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DVD Review: 'Bird on a Wire' — The long lost 1972 Leonard Cohen documentary finally gets its release



Posted by [The Zeitgeisty Report \(c\)](#) on Sep 9th, 2010 and filed under [Articles](#), [Recent Articles](#), [Spotlight](#). You can follow any responses to this entry through the [RSS 2.0](#). You can leave a response or trackback to this entry



RATING



Once thought lost forever, this documentary of Cohen's arduous 1972 European tour (From Dublin to Jerusalem), directed by Tony Palmer, closely mirrors the internationally acclaimed DA Pennebaker Bob Dylan doc "Don't Look Back".

Like the more famous film, it chronicles behind-the-scene goings on intercut with live performances. However, what the footage exposes is a more truthful affair, in that it shines a brighter light on the artist, revealing him to be far more sensitive, articulate, and uncompromising than the playful and elusively inscrutable young Dylan, which only makes sense as Cohen was nearly 40 at the time.

One scene that perfectly sums up the rock poet's worldview, is when a reporter asks him what the "meaning of life is"... He pauses briefly and answers wearily, "Survival."

Yes.

This movie is, in effect, about the survival of his band (a star studded entourage that includes back up singer Jennifer Warnes and renowned record producer Bob Johnston) as they navigate technical difficulties, unruly crowds and the emotional drain of a tour that is not running smoothly.

Capturing everything from Cohen trying to pick up a beautiful groupie only to coolly let it go, to his tearful breakdown on the final night because he felt that they were not delivering the songs well enough for the audience (he was crazy, by the way) this is one of the most candid



snapshots of an artist at his peak that I've ever seen. Add to that truly stunning performances of some of his most beloved classics (Suzanne, Sisters of Mercy, Famous Blue Raincoat and So Long Marianne) and you have a film that is literally like discovering a buried treasure.

Any fan of the folk legend, or of rock documentaries in general has got to pick this DVD up immediately... It's an owner.



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1.  *vix* says:

[September 9, 2010 at 7:40 am](#)

I can't wait to see this! I love Lenny!

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