

The DVD-Laser Disc Newsletter

After Palmer's film, then, one is open to and readily welcomes the deconstruction of Cohen's artistry, **Leonard Cohen's Lonesome Heroes**, a Pride DVD release (UPC#823564522692, \$20) that scores a significant coup by landing the participation of Judy Collins. We reviewed an excellent analysis of Cohen's early albums, **Leonard Cohen Under Review 1934-1977**, in Aug 07. The 2010 **Lonesome Heroes**, which runs 110 minutes, is a complement to that program, looking at Cohen's complete career as an author, musician and (for a while) Buddhist monk, and providing comprehensive profiles of the artists who influenced him, including the Canadian poets of the Forties and Fifties, the Beat poets, the Spanish writer, Federico Garcia Lorca, Hank Williams, and even Ray Charles (Cohen's songs almost always have female backup vocals, which the program even refers to as his 'Rayettes.'). Very few of his specific recordings are heard, but a lot of other music is presented in snippets, and the overall analysis is so rewarding that you accept the absence of the songs themselves, particularly if Palmer's movie is fresh in your head. As for Collins, she is marvelous, talking about how she first met Cohen, how their music intersected and what sort of lasting influence he has had on her life.

The Collins material so terrific, in fact, that 7 more minutes of her are presented in the supplement, along with text profiles of the other interviewees. The film itself is presented in full screen format and the picture transfer is passable. The sound is centered, and the volume is set unusually high. There is no captioning.

Leonard Cohen Under Review 1978-2006 was released by Sexy International (UPC#823564513591, \$20) around the same time as **1934-1977**, but we're glad we waited until after we saw **Lonesome Heroes** before watching it, because the **Lonesome Heroes** provides an extra background and context that allows the viewer to understand the specifics of each later Cohen album more thoroughly than the 64-minute program can impart on its own. If Cohen's earlier albums had a reasonably straight line of development, his later works zigged and zagged a lot more, though many were brilliant works. The program analyzes them and deconstructs a few of the major songs in each, as well as charting Cohen's phases of creativity and the major shifts in his personal life. One wishes the show were twice as long, only so it could cover that many more songs. As with its companion release, there are no complete songs presented, but there are plenty of partial songs and many satisfying music video clips, performance clips and miscellaneous footage of Cohen experiencing life.

The full screen picture is in good shape and the stereo sound has an occasional dimensionality. There is no captioning. Also featured are a 4-minute outtake, a trivia quiz, and text profiles of the interviewees.