are new recordings of his greatest hits originally recorded for Giant label in the 1990s . No single was released from the album .

" Rock the Radio " will be Clay 's next release in 2015 .

On September 11 , 2015 , Clay released " Right Now , " a track presumably from his upcoming album .

= = Musical image and influences = =

In 1994 , Bob Cannon of Entertainment Weekly wrote that Walker 's image of a " Resistol hat ,

sturdy cowpoke face , and very tight jeans " seemed to be from a " Country Music Handbook for Success , " but also said that he " ignores the danger of being dismissed as just another hunk in a hat . " Walker has been compared to Mark Chesnutt and Tracy Byrd , both of whom are also Beaumont , Texas natives who began their careers shortly before Walker did . Of the comparison among the three , Rick Koster wrote in the book Texas Music that Walker 's success came more quickly than that of Chesnutt or Byrd . Kurt Wolff and Orla Duane , authors of Country Music : The Rough Guide , said that he " had loads of youthful energy , a golden Texas twang , and , of course , plenty of boyish good looks . " They also called his music " relatively tame " but said that " his Texas bar @-@ room roots remain clearly visible in his voice and songs . " Regarding Walker 's onstage persona , former Warner Bros. executive Bill Mayne told Billboard magazine in 1997 that Walker has " maintained a low profile " but that he " really touches people and connects . "

Walker described his voice to CMT as " raspy [ and ] rugged . " He cites George Jones ( also a Beaumont native ) as a primary influence , as well as James Taylor and Bob Seger ; he has also said that , because he grew up in a largely African @-@ American neighborhood , his singing style was influenced by rhythm and blues music . In addition , he said that after his diagnosis , he realized that " you need to love your family " and said that , because he considered his songs positive in nature , he felt that he could connect to younger listeners .

= = Personal life = =

Before the release of his first single , Walker married a rodeo queen named Lori Jayne Lampson . They had two daughters : MaClay DaLayne , born on January 14 , 1996 , and Skylor ClayAnne , born on May 14 , 1999 . The couple divorced in 2003 . He married model Jessica Craig on September 28 , 2007 and had three more children with her : a son named William Clayton , born August 5 , 2008 , and a daughter named Mary Elizabeth , born December 27 , 2009 @.@ and son Elijah Craig born June ( Fathers Day 2013 )

Walker has participated in several forms of charity to help raise awareness of Multiple Sclerosis following his diagnosis in 1996 , including his own non @-@ profit charity , Band Against MS , which he founded in 2003 . In 2008 , he received a Humanitarian Award for his charitable efforts in relations to MS and participated in a charity golf tournament benefiting his organization .

= = Discography = =

= = = Albums = = =

Clay Walker ( 1993 )  
If I Could Make a Living ( 1994 )  
Hypnotize the Moon ( 1995 )  
Rumor Has It ( 1997 )  
Greatest Hits ( 1998 )  
Live , Laugh , Love ( 1999 )  
Say No More ( 2001 )  
Christmas ( 2002 )  
A Few Questions ( 2003 )  
Fall ( 2007 )  
She Won 't Be Lonely Long ( 2010 )  
Best Of ( 2014 )

= = = Number @-@ one singles = = =

" What 's It to You " ( 1993 )  
" Live Until I Die " ( 1993 ? 1994 )

" Dreaming with My Eyes Open " ( 1994 )

" If I Could Make a Living " ( 1994 )

" This Woman and This Man " ( 1995 )

" Rumor Has It " ( 1997 )

= = Awards = =