

DVD Review: Leonard Cohen's "Lonesome Heroes"

By **Lucy Tonic**

Leonard Cohen's "Lonesome Heroes" is a different sort of music DVD. Instead of focusing on the details of Cohen's life and work, the film looks at Cohen's life-long influences which inevitably affected his music career.

Says music journalist Nigel Williamson of Cohen, "He's a worldly man... that brings with him influences that were unusual if not unique to rock & roll at that time." Indeed, when Cohen immersed on the scene in the late 1960s, his introspective work was so original that there seemed to be no one before him; his work seemed all his own. But through the words of several academics, journalists and friends, and previous concerts and dialogues from Cohen himself, "Lonesome Heroes" taps into who and what Cohen drew inspiration from, and how these inspirations translated into his music.

Before music, Cohen was very much a part of the poetic and literary world. Some of his favorite poets were Irving Layton, F. R. Scott and Federico Garcia Lorca (whose influence is seen in Cohen's 1988 album, *I'm Your Man*.) He was also highly influenced by beat generation writers like Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac, (with Cohen writing his own free-form, experimental novel in 1966 called *Beautiful Losers*.) and musicians like Ray Charles, Hank Williams, Bob Dylan and Judy Collins. Cohen was also a big fan of Jacques Brel, and religion/spirituality, specifically Buddhism, would have a profound affect on his music career.

The DVD runs at 110 minutes, features lots of live footage and rare photographs, an includes extras such as the biographies of panel members like Judy Collins, Leslie Stainton, Ira Nadel and more.

Overall, this is a very informative DVD for anyone who's a Cohen fan, let alone anyone who's interested in international culture during the late 60s and early 70s.

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