**Selena Quintanilla-Pérez** (April 16, 1971 – March 31, 1995), known mononymously as **Selena**, was an American singer-songwriter, fashion designer and entrepreneur. Selena was born as the last child of a [Mexican American](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mexican_American) father and a half-[Cherokee](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cherokee) mother. She released her [first LP record](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mis_Primeras_Grabaciones) at the age of twelve with her [Selena y Los Dinos](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Selena_y_Los_Dinos) band. At the 1987 [Tejano Music Awards](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tejano_Music_Awards), she won [Female Vocalist of the Year](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tejano_Music_Award_for_Female_Vocalist_of_The_Year); she won the award eight consecutive times after that starting in 1989. She landed her first major recording contract with [EMI Latin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/EMI_Latin) in 1989 and released her [debut album](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Selena_(album)) with them that same year. Her brother and principal record producer, [A.B. Quintanilla III](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A.B._Quintanilla_III), began writing materials for Selena to record. "[Como La Flor](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Como_La_Flor_(song))", the [lead single](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lead_single) for [*Entre a Mi Mundo*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Entre_a_Mi_Mundo) (1992), peaked at number six on the U.S. [*Billboard*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Billboard_(magazine)) [Hot Latin Tracks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hot_Latin_Tracks). It launched Selena's Mexico tour which expanded her fan base and gained critical acclaim from critics who cite it as being her[signature song](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Signature_song) and as well as being a fan favorite recording.

On April 2, 1992, Selena and her guitarist [Chris Pérez](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chris_P%C3%A9rez) eloped, despite disapproval from her father who later accepted the relationship. Her [*Live!*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Selena_Live!) (1993) album garnered her first Grammy for [Best Mexican/American Album](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grammy_Award_for_Best_Mexican/Mexican-American_Album), becoming the first Tejano recording artist to win a Grammy. That same year, Selena opened her [Selena Etc.](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Selena_Etc.) boutique store in Corpus and named [Yolanda Saldívar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yolanda_Sald%C3%ADvar) as president. Selena's decision was made after Saldívar helped her fan club reached an unprecedented number of fans. According to *Hispanic Business* magazine, Selena earned [$](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/US_dollar)5 million from these establishments. In 1994, [*Amor Prohibido*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amor_Prohibido) was released and debuted atop the [Top Latin Albums](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Top_Latin_Albums) and [Latin Pop Albums](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_Pop_Albums) chart and became one of the [best-selling Latin albums](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_best-selling_Latin_albums_in_the_United_States)being certified [20× Platinum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RIAA_certification#Spanish) by the [Recording Industry Association of America](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Recording_Industry_Association_of_America) (RIAA), denoting shipments of 2,000,000 copies. Four number-one singles including, the [title track](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amor_Prohibido_(song)), "", "[No Me Queda Más](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/No_Me_Queda_M%C3%A1s)" and "[Fotos y Recuerdos](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fotos_y_Recuerdos)", received a positive reception from music critics. Selena had the most successful singles of 1994 and 1995 for "Amor Prohibido" and "No Me Queda Más". She was then called "[The Queen of Tejano music](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Honorific_nicknames_in_popular_music)"[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Selena#cite_note-FOOTNOTEMitchell1995-1) and the Mexican equivalent of [Madonna](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madonna_(entertainer)).[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Selena#cite_note-FOOTNOTE.27.27New_York_Times.27.271995-2)

The chairman of [EMI Records](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/EMI_Records) at the time, [Charles Koppel man](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Koppelman), launched Selena's[crossover](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crossover_(music)) contract. He believed that Selena reached her peak in the Spanish-speaking market and wanted to propel her as an American solo pop artist to expand her career. After performing at a sold out concert at the [Houston Astrodome](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Houston_Astrodome) in February 1995, Selena's father and manager, [Abraham Quintanilla, Jr.](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abraham_Quintanilla,_Jr.) noticed that money was missing from Selena's boutique. Abraham, Selena and her sister and drummer QQuintanilla held a meeting with Saldívar to discuss inconsistencies concerning disappearing funds. Saldívar was then banned by Abraham from his recording studio [Q-Productions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Q-Productions). Saldívar bought a gun a few weeks later and tried luring Selena to meet her alone at her hotel room. On 31 March 1995, Selena was [killed](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Murder_of_Selena) by Saldívar. Selena's death stunned people in the Hispanic community; many candlelight vigils took place, as well as other memorials from fans. Two weeks later, [Governor of Texas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Governors_of_Texas) at the time, [George W. Bush](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_W._Bush), declared 16 April as "Selena Day" in Texas.

Her crossover album [*Dreaming of You*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dreaming_of_You_(album)), which was not finished, was released on 18 July 1995 and became the first vast majority Spanish-language album to top the [*Billboard 200*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Billboard_200) and sold 175,000 units its first day of release, a then-record for a pop singer. In 1997, [Warner Bros.](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Warner_Bros.) released a biographical film [based on her life](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Selena_(film)) which starred Puerto Rican-American actress [Jennifer Lopez](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jennifer_Lopez) as "Selena" in the movie, which became her [breakout role](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Breakout_role). Selena was named the "top Latin artist of the '90s" and "Best selling Latin artist of the decade" by *Billboard* for her fourteen top-ten singles in the Hot Latin Songs chart, including seven number-one hits. Selena's life was also the basis of the musical [*Selena Forever*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Selena_Forever) starring [Veronica Vazquez](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Veronica_Vazquez) as Selena. To commemorate her tenth anniversary of her death, [Univision](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Univision) produced [*Selena ¡VIVE!*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Selena_%C2%A1VIVE!) In April 2005 which scored a 35.9 [Nielsen household rating](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nielsen_rating). It became the most-watched and highest-rated Spanish-language program in [American television history](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Television_in_the_United_States). In June 2006 Selena was commemorated with a life-sized bronze statue ([Mirador de la Flor](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mirador_de_la_Flor) in Corpus Christi, Texas) and a Selena museum. She has sold over 60 million albums worldwide, making her one of the best-selling artists of all time.

Early life

Selena was born in [Lake Jackson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lake_Jackson,_Texas), Texas,[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Selena#cite_note-FOOTNOTEPatoski199630-3) as the youngest of three children born to a Mexican American[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Selena#cite_note-BaylorHSA-4) father, [Abraham Quintanilla, Jr.](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abraham_Quintanilla,_Jr.) and a half-[Cherokee Native American](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cherokee) mother,[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Selena#cite_note-FOOTNOTEPatoski199620-5) Marcella Ofelia (née Samora).[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Selena#cite_note-6) She was raised as a [Jehovah's Witness](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jehovah%27s_Witnesses).[[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Selena#cite_note-FOOTNOTE.27.27Caller-TimesApril_16.2C_1997-7) Selena began singing at age three. When she was nine years old, her father launched a vocal group consisting of several of his children, [Selena y Los Dinos](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Selena_y_Los_Dinos).[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Selena#cite_note-FOOTNOTE.27.27New_York_Times.27.271995-2) They initially performed at a restaurant the family operated, [[8]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Selena#cite_note-rolemodel-8) but went bankrupt soon thereafter. They moved to [Corpus Christi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corpus_Christi,_Texas), Texas, where they performed wherever they could - street corners, weddings, [*quinceañeras*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quincea%C3%B1era), and fairs.[[9]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Selena#cite_note-FOOTNOTEPatoski199653-9) As Selena grew more popular, the demands of her performance and travel schedule began to interfere with her education. Her father took her out of school when she was in the eighth grade.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Selena#cite_note-FOOTNOTEMitchell1995-1) At seventeen, she earned a high school diploma by the American School Program.[[10]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Selena#cite_note-FOOTNOTEPatoski199659-10)

The band's efforts paid off in 1985, when fourteen-year-old Selena recorded her first album for a record company. Her father bought all of the original copies.[[11]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Selena#cite_note-FOOTNOTEPatoski199649-11) It was re-released in 1995 as *Miss Primeras Grabaciones*.[[12]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Selena#cite_note-FOOTNOTEPatoski1996288-12) Over the next three years, not under a recording contract, she released six more albums.

Success

At the 1987 [Tejano Music Awards](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tejano_Music_Awards), Selena won Best Female Vocalist, an award she would dominate for the rest of her life.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Selena#cite_note-FOOTNOTEMitchell1995-1) [[13]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Selena#cite_note-TejanoAward-13) in 1989, José Behar, the former head of [Sony](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sony_Music_Entertainment) Music Latin, signed Selena with [Capitol](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Capitol_Records)/[EMI](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/EMI). Behar later explained signed her because he thought he had discovered the next [Gloria Estefan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gloria_Estefan).[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Selena#cite_note-FOOTNOTEMitchell1995-1) In 1988, she met [Chris Pérez](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chris_P%C3%A9rez), who had his own band. Two years later, the Quintanilla family hired him to play in Selena's band and they began dating. At first her father opposed their relationship and went as far as firing Pérez from the band. He eventually came to accept the relationship.[[14]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Selena#cite_note-FOOTNOTEPatoski1996-14) On April 2, 1992, Selena and Pérez were married in Nueces.[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Selena#cite_note-FOOTNOTE.27.27New_York_Times.27.271995-2)

In 1990, her debut album [*Ven Conmigo*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ven_Conmigo_(album)) was released, written by her brother and main songwriter [Abraham Quintanilla III](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abraham_Quintanilla_III). This recording was the first Tejano album recorded by a female artist to achieve gold status. Around the same time, a registered nurse and fan named[Yolanda Saldívar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yolanda_Sald%C3%ADvar) approached Selena's father with the idea of starting a fan club. He approved and Saldívar became the club's president; later, she worked as the manager of Selena's retail enterprises.[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Selena#cite_note-FOOTNOTE.27.27New_York_Times.27.271995-2) In 1992, Selena’s stardom got a big boost with the song, "[Como La Flor](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Como_La_Flor_(song))" off a new album, [*Entre a Mi Mundo*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Entre_a_Mi_Mundo). The next album, [*Selena Live!*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Selena_Live!) Won [Best Mexican-American Album](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grammy_Award_for_Best_Mexican/Mexican-American_Album) at the [36th Grammy Awards](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/36th_Grammy_Awards).[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Selena" \l "cite_note-FOOTNOTE.27.27New_York_Times.27.271995-2)

The album [*Amor Prohibido*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amor_Prohibido) was released in 1994. It was nominated for a Grammy award for [Mexican-American Album of the Year](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grammy_Award_for_Best_Mexican/Mexican-American_Album). Selena and her band received yet more accolades in 1994. [*Billboard*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Billboard_magazine)*'*s [Premio Lo Nuestro](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Premio_Lo_Nuestro) awarded them six awards, including Best Latin Artist and Song of the Year for "Como La Flor". Meanwhile, her duet with the Barrio Boyzz, "

Was: 22

Were: 1

Released: 9

Won: 4

Landed: 1

Began: 4

Peaked: 1

Launched: 3

Expanded: 1

Gained: 1

Eloped: 1

Accepted: 1

Garnered: 1

Opened: 1

Named: 3

Made: 1

Helped: 1

Reached: 2

Earned: 2

Debuted: 1

Became: 5

Certified: 1

Received: 2

Had: 3

Called: 1

Believed: 1

Wanted: 1

Noticed: 1

Held: 1

Banned: 1

Bought: 2

Tried: 1

Killed: 1

Stunned: 1

Took: 2

Declared: 1

Finished: 1

Based: 1

Starred: 1

Produced: 1

Scored: 1

Watched: 1

Commemorated: 1

Born: 3

Raised: 1

Performed: 2

Operated: 1

Went: 2

Moved: 1

Could: 1

Grew: 1

Paid: 1

Recorded: 2

Signed: 2

Explained: 1

Thought: 1

Discovered: 1

Met: 1

Hired: 1

Opposed: 1

Came: 1

Married: 1

Registered: 1

Approached: 1

Approved: 1

Worked: 1

Got: 1

Nominated: 1

Awarded: 1