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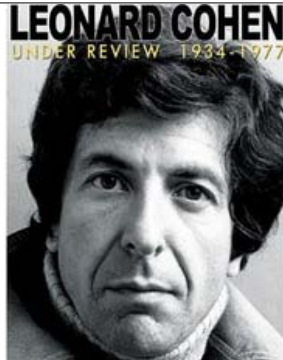
10 REVIEWS

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Leonard Cohen

by *Jocelyn Hoppa*

May 30, 2007



Leonard Cohen - Under Review 1934-1977
(Sexy Intellectual, 2007)

A friend of mine calls Leonard Cohen "The King of Things." For this self-demeaning and seductively literate singer-songwriter whose music has become something just short of a religious experience for

those who have come to appreciate it, it is a fitting title to bestow upon him. I am clinically unable to stop fawning all over the man's discography. I am not alone. For those of us who bow down to this king of things, we can attest to learning more from Cohen about humility than we ever did in church.

In 2005, we saw the release of the film *I'm Your Man*, a sort of half-tribute, half-documentary to the man himself. There within were live covers of Cohen's songs from the likes of Nick Cave, Rufus and Martha Wainwright, Beth Orton and Jarvis Cocker (plus many more), with ego stroking commentary peppered throughout from Bono and the above mentioned. The covers were fairly meh, aside from Martha Wainwright's rendition of "The Traitor" that almost literally knocked me off of my couch, but it was the narrative commentary from the present day man himself that was, beyond all else, what made the movie worth anything at all. And, obviously, that's quite a lot.

That being said, it just felt like something was missing after watching *I'm Your Man*. It was a celebration for Cohen by way of other people playing his music. What I really wanted was to see footage from back in the day of him playing live, older interviews, and some analysis of his music that wasn't so overtly congratulatory. But, thanks to the people over at MVD, we can now shut up about all that.

Leonard Cohen – Under Review 1934-1977 is not cinematically appealing whatsoever, but it does deliver the goods. What we find here is black-and-white musical performances from the man himself, rare interviews, rarely seen photography, and insightful commentary into the early part of Cohen's life and career. The biographical commentary and critical insight comes from Cohen's official biographer, Ira Nadel; his regular guitarist, Ron Cornelius; producer on the *New Skin For the Old Ceremony* record, John Lissauer; producer of *Songs of Leonard Cohen*, John

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WHAT GOES ON

May 31, 2007

Sam the Record Man, an iconic record store located in Toronto, Canada, is to close it's flagship location due to the result of **poor CD sales**. ([Jam](#))

Is **MTV "Unplugged"** making a comeback specifically for **Police** to perform acoustic? If not, we're sorry. We don't know where we've been. Actually, no, we do know... watching recorded episodes of **Planet Earth**. ([Fox News](#))

We once saw **Nada Surf** perform an acoustic set in the back of a small bar in Brooklyn following a funeral procession for a dog. It was the most awesome thing ever. Read a little about their new upcoming album, set to feature special guest appearances. ([Billboard](#))

Last.fm has been acquired by **CBS**. ([Last.fm Blog](#))

Now here's a piece of news that's after our own heart. As if vying for stake in one of our Switchback segments, indie rock band the **Frames** were invited by **Bob Dylan** to open up for his August tour in Australia. ([CMJ](#))

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Simon; music editor Robert Christgau from *Village Voice*; and *Rolling Stone*'s Anthony De Curtis, and notable others.

Besides the fact that these are two entirely different projects on Cohen, the biggest difference between commentary from these know-it-all guys in *Under Review 1934-1977* and the performers and peers in *I'm Your Man*, is that here in *Under Review* they're giving the story straight. The viewer gets to explore the ups and downs and reservations and triumphs of Cohen's step into the singer-songwriter arena. The interesting facts that made certain albums of his come to be, the road blocks, the complications, the sometimes questionable material, and even Cohen's less than admirable moments are on full display for this analytical documentary. Of course, all of this is saved since it's shot through with all the deserved admiration for his music. But the fact remains, *Under Review* is much more real, much like what we expect to find reflected in Cohen's body of work.

Watch: "[The Stranger Song](#)" a unrelated clip to *Under Review* [at youtube.com]

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themadterran - Wednesday, May 30, 2007 04:22 PM

Cool that you're reviewing these things. I always see them come in at my store and kind of shake my head, thinking their just there to profit off artists by being critical.

I might seriously look into some of them for artists I don't know very well

suzie q - Wednesday, May 30, 2007 10:02 AM

i adore leonard cohen!! can't wait to watch the DVD. and i like that you guys are reviewing things like books and DVDs in addition to CDs.

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