



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**THE ESSENTIAL LEONARD COHEN CRIES "HALLELUJAH" AS IT  
SEARCHES THE DECADES FOR THE DEEP & THE TIMELESS**

31-song, 2-CD/2-cassette collection spans his Columbia recordings from 1967 ("Suzanne," "Sisters Of Mercy," "So Long Marianne," "Hey, That's No Way To Say Goodbye,") through 2001 ("In My Secret Life," "Alexandra Leaving," "A Thousand Kisses Deep," "Love Itself")

Cohen personally determines selections  
and supervises remastering and editing of tracks

Also drafts novelist and travel writer Pico Iyer for liner notes  
to highlight newest addition to the ESSENTIAL series,  
set to arrive in stores October 22<sup>nd</sup> on Columbia

"He defined the '60s for many of us, with songs like 'Suzanne' and 'Bird On a Wire'; he caught the bravado of the '80s ('First We Take Manhattan'), and, having already plunged deep into the time out of time ('Night Comes On'), he then summarized the '90s ('The Future'). When everyone had counted him out, he looked in on us again, from his cabin high up at the Mount Baldy Zen Center, and told us what was essential in the 21<sup>st</sup> century too."

– From the liner notes written by Pico Iyer

The travels of **Leonard Cohen** – from his childhood home in Montreal to an island off the coast of Greece, from an endless succession of sterile hotel rooms to a modest house in Los Angeles, from the great stages of North America and Europe to a remote mountaintop in the San Gabriel Forest – have resulted in a towering body of songs which, in his own words, represent "a kind of balance in the chaos of existence." Though it comprises barely a dozen original studio album releases between 1967 and 2001 (and but two *live* albums), Cohen's Columbia catalog is an endlessly intriguing musical resource that continues to inspire listeners across the spectrum – fans, musicians, fellow songwriters, theologians, politicians, and Zen Masters.



**THE ESSENTIAL LEONARD COHEN**, whose entire repertoire of 31 songs was personally chosen by the artist, is the first career-long anthology of Cohen's recordings to span from his debut LP of 1968, *Songs Of Leonard Cohen* (source of "Suzanne," "Sisters Of Mercy," "So Long Marianne," "Hey, That's No Way To Say Goodbye," "Master Song") through last year's *Ten New Songs* ("In My Secret Life," "Alexandra Leaving," "A Thousand Kisses Deep," "Love Itself"). The newly-compiled digitally remastered double-CD/double-cassette collection will arrive in stores October 22<sup>nd</sup> on Columbia, a division of Sony Music.

Leonard Cohen now becomes the first Canadian-born artist to join Sony Music's prestigious **ESSENTIAL** series – which includes career-long best-selling double-CD collections from core Columbia and Epic recording artists **Tony Bennett, Johnny Cash, Miles Davis, Neil Diamond, Bob Dylan, Billy Joel, Journey, Santana, Sly & the Family Stone, Barbra Streisand, and Stevie Ray Vaughan.**

By supervising the song selection for **THE ESSENTIAL LEONARD COHEN**, the artist achieved his goal of giving consumers the "maximum" for their purchase, with each disc clocking in at more than 78 minutes of music. Cohen also personally chose the liner notes writer, Pico Iyer, the Oxford-born and Eton-educated author, essayist, novelist, biographer, and world-renowned travel writer who has contributed articles to *Conde Nast Traveler*, *Civilization*, the *New York Review of Books*, *Sports Illustrated*, and the *Times of London*. His books, which have been translated into many languages and published around the world, include *Video Night in Kathmandu*, *The Lady and the Monk*, *The Global Soul*, the novel *Cuba and the Night*, and the upcoming *Abandon*.

Born in Montreal on September 21, 1934, Cohen was attending McGill University when he formed a country-western trio at age 17, the Bucksin Boys. Four years later, upon graduation, he published his first collection of poetry, *Let Us Compare Mythologies*. With the publication of his second collection five years later, *The Spice Box Of Earth*, Leonard Cohen was catapulted to international recognition. After a brief stint at Columbia University in New York, he obtained a grant that enabled him to travel throughout Europe; he eventually settled on the Greek island of Hydra where he stayed on and off for seven years.

During this time he wrote another collection of poetry, the controversial *Flowers For Hitler* (1964); and two highly acclaimed novels, *The Favorite Game* (1963), his portrait of the artist as a young Jew in Montreal, and *Beautiful Losers* (1966). Upon its publication, the *Boston Globe* raved, "James Joyce is not dead. He is living in Montreal under the name of Cohen." To date, each book has sold more than a million copies worldwide.

Cohen's decision to turn his attention to songwriting landed him in Nashville, and his music came to the attention of top-selling folk artist Judy Collins, known for her prescient championing of the new breed of singer-songwriters including Bob Dylan, Eric Andersen, Phil Ochs, Richard Farina, and Gordon Lightfoot. Her inclusion of Cohen's "Suzanne" and "Dress Rehearsal Rag" on her *In My Life* album of late-1966 (alongside songs by Dylan, Randy Newman, Donovan, and the Lennon-McCartney title tune) placed Leonard Cohen in the front ranks of the genre; he subsequently joined her on tour. Cohen appeared at the Newport Folk Festival in 1967, where he came to the attention of legendary Columbia A&R man John Hammond, known for his signings to the company of Billie Holiday, Olatunji, Aretha Franklin, Pete Seeger, and Bob Dylan; Hammond would bring Bruce Springsteen along in the '70s and Stevie Ray Vaughan in the '80s.



The Columbia release just before Christmas 1967 of the debut album, Songs of Leonard Cohen signaled the arrival of a critically important "new" face. It marked one of the first assignments for young Columbia staff production assistant John Simon, who went on to acclaim as the producer of Big Brother & the Holding Company's Cheap Thrills, Blood, Sweat & Tears, and the Band, among others.

Cohen's next two albums, 1969's Songs From a Room ("Bird On a Wire," "The Partisan") and 1971's Songs Of Love and Hate ("Famous Blue Raincoat") found him recording in Nashville with producer Bob Johnston, known for his career defining work of the late '60s and early '70s with Johnny Cash, Bob Dylan, the Byrds, Dino Valente, Loudon Wainwright III, Dan Hick & His Hot Licks and others. The two albums reinforced Cohen's standing as "the master of mortification and the sentry of solitude," even as he ventured into new territory: the Columbia soundtrack for Robert Altman's quirky western of 1971, McCabe and Mrs. Miller (starring Warren Beatty and Julie Christie); and 1972's Live Songs, his only live album until 1994.

After 1974's New Skin For the Old Ceremony ("Chelsea Hotel #2," "Take This Longing," "Who By Fire"), his first self-produced album, Cohen took a well-earned sabbatical. His reappearance in 1977 took the form of Death Of a Ladies' Man, a controversial wall-of-sound experiment with producer Phil Spector. The LP wound up as part of Spector's Warner Bros. catalog, but was eventually acquired by Columbia Records in the '90s where it now resides. Cohen decided to serve as co-producer of his next LP (for the first time) with Henry Lewy, who'd been Joni Mitchell's engineer for the past ten years. 1979's Recent Songs ("The Guests") began to address long-standing exploration into the religious arena. It took five years more for this spiritual odyssey to culminate in a new collection of songs, Various Positions ("Hallelujah," "If It Be Your Will"), produced by woodwind arranger John Lissauer.

Now on the path, Cohen observed another lengthy sabbatical-cum-quest, during which time his friend Jennifer Warnes released her critically acclaimed Famous Blue Raincoat in 1986, an entire album of Cohen's work – and the first of some 12 tribute albums in his honor over the next decade and a half. The end result of Cohen's '80s hiatus was one of the greatest albums of his career, 1988's self-produced I'm Your Man ("I'm Your Man," "Everybody Knows," "Tower Of Song," "Ain't No Cure," "Take This Waltz," "First We Take Manhattan"). It was a stunning new collection of songs that sparked a renaissance of interest in the flush of the fledgling MTV era, and went to #1 in several European countries.

Another major tribute album arrived in 1991, I'm Your Fan (Atlantic), an 18-song collection featuring such prominent musicians as REM, John Cale, Nick Cave, Ian McCulloch, Pixies, the House of Love, Lloyd Cole and others. The following year Cohen re-emerged with The Future ("The Future," "Democracy," "Waiting For the Miracle," "Closing Time," "Anthem"), an album that was every bit as strong and monumental in its scope as I'm Your Man. He followed it less than two years later with Cohen Live ("Dance To the End Of Love"), his first live album in just over two decades.

One year ago, on October 9, 2001, Columbia issued two Leonard Cohen albums on the same day: Field Commander Cohen – Tour Of 1979 (his third live album) was a marvelous time capsule of songs that featured long-time touring vocalists Warnes and Sharon Robinson (co-writer of "Everybody Knows") and Cohen's full-band ensemble. Ten New Songs, which contributes the four closing selections on THE ESSENTIAL LEONARD COHEN, is essentially a collaboration with Sharon Robinson, who sings with Cohen on every track and reminds us of his timeless qualities.



"If you think of some of the other great pilgrims of song," writes Pico Iyer, "Bob Dylan, say, or Van Morrison or Joni Mitchell, you see them pass through philosophies and selves as if through stations of the cross; with Cohen, one feels that he knew who he was and where he was going from the beginning, and only digs deeper, deeper... Cohen takes us, at heart, into a mythic place, an ageless space alight with goddesses and God, where we see a lone figure walking down the road, in dark Buddhist robes, with a Torah in one hand and a picture of a woman in the other. Always in our sight even as he disappears into the dark."

**THE ESSENTIAL LEONARD COHEN (C2K) Selections – Disc One:** 1. Suzanne (A) • 2. Sisters Of Mercy (A) • 3. So Long Marianne (A) • 4. Hey, That's No Way To Say Goodbye (A) • 5. Master Song (A) • 6. Bird On a Wire (B) • 7. The Partisan (B) • 8. Famous Blue Raincoat (C) • 9. Chelsea Hotel #2 (D) • 10. Take This Longing (D) • 11. Who By Fire (D) • 12. The Guests (E) • 13. Hallelujah (F) • 14. If It Be Your Will (F) • 15. Night Comes On (F) • 16. I'm Your Man (G) • 17. Everybody Knows (G) • 18. Tower Of Song (G)

**Disc Two:** 1. Ain't No Cure (G) • 2. Take This Waltz (G) • 3. First We Take Manhattan (G) • 4. Dance To the End Of Love (*live*, H) • 5. The Future (I) • 6. Democracy (I) • 7. Waiting For the Miracle (I) • 8. Closing Time (I) • 9. Anthem (I) • 10. In My Secret Life (J) • 11. Alexandra Leaving (J) • 12. A Thousand Kisses Deep (J) • 13. Love Itself (J).

**Key:** A – from *Songs Of Leonard Cohen* (Columbia 9533, recorded and released 1967)  
B – from *Songs From a Room* (Columbia 9767, recorded 1968, released 1969)  
C – from *Songs Of Love and Hate* (Columbia 30103, recorded 1970, released 1971)  
D – from *New Skin For the Old Ceremony* (Columbia 33167, recorded and released 1974)  
E – from *Recent Songs* (Columbia 36264, recorded and released 1979)  
F – from *Various Positions* (Columbia 66950, recorded 1984, released 1985)  
G – from *I'm Your Man* (Columbia 44191, recorded and released 1988)  
H – from *Cohen Live* (Columbia 66327, recorded 1993, released 1994)  
I – from *The Future* (Columbia 53226, recorded and released 1992)  
J – from *Ten New Songs* (Columbia 85953, recorded and released 2001)

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