

Well done, Leonard!

by Richard Jinman via quill - SMH Friday, Jan 30 2009, 9:40pm
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A gentleman's triumph

From the earliest totems and depictions on cave walls till today; poets/artists have possessed the 'magic' to transform. The world allows murderers, liars and frauds to assume leadership at great cost to the people and planet. However, REAL HOPE and CHANGE RESIDES in the CREATIVE (not warring, destructive) spirit of humankind; from all Aussie poets and artists, WELCOME to Oz, Leonard -- and a job well done, old man.

"That sunny dome those caves of ice
And all who heard should see them there,
And all should cry, Beware! Beware!
His flashing eyes, his floating hair
Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread,
For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of Paradise." -- STC

Sydney is also known for its street poet, Arthur Stace, who summed it up in a word, which he chalked onto the sidewalks of Sydney until his death:

Eternity



"OH MY God," gasped the 30-something woman in the white dress. "I'm in love with a 74-year old man."

She was not alone. As the audience spilled out of Leonard Cohen's show at the Sydney Entertainment Centre on Wednesday night, there were many such declarations of love from people

with eyes reddened by tears.

Among those paying tribute to the Canadian poet and songwriter yesterday was "Cheryl" - aka the former Democrats leader Cheryl Kernot - who rang ABC 702 to say how profoundly Cohen had moved her.

It was a common sentiment. The concerts - which continue this weekend at vineyards in the Hunter Valley and Bowral - are a sensation: giant communions led by the world's grooviest pensioner. A man forced back onto the concert circuit by the dastardly misappropriation of his retirement fund; a man who still manages to radiate a kind of cosmic munificence.

But why does the author of Suzanne and Famous Blue Raincoat have such power? Sure, the songs are brilliant, the voice is in surprisingly good nick and the band are tight. But when did you last cry at a Rod Stewart concert?

Cohen is not only the author of pop's great secular hymn, Hallelujah, he creates an aura of religiosity. Intoning a line such as "There is a crack in everything. That's how the light gets in," one feels oneself in the presence of someone who, if he has not actually reached enlightenment, has at least glimpsed its outer suburbs.

Michael Gudinski, the tour promoter, calls him "a reluctant rock star". He has not made any excessive demands in terms of hotel suites or tour riders, although he has chartered a plane to ferry himself and the band from New Zealand and interstate.

Cohen's only major demand is superlative sound quality at his performances. He attends every sound-check, staying for several hours to ensure the mix is perfect.

Although a small group of his fans believe Cohen is an astral traveller, the Canadian will use a conventional tour bus to head for the Hunter Valley today. It is unlikely there will be any groupies or rowdy behaviour up the back.

"He keeps to himself and hasn't done any interviews for the tour," said Gudinski. "The backstage atmosphere is quiet and refined. That is the way he wants it ... there is none of the usual yahooping."

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<http://cleaves.zapto.org/news/story-1417.html>



Sydney honoured Arthur Stace during millennium festival

<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2009/01/30/1232818721962.html>

Underground Oz Poetry. <http://ozpoetry.lingama.net/news/poem-26.html>

