

McKeesport Daily News

“LEONARD COHEN — UNDER REVIEW: 1934-1977” (Sexy Intellectual/ MVD Visual) ...

1 / 2 — Yet another winner in the outstanding “Under Review” series, this documentary takes an in-depth look at the man whose critically acclaimed musical career came about after he earned kudos as both a poet and novelist in his native Canada. A panel of journalists, musicians and industry types discuss Cohen’s career and offer interesting insights into the man and his work. Cohen often drew comparisons to Bob Dylan for his songwriting magnificence and, frankly, less than idyllic singing voice — but most of the panelists downplay the Dylan ties. While Dylan was a songwriter all along, Cohen was a poet and novelist first. As a result, the panelists agree, Cohen’s lyrics are far more literal and personal than the stream-of-consciousness ramblings favored by Dylan. Most of the attention goes to Cohen’s first four studio records — “The Songs of Leonard Cohen,” “Songs From a Room,” “Songs of Love and Hate,” “New Skin for the Old Ceremony” — and how his poetry set to music altered the folk landscape in the late 1960s and early ’70s. The DVD also includes interview clips, snippets of live performances and audio excerpts of Cohen’s best-known songs from that era — “Suzanne,” “Master Song,” “Bird On a Wire,” and “Chelsea Hotel No. 2.” Extras include an extended interview with Ron Cornelius, leader of Cohen’s backing band “The Army” during this period, as well as biographies of all the panelists and an interactive quiz. (JS)