



Webb headlines symphony's tribute to Glen Campbell

By Keith Powers / Contributing Writer

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Singer-songwriter Jimmy Webb and Glen Campbell's daughter, Ashley, will be guest artists Monday with the Cape Symphony's New Year's Day tribute to Glen Campbell.

No, still no idea why he left the cake out in the rain.

But a conversation with singer/songwriter **Jimmy Webb** does have its unexpected revelations, and surprising admissions. And you can expect more of the same when he takes the stage New Year's Day with the Cape Symphony – in a sold-out “**New Year's Day Party**” tribute to his longtime friend and collaborator, the late Glen Campbell.

“I spent my due diligence studying classical music,” he says in the first unusual turn. “I am a big fan of Vaughan Williams, Barber, Stravinsky and Sibelius. Classical music is a touchstone, and one of the elements that make up my approach to music. That, and my background in the Baptist church.”

Unexpected, from the composer who created such easy-listening hits as “MacArthur Park,” “Galveston,” “Up, Up and Away,” and “Wichita Lineman.”

But Webb has also composed “Nocturne for Lefty” for piano and orchestra, a waltz segment of which will be performed by the symphony (along with waltzes by Strauss) on Monday. In a career that spans half a century, Webb has written for and collaborated with artists who include Louis Armstrong, Paul McCartney, the Kentucky Orchestra, Elvis Presley and Donna Summer.

But his greatest partner was Glen Campbell. Perhaps the first artist to bring country music styles to the top-40 charts, Campbell passed away in August after a feisty and bravely public battle with Alzheimer's disease.

“Glen was really the first country crossover artist,” Webb says. “The first really successful one. ‘Wichita Lineman’ sold 44 million copies. He laid the groundwork for Lionel Richie, Kenny Rogers, a whole bunch of players.

“Glen made everything look so easy,” he says, “that there was a tendency to lump him into a group of establishment, middle-of-the-road artists. Probably because he branched out — he even did comedy on TV. He never had those dramatic lines on his face, like rock stars.

“But his guitar playing was phenomenal. He could duel with anyone in the world — (Eric) Clapton, (Mark) Knopfler. Maybe (Larry) Coryell and (John) McLaughlin could play faster, but most guys — he kicked their ass. (Paul) McCartney knew, and Knopfler knew, those guys in the inner circle. Glen was the man.

“But he was a nice guy, and he never assumed the role of tormented artist. That’s probably why we never associated him with the rock stars.”

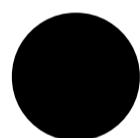
Campbell went out on top, going on tour even after announcing that his diagnosis in 2010. He recorded an album, “Adiós,” just after that tour, and that album was released last summer, just before he died.

“He really took on Alzheimer’s,” Webb says. “He went into the abyss. Going onstage with his teleprompter – that inspired a little bit of awe.”

Campbell’s daughter Ashley will join Webb on the Barnstable High School stage for the concert tribute. “We did a few things together at an 80th birthday celebration for Glen last year in Nashville,” Webb says. “Ashley’s an up-and-coming banjo player and singer. I hear resonances of Glen in her voice, and her father’s influence. When she and I do some of the standard stuff, I think it’s really poignant.

“It should make for a very nice New Year’s,” he says of the program.

Besides paying tribute to Glen Campbell, the orchestra will perform a variety of works by Strauss and Sousa plus other New Year’s favorites.



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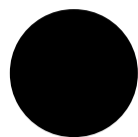
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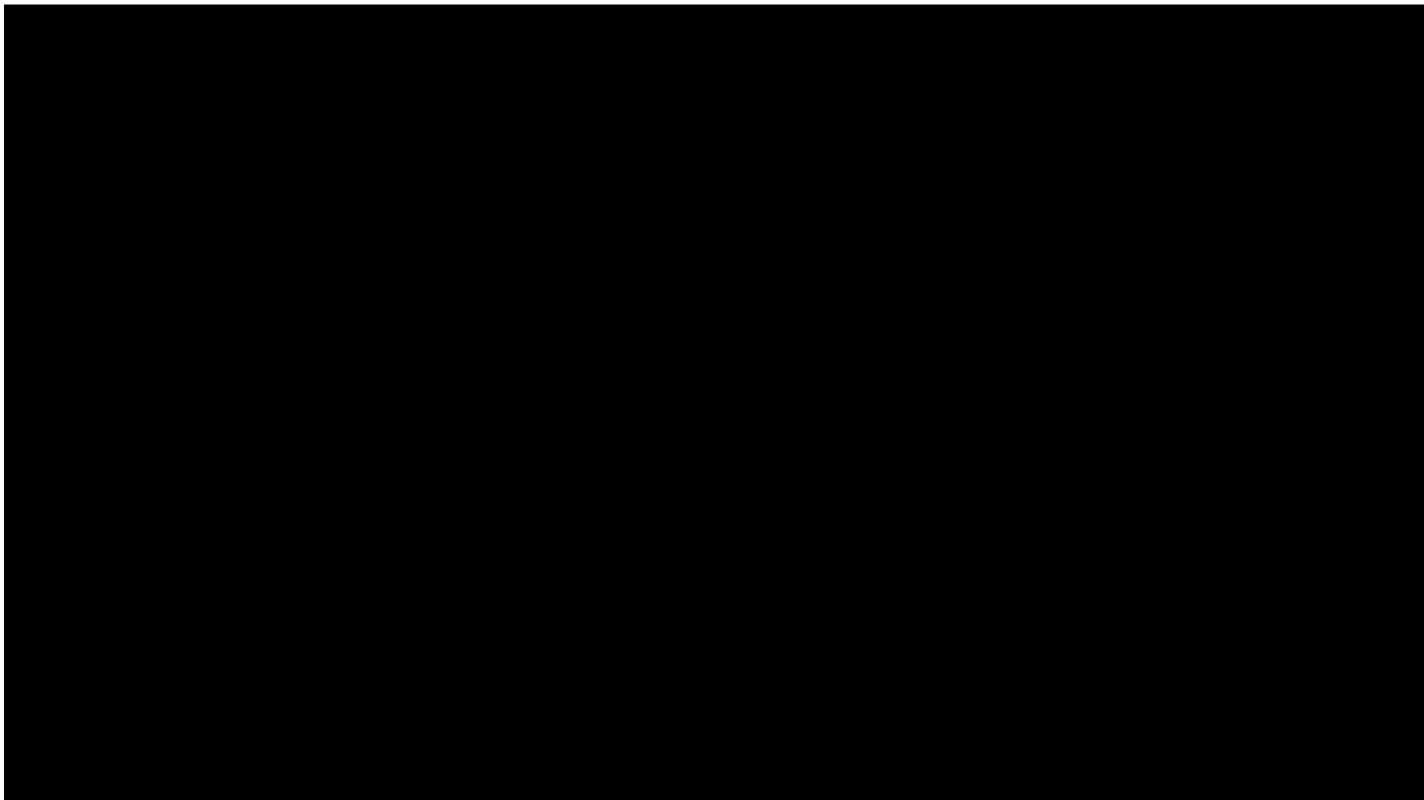


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