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MONDAY, AUGUST 30, 2010



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# Poetry in Motion

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*Bird on a Wire* Director Tony Palmer on Leonard Cohen

British filmmaker Tony Palmer is the only two-time winner of the Prix d'Italia (the most award). His long and rich career, encompassing over 100 films, has been marked by a with his first film about Benjamin Britten—made for the BBC soon after he graduated t Leonard Cohen, who he shot for the 1972 film *Bird on a Wire*, he's profiled Maria Call Previn, Igor Stravinsky and Yehudi Mehunin, among many others. He is currently won he talks about his first encounter with Cohen.

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Artists Get Textual



On This Day In 1934: Leonard Cohen Is Born

I was a music critic for the [British] Observer from 1967 to 74. I had written a piece about Leonard Cohen's *Room*, and said that here was clearly a very extraordinary poet. I said he deserved credit for what he was trying to say something. I think Leonard had seen it, but Marty Machat, his manager, held me and, in October 1971, flew me to New York to discuss a Leonard Cohen project. Minutes when Leonard Cohen walked in. Leonard was told to leave the room—all in vain. Leonard was extremely worried that [his] first three LPs had not sold at all, or very little. Marty didn't tell me, [that] he'd actually been dropped by Columbia, so Marty was in a bit of a admitted, and we chatted away a bit. He asked what I was going to do about the music condition: "If we are going to do this, what interests me is you as a man, and also the [Cohen's sixth book of poetry] *The Energy of Slaves*. I think that's what clinched it, because he only listened to the records, but he's actually read the poetry!"

There is a conflict within him, the poet. He says in the film: "I wrote these songs to myself. It is a curious thing to be trapped in that original effort. Because here I wanted to tell of the situation where I must repeat them, like some parrot, chained to his stand, night after night. He was very aware of the kind of intimacy of my process; that really coincided with the fact that on the other hand, he was advertising it by allowing me to film him. On his part, he fell apart and bursting into tears. He never did any of that stuff that you see for our benefit. I got as close as I possibly could to him as a man. The music, with a bit of luck, would tell the story."

Tags: Music , Documentary , Leonard Cohen , Bird on a Wire , Tony Palmer



Eniko's Diamond Dip



John and Yoko or Serge and Charlotte?

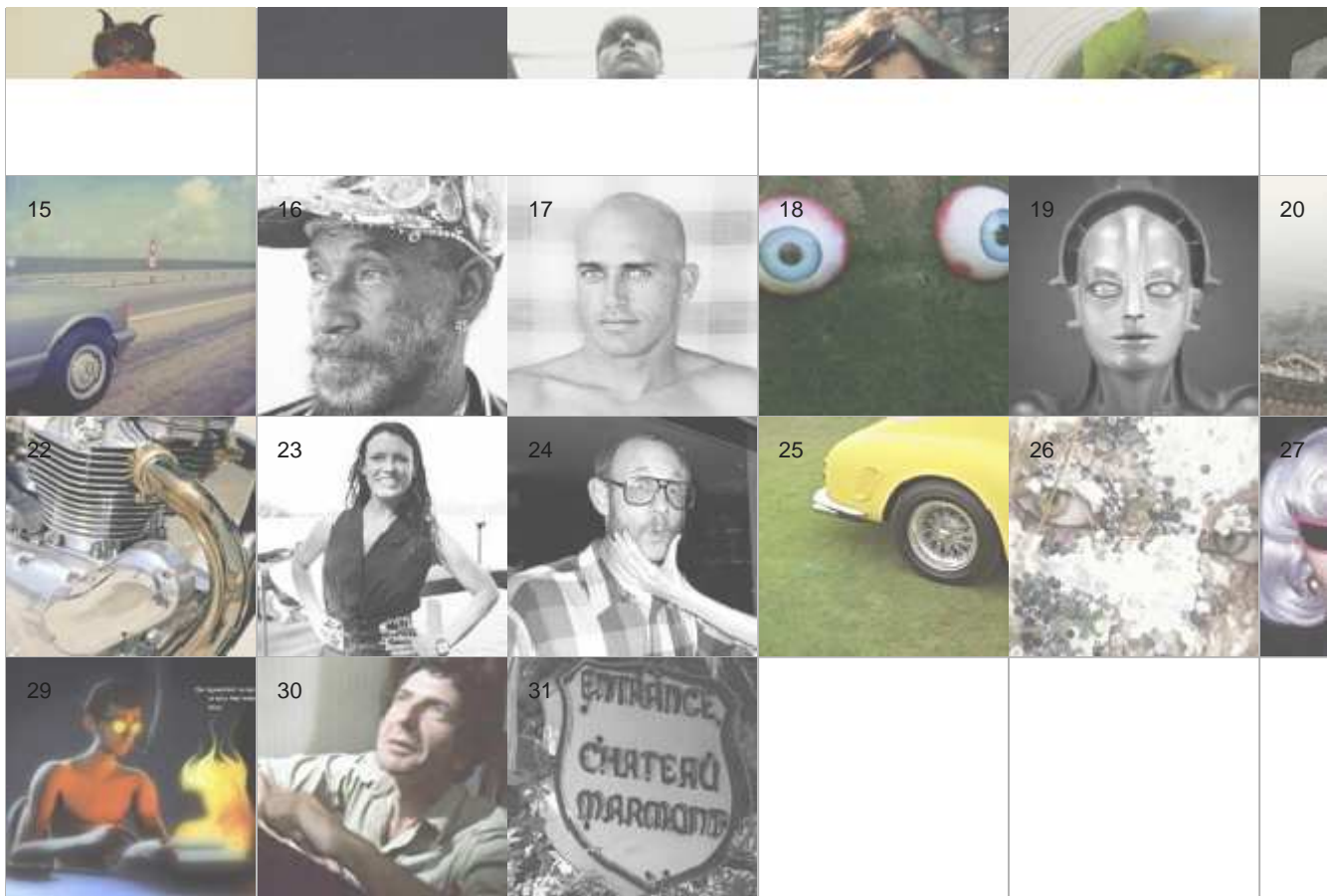


Will Self: Walking to Hollywood

### THIS MONTH

### AUGUST 2010





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