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MEDIA CONTACT  
Amanda Strittmatter | (512) 463-5424  
Marketing@TheStoryOfTexas.com

## Bobbie Nelson's Grand Piano Makes its Debut at the Bullock Museum

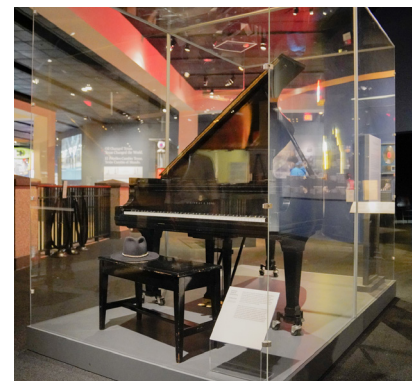
The iconic instrument is on view along with other special items celebrating the pioneering musician

**DECEMBER 14, 2022 (AUSTIN, TX)** — In collaboration with her family, country music pioneer and pianist Bobbie Nelson's Steinway Model B grand piano is now on view at the Bullock Texas State History Museum alongside other cherished artifacts celebrating her life and music.

"The incomparable Bobbie Nelson left an indelible mark on Texas music," said Museum Director Margaret Koch. "The resonance of her playing this well-traveled and cared-for instrument provides a beautiful legacy for all those who knew her and those musicians still to come. It is a privilege and honor for the Bullock Museum to be able to share her story in our Texas history galleries."

Nelson (1931 - 2022) was a life-long musician whose talent has been credited with elevating her younger brother, Willie Nelson's, numerous hits. The siblings were raised in Abbott, Texas, where they learned to play music together. She started playing gigs in the 1940s with a band including her brother and ex-husband Bud Fletcher. Following her divorce from Fletcher, she taught piano lessons and played in restaurants, supper clubs and lounges for two decades. In 1973, Willie invited her to join The Family Band, calling her "the main spark I'd been missing." At first, Nelson used whatever piano the venue provided when the band traveled, but Willie bought her the Steinway Model B so she would have a fine working instrument every night that was properly tuned. It traveled with her for much of her five decades with the band.

Nelson's grand piano is on display along with her cowboy hat, often the only thing audiences could see peeking over her open piano as she played. Visitors will also see a pair of her well-loved cowboy boots, sheet music from her days of teaching piano lessons, and a photo of her performing in Luck, Texas in July 2021—one of the last shows she played. Visitors also have the opportunity to view a platinum record for Stardust, an album Nelson inspired and played on with Willie, awarded to her after the album went on to quintuple platinum success.



"Bobbie Nelson was a humble legend. People knew her by her notes and her gigantic cowboy hat, slightly hidden behind her Steinway at every Willie show," said Bobbie's daughter-in-law Lisa Fletcher. "Her rendition of 'Down Yonder' played on that piano hundreds of times will live in the hearts of so many people forever."

Bobbie Nelson's grand piano and other artifacts are now on view in the Bullock Museum's third-floor gallery. For more information about the Museum, visit [TheStoryofTexas.com](http://TheStoryofTexas.com).

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Artifacts courtesy of The Family of Bobbie Nelson.

The Bullock Museum, a division of the Texas State Preservation Board, is funded by Museum members, donors, and patrons, the Texas State History Museum Foundation, and the State of Texas.

### **ABOUT THE BULLOCK MUSEUM**

The Bullock Texas State History Museum, a division of the State Preservation Board and an accredited institution of the American Alliance of Museums, illuminates and celebrates Texas history, people, and culture. With dynamic, award-winning exhibitions, educational programming for all ages, and an IMAX® theater with the largest screen in Texas, the Museum collaborates with more than 700 museums, libraries, archives and individuals across the world to bring the Story of Texas to life.

1800 N. CONGRESS AVE. | AUSTIN, TEXAS 78701 | (512) 936-8746 | [THESTORYOFTEXAS.COM](http://THESTORYOFTEXAS.COM)