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- [Print view](#)

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[Tony Palmer presents "Bird on a wire"](#)

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26 posts • [Page 1 of 2](#) • [1](#), [2](#)

[Tony Palmer presents "Bird on a wire"](#)

 by [bridger15](#) » Tue May 25, 2010 5:05 pm

Meeting Tony Palmer and talking about changes in the new release of "Bird On A Wire"

Tony Palmer was in Los Angeles last weekend for the *Tony Palmer Wagner Film Festival*, a part of the hoopla leading up to the Los Angeles Opera's first Ring Cycle. While not a fan of Wagner or of the Ring, I am an enthusiast of historic Opera productions. So I attended the Saturday afternoon screening of Palmer's "The Wagner Family," a film chronicling the internecine fighting among the composer's family members.

Prior to the screening, I had the chance to talk with Tony Palmer and his associate, Rob Ayling, at a meet & greet.



Mr Palmer had just finished a difficult Q&A following the showing of another of his films, "Parsifal -- The Search for the Grail," and commented that "a good proportion of the audience this morning were in a somewhat disturbed emotional state at the end of the film". He brightened, however, when he noticed a sheet I was holding with the image of the Bird On A Wire DVD cover I had printed out from Jarkko's post in this thread. (Thank you, Jarkko)

[viewtopic.php?f=3&t=20574&start=45#p226040](http://www.leonardcohenforum.com/viewtopic.php?f=3&t=20574&start=45#p226040)

And when I mentioned that everyone on the Leonard Cohen forum is very excited about the impending release of the DVD, he smiled broadly and replied, "You just made my day".

He then became effusive and ebullient - and incredibly charming. telling me how the the new version of the film will differ from the original. When I asked him if anything had been edited out from the original film that he regretted seeing on the cutting room floor, he looked dismayed then became very excited. Palmer explained that the original footage of Leonard Cohen speaking, deleted from the first release at LC's request, has been restored to the new DVD version.

Mr Palmer was also good enough to agree to a photo with me, insisting we hold the sheet with the Bird On Wire DVD cover, which he later autographed.



Afterward, Rob Ayling forwarded these two photos to me.





---Arlene

LC Forum Fans-final NA leg 2009

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f8Dj6Cw3uR4>



[bridger15](#)

Posts: 900

Joined: Fri Feb 13, 2009 8:49 pm

Location: ex Toronto - now Los Angeles

- [E-mail bridger15](#)

[Top](#)

[Tony Palmer presents "Bird on a wire"](#)

 by [jarkko](#) » Sat May 29, 2010 11:36 am

TPDVD166

TONY PALMER'S CLASSIC FILM

LEONARD COHEN

BIRD ON A WIRE

In memory of
MARTY MACHAT
1921 - 1988

Directed and Edited by
TONY PALMER

Produced by
MARTIN J. MACHAT
& STEVEN MACHAT

THE MUSICIANS
Vocals: JENNIFER WARNES
& DONNA WASHBURN
Guitar: RON CORNELIUS
Guitar: DAVID O'CONNOR
Bass: PETER MARSHALL
Organ: BOB JOHNSTON

Photographed by
LES YOUNG

Sound recorded by
IVAN SHARP
and re-mixed by
TONY ANSCOMBE &
LANCE ENGLAND

Lighting Engineer
DEREK GATRIL

Recording Engineer
BOB POTTER

Film restoration
BLAIR WALLACE

Digital editing
MILES CLENNELL

Executive Producer DVD
ROB AYLING

Packaging
MARK WILKINSON

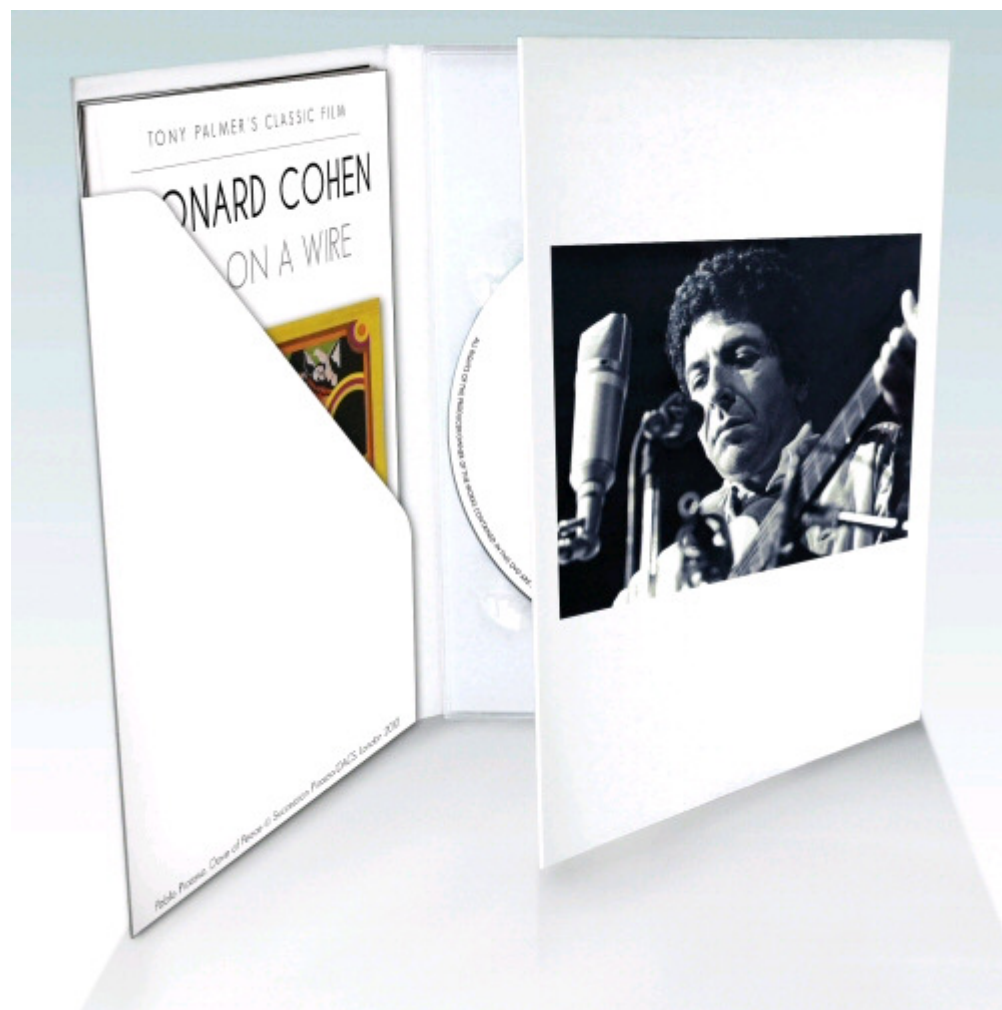
Memorabilia supplied by DAVE CURLESS
Photos by CLAUDE GASSIAN
from the collection of DOMINIQUE BOILE

© re-mastering Isolde Films 2010



In 1972 Leonard Cohen was considered to be one of the major singer song writers and poets of our time. It was decided by Cohen's then manager, Marty Machat, to make a film about Leonard at work, on tour and 'Off Duty'. The film was entitled Bird on a Wire and featured some fantastic performance footage. It was directed by the celebrated British film director Tony Palmer and scheduled for release in late 1972. After screening a rough copy, the BBC immediately bought the UK TV rights. But after 9 months of re-editing at Cohen's request, a second version was released in the 1974. It was thought that the original film had been lost until more than 290 rolls of film in rusted cans were discovered in late 2009. The cans contained much of the original 'rushes' of the film, and especially most if not all of the original soundtracks. So, in 2010 with Leonard Cohen once again at the forefront of popular music, Tony Palmer has lovingly restored the film to much of its original glory. The film runs at 107 minutes, as did his original in 1972, and when it is released on DVD in September will include much that will make this the ultimate package for Leonard Cohen fans.

Photos of the forthcoming DVD release received directly from Tony Palmer!
He will join us at the Krakow Event in August to present the World Premiere of the restored documentary!





1988, 1993: Helsinki || **2008:** Manchester |Oslo|London O2|Berlin|Helsinki |London RAH || **2009:** New York
Beacon|Berlin|Venice|Barcelona|Las Vegas|San José || **2010:** Salzburg | Helsinki | Gent...



[jarkko](#)

Site Admin

Posts: 4182

Joined: Thu Jun 27, 2002 1:01 am

Location: Espoo, Finland

- [E-mail jarkko](#)
- [Website](#)

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[Re: Tony Palmer presents "Bird on a wire"](#)

 by [Puddingdale](#) » Sat May 29, 2010 4:12 pm

Woooah - the package looks great! Thank you for posting the pictures, jarkko!!

Now I cannot wait till September, which will bring the DVD and LC giving a concert in my hometown 😊



[Puddingdale](#)

Posts: 37

Joined: Thu Jan 08, 2009 2:10 pm

- [E-mail Puddingdale](#)

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[Re: Tony Palmer presents "Bird on a wire"](#)

 by [jarkko](#) » Sat May 29, 2010 5:17 pm

Tony sent us also a list of the contents:

Music includes performances of:

Avalanche

Suzanne

Tonight Will Be Fine

Passing Through

Sisters of Mercy

Who By Fire?

Story of Isaac

One Of Us Can't Be Wrong

The Partisan

Sisters of Mercy

Chelsea Hotel

Nancy

One Of Us Can't Be Wrong

Famous Blue Raincoat

Hey, That's No Way To Say Goodbye

So Long, Marianne

Bird On A Wire

The poems, from The Energy of Slaves, include:

"Any system you contrive without us will be brought down".

"I perceived the outline of your breasts"

"The killers that run the other countries"

"Since I am now broken down, no leader of the borning world....."

1988, 1993: Helsinki ||**2008:** Manchester |Oslo|London O2|Berlin|Helsinki |London RAH || **2009:** New York
Beacon|Berlin|Venice|Barcelona|Las Vegas|San José ||**2010:** Salzburg | Helsinki | Gent...



[jarkko](#)

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Joined: Thu Jun 27, 2002 1:01 am

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[Re: Tony Palmer presents "Bird on a wire"](#)

 by [lizzytysh](#) » Sat May 29, 2010 6:02 pm

Awesome thread and contents. LOVE your photos, Arlene... and your own communications with Tony, Jarkko 😊. It was clearly a wonderful and informative meeting for you, Arlene. And you asked such a great question about anything having been cut... and we learn that it's been restored. Can't wait to see it in Cracow! You're still going, right, Arlene??

~ Lizzy

"Be yourself. Everyone else is already taken."

~ *Oscar Wilde*



[lizzytysh](#)

Posts: 21736

Joined: Thu Jun 27, 2002 8:57 pm

Location: Florida, U.S.A.

[Top](#)

[Re: Tony Palmer presents "Bird on a wire"](#)

 by [Davido](#) » Sat May 29, 2010 6:20 pm

I am so pleased to see this film finally resurface on DVD - it has always been special to me.

I'd like to tell my story:

I was introduced to LC's music and poetry by my older sister, when I was about 16 years of age, in 1969. I was immediately hooked and sought out and collected all things Cohen ever since.

About 3 years ago, on a whim, I bought a 15mm film reel of 'Bird on a wire' from a German seller on ebay. I had no way of viewing it (no access to a projector) and enquiries I made revealed that it would be very expensive to have it professionally transferred to dvd. So I put it away in my Cohen collection where it stayed until, a couple of years ago, the film became a topic under discussion on the forum - ie no one knew where the original reel/s had gone, not even Palmer or Cohen.

I contacted Tony Palmer via email and arranged to visit him when I went to see LC at the O2 in London in 2008. The meeting never took place as TP had to go to Nashville.

When the news broke that the original reels had been discovered in a film archive in California by Steve Machat(not in Europe as reported), I contacted TP again and agreed to send my 15mm reel to him.

When he had viewed it he phoned me to say that it would be 'enormously useful' in restoring the film, as some of the original footage had deteriorated badly etc. and it provided a guide to the sequence of scenes in the film.

I told him about my LC related collection etc which included quite a lot of material relating to the film and to the 1972 tour - original posters/newspaper clips/ audio recordings etc.

He said he would contact me for assistance in compiling an accompanying booklet when the film was fully restored.

And so it transpired that Tony Palmer visited me at home a few weeks ago and we had a great time going through all the material I had, and discussing ideas for the format and content of the booklet. He took a substantial amount away with him, including original posters etc.

The original poster advertising the film in the 70s and the 1972 tour poster were so striking that I suggested smaller copies be given away with the dvd.

There is also a 6-double page booklet with lots of photos, newsprint, etc relating to the tour. (LC had announced his retirement from the music scene after the 1972 tour!)

I have also spoken via email to Mark Wilkinson, who was responsible for the design and assembly of the packaging.

It is now just about complete and I would like to thank Tony Palmer and his team publicly for his dedication, great enthusiasm and obvious passion in bringing this great film to LC's fans once again.

I knew my collection would come in useful one day.

Dave



[Davido](#)

Posts: 1526

Joined: Mon Jan 30, 2006 3:47 am

Location: UK

[Top](#)

[Re: Tony Palmer presents "Bird on a wire"](#)

 by [bridger15](#) » Sat May 29, 2010 6:30 pm

lizzytysh wrote: Awesome thread and contents. LOVE your photos, Arlene... and your own communications with Tony, Jarkko 😊. It was clearly a wonderful and informative meeting for you, Arlene. And you asked such a great question about anything having been cut... and we learn that it's been restored. Can't wait to see it in Cracow! You're still going, right, Arlene??

Thank you for your kind words. Yep, Lizzie. I am still going to Krakow even though I have "graduated" to walking with two canes. Neither floods, volcanoes or limited mobility will keep me from attending this outstanding Event.

And we have Jarkko to thank for arranging with Palmer to present his extraordinary documentary film in person in Krakow.

Thank you, Jarkko.

---Arlene

LC Forum Fans-final NA leg 2009

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f8Dj6Cw3uR4>



[bridger15](#)

Posts: 900

Joined: Fri Feb 13, 2009 8:49 pm

Location: ex Toronto - now Los Angeles

- [E-mail bridger15](#)

[Top](#)

[Re: Tony Palmer presents "Bird on a wire"](#)

 by [lizzytysh](#) » Sat May 29, 2010 6:36 pm

Oh, that's great news, Arlene 😊. I'm glad to hear that you haven't shifted your plans. And you're right that it is, and this one will surely be, an OUTSTANDING Event. I'm sure your canes are classy. Fortunately, we'll be dealing with a lot of level ground. The stones at Birkenau will just require maybe some slower going than usual.

Yes... Jarkko... such a catalyst 😊. Thank you, Jarkko, for making it possible for us to see [and, according to another thread and someone's request there, maybe even buy?] this film in its new form 😊.

~ Lizzy

"Be yourself. Everyone else is already taken."

~ *Oscar Wilde*



[lizzytysh](#)

Posts: 21736

Joined: Thu Jun 27, 2002 8:57 pm

Location: Florida, U.S.A.

[Top](#)

[Re: Tony Palmer presents "Bird on a wire"](#)

by [jarkko](#) » Sat May 29, 2010 6:52 pm

Thanks for thanks, but I have to add that Tony Palmer has been extremely helpful and excited about both the film and our Event.

And yes, he plans to take a number of the brand-new DVDs to Krakow, and promised to give a special Event price for us.

Maybe he is even prepared to sign some of the DVDs!

1988, 1993: Helsinki || **2008:** Manchester |Oslo|London O2|Berlin|Helsinki |London RAH || **2009:** New York Beacon|Berlin|Venice|Barcelona|Las Vegas|San José || **2010:** Salzburg | Helsinki | Gent...



[jarkko](#)

Site Admin

Posts: 4182

Joined: Thu Jun 27, 2002 1:01 am

Location: Espoo, Finland

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- [Website](#)

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[Re: Tony Palmer presents "Bird on a wire"](#)

by [lizzytysh](#) » Sat May 29, 2010 7:12 pm

Oh, that would be wonderful, Jarkko... all of it! AND we'll get to meet him, besides 😊. It's great that he's taken such a strong, personal [okay, some professional, as well 😊 ... but, hey, who minds that? Not me.] interest in the Event 😊.

~ Lizzy

"Be yourself. Everyone else is already taken."

~ *Oscar Wilde*



[lizzytysh](#)

Posts: 21736

Joined: Thu Jun 27, 2002 8:57 pm

Location: Florida, U.S.A.

[Top](#)

[Re: Tony Palmer presents "Bird on a wire"](#)

 by [friscogrl](#) » Sat May 29, 2010 7:17 pm

Dave, thanks for telling us your story. I am very impressed by your collaboration with Tony Palmer and by what you had to offer him. I will be at the Krakow event for the screening and am planning to buy a DVD (hopefully signed by Mr Palmer). I am hoping he has one set aside for you!

Marsha

Toronto June 6 New York Feb 19 Oakland April 13 14 Coachella April 17 Ottawa May 25 26 Barcelona Sept 21

Las Vegas Nov 12 San Jose Nov 13 ???



[friscogrl](#)

Posts: 1673

Joined: Tue Dec 04, 2007 6:07 am

Location: San Francisco, Ca.

- [E-mail friscogrl](#)

[Top](#)

[Re: Tony Palmer presents "Bird on a wire"](#)

 by [lizzytysh](#) » Sat May 29, 2010 8:19 pm

My gosh, Dave, I'm glad that Marsha specifically addressed your post because in my scrolling, I somehow missed it! WoW. What an amazing coming together of people and items from the distant past to the highly-relevant present! An understatement to say that your collection came in handy 😊 . What a rewarding experience for you who have been collection Leonard-related items for so long, due to your deep and abiding interest in him.

Such a thoughtful suggestion on your part regarding the miniature of the original poster advertising the film to be included for those who buy the DVD. I hope that idea comes to fruition. Since my budget is severely limited, I'm also hoping that Jarkko will post here ahead of time the cost approximation of the DVD [and whatever's included with it] so that I and anyone else in similar financial circumstances can allot for it ahead of time.

Big time... thank you for sharing your story!!

~ Lizzy

"Be yourself. Everyone else is already taken."

~ Oscar Wilde



[lizzytysh](#)

Posts: 21736

Joined: Thu Jun 27, 2002 8:57 pm

Location: Florida, U.S.A.

[Top](#)

[Re: Tony Palmer presents "Bird on a wire"](#)

 by [Pete](#) » Sat May 29, 2010 9:09 pm

Wow, Dave!! Thank you so much for sharing your story and, of course, sharing your valued possessions.

I remember going to the cinema in Coventry to see the film. It was only on for one night and I was spellbound. I can't wait for the dvd (but guess I will have to 😊)

Pete

1974: Brighton Dome 1976: Birmingham Town Hall 1993: London RAH 2008: Manchester Opera House, London O2, Matlock Bandstand, Birmingham NEC 2009: Liverpool Echo Arena



[Pete](#)

Posts: 1424

Joined: Fri Jul 12, 2002 1:36 am

Location: Matlock, England

- [E-mail Pete](#)

[Top](#)

[Re: Tony Palmer presents "Bird on a wire"](#)

 by [Davido](#) » Sat May 29, 2010 9:52 pm

Thanks, Marsha - unfortunately I won't be at the Krakow meet, but Tony Palmer will be kindly sending me a signed dvd. Can't wait!

Thanks, Lizzy. You can see the copy of the original film poster in the image above, and the tour poster is reproduced in postcard format.

Thanks, Pete. The film has always been special to me. A lot of the 'memorabilia' is reproduced in the booklet.

I have it in pdf format but cannot upload it to the forum.

Dave



[Davido](#)

Posts: 1526

Joined: Mon Jan 30, 2006 3:47 am

Location: UK

[Top](#)

[Re: Tony Palmer presents "Bird on a wire"](#)

 by [lizzytysh](#) » Sat May 29, 2010 11:07 pm

Hi Dave ~

So, it's the one with the peace dove and the 'sidebar' of names? I'm sorry to hear you won't be going to Cracow. As Pete said, too, which crossed my mind but, somehow, not my fingertips... thank you for trusting to safe delivery and return of your precious, historical, Leonard-related merchandise. Just reading it gave me a twinge of anxiety. What a gift you've given the process 😊 !

~ Lizzy

"Be yourself. Everyone else is already taken."

~ *Oscar Wilde*



[lizzytysh](#)

Posts: 21736

Joined: Thu Jun 27, 2002 8:57 pm

Location: Florida, U.S.A.

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26 posts • [Page 1 of 2](#) • 1, 2

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