



Newsletter

Issue 2 Volume 1

Summer 2006

**VIDEO CONTEST WINNERS ANNOUNCED PG. 2
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING ON SEPT. 22**

Anne Vriend - Berlin 2006

By: Jerome Martin

Ann Vriend is a young Edmonton-based songwriter and performer with a mature approach to music and a great affection for the songs of Leonard Cohen. Vriend, recently described as 'Edmonton's own piano pop laureate of emotional conflict'



by Steve Baylin of the Ottawa Express, relates to Cohen as a songwriter who has struggled with himself and with his relationship to God: 'Cohen's allusions are biblical. I too know these stories well. I admire his literary ability - being able to say several things in a short song.'

She has performed Cohen songs at two of the four annual Leonard Cohen Night festivals in Edmonton and will be one of the featured performers at the 2006 event to be held on September 23 at La Cité in Edmonton. Ann will also travel to Berlin in August, 2006, to perform five of Cohen's songs at the 'Let's Sing Another Song' Leonard Cohen Event in Berlin and to promote the 2008 Leonard Cohen International Festival which will be held in Edmonton.

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The City of Berlin

By: Thomas Mueller

The International Leonard Cohen Festival will be in Berlin this year. Berlin is for me the most German city I can think of, a symbol of both the beautiful and the ugly sides of my country.

This city was the site of the rise and the fall of the Third Reich. The place of the night of the broken glass, 'Reichskristallnacht', November 9, 1938. The Wannsee Conference where the decision for 'the final solution on the question of Jews' was made. The capital of megalomania, militarism, the starting place for two world wars. Hitler, Goering, Goebbels ...

Yet it is a city of arts and science, where theatre, film and opera thrive. The Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, the German Theatre. The Charite hospital, the Berlin Institute of Physics, the Freie University. Bertolt Brecht, Marlene Dietrich, Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, Robert Koch, Albert Einstein, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Rosa Luxemburg, Wilhelm von Humboldt ...

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Berlin

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But visiting Berlin is not only a trip into the heart of German history, it is a way of connecting your personal life with these historical moments. The fall of the Berlin Wall, November 9, 1989. What a beautiful event; how hopeful and happy we were with the unification of East and West, the idea of the United Nations of Europe, all singing the 'Ode to Joy'.

*Give me back the Berlin Wall,
Give me Stalin and Saint Paul,
I've seen the future, brother:
It is murder.*

(The Future, 1992)

Leonard Cohen wrote these lines in 1992. In Sept 2001 I began to understand them. The fall of the Berlin Wall,

and the destruction of the Twin Towers, changed the balance of power in the world and in our personal lives. The loss of ideologies, the uninhibited rule of money and globalization, and the demons of fundamentalism opened the doors to nihilism. Leonard Cohen proves with these lines, and so many of his songs, that the most honorable function of the poet is to anticipate developments and express feelings.

So I welcome International Leonard Cohen Festival into Berlin this August, in the hope that each visitor might find within himself a connection with the history and culture of the city. And, perhaps, in addition to great music and friends, they will discover there just a little of what Cohen meant when he cried: "Give me back the Berlin Wall."

The Cohenights Arts Society is pleased to announce the winners of The 2006 Leonard Cohen Video Scholarship Competition

First place went to Alicia Pawlowski and Katie Harlton for their creative interpretation of Leonard Cohen's "Last Year's Man." With numerous costume changes and a wide variety of locations Alicia and Katie accurately portrayed Leonard's soulful lament. Grant Guidy's wonderfully personal video of Leonard Cohen's "In My Secret Life" awarded him second place. The Scholarships awarded allowed the winners to participate in this summer's "Teen Video Intensive" held this past July at Red Deer College. Here the young video creators further developed their filming techniques.

Both videos will be shown at the this year's Leonard Cohen Night, September 23, 2006 at La Cite Francophone in Edmonton, Alberta.

This year's Annual General Meeting of the Cohenights Arts Society will be held on September 22, 2006, immediately following the 1966-2006 panel discussion on Leonard Cohen's influence on music and poetry. All members and potential members are invited. Refreshments will be served.

Join us for great conversation and great music!

Location TBA. Call 780-710-1644 for details.





Lady in the Blue Gloves

By: Karen Slevinsky

“Rick, let’s go. It’s Leonard Cohen Night again. We don’t wanna be late.” This was our third Leonard Cohen Night together.

“I’m coming and I’ll even hurray if the lady with the blue gloves will be singing again,” my husband quipped wickedly.

Ah yes, the lady with the blue gloves, fuchsia hair and breathtakingly delicate voice is Wendy McNeill from Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. In her lovely style, she will be performing in Berlin, Germany at the Leonard Cohen Event 2006, August 11-13, 2006. Currently, she lives in Paris so a gig in Berlin will be just a nice jaunt for her. An Edmonton

girl performing in Germany! Wow, but wait a minute, Wendy has performed in France, Sweden, Norway and the Netherlands on various tours releasing various CDs.

Wendy sings, plays guitar, squeezes the accordion and gently dances on stage as she performs Leonard Cohen, Woodie Guthrie, Joni Mitchell, John Prine and a wide range of original material. Her stage presence is mesmerizing and her songs have been described as both ‘sweet and sorrowful’ and ‘raucously catchy.’ She is promoting her current CD *The Wonder Show* released this year with a wonder show across Europe. Catch her in Berlin, if you can!

Anne Vriend

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Ann earned a diploma in Vocal Performance at Grant MacEwan College in Edmonton. She’s known as a singer, a songwriter and a pianist, with skills and sensitivities that show influences of not only Cohen but also her other musical heroes including Aretha Franklin, Billie Holiday and Paul Simon.

In her studies at Grant MacEwan she also learned a lot about the origins of popular music and jazz. ‘I’ve been very interested in the work of Art Tatum, Bill Evans, Dave Brubeck, and Rueben Gonzales - and I continue to listen and learn.’

I asked Ann what she would say to Leonard if she had an opportunity to meet him.

‘I would, of course, be thrilled to meet Leonard. He’s so talented and so wise. I know that he struggles and he transforms that struggle into art - and I’d be worried that he wouldn’t want to talk to me.’ Leonard would like to talk to this remarkable young woman. He would like to hear her soaring voice as she interprets Bird on a Wire: and I’m sure he’d



smile and hum quietly in the background while she sang I’m Your Man. He would admire her abilities as a pianist and would notice the way she shifts emphasis from her voice to the piano and back again, letting the music flow, never too loud. I think he would want to buy her latest CD Modes of Transport.

But most of all I think Leonard would like to talk to Ann Vriend about her music and her career: and then he’d ask her to play just one more song. And this time he would sing along.

Slevinsky and Cohen in TO

May 13, 2006

By: Karen Slevinsky

I saw her at 9-ish that morning. It was a beautiful morning in Toronto. The sun was shining, the air was clear and Indigo was open. It was evident, though, that this was not a regular Saturday morning at Indigo. A stage was set and nice chairs were out. A passer-by would think an outdoor wedding was planned but not me and not her. We were there for the same reason. Leonard was coming to Toronto. Maybe he was already in town: I was. I from Edmonton; he from Montreal – must be in town already, I thought.

She was young, in her mid-twenties, an unlikely fan. I had just turned fifty, an unlikely fan as well. She had porcelain dewy skin and auburn curly hair. I had... well ... let's just say the 'dew is off the rose.' I was introduced to Leonard in the early nineties. My student teacher told me that Leonard was performing at the Jubilee Auditorium and that he sold out in one hour. I was intrigued, bought *The Future* and became a fan.

An Edmontonian Board Member recounts her experience at Indigo Stage in Toronto



The Signed And Framed Leonard From 1966



Fans Gather In The Lineup

In Toronto, the day progresses. A crowd gathers and struggles to remain lined up. All the likely fans were there; those who knew him when... he was young... when he did seven encores... when Suzanne was sung for Suzanne ...when he read poetry at universities in Ontario, Quebec...when he went west... (Really???)... when he was shy on stage ... when he was drunk on stage... We told Leonard stories throughout the day. Her story: Leonard 'helped her through high school.'



Leonard Singing With The Barenaked Ladies, Ron Sexsmith, And Anjani

Suddenly it was 3:45 p.m. and Heather Reisman, CEO of Indigo, was on stage to introduce Leonard and her show. Ron Sexsmith, the Barenaked Ladies, Anjani sang and played Leonard but the best of course, was Leonard. When he came on stage, he said "Hello," and moved naturally into a poem. A poem like my day with his fans. A poem about talking, and drinking and feeling... with friends... Leonard was in Toronto to spring-board Anjani's debut; he was not supposed to sing but he did. He was not supposed to sign autographs but he did.

Become a member of Cohenights Arts Society today!

Membership: \$5.00

As a member you will receive:

- * the newsletter, produced to inform members of current events, opportunities and developments in the arts community
- * invitations to openings and events
- * a vote at the Annual General Meeting
- * opportunity to participate in organizing events

We are working to increase our membership program, and provide enhanced services in the future. If you have any comments or suggestions, to receive a sample newsletter, or to sign up for membership, please contact Marilyn Wiens, 9702-89 Avenue, Edmonton, AB T6E 2S2, Email: wiens_marilyn@hotmail.com, phone: 433-1486.

The Cohenights Arts Society produces an annual interdisciplinary arts festival highlighting and honouring Cohen's diverse achievements. His subtle influence, evident in numerous interpretations transcending both music and poetry, encourages artistic range in interpretation and use of new media, as well as film, theatre, dance, and the visual arts.

The Society focuses on educating the public and emerging talents to the importance of all disciplines in appreciating Leonard Cohen's diversity, encouraging imaginative interpretations and innovative approaches in art making that is influenced by Cohen's work. By promoting experimentation and collaboration through workshop opportunities, the Society promotes the exchange of ideas between professionals and emerging artists as well as students.

Return form with remittance to:

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Phone 433-1486*

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