



MEDIA INFORMATION

LEONARD COHEN

His first novel, The Favorite Game, made him a cult hero in the early Sixties. When his second, Beautiful Losers, was published, people began calling his hometown of Montreal "The City of Beautiful Losers." His first album became the core around which Robert Altman built his classic western "McCabe and Mrs. Miller." His songs, such as "Hey, That's No Way To Say Goodbye," "Famous Blue Raincoat," "Joan of Arc" and "Suzanne" have become classics in their own right, recorded by artists too numerous to tally. For years Judy Collins has made it a point to have at least one of his songs on each of her albums. Kris Kristofferson once said he'd place the first few lines of "Bird On A Wire" on his tombstone.

Novelist-poet-composer-singer, Leonard Cohen leaves his indelible mystique on words and on the people who come in contact with those words. He is a graduate of McGill University, the recipient of an honorary LLD from Dalhousie College (Halifax, Nova Scotia), the author of eight books of poetry.

He learned the old union songs and folk songs from the union-organizing father of a friend ("only Socialists and Communists played the guitar in those days"), and started writing poetry (which he prefers to call "constricted language") as a young man "trying to get girls." He began his professional career in '57, reciting his poetry, a la Ginsberg and Ferlinghetti in the States, against the backdrop of a jazz pianist, Maury Kay. For most of the Sixties he was in residence in Greece. Trips to New York, when he'd play his songs for friends led him to John Hammond (or vice versa) and a contract with Columbia. His albums, Songs of Leonard Cohen, Songs of Love and Hate and New Skin For Old Ceremonies, among others, have earned him a devoted following, not only in the U.S. and Canada, but throughout Europe as well.

Phil Spector is a hero of another sort and it seemed almost inevitable that the 'father of the wall of sound' should meet up with the 'master of words.' Death of A Ladies' Man (Oct. '77) grew out of a series of songwriting sessions, which grew out of an introduction by Spector and Cohen's mutual friend and lawyer, Marty Marchat. It's difficult to pinpoint exactly where Cohen leaves off and Spector begins, so closely did the two mesh talents and ideas on this album. Cohen sang his smoke and whiskey voice. Spector produced his lush instrumental backdrops. Both shared writing credits. As might be expected, this 'odd coupling' produced what Cohen refers to as a 'little classic,' a masterpiece of multi-leveled textures in music and words. At the center of this project is the theme of love --- in changing times that change lives (the title track was an incisive look at what might be considered a prototype male/female relationship in the '70s). This is not to say that the LP is without humor because "Memories" and "Don't Go Home With Your Hard-On" (where Cohen is joined by Dylan and Ginsberg) are as wry as they come. Nor is the program without pure interludes of poetic imagery, as on "True Love Leaves No Traces." Death of A Ladies' Man is one of those albums that's fascinating by any standards --- an interplay of lyrics, melodies, voices and instrumentation.

Cohen has said that with this album he's hoping to "touch his toe in the mainstream." No doubt, it's a place where he's always belonged.

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