

LAUGHING LEONARD

DESPITE his image as someone who writes songs to commit suicide to Leonard Cohen is much less miserable than people make out.

His new single *Dance To Me To The End Of Love*, released next month, is a relatively cheerful number and it coincides with his first British appearances in four years at the Hammersmith Odeon on February 26 and 27.

And, would you believe, Leonard, 50, actually laughed while telling me his style:

HOME: A little house in the immigrant section of Montreal. It's pretty simple with good chairs and tables, which is important. I was born in Montreal and it's close to New York if you want American civilisation.

FOOD: I like street food. They do the best hot dogs in the world in Montreal on a street called The Main. I don't know why they are so good—it might be the pollution or the grease.

SONGS: I write to lift people's hearts. I like writing about the boring stuff—love, death, suffering, happiness. I am not in the least depressive. I think all my songs are up-tempo, it's just that so many people move faster than I do.



LEONARD COHEN:

Uptempo.

CLOTHES: I like good suits that I can wear all the time. They have to be very durable because sometimes I fall asleep in them. I lead a wild life.

MUSIC: I had dinner recently with Matt Johnson from The The and I really love that song *My Gums Bleed For You*, by *Poetus On Your Breath*. Radio seems to be in the grip of icy commercialism, but they can't keep people like us down, people who are making real music from the heart.

HOBBIES: I wrote a couple of books recently. A book of my prayers called *Book of Mercy* has just come out in England. I don't consider myself religious, but there comes a time when you have to ask for mercy.