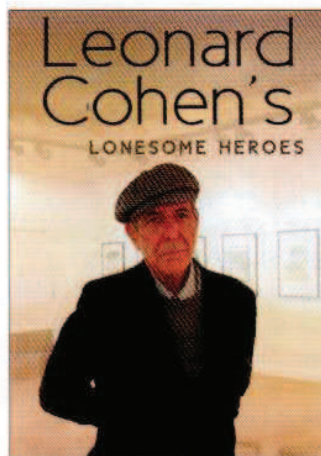


that's no little feat.

This year I spent longer than usual at the Workshop Stage, a comfortable tent where artists share their stories and perform more-or-less house concert style: easy, breezy and collegial. Dave Alvin showed his fine musical chops while casually demonstrating his very enviable intelligence. Similarly, Geoff Muldaur, Jim Kweskin and friends chatted and picked his way through the early days of Greenwich Village jug bands into today's excellent material, and the well-versed crowd asked intelligent questions. This tent provides the best music classroom I've found in a year.

Dance and food, Bonerama, Donna the Buffalo and C.J. Chenier and the open-air education you wished you had, all on a few acres in Rhode Island. Heaven, on Labor Day.

SUZANNE CADGENE



Leonard Cohen
Leonard Cohen's
Lonesome Heroes DVD
(PRIDE)

Whiskey, smoke and time have seasoned this legendary voice to a deep, raspy smoothness that is more compelling than ever. His poetry and music remain profound and resonant. "We needed Leonard back," states Judy Collins in this documentary, and she was right.

Necessity brought Cohen

back to the stage after an absence of nearly a decade, and this timely interpretation of his journey as an artist is insightful and fascinating. This documentary walks us through the moments and people in Cohen's life that spoke to him in some essential way and became part of the fabric that inspired him. From the Montreal poets of his formative years, to the revolutionary Beats, the dark, romantic chansons of Jacques Brel and the honesty of Hank Williams, this documentary weaves back and forth between these artists and Cohen's work. Especially poignant is the portrait of the poet Federico Garcia Lorca, whose exploration of unfulfilled desire was something Cohen understood profoundly from a young age.

There are fantastic, surprising archival clips, and although there is unevenness in the visual quality, anyone interested in Leonard Cohen should watch this. He thought he couldn't sing any more. Imagine.

CLAIRE OROLOGAS

Leon Russell
Bearsville Theater
Woodstock, NY

Leon Russell rolled into the historic heart of '60s counter-culture ready to take care of business. With a look that was part-cowboy, part-swami, the bearded wonder wasted no time in tearing things up. For over four decades, Russell has remained a brilliant keyboardist, fusing gospel, country, honky-tonk and boogie woogie, delivered with a nonchalance completely his own.

At the Bearsville, chestnuts like "Say You Will" and "Dixie Lullaby" were given fresh treatment by his tight band. Special moments were everywhere, especially when Russell shared remembrances of writing with Bob Dylan, then

segueing to a searing take on "A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall." Classics like "Magic Mirror" and "A Song For You," with Leon alone at the piano, reminded us that his genius is still intact. Fittingly, his new album, *The Union*, co-written/produced by Elton John and Bernie Taupin, suggests that a long-deserved resurgence may finally be at hand.

Russell's travelling salvation show slammed the message home with a rave-up of "Delta Lady/Roll in My Sweet Baby's Arms," complete with a thunderous encore of "Great Balls of Fire" and "Roll Over Beethoven," leaving no doubt in anyone's mind that rock 'n' roll history is still being made by one of its finest craftsmen.

BOB GIROUARD

Nils Lofgren
Cry Tough DVD
(EAGLE ROCK)

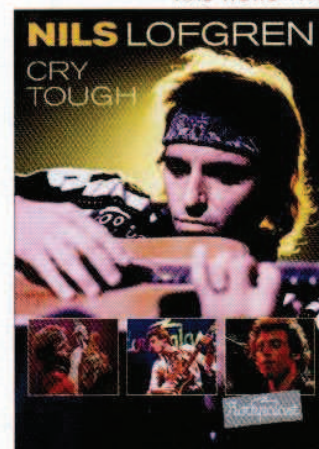
Despite a career that began with Grin back in 1969, including extended stints with both Neil Young and Bruce Springsteen and well over a dozen solo releases, Nils Lofgren remains under the radar. It's certainly not due to lack of talent, as this four hour DVD of three full concerts, from '91, '76 and '79, brilliantly illustrates. Lofgren, consistently accompanied by his brother Tom but otherwise featuring different backing musicians, struts his stuff, mixing better known tunes like "Back it Up," "Keith Don't Go" and "Cry Tough" with some of his more recent tracks.

The energetic 1979 gig finds him fronting a rollicking group with funk/rock bassist Wornell Jones and has him jumping from a small trampoline for dramatic effect during guitar solos. But it's his stunning lead playing and singing, shifting from moving ballads like "Going Back" to brash rockers like "Moon Tears,"

that makes Lofgren such a consummate performer.

Superior camera work is throughout and only enhances as the years progress, but what, truly polishes *Cry Tough* is the remixed multi-channel surround sound, capturing all the nuances of these rugged performances. Newcomers who may only know him from the E Street Band will see what they've been missing.

HAL HOROWITZ



The Infamous
Stringdusters
Brooklyn Bowl
Brooklyn, NY

With a strum it started. On August 10, bluegrass folk-band the Infamous Stringdusters brought their fiddle, banjo and bass to the green-apple stage lights of Brooklyn Bowl. The band, looking like they stepped out from the crowd in their worn t-shirts and jeans, opened the evening with "In God's Country," a U2 cover, from their latest album, *Things That Fly*. In an hour-and-a-half set, the Stringdusters jumped between their three albums, from *Fork in the Road*'s "Dream You Back" to *The Infamous Stringdusters'* "Black Rock" and "Lovin' You" and *Things That Fly*'s "Masquerade" and "Magic #9." Song names were rarely announced, and no one seemed to mind.

Fiddler Jeremy Garrett took to solos with *The Matrix*-like