

Cohen's saddest sound

by stephen r. mills

Leonard Cohen
"Song of Love and Hate"
Columbia

Simon and Garfunkel say (in "El Condor Pasa") "A MAN GETS TIED UP TO THE GROUND/ HE GIVES THE WORLD ITS SADDEST SOUND."

Their claim is certainly true with regard to Canadian poet Leonard Cohen, for this album, his latest, is the saddest I've heard from anyone in a long time.

There are eight songs on the album, and their subjects range from suicide to the inner thoughts of Joan of Arc. After listening to lyrics like: "It's come to this/ AND WASN'T IT A LONG WAY DOWN/ And wasn't it a strange way down?", "There are no letters in the mailbox/ There are no grapes on the vine/ And there are no chocolates in your box anymore/ And there are no diamonds in the mine," "LET'S SING ANOTHER SONG, BOYS/ THIS ONE HAS GROWN OLD AND BITTER", the title "Songs of Love and Hate" seems inappropriate.

The feeling created by the poetry, by Cohen's deep and dismal voice, by his forlorn back-up vocalists, "The Army" and by the gracefully depressing instrumentation is not love

or hate but sorrowful regret. The loving and hating — the girls in blue raincoats, the splendor of nature, the days of victory, glory, and acclaim, the hours of suffering, loneliness, and pain — are passed. Cohen's effort is not a bang — of love, of hate — but a remarkably moving whimper, a sigh before dying a welcomed death.

One may be tempted to ask whether Cohen's position is legitimate. I happen to think not. Yet I also happen to think that's not the point at all. Cohen is one of North America's best poets and performers. It matters not that he chooses to feel depressed and despondent — what matters is that he does it so well.



① Ten forty-three. In exactly TWO MINUTES I'll ring the FIRST BELL and they'll all stand still!



② All, that is, except your potential DEVIATE! Your fledgling REBEL! Your incipient BOAT-ROCKER! THEY'LL try to move all right! THEY'LL have to learn the HARD way not to move!



③ So I'll SCREAM at 'em and take their NAMES and give them FIVE DETENTIONS and EXTRA HOMEWORK! NEXT time they won't move after the first bell!



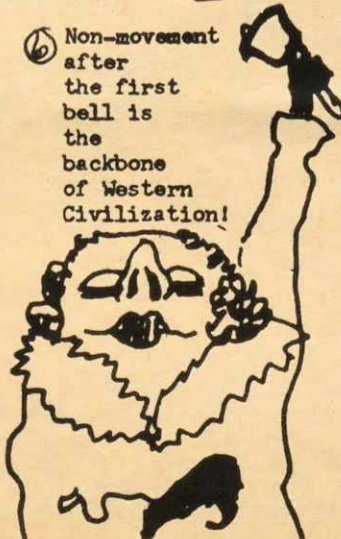
④ Because when they've learned not to question the FIRST BELL, they'll learn not to question their TEXTS! Their TEACHERS! Their COURSES! EXAMINATIONS!



⑤ They'll grow up to accept TAXES! HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS! INSURANCE! WAR! MEN ON THE MOON! LIQUOR! LAWS! POLITICAL SPEECHES! PARKING METERS! TELEVISION! FUNERALS!



⑥ Non-movement after the first bell is the backbone of Western Civilization!



Dal Radio Specials

SHOW DATE	SHOW TIME	ANNOUNCER SHOW TITLE
SEPT. 20	11 a.m.-11:30 a.m.	BILL PETERSON RADIO TODAY
SEPT. 20	8 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.	DAVID G. SMITH CIVIL RIGHTS
SEPT. 21	11 a.m.-12 noon	JOHN HAMILTON FRENCH ROCK-PGM 3
SEPT. 21	2 p.m.-4 p.m.	BILL HENDERSON CLASSICS
SEPT. 22	11 a.m.-12 noon	ALAN MOORS PRES. W. B. SMITH INTERVIEW — PART I
SEPT. 22	2 p.m. to 4 p.m.	BOB HUTCHINGS C.C.R. SPECIAL
SEPT. 23	11 a.m.-12 noon	JOHN HAMILTON FRENCH ROCK-PGM 4
SEPT. 23	12 noon-12:30 a.m.	FINLAY SPICER LOVE
SEPT. 23	2 p.m.-4 p.m.	BILL HENDERSON CLASSICS
SEPT. 23	8 p.m.-10 p.m.	FRED MATTOCKS BRUCE GRANT JEFFERSON AIRPLANE
SEPT. 24	11 a.m. to 12 noon	ALAN MOORS PRES. W. B. SMITH INTERVIEW — PART II
SEPT. 24	12 noon-12:30 p.m.	JOHN HAMILTON FRENCH ROCK-PGM 5
SEPT. 24	12 noon-12:30 p.m.	JOHN HAMILTON FRENCH ROCK-PGM 5
SEPT. 25	12 noon-1 p.m.	JOHN HAMILTON FRENCH ROCK-PGM 6
SEPT. 26	ALL DAY	-----v-----v-----