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## 'Ghost on the Canvas' Final Album for Country Star Glen Campbell

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DOUG JOHNSON: Welcome to American Mosaic in VOA Special English.

I'm Doug Johnson.

The singer Glen Campbell has released his first album of new songs in years. The album is also his last because Glen Campbell has Alzheimer's disease.

Today, Christopher Cruise tells us about the singer and his new CD.

### Glen Campbell

CHRISTOPHER CRUISE: You may never have heard about Glen Campbell. But he was one of the best-known singers in the United States in the late nineteen sixties and early nineteen seventies. He even had his own television show.

Campbell sold tens of millions of records. He had twenty-one top forty hits – two of them reached number one – and nine number one country albums. And he received five Grammy Awards from the music industry.

He had hits with songs that have been called "arresting country pop classics," like "Rhinestone Cowboy," "By the Time I Get to Phoenix," and "Gentle on My Mind."



Even before his success as a solo artist, Glen Campbell had been one of the music world's most in-demand studio musicians. He played on songs recorded by

Elvis Presley, Frank Sinatra and The Beach Boys, among others. Even with Alzheimer's disease, he remembers those days well.

GLEN CAMPBELL: "I could play, I could play guitar, you know. When I, when I was in California I could, I could play. And I knew I could play. People have said this and that and that and that. And my dad said 'Son if you think you can do it, you can do it, but you gotta' work at it.' [Laughter] And I said 'OK.'"

But after his success, the music changed. Glen Campbell and his songs simply were no longer popular. He continued to perform, but released few albums. In the nineteen eighties and nineties he had problems with drug abuse and alcoholism.

The lowest point came in two thousand three, when he was caught driving drunk. He hit a police officer and was jailed for ten days. The experience shook him. He says, as a result, he stopped abusing drugs and alcohol.

Now, at the age of seventy-five, Glen Campbell's career is coming to an end. Not because of his age, but because Alzheimer's disease is slowly robbing him of his memory. Campbell decided to record one last album while he was still in good health. He co-wrote some new songs and recorded them on a studio CD called Ghost on the Canvas. This song is called "Any Trouble."

(MUSIC)

I was lucky to have a chance to meet Glen Campbell in nineteen sixty-seven -- when I was eight years old. At the time, my mother wanted to meet him. But he was so popular that it was impossible - unless you were a friend or had connections in the music industry. So, my mother added a note at the bottom of a form letter that had been sent to her by the Glen Campbell fan club.

The note invited us to meet with Campbell before his sold-out show in Boston, Massachusetts. She then wrote his signature at the end of the note. To my surprise, it worked. Security guards let us into his dressing room and, before you know it, I was looking up at the famous singer.

Glen Campbell was nice. He called my mother by her first name and she was calling him "Glen." The picture I have of me from that day, with Campbell putting his arm around my shoulder, is one of my prized possessions.



Glen Campbell and 8-year-old Christopher Cruise

I showed the picture to the singer when I met with him before his recent performance in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He looked at it, pointed to himself in the picture and asked me who that good-looking gentleman was. It took me a few seconds to understand he was not joking. He did not recognize himself in the picture. But he signed it for me anyway. We have posted the picture on our website – [voaspecialenglish.com](http://voaspecialenglish.com).

(MUSIC: "The Billstown Crossroads")

At our recent meeting, Campbell asked me where he was. When I told him he was in Philadelphia, he asked me why. He knew he was with his children and his wife. But he did not know why he had come to Philadelphia. When I told him it was because he was to perform that night he seemed happy. His wife says he becomes Glen Campbell again when he is performing on stage.

(MUSIC: "A Thousand Lifetimes")

Glen Campbell no longer knows the words to even his most-famous songs - the ones he has been singing for forty or more years. During his show, he uses an electronic device that shows him the words he once knew by heart.

(MUSIC)

That was "Hold on Hope" from his new CD. In the song, he sings about how "everybody's got a hold on hope. It's the last thing that's holding me."

Campbell will continue performing for as long as his health will let him. He is set to perform in concerts through the end of the year throughout the United States and in the United Kingdom. He even has a concert set for next February.

We leave you with a song from Glen Campbell's new album that he co-wrote with Julian Raymond. The song is called "A Better Place."

(MUSIC)

DOUG JOHNSON: I'm Doug Johnson. This program was written by Christopher Cruise and produced by Caty Weaver.

If you have a question about American life, send it to [mosaic@voanews.com](mailto:mosaic@voanews.com) or click on the Contact Us link at [voaspecialenglish.com](http://voaspecialenglish.com). You can follow us on Facebook and Twitter at VOA Learning English.

Join us again next week for music and more on AMERICAN MOSAIC in VOA Special English.

(MUSIC: "Ghost on the Canvas")