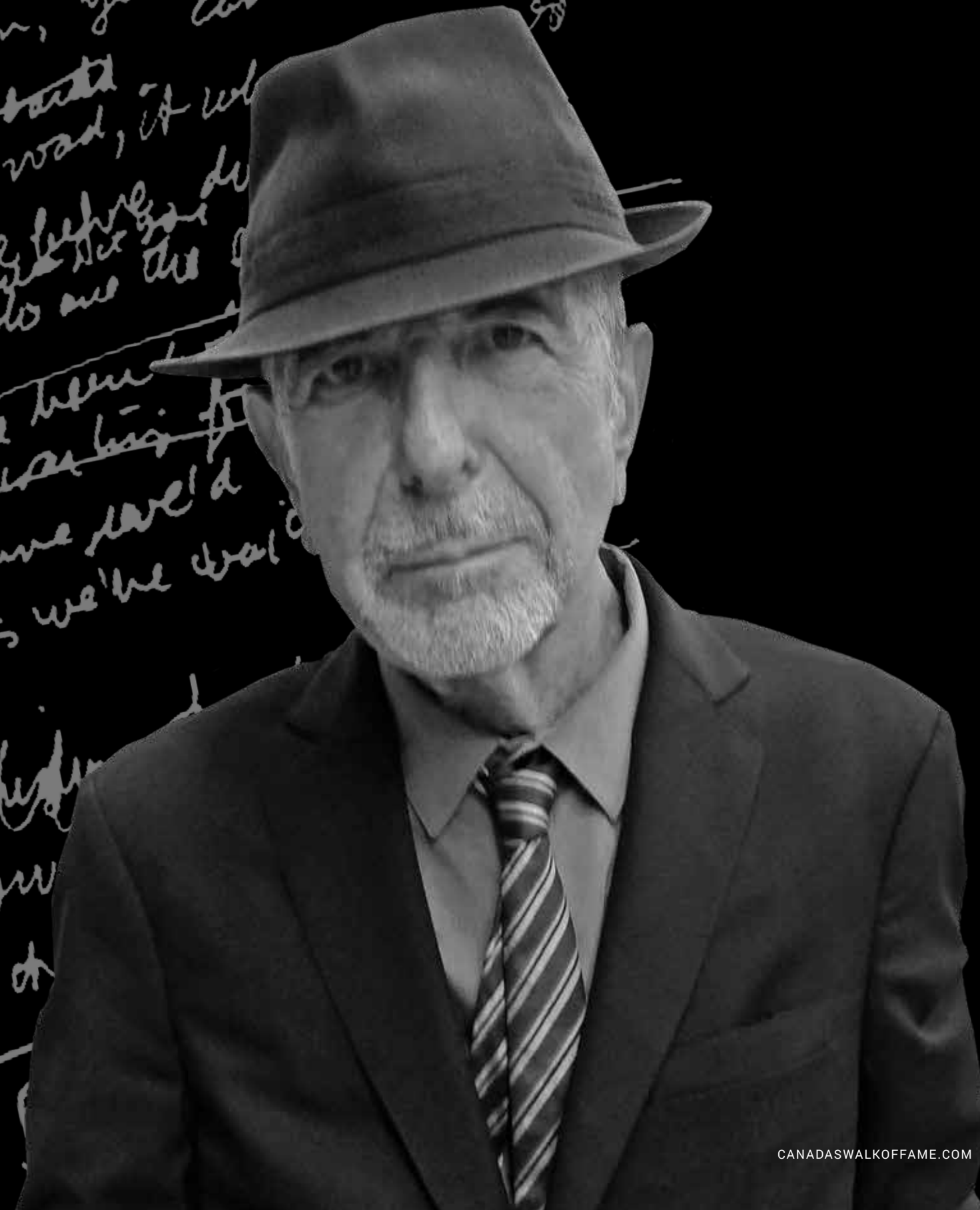


Tower of Song

CELEBRATING A CANADIAN LEGEND WHOSE WORDS AND MUSIC
ARE ENGRAINED IN THE FABRIC OF OUR LIVES

*You tell him to come in, sit down
but some things makes you turn around
the door is open, you can't close
your shelter
you take the road, if we
have done before, you
it's you, who are the
I've been
I was
I was sure, we'd
the train we've wait
The highway
below
I at*



2018 Canada's Walk of Fame Inductee: Leonard Cohen

The world mourned the loss of Leonard Cohen in November 2016. Yet his songs and his words live on, forever immortal, for their rich expression of complex desires. He was a novelist, poet and singer-songwriter who entranced with storytelling that could be deceptively simple and simultaneously reach in deep to touch heart and soul. He was a master of haunting and jubilant melody, of the rhythm and structure of words, and of living with freedom and complete authenticity.

"This is the most challenging activity that humans get into, which is love. You know, we have the sense that we cannot live without love, that life has very little meaning without it."

Cohen was born in Montreal and studied English at McGill University. His early years as a novelist and poet, which he spent travelling across Europe and living on the Greek island of Hydra, were captured in some of the memorable love songs he wrote later including *So Long*, *Marianne*, about his relationship with Marianne Jensen.

"Music is the emotional life of most people."

The '60s and '70s found Cohen in New York City, often at the Chelsea Hotel. He met folk singer Judy Collins in 1966 and played some of his songs for her. She covered many of his songs thereafter, recalling in her memoir, "His songs carried me through dark years like mantras or stones that you hold in your hand while the sun rises or the fire burns."

"There's a crack in everything, that's how the light gets in."

Cohen made records and toured the world performing—though not without discomfort. At his earliest shows he was often mortified by stage fright. Yet he also knew how to quietly weave a spell on audiences, often interspersing wry remarks and profound observations between songs.

"When something good comes, you have to be prepared to polish it, carve it and chisel it, that's the work. But the actual intention, what you are really going to be writing about, that's going to come up from a really authentic place that is deep and over which you exercise no conscious control."

Cohen spent years perfecting the songs he wrote. There were 80 verse drafts for *Hallelujah*, which took five years to write and even longer to become popular. He was unique in that his career path didn't follow a predictable trajectory. He would go out on tour and play for thousands in his favourite tailored suits, then retreat into solitude to write alone.

"I have always been attracted to the voluptuousness of austerity. I feel most comfortable and most abundant when things are very simple and I know where everything is and there's nothing around that I don't need."

In 1994, Cohen immersed himself in Zen Buddhism, moving to a monastery on Mount Baldy in California, where he kept a synthesizer and guitar in his room. In the last decade of his life he released a series of new albums and books and performed world tours. His last album was *You Want It Darker*, a masterful contemplation of endings, released a month before he passed away.

He is survived by his son Adam and daughter Lorca, and the many fans and musicians around the world who listened to him with rapt attention and continue to celebrate his legacy by singing his songs.

"This world is full of conflicts and full of things that cannot be reconciled. But there are moments when we can reconcile and embrace the whole mess, and that's what I mean by 'Hallelujah.'"

"Cohen was such a special force, such a supremely nuanced human being with such a beautiful precision of language, and just this perfect balance between mystery and something much more accessible," says John Zeppetelli, curator of the major art exhibition, *Leonard Cohen: A Crack In Everything*, at the Musée d'art contemporain (2017 to 2018). "He was so omnipresent, even though he was never a major star, everyone knew who he was. He occupied such a particular place. Nobody was like Leonard Cohen."

"There's a crack in everything, that's how the light gets in."

