

FORGET-ME-NOT SPOTLIGHT

Glen Campbell: I'll Be Me

Directed by James Keach

116 minutes

My first exposure to Glen Campbell was listening to my parents' Glen Campbell album "Wichita Lineman". Since then, I have always enjoyed his music, watched his TV show and other TV appearances, and bought a few of his albums myself. The last time I "saw" him was in this documentary about his battle with Alzheimer's disease. It left me with feelings of amazement that he could still perform so well, shock at some of his symptoms and, sadness that this disease was slowly stealing away a man that was, truly, so talented.

This documentary shows the life of Glen Campbell living with Alzheimer's disease – the good parts, the not-so-good parts, the confused parts, and the bad parts. He doesn't recognize himself on TV, doesn't know his children, forgets his wife's name, but, he can get on stage and play his guitar and sing his songs (most of the time)!! "{The Director James} Keach has remarkable access to Campbell and family, chronicling the singer's increasing angry outbursts and confusion, which are also impossible to hide from concertgoers. It's a rare, intensely personal look at Alzheimer's that will be tragically familiar to those who have lived with it and sobering and sad for those who have not." Linda Barnard, Toronto Star.

It follows Campbell on his 2011 "Goodbye Tour" with his wife and 3 of his children that play in the backup band with his longtime

bandmates. They thought the tour would last 5 weeks, but it went for a year and a half, and had 151 sold out shows! The film includes vignettes of the more than 100 concerts in that goodbye tour, all of which serve as vivid and painful images of the downward spiral that is Alzheimer's. Campbell's humor, so obvious in those opening moments, fades along with his memory with each passing day.

“It’s not the life-story documentary you’d expect. Most of the biggest moments of Campbell’s career are capped up in a nifty opening credit sequence set to “Classical Gas”, and after that the film rarely looks back. Instead it’s a powerful testament to the strength of music, and a very painful study of a genius being disintegrated by a disease that often lends itself to punchlines. Although painful, Alzheimer’s doesn’t stop Glen from defying it through faith, unabashed goofiness, and a killer Donald Duck impression. In an interview by Roy Ivy, Glen says, “I have cried, and I have laughed. Laughter is a helluva lot better.”

This DVD is available at the Effingham Public Library from the Forget-Me-Not Resource Center. If you do not have a library card, it can be checked out under Effingham Area Alzheimer’s Awareness.

Review by Shannon Nosbisch, co-founder of Effingham Area Alzheimer’s Awareness

