

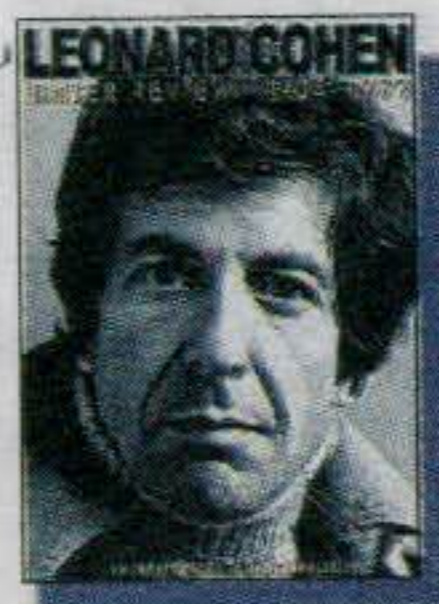
Reviews by Marke Andrews/Vancouver Sun

agement." In other words, the subject of the DVD, Canada's Leonard Cohen, is not among those commenting on his early writings and recordings.

Instead, the documentary relies on Cohen's Vancouver-based biographer Ira Nadel, former bandmates and record producers and music journalists to tell the story of Montreal's celebrated son, focusing heavily on his first half-dozen recordings.

Because this is a "critical analysis," the film leans heavily on a talking-heads format, supplemented by stills and stock footage of Cohen on and off the stage. It may surprise some to hear that Cohen

originally set out to record a country record in Nashville; that John Simon, producer of Cohen's first record *Songs of Leonard Cohen*, used female vocals in lieu of a string section to back Cohen (a style the artist retains to this day); and that his shift from singer-songwriter to lead singer in a band was exceedingly awkward.



One of the more intriguing (and critical) sections comes with analysis of Cohen's 1977 record *Death of a Ladies' Man*. Wildman producer Phil Spector and Cohen were constantly

at odds on that recording, and after Spector mixed the record in private, Cohen called the result "grotesque." There are some good stories from some who were in the studio at the time, but nothing from the two main figures in the drama.

Under Review 1934-1977 whets the appetite, but does not satiate.

UNDER REVIEW 1934-1977

LEONARD COHEN (DVD)

Chrome Dreams/Music Video Distributors

★★★

This British-made bio-doc goes under the subtitle *An Independent Critical Analysis*, and carries the bold-face warning: "This film is not authorized by Leonard Cohen, his record label or man-