

Perla Batalla in the House of Cohen

A Visions and Voices Signature Event

Saturday, September 21, 2019, at 7:30 p.m.

Bovard Auditorium

University of Southern California



KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

- Perla Batalla is a GRAMMY-nominated vocalist and composer who spent several years as a backup singer for Leonard Cohen.
- She has released seven solo albums and toured around the world.
- Leonard Cohen was a Canadian singer-songwriter and poet who became famous for his lyrically sophisticated folk music in the late 1960s and early '70s.

PERLA BATALLA

Perla Batalla was born in Los Angeles to a Mexican father who was a singer and radio personality and an Argentinean mother who ran a record store called Discoteca Batalla. Perla grew up in the family record store, immersed in a wide range of musical influences.

Perla Batalla toured and recorded with Leonard Cohen from 1988 to 1994. She has also toured with artists including k.d. lang, Iggy Pop, and the Gipsy Kings.

She is the recipient of a UN Earth Charter Award for “extraordinary devotion to social and economic justice” and a Premio Fronterizo Award for “healing work in the world.”

PERLA BATALLA ALBUMS

Perla Batalla (1993)

Mestiza (1999)

Heaven and Earth (2000)

Discoteca Batalla (2002)

Gracias a la Vida (2004)

Bird on the Wire: The Songs of Leonard Cohen (2007)

Love Is Everything (2014)

LEONARD COHEN

Leonard Cohen (1934–2016) was a poet/singer/songwriter perhaps best known for his late '60s/early '70s folk love songs, including “Suzanne,” “Famous Blue Raincoat,” and “Bird on the Wire.” His lyrics explored love and romance as well as religion and politics. Cohen had a resurgence of fame in the mid-1990s when several of his songs were used on the soundtrack for the Oliver Stone film *Natural Born Killers*. His most

famous song is 1987’s “Hallelujah,” which has inspired numerous covers, including a beloved one by Jeff Buckley, released in 1994.

LEGENDARY BACKUP SINGERS

Afrodiziak—Caron Wheeler, Claudia Fontaine, and Naomi Thompson were the go-to backup singers for pop acts throughout the '80s

Merry Clayton—sang with Neil Young, the Rolling Stones, and many more

Sheryl Crow—sang backup for Michael Jackson, Don Henley, Stevie Wonder, and others before becoming a solo star

Clydie King—sang with Bob Dylan, Ray Charles, the Rolling Stones . . .

Claudia Lennear—one of Ike and Tina Turner’s Ikettes

Darlene Love—worked with legends of '50s and '60s rock and soul (and didn’t always receive proper credit)

Clare Torry—sang on Pink Floyd’s *Dark Side of the Moon*, among others

Luther Vandross—sang backup for David Bowie, Chic, and Diana Ross before launching a successful solo career

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

- What are your favorite song covers? What happens musically, emotionally, aesthetically when different musicians and singers cover the same song?
- How is the experience of listening to music live different from listening to a recording?
- What musical influences do you hear in Perla Batalla’s sound?

IF YOU LIKED THIS EVENT, YOU MIGHT WANT TO CHECK OUT:

- The Visions and Voices Event “Nina—A Story about Me and Nina Simone” bit.ly/VVNinaSimone
- The documentary *20 Feet from Stardom*, about backup singers twentyfeetfromstardom.com

DISCOVER MORE AT THE USC LIBRARIES

ANDREW JUSTICE of the USC Libraries selected the following resources to help you learn more about Leonard Cohen, Perla Batalla, and tonight's performance. Those with a call number (e.g., books) are physical items which you can find in our campus libraries. Those without a call number (e.g. journal articles and databases) are electronic resources, which you can access through the search bar on the USC Libraries homepage at libraries.usc.edu.

BOOKS

- Burger, Jeff and Jon Hahn. *Leonard Cohen on Leonard Cohen: Interviews and Encounters*. Chicago Review Press, 2014.
E-book via Central Academic Complete
- Cohen, Leonard. *Beautiful Losers*. Vintage, 1966.
Special Collections: RARE-BOOKS DML LVL 8 810.C6785TB
- Cohen, Leonard. *Book of Longing*. Ecco, 2006.
Doheny Memorial Library: PR9199.3.C57 B58 2006
- Cohen, Leonard. *The Flame: Poems, Notebooks, Lyrics, Drawings*. Robert Faggen and Alexandra Pleshoyano, eds. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2018.
Leavey Library: PR9199.3.C57 A6 2018
- Walker, George A. *The Wordless Leonard Cohen Songbook: A Biography in Eighty Wood Engravings*. The Porcupine's Quill, 2014.
E-book via ProQuest Central

ARTICLES

- Green, Ronald. "Teaching Zen's Ten Oxherding Pictures through Leonard Cohen's 'Ballad of the Absent Mare.'" *The ASIANetwork Exchange: A Journal for Asian Studies in the Liberal Arts* 24:1 (2017), 29–58.
Available via Directory of Open Access Journals
- Lebold, Christophe. "From Existential Troubadour to Crooner of Light: Uses and Refractions of the Love Song in Leonard Cohen's Work." *Rock Music Studies* 5:1 (2018), 1–19.
Available via Taylor & Francis
- Mus, Francis. "Leonard Cohen in French Culture: A Song of Love and Hate. A Comparison Between Musical and Literary Translation." *Centre Interdisciplinaire de Recherches en Traduction et en Interprétation*, January 2018.
Available open access via ORBi
- Mus, Francis. "Passive (Re)translations and Identity Struggles in the Poetry of Leonard Cohen. A Comparison of Three Translations of *Book of Longing* (2006)." *Cadernos de Tradução* 39:1 (2019), 145–167.
Available via Directory of Open Access Journals
- Tearson, Michael. "Perla Batalla: *Bird on the Wire: The Songs of Leonard Cohen*." *Sing Out!* 50:2 (2006), 128.
Available via Gale and ProQuest

AUDIO-VISUAL

- Cohen, Leonard. *Songs of Leonard Cohen*. Columbia, 1967.
Music Library: CD-AUDIO 13154mus
- Cohen, Leonard. *The Essential Leonard Cohen*. Columbia, 2002.
Music Library: CD-AUDIO 27685mus
- Cohen, Leonard. *Songs of Love and Hate*. New York, NY: Columbia, 1971.
Music Library: CD-AUDIO 27684mus
- Herzog, Werner. *Fata Morgana*. [Songs by Leonard Cohen.] Anchor Bay Entertainment, 2001.
Leavey Library: LUYDVD 2295 disc 2
- Various Artists. *Leonard Cohen: I'm Your Man*. Verve Forecast, 2005.
Available digitally via Alexander Street



LEONARD COHEN'S LYRICS

Leonard Cohen was a poet, and his lyrics are full of extraordinary poetic moments like these:

Ring the bells that still can ring
Forget your perfect offering
There is a crack in everything
That's how the light gets in

—from "Anthem"

And what can I tell you my brother, my killer
What can I possibly say?
I guess that I miss you, I guess I forgive you
I'm glad you stood in my way

—from "Famous Blue Raincoat"

Like a bird on the wire
Like a drunk in a midnight choir
I have tried in my way to be free

—from "Bird on the Wire"

There is a war between the rich and poor,
A war between the man and the woman.
There is a war between the ones who say
there is a war
And the ones who say there isn't.

—from "There Is a War"

I've seen your flag on the marble arch
Love is not a victory march
It's a cold and it's a broken hallelujah

—from "Hallelujah"

