

**GREENWICH**  
ENTERTAINMENT

presents

# KEYBOARD FANTASIES



Running time: 71 mins

In theaters and on digital October 29

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## **SYNOPSIS**

As a sci-fi obsessed woman living in near isolation, Beverly Glenn-Copeland wrote and self-released *Keyboard Fantasies* in Huntsville, Ontario back in 1986. Recorded in an Atari-powered home studio, the cassette featured seven tracks of a curious folk-electronica hybrid, a sound realised far before its time.

Three decades on the musician – now Glenn Copeland – began to receive emails from people across the world, thanking him for the music they'd recently discovered. Courtesy of a rare-record collector in Japan, a reissue of *Keyboard Fantasies* and subsequent plays by Four Tet, Caribou and more, the music had finally found its audience two generations down the line.

*Keyboard Fantasies: The Beverly Glenn-Copeland Story* sees the protagonist commit his life and music to screen for the first time - an intimate coming of age story spinning pain and the suffering of prejudice into rhythm, hope and joy.

Half aural-visual history, half DIY tour-video, the film provides a vehicle for our newly appointed queer elder to connect with youth across the globe. A timely lullaby to soothe those souls struggling to make sense of the world.

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## **BEVERLY GLENN-COPELAND BIO**

The diverse work of legendary Canadian/American singer, composer and transgender activist Beverly Glenn-Copeland has been gathering momentum and recognition in recent years thanks to a reissue of the extraordinary folk-jazz of his debut self-titled album (1970) and the widespread discovery of his masterpiece *Keyboard Fantasies* (1986), which was awarded the Slaight Family Polaris Heritage Prize in 2020.

The recent career retrospective release, *Transmissions: The Music of Beverly Glenn-Copeland*, is a career-spanning album that includes compositions from his early works and his cult-status release, *Keyboard Fantasies*. It achieved widespread critical acclaim and has shown that Glenn-Copeland's music continues to defy categorisation and genre 50 years after his miraculous career began.

Born in Philadelphia in 1944, Glenn-Copeland grew up in a house obsessed with classical music, his father practiced piano for 5 hours a night. Glenn refers to Bach, Chopin and Mozart as his 'cradle music', music that seeped into his blood-stream. He moved to Montreal in 1961 so that he could study German Lieder (song-cycles) at McGill University. Faced with challenges and hostility relating to his race, gender and sexual orientation he dropped out of university before completing his degree. He picked up a guitar and started writing music.

In 1970 Glenn-Copeland recorded two brilliant albums. The first was part of CBC's 'Transcription Series' titled Beverly Copeland. It was a virtuosic showcase of classical and jazz vocal stylings, poetry, jazz and folk, accompanied by some of the best players of the time. Original pressings of that album now fetch thousands of dollars when passed from collector to collector – just 250 copies were pressed. Six months later Glenn- Copeland made a studio album with many of those same musicians, this time titled Beverly Glenn-Copeland, it was folk-jazz classic and an album that has been the subject of a mystical reputation and underground following for almost five decades now.

It wasn't until 1986 that Glenn-Copeland recorded again. This time he was inspired by a profound relationship with nature, an obsession with science fiction and some of the earliest drum-machines and synthesisers. Keyboard Fantasies is a minimalist, proto- electronic masterpiece with unbelievable soul. Imagine Joni Mitchell collaborating with Brian Eno and you'll get close. Self-released on cassette, it sold less than 100 copies at the time. But Keyboard Fantasies was this record that would break Glenn's career wide- open more than 30 years later.

His life has been a non-stop combination of self-discovery and part pop-culture fairy-tale. He appeared as regular guest 'Beverly' on the beloved Canadian children's TV show Mr. Dress-up for nearly 30 years. He wrote for Sesame Street. He lived in the cities and in the wild. He wrote musicals, operas, children's music and hundreds upon hundreds of other songs even though he only had the means to record those few aforementioned albums.

In the early 1990's Beverly Glenn-Copeland first heard the term 'transgender'. Armed with the language to describe the way he had felt since before he was even a teenager, he found a self-identity which had eluded him his whole life.

In 2016 Keyboard Fantasies was discovered by a revered Japanese record-store owner and collector. Word spread in the record-collecting community and several re-issues were released on different labels. Glenn played his first shows of original music in more than 40 years to standing ovation after standing ovation. He formed a band of brilliant and talented young musicians from Nova Scotia, Montreal and Toronto and started touring the world.

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## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT:

I first heard the record *Keyboard Fantasies* in 2017. Like many others I quickly became obsessed, and wanted to find the person behind the timeless, mesmerising record.

After a long, fruitless search for Beverly online, I found my way to Glenn delivering a lecture at Red Bull Music Academy Montreal. Watching him mimic the unique dancing styles of his ancestors to a room of enraptured and hungover twenty-year-olds, I knew I needed to know more.

A year of lively Skype calls followed as Glenn and I explored how we might work together. Glenn had written *Keyboard Fantasies* alone, looping takes from his Roland TR-707, so had never played the music live. Initially he was reticent to revisit the music of his past, yet as time went on and more and more young people started getting in touch, he changed tack and formed an ensemble of artists - Indigo Rising - with whom to share his music with the world.

A few months later – after receiving a chance cancellation fee from a commercial job – I got on a plane to Nova Scotia to meet with Glenn, and see if I could find the makings of a film. Spending a week with Glenn confirmed my suspicions that his was a story that needed to be told. Glenn has a profoundly enlightened understanding of the bigger constructs we allow to rule our lives – gender, time, space, identity – wisdom learned through the challenges he has faced in the past. To hear such timely sentiments coming from a radiant 74 year-old man (an “elder”, as he calls himself), is both a comfort and an inspiration.

The music of *Keyboard Fantasies* has already touched record collectors around the world, and I hope that this film can now travel in a similar manner, bringing a little hope, joy and solace to those whom encounter it.

## CREDITS

### CAST

Glenn Copeland

Jeremy Costello

Carlie Howell

Kurt Inder

Nick Dourado

Bianca Palmer

### ADDITIONAL CAST

April Sudler

Charlie Bones

Don Thompson

IeZlie Lee Kam

Mike Hazard

Terry Brown

Ami Koda

Anna Ekelund

Dayo James

Hannah O'Neill

Lily Ames

Tiger Reid

Director Posy Dixon

Producer Liv Proctor

Editor Tim Beeston

DOP Europe Lee Burnett

DOP Colour Sequences Morgan K. Spencer

DOP Canada Kevin A. Fraser

Sound mixer Danny Carey

Art Director Whitney Conti

Colourist Steve Atkins

Supervising Sound Editor John Cohen

Re-recording Mixer Rob Szeliga

## COLOUR SEQUENCES

Spectacle Studio

Colour Spectrum

Peter Wynne-Willson

Colour Technique

Whitney Conti

## ADDITIONAL MUSIC & SOUND DESIGN

Jeremy Costello

Chris JP Franks