

Mp3 Debbie Campbell-floren - Come As You Are

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Originally inspired by the Sunday lesson or scriptural passages the lesson was based upon, I wrote all of these songs originally to sing for that Sunday's service. Eventually, my friends and spiritual "family" pleaded with me until I undertook the somewh 14 MP3 Songs GOSPEL: Contemporary Gospel, FOLK: Gentle Details: Born and raised in Fort Worth, Texas, Debbie Campbell left home at the age of 15 to begin a musical career that would take her all over the U.S. and around the world, captivating the hearts of music fans wherever she would sing. As a member of the all-girl rock 'n' roll group, the Kandy Kanes, Debbie began living and learning the life of a musician "on the road," even though she and her bandmates would be required to continue to be chaperoned and tutored as high school students as they traveled and would have to obtain special "under age" permits to enter the clubs where they were to play each night. After almost five years, the Kandy Kanes disbanded and Debbie joined an LA-based country-rock band, Buckwheat, with whom she toured and recorded on three of Buckwheat's four LP's for London Records. During her touring days, Debbie performed numerous times in Tulsa and was consistently impressed with the quality of the musicianship she found there, as well as with the friendly warmth of the people and livability of the community. So, in the mid-1970's, Debbie bid farewell to the bright lights of LA and relocated to Tulsa, where she became an integral and well-recognized part of the Tulsa music scene and established herself as one of the preeminent exponents of the "Tulsa Sound" for more than 25 years. With her distinctive jazz, pop and blues sound, Debbie became a familiar voice and face throughout the Tulsa area, being named Tulsa's Best Local Performer for 4 consecutive years by Tulsa People magazine. Debbie successfully exported her version of the Tulsa Sound all over the world. Performing at international music festivals in England, Austria, Malaysia, Egypt and Bulgaria, she became the first American to win Bulgaria's prestigious Golden Orpheus award. She appeared as both a guest and as a guest host on a number of local and national television programs, including a guest appearance on "Nashville Now" and a week-long stint as guest co-host with Rick Wells on Tulsa KOTV's "Six In The Morning." In addition to her charismatic live performances in clubs, restaurants, public events and at private parties, Debbie was also widely and warmly received as both a speaker and a singer at a

tremendous variety of church, civic and social events and services, not only in Tulsa and throughout Oklahoma, but also in Missouri and Texas, and even as far away as Ohio and California. In November, 1999, Debbie performed at the Betty Ford Center 17th Anniversary Banquet, at which she made a singing presentation to President and Mrs. Ford of an original, commemorative song for the event. Debbie spent several years teaching college level courses in songwriting, stage personality and chorus and in the last few years of her life gained great satisfaction and enjoyment teaching vocal music and beginning guitar to a number of individual students of all ages and backgrounds. However, Debbie's passion for music and her joy in being able to share some of the many gifts that music had brought into her life seemed to shine most brightly in her teaching beginning guitar to teenage girls - perhaps most noticeably in her "Girls and Guitars" workshops given in conjunction with Tulsa's Resonance for Women in 2002 and early 2003. In the 1990's, Debbie's musical work began to reflect her own deepening spiritual commitment, which included Debbie donating much of her time and talent to a number of different charities - a pattern that would continue to the end of her life. Debbie's amazing ability to make everyone who heard her music feel as though she was one of their very best friends began to grow and shine ever more brightly as she would share her own spiritual "story" - along with her strengths, hopes and beliefs - through her original songs. Debbie would use sermon topics and titles and scriptural quotes to guide her in her songwriting for the majority of the songs which she performed in her home church and in other churches around the country. So fondly received were her songs that Debbie was eventually convinced by her church family and others to produce and record two albums of her all-original music, "Back 2 Basics" (1995-out of print) and "Come As You Are" (1997). Debbie and her husband, Charlie Floren, teamed up to form their own company, Debbie Campbell Music, L.L.C., in 2000 and this company (DCM, for short) was responsible for the production and 2001 release of Debbie's last album entitled, "Some of These Days," a collection of jazz and pop standards (also available on CD Baby.) Debbie had begun work on a new gospel album in early 2003, before her deteriorating health intervened later that year to prevent any further vocal work on the album. Beginning sometime in the spring of 2003, Debbie began experiencing an increasing level of pain in her hip and back which failed to respond to the many forms of treatment (for what was believed to be either arthritis or sciatica) which she sought throughout the year. Debbie, her family and friends were understandably stunned to learn in November, 2003, that her diagnosis was in fact Stage 4 lung cancer. During the three and one-half months following her diagnosis, Debbie underwent numerous rounds of

radiation therapy on her lung, pelvic area and brain, a week-long series of tests, scans and evaluations at M.D. Cancer Center in Houston, and a session of chemotherapy before being released from the hospital for the last time, to return home under the care of Saint Francis Hospice, along with her husband and closest friends. On Saturday night, February 28, 2004, in her home surrounded by her loved ones, Debbie passed peacefully from this life. Finally freed from the body which had become only a source of unfathomable pain, Debbie has joined the heavenly chorus to sing of redemption, faith, hope and love, so that those of us left here on earth who miss her so badly may in time find peace, comfort and perhaps even joy of our own. On Wednesday, March 3d, a memorial service was held for Debbie at Christ United Methodist Church in Tulsa. Despite a steady, and at times torrential, rainstorm (Yes, even the sky was crying that day.), the church was filled to standing-room only capacity and all present were given the opportunity - as planned by Debbie herself, together with her husband, Charlie, and Reverend Robert Pierson, officiating - to celebrate the life fully lived and love fully shared by Debbie Campbell, rather than simply mourn her loss. Two songs from this album were among the musical selections used in the service, "Come As You Are" and "Reach Out And Touch Someone With Your Love." However, knowing of Debbie's dislike for having her own music played for her - (Debbie said often that she was only able to hear the mistakes in her own recordings.) Debbie's husband enlisted the help of Pat Savage, the producer of this album and world-class studio and engineering wizard, to use the instrumental tracks (only) of the song "Come As You Are" as the background of a video collage of Debbie's life, with Andre Martin (whom Debbie had specifically requested handle all the music at the service) adding his own transcendent voice for the song's lyrics. The second song from this album used at Debbie's memorial service, "Reach Out And Touch Someone With Your Love," was a tribute arranged by the incomparable Rick Fortner, musical director of All Souls Unitarian Church, using a full choir to back up lead solo performances by several of the brightest current stars in Tulsa's rich musical landscape - Mary Cogan, Rebecca Ungerman, and Grady Nichols. The specific songs selected by Debbie were "Sweet Spirit of God (Fall Gently On Me)," sung as a congregational hymn, "In The Garden" beautifully rendered by Andre as a solo and then, at the very end, "Amazing Grace" sung by all. At Debbie's husband's request, all attendees were invited by Rev. Pierson to take with them one or a few of the flowers from the enormous number of beautiful and majestic sprays and displays which had been sent in by many of Debbie's fans and friends. Rather than simply making and selling new copies of Debbie's first gospel album, "Back 2

Basics" which although musically and thematically sparkling, was considerably less filled-out than her later works due to a very limited budget, Debbie's husband is currently planning a new release which will include the songs of "Back 2 Basics" remastered, together with the songs that can be completed from Debbie's April 2003 sessions. Although Debbie may have "left the building" as Elvis' announcer used to say, her music will definitely live on. You really do owe it to yourself to have your own copy of this beautifully produced, musically masterful, and spiritually enlightened work of art and love. --Charlie Floren

March 26, 2004

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