

# GLEN CAMPBELL

BRINGS SOUTHERN NIGHTS TO DEADWOOD



By  
Nick Thomas



★ After 50 years in the entertainment business, record sales of over 45 million, and 75 trips up the pop and country music charts, Glen Campbell will be heading to Deadwood on June 20th to perform during the "Wild Bill Days" celebration. Campbell, however, is no stranger to the area.

"This is not the first time Glen has been here," says Sarah Anderson, event coordinator for the Deadwood Chamber of Commerce. "He was the first act to play on Main Street 20 years ago. We are very excited to have him back and he has a brand new album out."

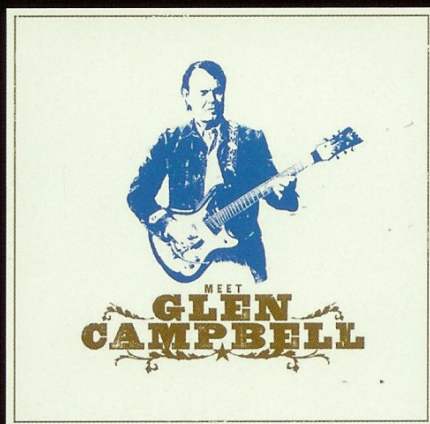
The album, "Meet Glen Campbell," peaked at number 27 on the Billboard country charts last year. Though a far cry from his numerous chart-toppers of the past, the album received good reviews and had special significance for Campbell. In addition to his daughter, Debby, who has been singing along side her father for the last two decades, the record's list of backing vocalists features more Campbells than a supermarket soup aisle – Dillon, Cal, Shannon, and Ashley Campbell also joined their famous dad on the album.

"This was the first time so many of my children worked on one of my records," said Campbell from his home in Malibu. "It was great to have them all involved."

For long-time fans, the new record is an opportunity to rediscover the veteran singer who has entertained America for decades with his country-pop fusion style. But as the title suggests, Campbell also wanted to introduce himself to new audiences. "I've been meeting a lot of young people who thought I was just a country-and-western singer.

The new album covers a wide variety of songs – some fairly contemporary, and others that go back several decades. It was most important for me that this still sounded like a Glen Campbell album, and I think it does."

Campbell says he was approached after a concert two years ago by Capitol Records producer Julian Raymond, who suggested recording a new album of cover songs from a broad musical spectrum. "Julian



▲ Glen Campbell continues to entertain after 50 years with his new album "Meet Glen Campbell." The 10-song album features covers of hits like Tom Petty's "Angel Dream" and "Grow Old With Me," by John Lennon. His new album introduces him to a new generation of fans and gives his life-long fans another chance to enjoy his musical talents.

asked if I wanted to do a new record," says Campbell. "I had never met him before – he just turned up out of the blue!"

Raymond compiled a list of over 100 songs, which he and Campbell whittled down to the 10 finally selected for the album. "I had a lot of faith in what he was doing. He

chose some good songs – proven songs," says Campbell.

Tracks include cover versions of "Sing," the 2001 hit by the Scottish alternative rock group Travis, Tom Petty's "Angel Dream," Jackson Browne's "These Days" from the 1960s, and "Grow Old With Me," one of the last songs written by John Lennon who recorded it with his wife, Yoko Ono, in their home shortly before Lennon's death. It has since become a popular tribute song at weddings. "Lennon never got to record it professionally in the studio," says Campbell. "Yoko let me use it on the album, and you can really imagine him singing it to her."

Despite being well-known as a singer throughout his career, Campbell is perhaps less recognized as an accomplished musician. But in his early years, he was hotly sought as a reliable and skillful session guitarist. In fact, name almost any music legend from the '60s – Dean Martin, Elvis, Ricky Nelson, The Beach Boys, Ray Charles – and Glen probably played guitar on some of their hit songs.

Listen again to Frank Sinatra's classic, "Strangers in the Night." That's Campbell on rhythm guitar performing all the guitar licks, which no doubt helped push the song to the top of the charts in 1966. "I played the melody along with him," says Campbell, proudly. "That was the topper of all time, I think, to get to play with Sinatra!"

Davy Jones, former vocalist for the 60s pop group, The Monkees, recalls working with Campbell. "Glen began his career as a studio musician and played on numerous records, including a few for The Monkees,"



stars guitar stars

said Jones from his home in New York. "He was an amazing musician and very talented. I had great respect for his artistry and was a big fan of his music."

On stage, Campbell's nimble fingers will still belt out popular guitar solos such as "Classical Gas," the Mason Williams' pop hit from 1968. But Glen knows classical, too. With an orchestral accompaniment, his blistering guitar version of the William Tell Overture ending is a favorite with concert goers,

especially when Campbell displays his theatrical nature by playing with the instrument balanced on his head towards the conclusion of the piece.

Scott Olson recalls Campbell dazzling the audience with the Rossini classic during a concert with the South Dakota Symphony Orchestra back in 2001, at the Washington Pavilion in Sioux Falls. "It's a difficult piece, mainly for the string sections because of the fast passages," explains Olson, who has been principal trumpet with the SDSO since 1992.

"PBS was filming the performance for a DVD and the crowd was very receptive. Glen is not only a good singer, but a great guitarist," says Olson. "Typically we have three pops shows a year like that one because it's a great way to attract a lot of people who might not normally come to a symphony concert."

Campbell says performing with a first-class orchestra like the SDSO is a treat. "I love playing with big orchestras, everything is so full and rich and it actually makes me sing better." And

▼ Campbell (far right) was a legendary music icon easily categorized with the likes of, from left, Johnny Cash, Merle Haggard and Buck Owens. Campbell and Cash made guest appearances on each others' TV shows.





he still plays the Tell overture, "but not at every show. Sometimes I will if people ask for it."

Showcasing more of his musical skills – not to mention his Scottish heritage – Campbell rounded out the Sioux Falls concert by not only singing "Amazing Grace," but by accompanying himself on the bagpipes. He has also played the instrument on several studio albums. However, don't expect Campbell to strap on the pipes for the Deadwood concert, because he says those days are probably over. "With only one octave range, they are not really all that difficult to play. But they're a lot of work to keep in tune and you certainly need a good set of lungs!"

When Campbell comes to Deadwood this summer, audiences can expect to hear tracks from his latest album. But the crowd could become ugly if the Campbell chestnuts aren't included on the program.

▼ Campbell poses with Grammy-winning songwriter Jimmy Webb, who wrote Campbell hits such as "By The Time I Get To Phoenix" and "Wichita Lineman."



Fortunately, the local riot squad can probably stand down. Glen says a selection of his classics, such as "Southern Nights," "Galveston," "Wichita Lineman," and "Rhinestone Cowboy," are usually in the lineup. And he says there is no mystery

many of my biggest hits. He's one of the best song writers, ever."

Although Webb was unavailable for this story, his appreciation for Campbell is evident from past comments. "Some songwriters are

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*"I was blessed by having people like Glen Campbell putting my work out there."*

– Jimmy Webb

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behind the success of these mega chart-topping 'career' songs that he made his own.

"You need a good piece of poetry up front and then a great melody to go with it," he explained. "That was the genius of Jimmy Webb who wrote

just blessed in some way," Webb said in an interview in the late 1990s. "I was blessed by having people like Glen Campbell putting my work out there."

Despite his musical talents, Campbell rarely attempted to write his own songs. "I'm not a writer, I'm really a 'song doctor,'" he explains. "If I hear a good song that I like, I'll change lines and chord progressions, and make it my own."

Glen Campbell was born just 100 miles from the birthplace of another Arkansas native and country music legend, the late Johnny Cash. The two first crossed paths when Campbell was in his early twenties. "I met him around 1959 in Albuquerque, N.M. He was doing a show as 'Johnny Cash and the Tennessee Two' (The others were Luther Perkins and Marshall Grant.) I've never heard anyone sing like that since."

Campbell and Cash both made the successful jump from country music to pop, and performed together on each other's TV shows during the





◀ Campbell poses with three of his gold albums. Throughout his career, the pop and country star has had 12 Gold albums, 4 Platinum and 1 Double Platinum.





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'60s and '70s. Campbell's variety show, *The Glen Campbell Goodtime Hour*, was watched by up to 50 million viewers each week during its four-season run from 1969-72.

Audiences tuned in to CBS on Sunday evenings to watch cheesy humorous skits, typical of the '60s (writers included yet-to-become-famous Steve Martin and Rob Reiner), and the parade of big name singers eager to share the stage with Campbell's easy-going style of hosting.

Throughout the show's run, Campbell performed duets with virtually every

top artist of the day, including Cher, Johnny Cash, Linda Ronstadt, Liza Minnelli, Neil Diamond, Roger Miller, and Jackie DeShannon.

"I did the show several times," said singer-songwriter DeShannon, in an email message. She is best known for her '60s hit "Put a Little Love in Your Heart." "It was exciting to be a guest on the *Glen Campbell Goodtime Hour*. Glen has a great sense of humor and made everyone feel welcome. I was privileged to have Glen play guitar on many of my recordings and his contributions were always inspiring."

▼ Glen alongside his daughter Debby. After nearly five decades of performing with famed musicians like Neil Diamond, Cher, and Jackie DeShannon, Campbell is now proud to have his daughter as part of his act.



During his live performances today – including the upcoming free summer concert in Deadwood – daughter Debby will often join her father on stage to perform a duet or two.

"Our voices blend well, and it's a great joy that we can perform together," says Campbell. "I didn't get to spend a lot of time with her when she was young, but she grew up knowing that her dad loved her."

As the mood takes him, Campbell will often toss in a few anecdotes between songs during a concert. And if you haven't heard them before, tales from his childhood and about the famous entertainers he encountered are fascinating when told in Campbell's light-hearted and relaxed style.

I would bet you money the name John Wayne will come up! Campbell not only co-starred with Wayne in the 1969 western classic, "True Grit", he sang the movie's theme song, which earned Campbell an Oscar nomination. Wayne won the Oscar for Best Actor that year (his only Oscar) and Campbell was nominated for a Golden Globe Award.

Campbell first met Wayne when "The Duke" strolled onto the set of the *Goodtime Hour*. "I walked this building!" says Campbell of Wayne's massive six-foot, four-inch frame. "His daughter was a fan of the show. One day, during a break on the show, in walks The Duke holding his daughter's hand, and she wanted my autograph. A few weeks later, I got a call saying John Wayne wanted me to co-star in *True Grit*. I wasn't an actor, but Wayne was pretty smart. He wanted to get popular contemporary entertainers for his films to attract a younger audience.



Fabian and Ricky Nelson also did films with him."

True Grit was also Kim Darby's first major role in film. She brilliantly played the feisty Mattie Ross seeking revenge for her father's death. "She was a great gal to work with, a wonderful actress," said Campbell.

music and is an extraordinary and original talent."

The positive critics' reviews of the "Meet Glen Campbell" album would indeed suggest that the lad from Arkansas has still got it. "I love the album!" says DeShannon.

▼ Over 40 years of musical success, hosting his own television series and movie stardom haven't slowed down Glen Campbell. Fans can expect the same vocal talent in Deadwood this June as they heard from Campbell in the 1960's.

*"I know how to sing better and how to hit a high note better than I used to..."*

— Glen Campbell

In a *Seventeen Magazine* article back in the summer of 1969, as filming was beginning, Darby said: "I haven't worked with Glen Campbell yet, so I really haven't formed any feeling in relation to his character."

Four months later after filming was complete, Campbell obviously had left an impression. "I like Glen very much," Darby said in a follow-up interview in the *Los Angeles Times*. "He sang for me an hour and a half the other day and when he sings it's unbelievable. I can't take my eyes off him."

All eyes are sure to be fixed on Glen Campbell when he reclaims the Deadwood stage this June. And perhaps many in the audience will be wondering if it's realistic to expect the 72-year-old entertainer to sing with the same strong, rich country vibe he had 40 years ago.

"Glen is sounding better than ever," says Jackie DeShannon. "He can sing any style of song, play any style of

According to Tracelyn Gesteland, assistant professor of music and voice at the University of South Dakota, "our vocal folds are really just little bands of muscle, so just like any other muscle in the body they lose strength and flexibility as we age." But after listening to a track from the Campbell's album, Gesteland concluded that he "sounds just like I remember him. I don't hear any signs of aging, he sounds fresh and resonant."

In fact, Campbell feels that age as actually improved his voice.

"It's thicker, and I still do everything in the same key," he says. "Actually, it's easier now because I know how to sing better and how to hit a high note better than I used to.... Let's just say I can still jump as high; I just can't stay up there quite as long now!" ★

