A GROUP INTERPRETATION PRODUCTION OF SELECTED LITERATURE OF LEONARD COHEN

APPROVED:

[Signatures]

Major Professor

Minor Professor

Chairman, Department of Speech and Drama

Dean of the Graduate School
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It was the purpose of this study to introduce a selected representative body of literature by the Canadian author Leonard Cohen to local audiences. Since the literature of Leonard Cohen remains relatively unknown to the general American public in spite of his international reputation as a contemporary writer, it was believed that a well-planned group-interpretation production based upon his work would successfully introduce that literature to campus audiences. A body of literature including prose, poetry, and song, by Leonard Cohen was selected and produced for performance. Scholarly reviews and articles are used to furnish both a background to Cohen's life and a critical analysis of his literature.

This thesis has four major divisions. The first chapter establishes the literary credibility of Cohen by citing the numerous literary awards his writing has won. His place in international letters is further established through comments of noted literary scholars and critics. This first segment also includes an overall statement of the purpose of this study, and gives justification for Cohen's literature being chosen for such a study. A general analysis of Cohen's work reveals that it is aptly suited to oral interpretation,
and that both his literature and the art of oral interpretation would benefit from such a study. The latter part of this first division deals with a biography of Leonard Cohen. His life, his philosophies, and the development of his writing are reflected in his own comments as well as those of his biographers.

The second chapter lists the criteria by which literature was chosen for inclusion in the production script. Among the criteria are originality of style and expression, unique literary forms employed by the author, and relation of the literature to recurring themes, ideas, or topics within the author's work. Each literary selection is dealt with individually; its reason for inclusion in the script, and an explication of each are included, as well as comments and suggestions for its interpretation. The second chapter also incorporates a discussion of the principles and philosophies of programming an interpretation production following the suggestions of various authors in the discipline of oral interpretation. Justifications for the programming decisions of the Director of this production are also included in this chapter. The philosophy of this program is stated and compared with those guidelines suggested in the earlier discussion of general programming.

The final chapter includes a complete description of the production. It discusses the procedure for obtaining permission to use the literature in a performance, casting the script, and
a complete schedule and description of rehearsals. Also included is an explanation regarding the blocking of this script. A description of the setting, lighting, clothing, and music used in the performance is given. Specific problems, such as the readers' use of focal placement, are cited and discussed. A description of the production performances is included, as well as an evaluation of the performances. Specific critical comments concerning the production which were made by audience members are included.

The fourth major division of this study is the production script, which is included as Appendix A of the thesis. Other appendices include the production program and publicity materials, photographs of the performance, letters of copyright permission, and the production budget.
A GROUP-INTERPRETATION PRODUCTION OF SELECTED
LITERATURE OF LEONARD COHEN

THESIS

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North Texas State University in Partial
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For the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

By

Robert Lewis Zafran, B. A.
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Leonard Cohen is one of the most widely recognized Canadian authors of the twentieth century. His first publication, a volume of verse, appeared in 1956, and he has consistently published since that time. To date he has published five volumes of verse, two novels, a collection of songs, and three record albums (3, p. 209). But the recognition of his literary merit is not limited to Canadian critics and audiences; his work has appeared in magazines in the United States and throughout Europe, including, among others, The Queen's Quarterly, Prism, Saturday Review, The McGill Chapbook, and Tamarack Review. He has been represented in numerous anthologies throughout the world. Twice he was winner of the prestigious Canada Council Award for his poetry, and he was the subject of an award-winning film feature, "Ladies and Gentlemen, Mr. Leonard Cohen," produced by the National Film Board of Canada (2, acknowledgements).

In 1969 Cohen was offered Canada's important Governor General's Award for his collected poems. He declined the award, explaining, "The poems themselves forbid it absolutely. Art is the verdict you give to writing that is
important, but for me to write for art is wrong" (7, p. 116). He has written under monetary grants awarded by the Canada Council (2, acknowledgements), and was contracted by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation to act as literary critic for a television series (9, p. 18). In America, Cohen was featured on "Camera Three," a cultural affairs program of the Columbia Broadcasting System; the impression he made was strong enough to elicit the greatest audience response in the show's fourteen-year history (4, p. 4).

Cohen has received much critical acclaim for his poetry, novels, and songs in Canada, the United States, and Europe. His recitations of his writings have drawn capacity crowds throughout North America, Europe, and the Mediterranean. In 1967, Canadian literary critic Desmond Pacey commented on the quality of Cohen's writing as follows:

In naming Leonard Cohen a phenomenon, I am motivated by the quantity, quality and variety of his achievement. Still only thirty-three, Cohen has published four books of verse, and two novels, and he has made a national if not an international reputation. . . . The best of his poems have lyrical grace and verbal inevitability; his two novels are as perceptive in content and as sophisticated in technique as any that have appeared in English since the Second World War. . . . (6, p. 5).

Of Cohen's poetic merit, Canadian literary scholar Alfred W. Purdy said,
Cohen writes love poems which are probably the best ever written in this country. Image succeeds image in a flow natural as birdsong. . . . With The Spice Box of Earth, 1961, Cohen brought to near perfection the techniques and rhythms of his first book (3, p. 11).

Concerning Cohen's skill with prose Pacey stated, "... his second novel, Beautiful Losers (1966), [is] his most impressive single achievement, and in my opinion the most intricate, erudite, and fascinating Canadian novel ever written" (6, p. 5).

Cohen is versatile in that he is equally adept at prose, poetry, or songs, but more important, he is versatile within each genre of literature.

Of his literary versatility critic, D. D. C. Chambers says:

The figures of Leonard Cohen's poems rise like figures in Chagall, transformed from the ordinary, surprised into a world of visionary experience. Out of the junk of the everyday--'the garbage and the flowers'--the magical world of the imaginative is created. There is a strong sense in which his poetry is a prodigious search of experience for the exit from the ordinary. But it is not always violently so. Some of the earlier lyrics--'Go By Brooks,' for instance--have a simple lyricism that is also intense. Occasionally, it slopes off into a wry humor that is characteristic of him; more often its apparent Emily-Dickinson [sic] simplicities conceal a toughness and a danger for which only the ballad is adequate. And it is in the ballads that his greatest strength lies. The concentration of the imagery and the force of the rhyme give a telling intensity to the surrealist experiences of his imagination--an intensity that becomes at times almost gnomic. . . (3, p. 209).
The following poem is included in its entirety to illustrate Mr. Chambers' example of Cohen's earlier lyrics:

Go by Brooks

Go by brooks, love,
Where fish stare,
Go by brooks,
I will pass there.

Go by rivers,
Where eels throng,
Rivers, love,
I won't be long.

Go by oceans,
Where whales sail,
Oceans, love,
I will not fail.

(1, p. 43)

Cohen is as versatile with his themes as he is with literary styles. Purdy comments on the progression of Cohen's literature: "With Flowers for Hitler Leonard Cohen recognizes the necessity to get away from his sensuous unrealistic parables and flesh fantasies. Cohen does change" (8, p. 13). Further evidence of the change in Cohen's style is provided by Desmond Pacey:

Since The Spice-Box of Earth was also a very personal book, Cohen seems to have felt that he must break out of the prison of self and attempt a more objective art. The significance of his third book of poems, Flowers for Hitler, at any rate in relation to Beautiful Losers, lies in its strenuous effort to broaden and deepen and objectify its author's interests and sympathies (6, p. 15).

Leonard Cohen is justly recognized as an important contemporary literary figure. His merit as a writer of significance is illustrated by his versatility of style and theme,
the quality of his work, and his prolific publishing record. His place in contemporary literature has been frequently recognized by important awards, as well as by comments from literary critics who consider him one of the most significant contemporary Canadian authors.

The purpose of this study is to bring Cohen's literature to local audiences who might not be familiar with it. Since his literature remains relatively unknown to the general American public in spite of his international reputation as a contemporary writer, it is believed that a well-planned group interpretation production based upon his works would successfully introduce that literature to audiences on this campus. This study will include compiling a script of selected representative works of Cohen, including prose, poetry, and songs. Those pieces of literature selected for inclusion in the script will be fully explicated and organized into a group interpretation program. A complete list of the criteria for selection of literature will be included. A cast of three readers will be assembled and the script will be rehearsed for performance to an invited audience. This study will further include a full description of the performance production and an evaluation of it. An analysis of the program, and finally an analysis of the literature of Leonard Cohen will be included.

It is appropriate that Cohen's literature should be considered for such a production not only because his place
in international literature has been clearly established, but also because his literature is particularly suited to oral presentation. Cohen himself has presented his poetry and songs in performances throughout the world with capacity crowds wherever performed. Cohen's literature has been interpreted and recorded by numerous other artists.

The oral presentation of Cohen's writings through the medium of group interpretation can effectively show aural aspects of his writing: that is, the rhythm, the use of silence, the rhyme scheme, and other tonal qualities. These characteristics are concerned with sound as well as meaning and are therefore of interest to the oral interpreter. Furthermore, most poets intend for their poetry to be read orally, and they write for the ear, that is the sound aspect of the literature. It seems valid, therefore, to assume that the literature of Leonard Cohen could be successfully produced in the medium of group interpretation. Such a production could provide insight into the literature of this prolific and versatile contemporary writer. Both the literature and the medium of group interpretation would complement and benefit one another. The literature would benefit by gaining a new audience, as well as being presented orally, emphasizing the many and varied aural aspects the author has used. The medium of group interpretation would benefit by having new, evocative, and compelling
literature to introduce to an audience, literature that seems perfectly suited to this form of presentation.

It would be of relevant interest to devote a portion of this study to the life of the writer, since his literature reflects his experiences, personality, and life. Leonard Cohen was born in Montreal, Quebec, Canada in 1934, the son of a moneyed garment merchant. His father died when Cohen was nine. Cohen was graduated from McGill University in 1955. Ira Mothner quotes Cohen, and comments on Cohen's early life:

At McGill University, Cohen was a big man, but can't remember learning much. . . .

'I had a beautiful room with a fireplace and sherry, and we lived the life of Chinese mandarins, courting ladies and keeping warm. I felt life would go on like that. 'I'd drink wine and eat cheese and write poems.' But he wanted more than poetry to fill his days. 'Poetry is just the evidence of a life. If your life is burning well, poetry is just the ash. I thought like every man, I would have some important work to do.' Business tempted him. 'I liked the way business was conducted in our family. There is a genuine sense of honor, forthrightness and economy.' At McGill, he switched from arts to commerce and back again, tried law at Columbia University in New York, and took a job in the family's clothing factory but then, his first book of poems had been published and he won a Canada Council grant and went to Europe (5, p. 94).

Cohen reflects his family and their life in the garment industry in his poem "Priests 1957." This poem contains one of the very infrequent references to Cohen's father and his death. The poem also introduces us to Cohen's grandfather
who was a rabbi, and to whom Cohen has dedicated a volume of verse; the grandfather mentioned here is frequently referred to in Cohen's writings. The poem "Priests 1957" is cited here in its entirety:

Beside the brassworks my uncle grows sad,
discharging men to meet the various crises.
He is disturbed by greatness
and may write a book.

My father died among old sewing machines,
echo of bridges and water in his hand.
I have his leather books now
and startle at each uncut page.

Cousins in the factory are unhappy.
Adjustment is difficult, they are told.
One is consoled with a new Pontiac,
one escapes with Bach and the folk-singers.

Must we find all work prosaic
because our grandfather built an early synagogue?

(2, p. 69)

This is Cohen's most autobiographical poem. Much of his poetry deals with his life and experiences but this poem reflects Cohen's past, both immediate and removed, his present situation, and even suggests his future actions. Cohen could not remain in the family business as his father had, with only the echoes of his dreams and ambitions. Cohen found "all work prosaic," and had to pursue his ambitions and dreams. His travels to Europe, made possible by the Canada Council grant, led him to the Greek island of Hydra, where he bought a hilltop home without electricity or running water. Here he spends most of his time, returning to Canada and New York City to "renew my neurotic affiliations" (5, p. 194).
"At the time of the Bay of Pigs invasion, he went to Havana. He knew it was one of those historical moments that demand action. Once there, however, he was unable to determine on which side to fight. Both sides were evil; both causes were holy" (4, p. 5). "He both loved and hated Castro's revolution; he loved the energy, hated the blaring anthems and menacing posters" (5, p. 94). Out of this trip to Cuba came the poem "The Only Tourist in Havana Turns His Thoughts Homeward." This poem is highly reminiscent, in both style and content, of Ginsberg's "America," and of Ferlinghetti's "I am Waiting."

"Cohen's political temperament is revolutionary. But, like Camus, he is starkly aware of the paradoxes of rebellion. He is frozen in an anarchist's posture, but unable to throw his bomb" (4, p. 5). Cohen is aware a change is at hand, but he feels it must be an individual change within each of us, within our "heart of hearts" (4, p. 5). He is afraid of those who would encourage that change through mobilization. He says, "I'm afraid that when the Pentagon is finally stormed and taken, it will be by guys wearing uniforms very much like the ones worn by the guys defending it" (4, p. 5).

In his song "Stories of the Street," Cohen speaks of the mobilizers to the revolutionaries:

I know you've heard it's over now
And war must surely come
The cities they are broke in half
And the middle men are gone.
But let me ask you one more time
Oh, children of the dust:
All these hunters who are shrieking now
Oh, do they speak for us? (4, p. 45)

Cohen does not encourage anarchy and rebellion, merely
a new understanding of the laws by which a man can live in
the world. Cohen says:

The thing we find unpalatable about the law,
is that it is there to protect property, not
the spirit. It is no longer holy. We rebel.
But what we've been calling a revolution we
should call a return. As soon as the old law
is dead—as soon as everything becomes pos-
sible—you suddenly learn the necessity for
law. Things have to be placed in order again.
So we will have to write a new law. One which
is meaningful to us. A very pedestrian law
about how to behave with one another. . . .
We have to rediscover law from inside our own
heritage, and we have to rediscover the cruci-
fixion. The crucifixion will again be under-
stood as a universal symbol, not as just an
experiment in sadism or masochism or arrogance.
It will have to be rediscovered because that's
where man is at. On the cross (4, p. 5).

Cohen is not ultimately concerned with society, but with
the individual; his life is a quest for an inner peace. Here
William Kloman describes that quest:

Cohen is willing to embrace any system that
might clarify his fate. Which might bring
him to the mystical 'state of grace' that,
for him, means achieving a state of harmony
with the rest of creation. Like many of his
generation, Cohen yearns for commitment, but
no cause is pure enough to claim his loyalty
for long (4, p. 5).

Cohen is concerned with one's self concept, rather than with
the roles that one plays. He comments on people playing roles:
"Here are all these people plugging away at their roles. Being producers and policemen and bishops." But Cohen is more concerned with his self concept than with his various roles. "I don't even think of myself as a writer, singer, or whatever. The occupation of being a man is so much more" (4, p. 4).

Cohen is as diversified a man as he is versatile. Ira Mothner quotes Cohen: "My intentions run all the way from making a living to the highest and most arrogant aspirations of spirit seeking." Mothner notes that: "On Hydra, Cohen wrote two novels; The Favorite Game...and Beautiful Losers" (5, p. 95). Cohen feels he is more highly disciplined than most people, especially when he is writing.

Nobody writes who doesn't really drive himself...I know what it is to sit down at a desk for long periods of time and lay it on. Beautiful Losers I wrote every day until it was finished. I wrote a minimum of four hours a day and a maximum of twenty. The last two weeks I worked twenty hours a day (9, p. 18).

"The first rebellious act of man is to stay up late" (5, p. 95). Leonard Cohen feels perfectly comfortable combining discipline and rebellion.

As far as a structured life is concerned, Cohen avoids it. He is susceptible to change, and realizes the need for it. Cohen has overtly changed his style and point of view to break out of the prison of self and attempt a more objective art. His changes are a strenuous effort to broaden
and deepen and objectify his interests and sympathies (6, p. 15). As to where Cohen is going Alfred W. Purdy says:

\[ \ldots \] critics cannot predict, nor can the poet himself. Where he is going he does not know exactly, and where he has been he can only remember imperfectly. He inhabits language as well as the world, infuses words with something of his own questioning stance, his own black depression and joyous life. One can only guess where Cohen is going now. \ldots I have hope it may be terra incognita where he is going. With a ballpoint pen. And may survive there and map the territory (8, p. 16).
CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY


CHAPTER II

SELECTION AND ANALYSIS OF LITERATURE

It was the purpose of the group interpretation production about which this thesis is written to acquaint the audience both with the writer Leonard Cohen and with a selected representative body of his literature. The remainder of this study will focus on an analysis of the literature selected for presentation, and on the group interpretation production. The program is arranged in a lecture-recital format, and endeavors to give a comprehensive view of Cohen's literature. It includes his various types of literature (prose, poetry, and song), and reflects his various moods as revealed in his literature.

The criteria for selecting literature for inclusion in the script were the originality of the author's style and expression, unique literary forms employed by the author, and selections which relate to recurring themes, ideas, or topics within the author's literature. Other criteria focused on were the extrinsic qualities of art manifested by the work, including: universality of the literature, its individual appeal, its use of suggestion, and the aesthetic distance created by the literature. Literature was also considered for its intrinsic qualities,
such as unity and harmony, variety and contrast, and balance and proportion within the selection. The tonal qualities of a work, its use of silence, and its use of the poetic devices and forms were also considered in the selection of literature.

The reasons for selection of individual pieces of literature used in the script, and the explications of that literature follow. The complete piece of literature to which the explications apply can be found in the production script, located in Appendix A of this thesis. It is intended that the script and these explications should supplement each other, and be used in conjunction with one another; for that reason, and to avoid duplicate copies of literature within the thesis, the literature is not included with the explications.

The first poem in the script was chosen to serve as an introduction to Cohen for the audience. This poem, "Priests 1957," gives insight into his background and heritage, and introduces people who had influence on his development. In light of Cohen's biography this poem is easily understood; only two lines elude the interpreter. The first difficult line is, "echo of bridges and water in his hand"; this line could refer to the unfulfilled dreams of Cohen's father, who apparently had aspirations for a life's work outside the family garment business. The line also conjures the old
maxim which refers to the past as "water under the bridge"; thus Cohen's father had only the memory of his past dreams, rather than his dreams made real. The other line that might afford the interpreter difficulty is, "Must we find all work prosaic/because our grandfather built an early synagogue?" This line gives insight into Cohen and offers motivation for his actions. He felt compelled to become a part of family business, family tradition, which had been established early by his rabbi grandfather. But Cohen had to break the tradition of working in the family business because he could not find it personally fulfilling, but rather, he found it "prosaic."

There are many typical Cohen subtleties to be found in "Priests 1957." Among the implied meanings is the reason why Cohen's uncle "is disturbed by greatness," quite simply because he himself is not great. Likewise, is heard the uncle's spoken, but most probably unfulfilled statement that he "may write a book." The poet is found discovering his relatively unknown father, and being amazed at his unused books. These implied meanings and the obvious rationalization of Cohen's relatives who stayed in the family business combine to offer a very complete autobiographical introduction to the author.

The two poems, "Gift" and "On the Sickness of My Love," were chosen because they each reflect the poet's view of
poetry, although each has a different approach. In both poems the author asserts that the nature of poetry itself is useless. Poetry is not life, but merely a means of recording life. "Gift" is a simple little verse that shows the poet's willingness to create poetry, but his desire to create something more meaningful and real than poetry.

The poem "On the Sickness of My Love" is also a statement about the uselessness of poetry itself, but this poem reflects quite a different voice than the previous one. In this poem the poet is challenging and defying poetry to become life, knowing all the while that it cannot, that poetry merely records or mirrors life. Poetry provides the poet with a temporary escape from the realities of life; poetry is a "visa" from the pain of reality. Another type of escape the poet uses in this poem is found in the fourth verse: it is the escape from a sick and aging lover, to a faceless temporary lover. The poet yearns to "live in poems" and let their power of escape remove him from reality and its "prison of truth," but the essence of poetry is not strong enough to remove the pain of realization, and age, and illness.

The poem, "In the Bible Generations Pass...," was included in the script because it shows the author questioning the poet within himself. In this poem the author does not feel that he is inspired when he writes, he feels that he cannot get to the heart of poetry, but merely writes in
generalities that imitate poetry. The two people that the author introduces in this poem are called "two shining people," "shining" because they are inspired people, they have the soul of the true poet that in this poem Cohen wishes to be.

"I Wonder How Many People in This City" was chosen for the script to offer a balance to the previous poem. In the earlier poem Cohen was questioning himself as a poet; in this poem Cohen is recognizing every man as a poet. There is an obvious element of humor in this poem in its unusual and surprising ending; however, humor is not the author's primary attitude or mood in this selection. The feeling the author conveys in this poem is more serious and sincere than humor alone. The author is examining the universality of the poet. He is recognizing himself within all men: "I swear I see a face in every window looking back at me." Leonard Cohen sees himself mirrored in every man.

"The Cuckold's Song" was included because it is one of Cohen's most unusual poems, due to the unique relationship of the reader and the voice of the person speaking in the poem. In the first three lines the poet breaks the aesthetic distance normally reserved by poetry, by telling the reader and the two lovers whom he is addressing in the poem, that he has no desire to create poetry in this writing. The poet then reduces the aesthetic distance that remains by not
allowing himself to be removed from the poem, but rather
he makes the first person "I" painfully personal by referring to himself by name twice within the poem. The attitude of the poet is of interest in this poem. Desmond Pacey notes: "It begins in anger and modulates into wit and self-mockery; in style it substitutes, for Cohen's usual melodic grace, harsh colloquial diction and angry speech rhythms" (7, p. 8). The anger is obvious in the first part of the poem as Cohen addresses the man, his friend, who cuckolded him. Cohen then develops a sarcastic and wry humor as he says to the man, "oh there was passion I'm only too sure/ and even a little honour." The author's self-mockery reaches its zenith in the line, "I like that line because it's got my name in it."

The last part of "The Cuckold's Song" introduces the reader to a recurring Cohen motif: the "state of grace." In Cohen's words, "A state of grace is that kind of balance with which you rise to the chaos you find around you" (8, p. 18). Referring to Cohen, William Kloman says: "... 'state of grace'... for him, means achieving a state of harmony with the rest of creation" (3, p. 5). Cohen says in this poem that he is "turning to gold"; by this he means he is beginning to attain that state of grace. He is rising above jealousy, anger, hate, revenge, self-mockery, and all of the other states of existence, to achieve a level where he is above all these emotions and is at peace. But the
ironic thing about Cohen's "turning to gold," and the thing that gives beauty and power to this poem is the fact that he is beginning at the lowest point, and has the entire process of change before him. "The Cuckold's Song" is a very personal statement on the part of the poet; the interpreter may see pride in the character and attitude of the poet, but to read arrogance into his manner would be a misinterpretation. The interpreter can use focal placement to effectively establish the two characters spoken to in this poem.

To counterbalance the mood of "The Cuckold's Song" the poem "As the Mist Leaves No Scar" was included in the script. This poem shows none of the harshness or bitterness of the former poem, either in attitude or language. An attitude of optimism pervades the poem, but more than optimism, the feeling of confidence is present. "As the Mist Leaves No Scar" is perhaps one of Cohen's most lovely lyric poems. Structurally it is strictly rhymed in quatrains with a rhyme scheme of ABAB, CDCD, EFEF. The first and third lines of each quatrain end in a repetend. However, Cohen is not encumbered by the dictates of rhyme or structure; he uses the poetic structure as a framework for a peaceful and gentle mood which he apparently creates.

The first couplet of each verse is removed from the lovers in the poem; the last couplet of each verse deals
directly with them. Throughout the poem there is an impeccable use of balance and proportion. The reference to two different, although related, subjects in each verse gives the poem variety and contrast of theme.

Much of Leonard Cohen's literature is characterized by the presence of duality of theme, such is the poem entitled "Song." In this poem is seen the poet's inner turmoil when confronted with the conflicting desires for a saintly existence and sexual fulfillment. The poet wants to live in two planes of life which exclude one another (as he does in the poem "On the Sickness of My Love"). The poet values and wants to attain the saintly life, but he is compelled by his worldliness and desires to live with the pleasures of the flesh. Intellectually he can be the saint he finds in the "holy tomes," but physically he casts down the holy books, and lives in the mortal world.

The poem "Letter" was included in the script because of its use of suggestion and its levels of ambiguity. This poem as well illustrates Cohen's use of duality of theme. Cohen is contrasting individual love and war, as well as innocence and destruction, to create a union of conflicting states of existence.

The letter which is this poem itself is from a man to his lover telling the lover that even during their departures from destruction, for love, he knows the destruction is
continuing and that he will be consumed by it. The poet asserts that when one lives in a world of destruction, then destruction becomes meaningless, is to be expected and can be anticipated. To the poet the fleeting moments of love are more real than is impending death.

The ambiguous nature of the lover in this poem allows the reader several interpretations. Critic Sandra Djwa calls the lover "the madwoman," and sees her as the instrument of destruction for the man (2, p. 36). Normally, one would call the poet's lover in this poem "the woman," and would liken her to a siren luring the man to his downfall. However, if one gives attention to the verse: "I know that outside a war is raging/ that you issue orders/ that babies are smothered and generals beheaded," it might appear that this man's lover is a military figure; a direct, rather than removed, part of the destruction, and can himself "issue orders" for his lover's execution. The poem can be read as though a woman is speaking, one of the "harlots" of the generals, who will be "put to the sword" along with the "massacred troops" because she fraternized with the enemy. Her head along with the other harlots and generals will hang on his house gate. Whether the poet's lover is a military figure who issues orders, or the woman who indirectly orders his death, the poet leaves to the interpretation of the reader. Even the gender of the writer of the letter in this poem is only suggested in the
lines, "... when one morning my head/ hangs dripping with
the other generals."

The various levels of ambiguity in this poem only serve
to increase its suggested interpretations and meanings.
Cohen has used implication, ambiguity, and suggestion to
create a poem of variety and contrast which allows varied
interpretations. In this thesis production the poem was read
by a male reader, thus indicating the interpretation that it
was a general addressing his lover.

The poem "All There Is To Know About Adolph Eichmann"
was included in the script to illustrate Cohen's diversity
of style and originality of expression. Cohen uses the
paradoxical theme of evil within the ordinary to show that
all men have the potential to do evil, that evil is universal.
Cohen takes an individual case of evil, Eichmann, and shows
exactly how ordinary and common that case is. Ironically
Cohen is showing the evil within the ordinary by his struc-
ture of the poem. Although his subject is Adolph Eichmann,
the personification of evil, Cohen has structured the poem
to suggest there is nothing unusual about him, that he is
quite normal.

The unique and original structure and form the author
has given the poem dictates his intent for its interpreta-
tion. It is to be read as if it were a report, one among
many, no different from the rest. The irony of the poem is
contained in the innocent lines following "What did you expect?" The last line, "Madness?", is ironically deadly serious in meaning. Cohen's use of variety and contrast, and balance and proportion are blatantly obvious, but intentionally so. It is Cohen's use of obvious, report-like structure that gives this poem its ironic double meaning.

The structure of this poem also suggests its non-verbal interpretation. The interpreter must convey the impersonal report-like feeling of this poem physically as well as vocally. This mood can be achieved by appearing to read from a chart, or form. The reader can establish eye contact with a word in the left column of the poem, and then looking up from his manuscript, read that word to the audience. He can then re-establish that same point of eye contact, and follow obviously with his eyes to the opposite side of the manuscript page to the word on the same line as the previous word he read. From that point he again establishes eye contact with the audience to read that word.

"The Warrior Boats" was selected for the script to show Cohen's subtle use of mood. The initial mood created in the poem, and maintained throughout most of it, is one of dis-integration, decay, and despoilment. Into this atmosphere of destruction Cohen places two lovers who know they will be affected by it, and are powerless to change their fates. The lovers are not mentioned in the poem until the two final
verses, and in these verses Cohen completely changes the entire mood of the poem. The final mood of the poem is not one of decay and despoilment, but rather one of compassion and tenderness. The man in this poem is separated from his love, and so he addresses himself directly to the men of destruction who he knows will bring their despoilment to her, and he implores them to be gentle with her. Cohen only implies the nature of the lovers' separation; they may be separated by miles, or by the death of the man, who would be posthumously addressing the warriors.

Cohen shows that many events in the poem have a cause and effect relationship. The warriors are more interested in women than in war, because their country and cause are corrupt, and because their empire is withering. Their empire is collapsing, and their ships disintegrating because their interests lie elsewhere. Cohen calls them, "The beautiful dead crewmen"; his reference to them as "dead" is a foreshadowing that because of their actions, they will be defeated, their "home ports [will] put on mourning." Cohen shows that both the man and his love have foreknowledge of her impending fate at the hands of the warriors, when the man addresses them in the lines, "And I cannot know how long/ She has dreamed of all of you."

"The Warrior Boats" is a subtle poem. It is subtle in its use of foreshadowing, and in the ultimate mood it creates.
Its complex use of interrelated topics gives it a strong and unified inner structure.

"A Kite Is a Victim" illustrates Cohen's versatility of style and use of imagery. It is a simple lyric that conjures vivid images. In the first two verses Cohen personifies the kite, and uses language that suggests life and movement. In the final two verses Cohen shows the kite with dignity and respect for its individuality and freedom. Cohen likens the moon to a kite without a string in the line "... the traveling cordless moon." The prayer in the final verse is to attain a level of integrity and personal value equal to that of Cohen's personified and respected kite. This poem is possibly one of Cohen's most lovely, joyful, and peaceful poems.

The poem "Summer Haiku" shows Cohen's versatility of style and his ability to create a vivid mood within the confines of an established form. Cohen uses the oriental form of Haiku poetry, in which the structure of the poem on the page is directly related to its meaning and interpretation. Cohen is probably dictating his intended interpretation of this poem by leaving large spaces between each line in the structure of this poem. These spaces are pauses, both to the eye and the ear of the reader. To omit these pauses would be violating the author's intent, and would completely thwart the meaning and the mood of the poem. This poem is
an ironic parallel to the poem "Gift." It is ironic in
that it is an example of the gift of silence which he offers
in that poem, and is told: "This is not silence/ this is
another poem."

The pauses in this poem are essential to its mood and
effect; therefore, the use of extended pauses in this poem
is critical to creation of the proper mood. To attempt to
establish a formula or strict timing for this poem would
only serve to make it mechanical, and would not transfer the
full mood of the work. The interpreter must hold the pauses
long enough to create an effect of silence, and then even
more obvious silence. He must allow the audience to become
aware of the silence surrounding them, without breaking
aesthetic distance, or losing their attention. The inter-
preter must be aware of his audience and their response to
his use of pause; by their response the interpreter can de-
termine exactly how long to hold the pause. A final pause
to maintain mood and to hold the audience should be employed
after the final line of the poem.

Cohen's unique originality of expression and style is
seen in the graffiti-like poem "Marita." This short poem is
an intense plea to the woman of his dreams. A plea to find
him before it is too late and he is no longer worth finding,
or perhaps cannot find himself. Although this poem is a
sincere plea, it can serve in a program as comic relief,
from the otherwise serious mood of the script, without losing its meaning and individual, as well as universal, appeal.

Of the songs by Leonard Cohen, this study includes "Story of Isaac" because it reflects the familiar use of duality, both of theme and of point of view. More important it also reflects Cohen's use of legend. Cohen uses the ancient biblical legend of Abraham and his son Isaac as a basis for his song. The opposing themes are holy sacrifice, that of Isaac, and the slaughter of warfare. The first two verses merely recount the biblical story of the sacrifice of Isaac. In the second verse the line, "The lake a lady's mirror," refers to the lake below them appearing small and reflective, like a mirror, as they climbed the mountain. The lines "Thought I saw an eagle/ But it might have been a vulture,/ I never could decide" are the first use of duality of point of view in the poem. They reflect the possibility of good or evil in what the boy saw, and foreshadow the possibility of good or evil in the act which was to follow. The two other verses are also spoken by Isaac, but they are directed to all men who wage war. In the third verse Isaac condemns them for being responsible for the deaths of men for no reason. In the line "A scheme is not a vision" Isaac is saying that the plots and plans of men to make war are not inspired or holy causes, ordained
by God, as was his sacrifice. "Your hatchets blunt and bloody," refers to all instruments of killing and death, which are over used. "The beauty of the word" is the holy word of God which came to Abraham in a vision, telling him to sacrifice his son Isaac.

In the last verse Isaac tells the men who kill that he is not one of them, that the motivation for his sacrifice makes him different from them. The parallel lines, "When it all comes down to dust/ I will kill you if I must/ I will help you if I can./ When it all comes down to dust/ I will help you if I must/ I will kill you if I can.", show the dual existence of good and evil within every man. Cohen uses Isaac's voice to state that each man has the potential to kill and the ability to help his fellow man. Isaac asks for "mercy" and understanding for all men, no matter what their motives, or "uniform." By saying, "The peacock spreads his fan," Isaac means that all men embody every character of life, both the good and the evil, and they reveal their true nature by their acts. In this song Cohen encourages an introspective view of men's actions.

The poem "Credo" again illustrates Cohen's reference to historic legend; however, the primary reason for its inclusion in the script is to reveal Cohen's view of the process of change. He sees it as continuing and eternal, in a cyclical pattern, events related to the events which precede
and follow them. Within this poem there is frequent parallelism of events. An obvious use of cause and effect also appears throughout the poem. The use of duality, common to Cohen, is also present; there is the duality of theme in individual love amid destruction. The other use of duality is found in the poet's desire for escape and for commitment. He wants to both leave his love and be with her.

The grasshoppers in the poem are a symbol of destruction and of change. The grasshoppers are also used as motivation for changes in point of view and subject. The poet shifts his focus from the lovers to the destruction, and back again repeatedly.

When faced with the choice of leaving, or staying with his love, the man chooses to stay; he says his decision to stay "made me sane," implying that his desire to escape was not rational. The man sees himself and his lover as removed from all the destruction. This isolated location he calls "the small oasis where we lie." He realizes that their isolation is only temporary, and that they too will be affected by change, when he says "though only for a time." Cohen, through the man, is saying that it is good to live a life of change, continually in a state of flux. In the lines "It is good to live between/ a ruined house of bondage/ and a holy promised land" the man refers not only to the house the slave people overthrew, or the past, but also to the uncertainty of the future. Cohen then asserts that this future
will be based on change. Through events bringing about other events the cycle of change will continue in the future. The final lines: "It is good to hear/ the larvae rumbling underground,/ good to learn/ the feet of fierce or humble priests/ trample out the green" refer to the continual rebirth of change. Specifically, "the larvae rumbling underground" are new grasshoppers being born to carry out their destruction and engender change. "The feet of fierce or humble priests" refers to the holy wanderers who are fleeing continued destruction.

This poem uses the two themes in equal balance and proportion to heighten the unified philosophy of the cycle of change as continuing. Cohen contrasts the two situations in the poem to show the similarity of change within each of them.

The song "Sisters of Mercy" was chosen for the script to illustrate Cohen's concept of the state of grace. Although he introduces the concept in earlier works of this script, this is the first selection to deal specifically with the state of grace and to suggest a method of attaining it. In this song the poet approaches the state of grace by his association and experiences with those who have already achieved it. The "Sisters of Mercy" themselves are not a holy order of nuns, or religious figures; rather they are those persons who are living in the state of grace.
Anyone can be a Sister of Mercy, so long as he is existing in that saintly state.

In the first verse the poet finds those people who are living in a state of grace, when he had reached his lowest point and was about to abandon hope. They shared their inner peace with him, and showed him how to live in it. The poet then wishes that everyone not living at peace, but still searching for it, might make contact as he did with the people who have attained it.

Addressing throughout the song those people not living in a state of grace, the poet says in the second verse that he was once like them. In two lines evoking a symbol of Christ on the cross, "Well, I've been where you're hanging/ I think I can see how you're pinned," the poet says he can understand the state of existence of those not at peace, because he was once one of them. He says that those not at peace feel they must abandon everyone they cannot control, ultimately themselves. The loneliness that follows their abandonment merely emphasizes the fact that they are not at peace.

In the third verse the poet tells of his reverence for the Sisters of Mercy, and of their accepting him, and giving him insight. In the lines "If your life is a leaf/ That the seasons tear off and condemn/ They will bind you with love/ That is graceful and green as a stem" the poet is saying
that if you live a daily existence, without direction or purpose, the Sisters of Mercy will teach you to live a life of love.

In the final verse, "Don't turn on the lights, / You can read their address by the moon," the poet is saying not to seek out the people living in a state of grace, but to be aware of them all around you. He then says that his contact with them was of the spirit, not of the flesh, but whatever experience one might have with them would be good. The poet repeats the last couplet to confirm his last statement and to give a note of finality to the song. Throughout the song there is a quiet and peaceful attitude of contentment.

The selection, "God Is Alive--Magic Is Afoot," was chosen for inclusion in the script because it is one of the more important statements of this major Cohen motif: the quest for God. The existence of God is dealt with frequently in Cohen's literature, but this selection is his most positive affirmation of that existence. This is the only prose literature in the script and it is quite verse-like; however, it does illustrate Cohen's versatility of style and form. This selection is based on the dual themes of the existence of God and the existence of Magic, as the two real powers or forces in the world. God exists as ruler; Magic exists as the force behind the mystical and unknown.
The attitude of the literature changes frequently, but predominantly it is one of joy and exultation in the confirmation of the existence of God. The attitude of the introduction is one of holy reverence in the confidence of discovered truth. The body of the literature reflects many attitudes as it presents all aspects of the existence of the two forces in the world. The conclusion of the literature, from "This I mean to whisper to my mind," to the end, is in the attitude of extreme joy, exultation, and confirmation of the existence of God.

To explicate this selection line by line is unnecessary; many lines are obvious in their meaning and many are only fragments of complete thoughts. Some lines evoke images rather than convey meaning. To dictate one meaning for the lines of this selection would be to limit its appeal and effect. The appeal of this selection is in its mood and the use of vocal effect rather than to complete response and literal meaning. Cohen has used every line of this selection effectively to make the one triumphant statement, "God is alive--Magic is afoot." Although there is only one character making the statement in this selection, there are three roles or attitudes expressed within that statement: the role that affirms the existence of God, the role that affirms the existence of Magic, and the role of a narrator who has lines which do not affirm the existence
of God or Magic, but instead relate to the two. Since there are three roles represented, the decision was made to present this selection utilizing the group interpretation mode. It was read by three interpreters, each reading one of the roles. The interpreter who read the literary introduction to the selection also read the role that affirms the existence of God, since, essentially, "God is alive" is what he "meant to whisper."

The chant-like, "God - alive - Magic - afoot," was added to the original literature, preceding and following the body of the selection. This chant was included to create and sustain the mood of the literature and to achieve a sense of unity to the group interpretation. Within the selection the line, "Alive is in command," was read by all of the interpreters in unison because this line is an affirmation of the statements made by each of them.

Those elements which are essential to the effective interpretation of this selection are: intensity, pace, and continuity. The readers must maintain both a vocal and a physical intensity parallel to the level of intensity witnessed throughout the literature. Variation of their intensity is necessary as dictated by the literature, so that intensity builds to the maximum in the conclusion of the literature. The pace of the literature should offer variety and variation throughout the reading. Pacing can effectively
be combined with intensity to create builds within the selection. The lines "Magic is afoot. God rules./ Alive is afoot. Alive is in command," interrupt the established pace of the selection, and should be allowed to do so; however, the established pace should immediately be resumed after those lines. The continuity of this selection can be unbroken, in spite of short lines and frequent changes in readers, if all readers will endeavor to interpret the literature as if one person were reading it. Line cues between different readers must be tight to create the effect of one person making the statement.

"God Is Alive--Magic Is Afoot" is Cohen's most confident statement and is perhaps one of his finest pieces of writing. It blends two diversified themes into one statement of unity, and deals with them in almost equal balance and proportion. This selection covers a broad emotional plane, from reverence to triumph, and has internal strength and power throughout.

The poem "Ballad" reveals Cohen in a different religious attitude than the previous selection does. It was included in the script to illustrate his various approaches to religion, and to show yet another view of Christ. Cohen regards Christ as one who lived in that state of grace which Cohen himself strives for. In this poem Cohen tells of a man who approaches Christ on the cross and attempts to make contact with that state of grace.
Throughout this poem there are references to plant life and the cycle of growth. These references foreshadow the sterility of the land that follows Christ's death. "The hanging man" referred to in the poem is Christ on the cross. Christ asks if his death will do any good; if by his death a new flower will grow, or a song will be learned, or the ill be made well. His question is answered by the people, with the sacrifice of the man who came to Christ with a flower, seeking contact with him and his state of grace. The lines, "O they hid two bodies/ behind a stone," indicate that the man was figuratively buried with Christ. In the final verse the poet says that nothing will grow in the place where Christ and the man with the flower were killed. The lines, "gardeners in vain/ pour blood in that soil," refers to Christ's question, "Will petals find roots/ in the wounds where I bleed?" The gardeners are trying to give new life to the soil where Christ died, through his shed blood. Traditionally the blood shed by Christ is the symbol of new and everlasting life.

There is a definite cycle of events in this poem relating to growth and life. The man picks a flower, dips it in Christ's blood, and hopes a garden will grow in his hand. Christ asks if his blood will bring new life, but his question brings the death of the man. Ultimately, Christ's death brings new life to mankind, but brings only death to the ground where his blood has fallen.
This poem affords one problem to the interpreter, that of vague or indefinite pronoun references. The audiences may have difficulty understanding to whom pronouns refer. Since some pronouns have indefinite antecedents, the interpreter must show the relationship of pronouns to their referents through his reading. Such a vague or indefinite pronoun reference occurs in the line, "And they fell on the man." The interpreter must show his audience that "the man" is not "the hanging man," previously mentioned, but the man who approached him with a flower.

Another approach to Christ, and longing for a state of grace, as seen in the two previous poems, occur in still another manner in the poem, "He Was Lame." This poem was chosen to illustrate Cohen's versatility of approach within the same theme. It deals with a man stumbling through the fog, which is representative of his own search for enlightenment. The poet calls him "lame"; he is lame because he is not in a state of grace, not at peace. The man is addressing Christ, and asking him if he is the way to peace. Addressing Christ, the man says, "give me a light/ buddy," meaning, give me an inner light, insight, and relief from the fog of wandering.

On the surface this poem may appear to be about a drunkard in the fog who asks another man for a light for his cigarette. However, the poet reveals his secondary meaning...
and reference to Christ by capitalizing the word "Light." This word then obviously refers to Christ and his Biblical quotation, "I am the way, and the truth, and the light." This little poem, which at first appears quite simple, contains a major Cohen theme, the search for enlightenment and a state of grace. Because of its obvious level of meaning the audience might take it as comic relief; however, if this is the sole intention of the interpreter he is slighting the literature. He is obligated to the literature to offer both levels of meaning intended by the author.

The poem-song "Suzanne" was chosen for the script because it is probably Cohen's most familiar work. More important, it is a statement about those people living in a state of grace. The familiar use of duality is present in this lyric. Cohen sees both Suzanne and Christ as people who exist in a state of grace. The primary message of the poem is that the state of grace is all around, and to attain it one must be aware of it and make contact with it.

Suzanne is a simple person who is living in a state of grace. The poet says that the reader has achieved complete contact with her, both physically and spiritually, in the lines: "And you know that she will trust you/ For you've touched her perfect body/ with your mind. . . . And you know that you can trust her/ For she's touched your perfect body/ with her mind." In the final verse, "our lady of the harbour" refers to Suzanne. In the lines "And she shows you
where to look/ Among the garbage and the flowers" Cohen says that Suzanne can accept the duality of beauty within refuse, and can show others how to see that beauty also. The "heroes in the seaweed" and "children in the morning," who are "leaning out for love," are people who are approaching a state of grace. "Suzanne holds the mirror" which reflects her love, and the love of those who are in contact with her and seeking a state of grace.

Jesus, as Cohen has often stated, lived in a state of grace; here Cohen shows that through contact with him one can attain that state that he shares with, among others, Suzanne. The "lonely wooden tower" from which Christ watched is the cross upon which he was crucified. Cohen depicts Jesus as a sailor saying, "All men will be sailors then/ Until the sea shall free them"; this refers to Christ's Biblical quotation, "... whoso believeth in me will not perish, but have everlasting life." Jesus is saying that through belief in him, all men will triumph over death. The death symbol here is the sea; Christ is a sailor and walks over death. Through belief in him all men can be sailors and walk over the death-sea. The line, "He sank beneath your wisdom like a stone," has a note of sarcasm in it. "Your wisdom" is a sarcastic reference to man's lack of wisdom which resulted in Christ's crucifixion and scorn at the hands of men.
Throughout this poem there are frequent uses of water symbols; these suggest the flow of life in the two verses dealing with Suzanne. In the verse about Jesus the water references take on the aspects of death symbols. "Suzanne" is possibly one of Cohen's most intricate poems. In it Cohen combines the contemporary and the ancient to effect a poem of universal appeal.

Having chosen and analyzed the literary selections to be included in the production script the next step was to organize those selections into a unified program.

This script is written and arranged in a lecture-recital format, which is defined by Charlotte Lee as follows:

... [it] has a strong central unity, uses the critics' opinions and historical data as transitions, and arranges the selections to illustrate whatever technical or thematic development the speaker has chosen. It emphasizes evaluation more than appreciation per se (4, p. 485).

The lecture-recital program should thus be built upon a theme with all transitions and literature supporting or illustrating that theme. However, a strong central theme should not limit the program in interest appeal or variety. Lowery and Johnson make the following observation regarding variety in the program:

A lecture-recital, like a well developed speech, should be built upon a single theme from which unity is derived. Variety may be attained through choice of material and technique of delivery. Personal comment from the reader aids appreciation; it seems to be an integral part of a lecture-recital (5, p. 251).
Concerning unity of theme Armstrong and Brandes say, "The oral interpreter can make a contribution toward clarifying perspective for his audience if he adopts a theme for his selections and thus allows each selection to contribute to the other" (1, p. 50). The unifying theme should not merely tie all of the selections together under a heading of similarity, it must have purpose and direction. Mattingly and Grimes feel that, "a program should yield this sense of 'going somewhere,' of one thing leading to another, and of 'coming full circle' at the end" (6, p. 310).

Arranging the program within the central theme is essential to its logical progression. Lowery and Johnson state,

Selections should be arranged in sequence following the principles of composition. This sequence may be chronological, according to time. It may be logical according to cause and effect. It may be psychological: according to the effect the reader wishes to produce upon the audience (5, p. 251).

Since this script is unified by representing literature of only one author, sub-themes are necessary to lend variety to the main theme. Mattingly and Grimes note,

If the selections are all the work of one author, they will need to be arranged in some sort of developmental order. Sometimes a chronological arrangement makes good programming, sometimes a topical grouping is better. Whatever the arrangement, it is wise to choose representative selections, endeavoring to introduce the listeners to many facets of the author's works. Again, special attention must be
given to the climactic order within the
groups as well as within the whole program
(6, pp. 309-310).

These authors further discuss the importance of structuring
the program to offer development of the theme and variety:

Between the first and last number the
interpreter will place selections which de-
velop his central idea, and so carry the
program forward, and which contribute to
variety and contrast. He is prudent to let
the selections vary in length, structure, at-
titude, and emotion, and to avoid placing
together those too much alike in the cogni-
tive and the affective elements or in style.
One number may, of course, lead into another,
and too wide a jump from one emotion to another
is not easily accomplished. Yet within the
program as a whole, there are, ideally, sharp
contrasts.

Short poems or excerpts are usually better
grouped together, for the program, like the
interpreter's performance, must have shape or
form. A selection too short to stand alone
. . . will be lost, outbalanced by the other
numbers, unless it is part of a larger unit
within the whole (6, p. 309).

Most scholars in the field of oral interpretation rec-
ognize three distinct sections within a well-organized program.
According to Armstrong and Brandes, the introduction serves to
". . . catch the attention of the audience and polarize its
interest" (1, p. 47). It is the consensus of opinion that
the introduction should be rather short in length and if pos-
sible of a light nature. Since the introduction serves to
acquaint the audience with the theme, it should be relatively
easy to understand, and should illustrate the theme clearly.
The major portion of the program should exemplify the unifying theme and should lead progressively to the climax. There is a diversity of opinion among scholars as to where, within a program, the climax should occur. Lowery and Johnson favor primacy, putting the important selection in the early part of the program. They state: "It is usually considered wise to give the more intellectual portions toward the beginning while the audience is fresh" (5, p. 252). The opposing opinion of recency, putting the climax toward the end of the program, is held by Mattingly and Grimes:

The interpreter will place toward the end of the program that which he most wants his listeners to remember. Desirably this number will be broadest in comedy or strongest in emotional appeal, building to a higher climax than what precedes it... (6, p. 309).

Armstrong and Brandes agree, and state: "... it is more customary to place the climactic selection near the close of program, or at least in the second half" (1, p. 48).

Charlotte Lee combines the desirability of both primacy and recency in her suggestions on placing the climax:

The most difficult selections should probably come slightly past the middle of the program, before your audience tires but after you have won them to the mood and direction of your theme. Close on the note you wish them to take home with them. This may be a culmination of your theme or the climax of a sequence of units of that theme (4, p. 491).

The final portion of a program is the conclusion. Scholars agree that the conclusion should bring to a logical
end the progression of the program. Armstrong and Brandes summarize the view of most scholars:

Concluding numbers are often short and should offer the audience a measure of the sense of satisfaction of finality. Concluding material need not be light and humorous, but, after the intensive climactic material has been read, the high point of the program is over. . . . The conclusion of a program should therefore be a selection that will unify what has gone before and will give the listeners a feeling that the reading is complete (1, p. 48).

The conclusion should leave the audience with a feeling of resolution. It can also serve to underscore the main theme of the program.

Many scholars emphasize the importance of transitions within a program. Transitory material can do much more than merely link selections together. Charlotte Lee points out:

The transitions between selections should allow the listeners a few seconds to complete their emotional response to the preceding selection and should lead them economically and subtly into the mood and area of response of the one to follow. They should be brief and keyed to your unifying theme, although you need not mention it specifically every time (4, p. 492).

Transitions can be explanatory as well as introductory. Lee says they should prepare the audience for the experience of the literature (4, p. 492). Transitions should relate not only to the main theme, but to other literary selections within the program if possible. Mattingly and Grimes suggest: "Sometimes a word or phrase from a preceding selection can be related to the next one. Sometimes points of similarity can
be mentioned, sometimes aspects of contrast" (6, p. 312). Transitions can make a program clear and concise in its progression of theme. Transitory material can also serve to explain the literature and its relation to the theme.

Since this script dealt entirely with literature by one author, the unifying theme throughout the program was an introduction to that author and his literature. Sub-themes illustrating various aspects of his literature were used to explain his philosophies, and show his styles of writing.

The first sub-theme or section of the program introduced the author and his view of poetry and poets. An original introduction was written to give some background to the author and to gain the attention of the audience. The first literary selection was an autobiographical poem, which allowed the poet to introduce himself. A quotation by the author concerning the purpose of poetry led into two poems dealing with his attitudes toward poetry. Two poems dealing with the author's viewpoint of the poet within himself and within all men gave further insight into the poet and his relationship to poetry. Two poems dealing with diverse attitudes toward love were included in this section because of the intense involvement of the author in the first one. It illustrated how highly involved the poet could be in his literature.

The second section of the program introduced the first of several major motifs present in Cohen's writings, which
were dealt with in this script. This sub-theme was represented by four poems which illustrated Cohen's use of duality of theme. Within these four poems there is variety of style, form, attitude, and language, but they are unified by all exemplifying the author's use of duality of theme.

Cohen's versatility of style was the third section of the program. His versatility was shown in three very different poems, and was mentioned in two scholarly critiques which were quoted. The latter two poems were very short, and as Mattingly and Grimes suggest, were grouped together.

A second major Cohen motif was introduced as the next sub-theme: his use of ancient myths and legends in a contemporary setting. The two poems which illustrated this sub-theme also exemplified the poet's use of duality of theme, and were related to that motif.

The next sub-theme dealt with the concept "state of grace," which is perhaps the most important of Cohen's philosophies. This concept is predominant in all of his literature, and was the major point of focus of this script. The concept was introduced and explained, then exemplified by one of Cohen's songs. The concept of "state of grace" is directly related to Cohen's view of God and Christ. The climax of the program was the selection "God Is Alive--Magic Is Afoot." Not only was it the longest selection,
and the only prose literature, but it was also the only
selection that was read by all three interpreters. It
employed more movement and emotion than any other selection.
Of most importance in considering this selection the climax,
it is the culmination of two major Cohen motifs: the quest
for God and duality of theme. All of the literature in this
script led to this selection in some manner. As Cohen says
in his introduction to this selection, "All my speeches were
preface to this... now I come to the sweet burden of my
argument." The chant which was added before and after this
selection was intended to create, and sustain the mood of
the literature.

After the climactic selection came three poems which
were related to the "state of grace" motif and the religious
theme. The three poems all reflected the author's view of
Christ. The first one is a rather quiet poem and served as
a necessary mood change for the audience after the high
emotional content of the previous selection. The second
poem, a short verse, allowed the audience another change of
mood and could serve as slight comic relief if the audience
so desired. The last of the three poems, the final literary
selection, also related to concepts and themes introduced
earlier, but its secondary reason for being placed last was
that it is probably Cohen's best known work, and would leave
a portion of the audience with a feeling of familiarity and
identification.
The conclusion to the program was a quotation by Cohen which related to his overall philosophy, and to this program. It was a personal statement by the author about the present and the future, and it ended the program on a note of finality.

This script inter-mixed prose, poetry, and song, as it did long, short, and medium length selections. There were rises and falls in emotion, as there were light and serious moods created.
CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY


CHAPTER III
DESCRIPTION OF THE PRODUCTION AND EVALUATION OF THE PERFORMANCE

The first step toward making the proposed production a reality was securing permission from the copyright holder to use the literature in a performance. Five duplicate letters requesting permission to use the literature were sent to Leonard Cohen. Three letters addressed to him were sent to his publishers: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., Amsco Music Publishing Company, and The Viking Press. One letter was sent to his home on Hydra, and one was sent to an address listed for a Leonard Cohen in Montreal. The person named Cohen in Montreal was later telephoned, and it was determined that he was not associated with Cohen, the subject of this study. Cohen's New York office received one of the letters which had been forwarded from a publisher, and responded requesting a complete list of selections to be used in the script. That list was supplied as requested, and complete permission to use all of the literature requested was granted. (See Appendix D to this thesis.)

This production was performed in the Forum Room of the Speech and Drama Building on the campus of North Texas
State University in Denton, Texas. The Forum Room is an ideal setting for this type of production. It is a large room with a stage area of 16 feet, 4 inches wide, by 7 feet, 3 inches deep. In front of this stage area, and some 1 foot, 3 inches below it is a well area with the dimensions: 16 feet, 4 inches wide, and 16 feet, 9 inches deep. Into this well area, adjacent to the front of the stage, was placed a platform 8 feet wide, which projected 4 feet into the well area. This platform was at the same height of the stage and fit flush against it. On either side of the stage were two angled steps, each approximately 8 inches in height, which lead into the well area. The entire platform was covered with a dark red oriental print rug which ran from the foot of the platform straight back to within 6 inches of the back wall of the stage area. The dimensions of the rug, as well as its linear placement and design, gave a visual appearance of depth to the playing area, as well as a feeling of formality. On this rug were placed three stools which were 2 feet, 6 inches in height. The middle stool was placed center stage approximately 1 foot from the rear edge of the rug. Both side stools were placed some 6 inches down stage from the middle stool and to either side of it, each approximately 6 inches from the edge of the rug. This was the entire stage setting.

The Forum Room is 36 feet wide, and will accommodate seating on three sides of the well area. The primary
audience area opposite the stage area has seating which rises in five levels. For these performances seating was omitted on the sides of the well area and on the first level directly in front of the stage. The seating capacity for these performances was eighty persons.

The lighting for this production included use of full house lights, both in the well and the audience areas. The house lights were extinguished just prior to the beginning of the performance, and were lighted after its completion. In addition to the house lights, there were twenty-two permanently placed General Electric MR2, 750 watt, 125 volt, Lightolier fixture spotlights which were fixed at the top of the well area. These spotlights were focused on the entire stage and platform areas, and also illuminated most of the well area. The spotlights gave a high intensity general illumination to the entire playing area. The spotlights were on during the entrance and exit of the audience, and throughout the entire performance; they were not changed in intensity or position at any time, in order to retain the formal mood and to avoid distraction from the literature.

Although the Forum Room fit perfectly the physical needs of this production, it could have been effectively performed under more adverse conditions. The stage area should be large enough to accommodate movement easily, without appearing
crowded. The seating area for the audience should afford comfort and an unobstructed view of the entire playing area. The stage area lighting should be a general light as opposed to spot lighted areas. It should fully light the readers, avoiding shadows, as well as avoiding glare which would make it difficult for the readers to see their manuscripts easily. The detailed description of the physical setting for these performances is included in this study to illustrate the manner in which they were produced. It is by no means implied that a physical setting designed to duplicate that used for these performances is necessary for an effective production.

The script called for three readers; two males and one female reader were cast. The female reader was chosen to give vocal variety to the cast. The readers were chosen for their skill in oral interpretation, their professionalism, their ability to work in a rigorous and concentrated rehearsal schedule, and their enthusiasm toward the material and the proposed performances. The cast were given copies of the script, including literature and transitional material, for their study three weeks prior to rehearsals.

The rehearsal schedule covered two weeks and three days. The first four rehearsals were devoted to reading through the literature and discussing its meanings and interpretations. During these rehearsals some parts were reassigned among the cast members. The one selection involving the
entire cast, "God Is Alive -- Magic Is Afoot," was rehearsed daily, because it was the only selection which could not be worked on outside of rehearsal, and because of its degree of difficulty. The fifth through tenth rehearsals consisted of running the complete script, both the literature and the transitional material. During these rehearsals the stage blocking was added.

The basic philosophy behind the blocking of the production was to maintain the formal approach and atmosphere which the director felt were dictated by the literature. The performance must maintain interest physically as well as vocally, it must not be static to the eye or the ear of the audience. The reader's movement must be natural and should occur when motivated by the script. It was also felt that the visual picture must maintain variety by alternating the positions of readers on stools, and allowing the readers to use the spacial area around them. A platform was used to extend the level of the stage out into the well area of the room in which the performance occurred. This platform was employed to give the readers more stage area on which to work, and to allow them to move forward to approach the audience.

Special attention was given to the blocking for "God Is Alive -- Magic Is Afoot"; it was intended that the blocking should parallel the structure of the literature. This selection called for more movement than any other selection
in the script. The introduction was set off from the body of the literature, as was the chant before and after the selection, through the use of movement in the blocking. All blocking for this selection and throughout the entire production is shown in detail in the script, located in Appendix A to this thesis.

The latter rehearsals were devoted to rehearsing specific parts of the script which afforded the readers difficulty, rehearsing "God Is Alive -- Magic Is Afoot" apart from the rest of the script, and running the complete script with blocking. During these latter rehearsals the cast members were given directions as to their "in scene" and "out of scene" posture. The decision to be in or out of scene was based on the nature of the literature being read. Selections such as "The Cuckold's Song" or "Letter" were highly personal in nature. It was felt that if the two cast members who were not reading had remained in scene during these selections it would have appeared that they were being addressed by the reader of the literature. It thus seemed more appropriate for them to be out of scene. Other selections including "All There Is to Know About Adolph Eichmann" and "Summer Haiku" lent themselves to full attention from the entire cast as well as the audience; thus it was decided that all readers should remain in scene, with the two silent members directing their attention toward the reader.
The decision to be in or out of scene when not reading was also based on the length of a selection. Long selections such as "Credo" and "Ballad" demanded concentration from the audience. If the cast members who were not reading were in scene during these selections they might have attracted attention away from the literature; for this reason they remained out of scene. An effort was made to have continuity to the directions to be in or out of scene. If a short selection was preceded and followed by selections in which those cast members not reading were out of scene, then that direction to be out of scene was maintained for the selection between the two. This continuity of direction was an effort to keep the readers from going in and out of scene frequently, giving the appearance of random movement.

A uniformity of in scene or out of scene throughout the script was not desired. To have had the non-reading members of the cast uniformly in scene or out of scene would have lacked visual variety, and could have become predictable and uninteresting to the audience. But primarily an imposed uniformity would not have served all of the literature best.

During these latter rehearsals focal placement was established as part of the blocking. Certain selections necessitated definite character or referent focal placement. In "The Cuckold's Song" the man and woman spoken to in the
poem were given definite focal points, to allow the reader
to place and establish them clearly and effectively. In
the poems "Ballad," "Credo," and others, focal placement of
things referred to in the literature was established to
allow the reader to refer to them visually as well as orally
through the literature.

The readers were not costumed; however, an effort was
made to dress them in an attire that would befit the formal
approach taken throughout all aspects of the production.
The male readers were dressed in quite similar coats and
ties, each in a dark color scheme. The female reader wore
a floor length dress which was also predominately dark in
color. It was intended that the clothing worn by the readers
should not distract from the readers, by attracting attention
to itself. It should facilitate movement easily, and should
not appear out of place in these surroundings.

Uniform, black, hardbound, 7 inch by 10 inch manuscripts
were carried by each reader. It was decided that scripts
should be present throughout the performance since the di-
rector felt the scripts are the symbol of both the author's
word and the art of oral interpretation.

A pre-recorded music tape was used to set the mood of
the performance prior to its beginning. The tape was started
thirty-eight minutes before the start of the performance, and
was timed to end at the scheduled start of the performance.
It played continuously throughout the seating of the audience. Upon its termination the house lights were extinguished, and the performance began. The tape consisted of music written and performed by Leonard Cohen. The music was chosen to fit a quiet and somewhat serious mood. No piece of music which was overly familiar, or was to be read during the performance, was selected for the tape. The tape included (in order): "Avalanche," "Last Year's Man," "Master Song," "The Stranger Song," "Joan of Arc," and "Famous Blue Raincoat." All selections were from Cohen's third record album, Leonard Cohen Songs of Love and Hate (Columbia, 1971), except "Master Song" and "The Stranger Song," which were from his first record album entitled, Songs of Leonard Cohen, (Columbia, 1969). No attempt was made to identify the music or its performer other than intentionally ending the tape with a song which ended with the words: "Sincerely, L. Cohen." Although this reference to the composer-performer was no doubt obscured within the tape, it was believed that to identify the music and musician was unnecessary in light of the nature of this production. The tape was played from a control room above the Forum Room through numerous stereo speakers built into the ceiling of the Forum Room itself.

Four ushers were used at each performance to greet the guests, distribute programs, and assist in seating the audience. Two male and two female ushers were used at each performance. They were dressed in clothing which reflected the
approach of the production. The first performance had an audience of thirty-six persons, the second performance had a capacity house of seventy-nine persons.

It is felt that this production accomplished its intention, to acquaint an audience with a selected representative body of literature by Leonard Cohen. However, more than merely acquaint them with the literature chosen, it is believed that these performances gave their audiences an appreciation of Cohen: the man, his literature, and his philosophies. This belief is based on the comments of audience members, many of whom expressed an intention to obtain Cohen's literature and read other selections for their own interest. Other comments from audience members indicated that they appreciated a philosophical, as well as biographical background to Cohen.

The entire performance consistently lasted fifty minutes when timed. This is considered an ideal time for such a performance; a representative survey of the subject can be conducted within an uninterrupted time limit which will maintain the interest and intellectual participation of its audience. Although some minor changes occurred in the script and in blocking during the rehearsal period, no major changes of any kind in the entire production are suggested if this production were to be performed again. Certain points for consideration have been voiced by persons giving constructive criticism to the performance. Certain persons felt there
should be a uniformity to the cast members who were not reading being either always in scene or out of scene. These persons felt that having readers both in and out of scene for various selections compelled the audience to attempt to predict whether the readers would be in scene or out of scene during each selection. Another critique concerned the lack of specific comic relief literature within the program. Some critics felt that there should have been more frequent breaks in the overall mood of the program through humor, to allow the level of intensity required of the audience to subside briefly. The comment was also made that the size and placement of the rug, and the stools on it, delineated an established playing area. When the readers moved out of this defined area, to the side of the rug or into the well, it disturbed the total gestalt of the setting and arrangement, and the blocking momentarily distracted from the reading. The opinion was also expressed that more multiple-reading, such as was used in "God Is Alive--Magic Is Afoot" would have been desirable.

Although it is felt that the performances were successful, a response to some of the unfavorable audience comments must be included. It was suggested that more multiple reading could have been included in the script. It is quite true that such a technique might have added interest to the performance but the decision was made by the director to use
multiple reading only once. That decision was made for two reasons: (1) by using this technique only for "God Is Alive--Magic Is Afoot" it heightened audience interest for that selection which is regarded as the major climactic point in the script, and (2) it was felt that the use of multiple reading would not necessarily better serve to communicate either the intellectual or emotional content of the other selections. To have used it may have, in fact, distracted from the literature itself. Since the primary motivation for all directorial decisions was to focus attention on the literature, an effort was made to avoid all techniques which might distract from the literary content.

It was also suggested that the setting and costuming could have been treated informally. The decision was made quite early to strive for an air of formality so as to lend an aura of dignity to the program. The director does not regret that decision; however, it is recognized that an informal atmosphere could be equally effective, and that extremely informal attire for the readers could be appropriate for this body of literature. It is quite possible that the program could be staged in the three-quarter round so as to allow a closer audience-reader spacial relationship. The director chose to omit seating on the two sides to create a more formal and established physical distance, as well as to avoid possible distractions from the readers by audience members who were seated close to the playing area.
The lack of specific comic relief, or humorous, literature in the program is intentional. In selecting literature for inclusion in the script no piece of literature was found which was humorous in nature, and yet could be considered of significant importance to Cohen's overall work. It was felt that the mood created within the program displayed sufficient variety and contrast, so that specific selections designed to allow the audience to relax were unnecessary.

Planning a production for performance such as this one provides a unique and challenging experience for an oral interpretation director. Not only must he arrive at a thorough knowledge of the meaning of his topic, but he must transfer that meaning, both intellectual and emotional, to an audience who is generally unfamiliar with his subject. More important than merely communicating meaning to an audience, the researcher must convey an appreciation and understanding of his subject. This challenge combined with the task of creating a work that will entertain as well as inform an audience makes a thesis production for performance a personally and intellectually rewarding research experience.
APPENDIX A

PRODUCTION SCRIPT
(The numbers in parenthesis found at the end of literary selections are footnotes, and refer to the sources listed at the end of this script.)

"Beautiful Losers"

An adaptation of the literature of Leonard Cohen for group interpretation.

(The three readers enter from SR, Reader 2 first, followed by Reader 3, and last Reader 1. They stand in front of their stools, Reader 2 SL, Reader 3 center, Reader 1 SR, and open their scripts.)

Reader 1--Leonard Cohen is a "visceral romantic". . .

Reader 3--Leonard Cohen is the author of five volumes of verse, two novels, a collection of songs, and three record albums.

Reader 2--Leonard Cohen is "frozen in an anarchist's posture but unable to throw his bomb". . .

Reader 3--Leonard Cohen is twice winner of the prestigious Canada Council Award for his poetry.

Reader 1--Leonard Cohen is "a psalmist". . .

Reader 3--Leonard Cohen is one of the most important contemporary literary figures.

Reader 2--Leonard Cohen is "just some Joseph looking for a manger."

Reader 3--Cohen was born in Montreal, Canada in 1934, and educated at McGill and Columbia Universities. He
spends most of his time traveling, or at his hilltop home on the Greek island of Hydra.

Reader 1--Cohen was offered Canada's important Governor General's Award for his collected poems, but declined the award explaining, "The poems themselves forbid it absolutely. Art is the verdict you give to writing that is important, but for me to write for art is wrong."

Reader 2--Cohen is a "hero in the seaweed"...

Reader 3--a slaughtered lamb...

Reader 1--a literary phenomenon.

Reader 2--Cohen is a poet, novelist, songwriter, singer, and fork-tongued acolyte.

Reader 3--But how does Leonard Cohen respond to all this "praise and blame"?

Reader 1--"This is pure fantasy. Never heard of the man mentioned here. All good things, Leonard."

(Readers 1 & 3 sit, with their attention focused on Reader 2.)

Reader 2--Cohen's background and heritage are best revealed in his most autobiographical poem "Priests 1957." In this poem is one of the infrequent references to Cohen's father who died when Leonard was nine. Here we are also introduced to Cohen's grandfather who was a rabbi. Much of Cohen's writing reflects the
strong influence that his grandfather had on him, and it is to his grandfather that Cohen dedicated a volume of verse. This poem deals with Cohen's family and the prosperous garment industry which they owned. It also reveals the unfulfilled dreams of Cohen's father who wanted a life outside the family business. It is the realization of his father's unfulfilled dreams which compels Cohen himself to break away from the family business and pursue his own dreams.

(Reader 2 sits, Reader 1 stands, Readers 2 & 3 are out of scene.)

Reader 1--Beside the brassworks my uncle grows sad,
               discharging men to meet the various crises.
               He is disturbed by greatness
               and may write a book.

               My father died among old sewing machines,
               echo of bridges and water in his hand.
               I have his leather books now
               and startle at each uncut page.

               Cousins in the factory are unhappy.
               Adjustment is difficult, they are told.
               One is consoled with a new Pontiac,
               one escapes with Bach and the folk-singers.

               Must we find all work prosaic
because our grandfather built an early synagogue? (1)
(Reader 1 sits, and all readers are in scene.)

Reader 3--Cohen's life is mirrored in his poetry, but even Cohen warns not to equate poetry with life.

Reader 2--"Poetry is just the evidence of a life. If your life is burning well, poetry is just the ash."

Reader 1--In his two poems "Gift," and "On the Sickness of My Love," Cohen sees the nature of poetry itself as useless.

Reader 3--You tell me that silence is nearer to peace than poems but if for my gift I brought you silence (for I know silence) you would say This is not silence this is another poem and you would hand it back to me. (2)

(Reader 2 stands and moves forward, Readers 1 & 3 are out of scene.)

Reader 2--Poems! break out! break my head! What good's a skull? Help! help! I need you!
She is getting old.
Her body tells her everything.
She has put aside cosmetics.
She is a prison of truth.

Make her get up!
dance the seven veils!
Poems: silence her body!
Make her friend of mirrors!

Do I have to put on my cape?
wander like the moon
over skies & skies of flesh
to depart again in the morning?

Can't I pretend
she grows prettier?
be a convict?
Can't my power fool me?
Can't I live in poems?

Hurry up! poems! lies!
Damn your weak music!
You've let arthritis in!
You're no poem
you're a visa. (3)

(Reader 2 sits, and all readers are in scene.)
Reader 3--Just as Cohen questions the nature of poetry, he questions the poet within himself, as he examines his dumb tongue in the poem "In the Bible Generations Pass..."

Reader 1--In the Bible generations pass in a paragraph, a betrayal is disposed of in a phrase, the creation of the world consumes a page. I could never pick the important dynasty out of a multitude, you must have your forehead shining to do that, or to choose out of the snarled network of daily evidence the denials and the loyalties. Who can choose what olive tree the story will need to shade its lovers, what tree out of the huge orchard will give them the particular view of branches and sky which will unleash their kisses. Only two shining people know, they go directly to the roots they lie between. For my part I describe the whole orchard.

(4)

Reader 2--Even though Cohen questions the poet within himself, he recognizes the poet within all men in these lines...

(Reader 3 stands.)

Reader 3--I wonder how many people in this city live in furnished rooms. Late at night when I look out at the buildings
I swear I see a face in every window
looking back at me,
and when I turn away
I wonder how many go back to their desks
and write this down. (5)

(Reader 3 sits, and Readers 2 & 3 go out of scene.)

Reader 1--Cohen's poetry at times is so personal that it
shatters the aesthetic distance normally reserved
by poetry. Such a case is "The Cuckold's Song,"
in which the wounded poet lays bare his feelings
to the two lovers who have cuckolded him.
(Reader 1 goes out of scene as Reader 2 comes in.)

Reader 2--If this looks like a poem
I might as well warn you at the beginning
that it's not meant to be one.
I don't want to turn anything into poetry.
I know all about her part in it
but I'm not concerned with that right now.
This is between you and me.
Personally I don't give a damn who led who on:
in fact I wonder if I give a damn at all.
But a man's got to say something.
Anyhow you fed her 5 McKewan Ales,
took her to your room, put the right records on,
and in an hour or two it was done.
I know all about passion and honour
but unfortunately this had really nothing to do
with either:
oh there was passion I'm only too sure
and even a little honour
but the important thing was to cuckold Leonard Cohen.

Hell, I might just as well address this to the
both of you:
I haven't time to write anything else.
I've got to say my prayers.
I've got to wait by the window.
I repeat: the important thing was to cuckold Leonard Cohen.

I like that line because it's got my name in it.
What really makes me sick
is that everything goes on as it went before:
I'm still a sort of friend,
I'm still a sort of lover.
But not for long:
that's why I'm telling this to the two of you.
The fact is I'm turning to gold, turning to gold.
It's a long process, they say,
it happens in stages.

This is to inform you that I've already turned
to clay. (6)
(Reader 1 stands, and readers 2 & 3 come in scene.)

Reader 1--There are other traces of love than the scars left by a love cuckolded. There is the unseen bond between two people witnessed in "As the Mist Leaves No Scar."

(Reader 1 sits.)

Reader 3--As the mist leaves no scar
On the dark green hill,
So my body leaves no scar
On you, nor ever will.

When wind and hawk encounter,
What remains to keep?
So you and I encounter,
Then turn, then fall to sleep.

As many nights endure.
Without a moon or star,
So will we endure
When one is gone and far. (7)

(Reader 2 stands and moves forward.)

Reader 2--Leonard Cohen's literature is characterized by the almost consistent presence of duality of theme. Within most of his work there is present a theme and its antithesis, be it: involvement and escapism, religious affirmation and sexual
fulfillment, or individual love and war.
Consider the titles of two of his volumes of verse: Flowers for Hitler, and Parasites of Heaven, both combine conflicting themes, but in his poetry Cohen can wed opposing ideas to create a unified effect.
In his poem entitled "Song," Cohen shows the poet's inner turmoil when confronted with the conflicting desires for a saintly existence, and sexual fulfillment.

(Reader 2 sits.)

Reader 1-- When with lust I am smitten
To my books I then repair
And read what men have written
Of flesh forbid but fair
But in these saintly stories
Of gleaming thigh and breast
Of sainthood and its glories
Alas I find no rest
For at each body rare
The saintly man disdains
I stare O God I stare
My heart is stained with stains

(Reader 1 stands.)
And casting down the holy tomes
I lead my eyes to where
The naked girls with silver combs
Are combing out their hair

Then each pain my hermits sing
Flies upward like a spark
I live with the mortal ring

Of flesh on flesh in dark (8)

(Reader 1 remains standing and goes out of scene. Reader 3 stands. Reader 2 is out of scene.)

Reader 3--In the poem "Letter," the post-victim, aware of his impending death, addresses his lover directly to show that he knows what events will follow. Here Cohen contrasts individual love and war, to create a union of conflicting states of existence.

(Reader 3 moves to, and sits on SR stool, as Reader 1 moves DC stage. Readers 2 & 3 are out of scene.)

Reader 1-- How you murdered your family
means nothing to me
as your mouth moves across my body

And I know your dreams
of crumbling cities and galloping horses
of the sun coming too close
and the night never ending
but these mean nothing to me
beside your body

I know that outside a war is raging
that you issue orders
that babies are smothered and generals beheaded

but blood means nothing to me
it does not disturb your flesh
tasting blood on your tongue
does not shock me
as my arms grow into your hair

Do not think I do not understand
what happens
after the troops have been massacred
and the harlots put to the sword

And I write this only to rob you
that when one morning my head
hangs dripping with the other generals
from your house gate

that all this was anticipated
and so you will know that it meant nothing to me.

(9)

(Reader 1 sits, as Reader 3 stands and moves DR.
Readers 1 & 2 are out of scene.)
Reader 3--In the following poem Cohen uses the paradoxical theme of evil within the ordinary to show that all men have the potential to be executioners, that evil is universal. The evil man is ordinary, and within the ordinary man there is evil. Even the structure Cohen has given the poem suggests that its subject is not unusual, that it is quite normal. (Reader 3 returns to SR stool and sits, as Reader 2 moves down to stand in center of well area. Readers 1 § 3 focus their attention on Reader 2.)

Reader 2-- All There Is To Know About Adolph Eichmann

Eyes: .................. Medium
Hair: .................... Medium
Weight: .................. Medium
Height: .................. Medium
Distinguishing Features: ........ None
Number of Fingers: ........ Ten
Number of Toes: ............ Ten
Intelligence: ................ Medium

What did you expect?

Talons?
Oversize incisors?
Green saliva?
Madness? (10)
Reader 3--In "The Warrior Boats," Cohen creates a scene of disintegration, decay, and despoilment, into which he places two lovers who know they will be affected by the destruction, and are powerless to change their fates.

(Reader 1 stands and moves out and down to SL steps. Readers 2 & 3 are out of scene.)

Reader 1-- The warrior boats from Portugal
Strain at piers with ribs exposed
And seagull generations fall
Through the wood anatomy

But in the town, the town
Their passion unimpaired
The beautiful dead crewmen
Go climbing in the lanes
Boasting poems and bitten coins

Handsome bastards
What do they care
If the Empire has withered
To half a peninsula
If the Queen has the King's Adviser
For her last and seventh lover
Their maps have not changed
Thighs still are white and warm
New Boundaries have not altered
The marvellous landscape of bosoms
Nor a Congress relegated the red mouth
To a foreign district

Then let the ships disintegrate
At the edge of the land
The gulls will find another place to die
Let the home ports put on mourning
And little clerks
Complete the necessary papers

But you swagger on, my enemy sailors
Go climbing in the lanes
Boasting your poems and bitten coins
Go knocking on all the windows of the town

At one place you will find my love
Asleep and waiting
And I cannot know how long
She has dreamed of all of you

Oh remove my coat gently
From her shoulders. (11)
Reader 3--Leonard Cohen is a versatile writer, he handles prose, poetry, and song with equal adeptness and ease; but more important, he is versatile within each style of writing. His novels are called by literary critic Desmond Pacey, "As perceptive in content and as sophisticated in technique as any that have appeared in English since the Second World War. His poems have lyrical grace and verbal inevitability." Canadian literary scholar Alfred Purdy says, "Cohen writes love poems which are probably the best ever written in this country. Image succeeds image in a flow natural as bird-song."

Reader 1--Cohen's greatest poetic strength lies in the ballad which he handles with mastery, but he is also accomplished with many other forms of poetry. This simple lyric, "A Kite Is a Victim," illustrates Cohen's use of imagery.
A kite is a victim you are sure of. You love it because it pulls gentle enough to call you master, strong enough to call you fool; because it lives like a desperate trained falcon in the high sweet air, and you can always haul it down to tame it in your drawer.

A kite is a fish you have already caught in a pool where no fish come, so you play him carefully and long, and hope he won't give up, or the wind die down.

A kite is the last poem you've written, so you give it to the wind, but you don't let it go until someone finds you something else to do.

A kite is a contract of glory that must be made with the sun, so you make friends with the field the river and the wind,
then you pray the whole cold night before,
under the travelling cordless moon,
to make you worthy and lyric and pure. (12)
(Reader 3 moves across well and up to sit on SL stool, as Reader 2 moves DS between SR and center stools. Readers 1 § 3 are in scene.)

Reader 2--Cohen uses the established oriental form of haiku poetry to create a vivid effect in his poem "Summer Haiku."
(Reader 2 sits on SR stool, as Reader 1 stands and moves DC on platform.)

Reader 1-- Silence

and a deeper silence

when the crickets

hesitate (13)
(Reader 1 returns to sit on center stool.)

Cohen's versatility of style is seen in the graffiti-like plea:

Marita

Please find me

I am almost 30 (14)
(Reader 2 stands, as Readers 1 § 3 go out of scene.)
Reader 2--Much of Cohen's writing is dominated by his reference to myths, both ancient and contemporary. Cohen at times interweaves spiritual and historic myths and legends to form a tapestry of man in conflict with his own actions. In the song "Story of Isaac," we see the familiar use of duality, both of theme, and of point of view. The opposing themes of holy sacrifice and warfare slaughter serve to heighten Cohen's plea for inspiration and sanity in our lives. This verse uses the ancient legend to encourage an introspective view of contemporary actions.

(Reader 2 sits as Reader 3 moves down into SR well. Readers 1 & 2 are out of scene.)

Reader 3-- The door it opened slowly
My father he came in
I was nine years old
And he stood so tall above me
Blue eyes they were shining
And his voice was very cold.
Said, "I've had a vision
And you know I'm strong and holy
I must do what I've been told."
So he started up the mountain
I was running he was walking
And his ax was made of gold.
The trees they got much smaller
    The lake a lady's mirror
    We stopped to drink some wine
Then he threw the bottle over
    Broke a minute later
    And he put his hand on mine.
Thought I saw an eagle
    But it might have been a vulture,
    I never could decide.
Then my father built an altar
    He looked once behind his shoulder
    He knew I would not hide.
You who build the altars now
    To sacrifice these children
    You must not do it any more.
A scheme is not a vision
    And you never have been tempted
    By a demon or a god.
You who stand above them now
    Your hatchets blunt and bloody,
    You were not there before.
When I lay upon a mountain
    And my father's hand was trembling
    With the beauty of the word.
And if you call me brother now
Forgive me if I inquire
Just according to whose plan?
When it all comes down to dust
I will kill you if I must
I will help you if I can.
When it all comes down to dust
I will help you if I must
I will kill you if I can.
(Reader 3 has moved SL in the well, and starts to leave SL but turns back.)
And mercy on our uniform
Man of peace or man of war--
(Reader 3 starts to leave SL again but turns back.)
The peacock spreads his fan. (15)
(Reader 3 returns to sit on SL stool, and goes out of scene.)
Reader 1--In the poem "Credo," Cohen again uses reference to historic legend to show that the process of change is continuing and eternal.
(Reader 2 stands beside his stool SR, as Reader 1 goes out of scene.)
Reader 2-- A cloud of grasshoppers rose from where we loved and passed before the sun.
I wondered what farms
they would devour,
what slave people would go free
because of them.

I thought of pyramids overturned,
of Pharaoh hanging by the feet,
his body smeared--

Then my love drew me down
to conclude what I had begun.

Later, clusters of fern apart,
we lay.

A cloud of grasshoppers
passed between us and the moon,
going the other way,
each one fat and flying slow,
not hungry for the leaves and ferns
we rested on below.

The smell that burning cities give
was in the air.

Battalions of the wretched,
wild with holy promises,
soon passed our sleeping place;
they ran among
the ferns and grass.
I had two thoughts:
to leave my love
and join their wandering,
join their holiness;
or take my love
to the city they had fled:
That impoverished world
of boil-afflicted flesh
and rotting fields
could not tempt us from each other.

Our ordinary morning lust
claimed my body first
and made me sane.
I must not betray
the small oasis where we lie,
though only for a time.
It is good to live between
a ruined house of bondage
and a holy promised land.
A cloud of grasshoppers
will turn another Pharaoh upside-down;
slaves will build cathedrals
for other slaves to burn.
It is good to hear
the larvae rumbling underground,
good to learn
the feet of fierce or humble priests
tramble out the green. (16)

(Reader 2 sits, as Reader 3 moves DC. Readers 1 & 2 are in scene.)

Reader 3--Leonard Cohen's life, and indeed much of his literature is a quest to attain a "state of grace." As he describes it, "rising to the chaos around you," and achieving a perfect harmony with yourself and with the rest of creation. In the song, "Sisters of Mercy," the poet approaches the state of grace by his experiences with those who have already achieved it. He then encourages all of us to see that pure state of existence and strive for it.

(Reader 3 returns to SL stool and sits, as Reader 1 stands in front of center stool.)

Reader 1-- Oh, the Sisters of Mercy
   They are not departed or gone
   They were waiting for me
   When I thought that I just can't go on
   And they brought me their comfort
   And later they brought me their song.
   0, I hope you run into them
   You who've been traveling so long.
Yes, you who must leave everything
That you cannot control
It begins with your family
But soon it comes round to your soul.
Well, I've been where you're hanging
I think I can see how you're pinned
When you're not feeling holy
Your loneliness says that you've sinned.

They lay down beside me
I made my confession to them
They touched both my eyes
And I touched the dew of their hem.
If your life is a leaf
That the seasons tear off and condemn
They will bind you with love
That is graceful and green as a stem.

When I left they were sleeping
I hope you run into them soon.
Don't turn on the lights,
You can read their address by the moon;
And you won't make me jealous
If I hear that they sweetened your night
We weren't lovers like that
And besides it would still be all right
We weren't lovers like that
And besides it would still be all right. (17)
Reader 3--God is a force in much of Leonard Cohen's writings, but nowhere is the existence of that force more positively affirmed than in Cohen's second novel, *Beautiful Losers*. In verse-like prose Cohen asserts that the two real powers in the world are not science and politics, or sexual fulfillment and philosophy, but God and Magic.

(Reader 1 moves DC on platform, as Readers 2 & 3 move three steps behind him on their respective sides of him. Readers 2 & 3 are out of scene.)

Reader 1--Old friend, you may kneel as you read this, for now I come to the sweet burden of my argument. I did not know what I had to tell you, but now I know.

(Readers 2 & 3 start chant while out of scene, and slowly move forward until they are even with Reader 1.)

I did not know what I wanted to proclaim, but now I am sure. All my speeches were preface to this, all my exercises but a clearing of my throat. I confess I tortured you but only to draw your attention to this. I confess I betrayed you but only to tap your shoulder. This I meant to whisper.

All Readers--God - alive - Magic - afoot... God alive

Magic afoot... [Reader 1] God is alive,

(Reader 2 comes in scene.) [Reader 2] Magic
is afoot. [Reader 1] God is afoot, [Reader 2] Magic is alive. (Reader 3 comes in scene.) [Reader 3] Alive is afoot, [Reader 2] Magic never died. [Reader 1] God never sickened, many poor men lied. Many sick men lied. [Reader 3] Magic never weakened, Magic never hid, Magic always ruled, - [Reader 1] God is afoot; God never died. [Reader 2] (Echo) Died. [Reader 1] God was ruler, 'though His funeral lengthened, 'though His mourners thickened [Reader 2] Magic never fled - [Reader 1] 'though His shrouds were hoisted the naked God did live, [Reader 2] 'though His words were twisted, the naked Magic thrived. [Reader 3] 'Though His death was published 'round and 'round the world, the heart did not believe. Many hurt men wondered, many struck men bled. [Reader 2] Magic never faltered, Magic always led. [Reader 1] Many stones were rolled but God would not lie down. [Reader 3] Many wild men lied, many fat men listened. 'Though they offered stones, Magic still was fed. 'Though they locked their coffers God was always served.

[Reader 3] Alive is afoot, [All Readers] alive is in command. [Reader 1] Many weak men hungered, many strong men thrived. 'Though they bolstered solitude, God was at their side. [Reader 2] Nor the dreamer in his cell, nor the captain on the hill: Magic is alive. [Reader 3] 'Though His death was pardoned 'round and 'round the world, the heart would not believe. 'Though laws were carved in marble, they could not shelter men. 'Though altars built in parliaments, they could not order men. Police arrested Magic, and Magic went with them, for Magic loves the hungry.

But Magic would not tarry, it moves from arm to arm. It would not stay with them. [Reader 2] Magic is afoot, it cannot come to harm. It rests in an empty palm, it spawns in an empty mind. But Magic is no instrument, Magic is the end. [Reader 3] Many men drove Magic, but Magic stayed behind. Many strong men lied, they only passed through Magic and out the other side. Many weak men lied, they came to God in secret, and 'though they left Him nourished, they would not tell who healed. 'Though mountains dashed before them, they said that God was dead. [Reader 1] 'Though His shrouds were hoisted, the naked God did live -
Reader 3--Cohen regards Christ as one who lived in that state of grace which Cohen himself strives for. In the poem, "Ballad," Cohen speaks in a different religious voice than that we have just heard. He tells us of a man who approaches Christ on the cross, and attempts to make contact with that state of grace.

Reader 2--He pulled a flower
out of the moss
and struggled past soldiers
to stand at the cross.
He dipped the flower
into a wound
and hoped that a garden
would grow in his hand.

The hanging man shivered
at this gentle thrust
and ripped his flesh
from the flower's touch,

and said in a voice
they had not heard,
"Will petals find roots
in the wounds where I bleed?

"Will minstrels learn songs
from a tongue which is torn
and sick be made whole
through rents in my skin?"

The people knew something
like a god had spoken
and stared with fear
at the nails they had driven.

And they fell on the man
with spear and knife
to honour the voice
with a sacrifice.

O the hanging man
had words for the crowd
but he was tired
and the prayers were loud.

He thought of islands
alone in the sea
and sea water bathing
dark roots of each tree;

of tidal waves lunging
over the land,
over these crosses
these hills and this man.

He thought of towns
and fields of wheat,
of men and this man
but he could not speak.

O they hid two bodies
behind a stone;
day became night
and the crowd went home.
And men from Golgotha
assure me that still
gardeners in vain
pour blood in that soil. (19)

(Reader 3 stands by stool. All readers are in
scene through the conclusion of the script.)

Reader 3--Another approach to Christ, and longing for a state
of grace—that light from within, occurs in quite
a different manner as Cohen writes of a man stum-
bling through the fog—the fog of his own search
for enlightenment.

(Reader 3 sits on center stool.)

(Reader 2 stands and moves forward.)

Reader 2--He was lame
as a 3 legged dog
screamed as he came
through the fog

If you are the Light
give me a light
buddy (20)

(Reader 2 sits on SR stool.)

Reader 1--The state of grace is all around us, as are those
people who are living in it. One of Cohen's best
known poem-songs tells of two such people. It is
here that Cohen shows us that "even damnation is
poisoned with rainbows--there are flowers amid
the garbage."

(Reader 3 stands and moves forward gradually to
platform.)

Reader 3--- Suzanne takes you down
To her place near the river
You can hear the boats go by
You can spend the night beside her.
And you know that she's half crazy
But that's why you want to be there
And she feeds you tea and oranges
That come all the way from China.
And just when you mean to tell her
That you have no love to give her
Then she gets you on her wavelength
And she lets the river answer
That you've always been her lover
And you want to travel with her
And you want to travel blind
And you know that she will trust you
For you've touched her perfect body
with your mind.

And Jesus was a sailor
When he walked upon the water.
And he spent a long time watching
From his lonely wooden tower.
And when he knew for certain
Only drowning men could see him
He said, "All men will be sailors then
Until the sea shall free them."
But he himself was broken
Long before the sky would open
Forsaken, almost human,
He sank beneath your wisdom like a stone.
And you want to travel with him
And you want to travel blind
And you think maybe you'll trust him
For he's touched your perfect body
with his mind.

Now Suzanne takes your hand
And she leads you to the river
She is wearing rags and feathers
From Salvation Army counters.
And the sun pours down like honey
On our lady of the harbour;
And she shows you where to look
Among the garbage and the flowers.
There are heroes in the seaweed,
There are children in the morning,
They are leaning out for love
And they will lean that way forever.
While Suzanne holds the mirror
And you want to travel with her
And you want to travel blind
And you know that you can trust her
For she's touched your perfect body
with her mind. (21)

(Reader 3 remains standing, in scene, DC platform.
Reader 2 moves next to Reader 3 SR.)
Reader 2--All of Cohen's literature blends to express a
philosophy of individual peace with one's self and
with mankind.
(Reader 1 moves next to Reader 3 SL.)
Reader 1--He is striving to attain and live in that peace.
Reader 3--"The thing we find unpalatable about the law, is
that it is there to protect property, not the
spirit. It is no longer holy. We have to redis-
cover law from inside our own heritage, and we
have to rediscover the crucifixion. The cruci-
fixion will again be understood as a universal
symbol, not as just an experiment in sadism or
masochism or arrogance. It will have to be re-
discovered because that's where man is at. On
the cross."
(All Readers close their scripts, bow, and turn to
exit SR. They exit in the same order in which they
entered.)
FOOTNOTES


(4) "In the Bible Generations Pass...," Cohen, *Selected Poems*, p. 192.


(9) "Letter," Cohen *Selected Poems*, p. 16.

(10) "All There is to Know about Adolph Eichmann," Cohen, *Selected Poems*, p. 122.


(14) "Marita," Cohen, *Selected Poems*, p. 239.


(19) "Ballad," Cohen, Selected Poems, p. 22.
(20) "He Was Lame," Cohen, Selected Poems, p. 195.
APPENDIX B

PROGRAM AND PUBLICITY MATERIALS
The Speech and Drama Department
North Texas State University
presents

"BEAUTIFUL LOSERS"

a Readers Theatre production of
the literature of

LEONARD COHEN

adapted and directed by

Robert Zafran

May 3 & 4, 1972
"BEAUTIFUL LOSERS"
a Readers Theatre production of
the literature of

LEONARD COHEN

adapted and directed by
Robert Zafran
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Arts in Oral Interpretation

THE READERS
Kathleen Couser
Bill Hutson
Mark Price

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
Acknowledgement is hereby given to the following individuals and firms for permission to use the material included in this program: Leonard Cohen, Stranger Music, Inc., and Miss Carol S. Rothstein, personal representative for Leonard Cohen.

The director also wishes to express his appreciation to his major professor, Dr. Ted Colson, for his assistance in this production.
You are invited to a performance of

"BEAUTIFUL LOSERS"

a program of the literature of Leonard Cohen
Adapted and directed by Robert Zafran
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Arts in Oral Interpretation

May 3 and 4, 1972 8:00 p.m.

Forum Room - Speech and Drama Building
North Texas State University

Printed invitation, which was mailed to selected guests.
"BEAUTIFUL LOSERS"

A Readers Theatre Production of
The Literature of Leonard Cohen

Forum Room - Speech & Drama Building

May 3 & 4, 1972 -- 8:00 P.M.

No Admission

Leonard Cohen
MEMORANDUM

TO: Speech and Drama Department Faculty
FROM: Robert Zafran

As partial fulfillment for my masters degree I am directing a Readers Theatre production of the literature of the Canadian poet, Leonard Cohen.

The performances are scheduled for the evenings of May 3 and 4 at 8:00 P.M. in the Forum Room of the Speech and Drama Building.

You are, of course, cordially invited to attend and I would greatly appreciate your announcing the production to your students. There is no admission charge.

Sincerely,

Robert Zafran

Robert Zafran
MEMORANDUM

TO: English Department Faculty
FROM: Robert Zafran, Speech Department

As partial fulfillment for my masters degree in Oral Interpretation I am directing a Readers Theatre production of the literature of the Canadian poet, Leonard Cohen.

The performances are scheduled for the evenings of May 3 and 4 at 8:00 P.M. in the Forum Room of the Speech and Drama Building.

You are, of course, cordially invited to attend and I would greatly appreciate your announcing the production to your students. There is no admission charge.

Sincerely,

Robert Zafran
APPENDIX C

PHOTOGRAPHS OF PERFORMANCE SETTING AND READERS
The performance setting in the Forum Room of the Speech and Drama Department, North Texas State University, Denton, Texas.

The readers: left, Reader 1, Bill Hutson; center, Reader 3, Kathleen Couser; right, Reader 2, Mark Price.
The readers illustrating use of focal placement in the selection "God Is Alive - Magic Is Afoot."

An illustration of movement and the use of the well area, also showing silent readers "out of scene."
APPENDIX D

LETTERS OF COPYRIGHT PERMISSION
April 6, 1972

Mr. Robert Zafran
P. O. Box 5452
North Texas State University
Denton, Texas 76203

RE: Request for permission

Dear Mr. Zafran:

On behalf of Leonard Cohen, permission is hereby granted to use the following selections in the completion of your Master's Degree in the Oral Interpretation of Literature at North Texas State University Campus on two consecutive evenings in late April for an invited audience (said program not to be repeated, recorded nor broadcasted):

From Beautiful Losers, Bantam edition, pp. 197-199,
"God Is Alive, Magic Is Afoot"

From Selected Poems 1956-1968:
"Letter", p. 16
"Pagans", p. 19
"Ballad" p. 22
"Poem", p. 30
"A Kite Is A Victim", p. 37
"Gift", p. 39
"I Wonder How Many People In This City", p. 42
"Credo", p. 49
"The Cuckold's Song", p. 56
"Summer Haiku", p. 70
"On The Sickness Of My Love", p. 113
"All There Is To Know About Adolph Eichmann", p. 122
"He Was Lame", p. 195
"He Was Beautiful When He Sat Alone", p. 204
"Suzanne Takes You Down", p. 209
"Marita", p. 239
"Song", p. 67

From The Spice-Box Of Earth:
"Priests 1957", p. 69
Permission is hereby granted, on behalf of Leonard Cohen, to use the following selections (insofar as any or all of same are being considered for final inclusion in the script):

From **Selected Poems 1956-1968**:
- "These Heroics", p. 12
- "Lovers", p. 13
- "The Warrior Boats", p. 14
- "Prayer For Sunset", p. 21
- "Ballad", p. 26
- "The Fly", p. 30
- "Warning", p. 31
- "Story", p. 32
- "There Are Some Men", p. 40
- "You Have The Lovers", p. 50
- "As The Mist Leaves No Scar", p. 63
- "In The Bible Generations Pass", p. 192
- "I Met A Woman Long Ago", p. 198
- "I Am A Priest Of God", p. 207

Very truly yours,

Carol S. Rothstein,
on behalf of Leonard Cohen
April 6, 1972

Mr. Robert Zafran
P. O. Box 5452
North Texas State University
Denton, Texas 76203

RE: Request for permission

Dear Mr. Zafran:

On behalf of Stranger Music, Inc., permission is hereby granted to use the following selections in the completion of your Master's Degree in the Oral Interpretation of Literature at North Texas State University Campus on two consecutive evenings in late April for an invited audience (said program not to be repeated, recorded nor broadcasted):

From Songs of Leonard Cohen:

"Story Of Isaac", p.49

"Sisters Of Mercy", p.54

Very truly yours,

STRANGER MUSIC, INC.

By Carol S. Rothstein

csr
### Production Budget

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books


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Ruddy, Jon, "Is the World (or Anybody) Ready for Leonard Cohen?," Maclean's Magazine (October 1, 1966), 18-34.

Recordings


_______, Songs of Love and Hate, New York, Columbia, 1971.