

# WEEKEND PREVIEW

## Roger Salloom returns to his roots

**Singer-songwriter performs at Waldron tonight; performance will be filmed for documentary**

**By Brian Hartz**  
H-T Staff Writer

Although he didn't grow up here, singer-songwriter Roger Salloom has a fondness for Bloomington that goes beyond simple nostalgia.

Salloom, a Massachusetts native, came to Bloomington in the 1960s to study at Indiana University — and, like so many others during those tumultuous times, found himself gaining a new political and social consciousness.

While attending IU and playing in the local band Salloom, Sinclair and the Mother Bear, Salloom said he and his friends and bandmates were "trying to save the world."

"We had a vision of a better world," Salloom said. "That was when I discovered myself and became aware of politics. Being in Bloomington inspired me and made me feel like I could be a poet and write poetic lyrics."

Those lyrics will be on display, along with Salloom's rootsy blues-folk music, during a performance tonight at the John Waldron Arts Center in downtown Bloomington. Blues musician Peter Aceves Narvaez, another former Bloomingtonian, will open the show, which begins at 8 p.m.

Award-winning filmmaker and former Bloomington attorney Chris Sautter will film the performance for a documentary about Salloom that he plans to submit to the Sundance Film Festival later this year.

"I am very excited about this project," Sautter said. "Roger Salloom is one of the most talented singer-songwriters of his generation, yet he is virtually unknown outside a small circle of friends and fans."



**Singer-songwriter Roger Salloom** performs tonight at the John Waldron Arts Center. COURTESY PHOTO

However, Salloom is known to many because of "Leold," his off-beat, quirky foray into the world of comic strips. A collaboration with his son, Salem, "Leold" appeared in many newspapers across the country, including the *Indiana Daily Student*. At one point, Salloom said, "Leold" boasted more than 500,000 readers.

But now, Salloom wants to focus

on getting his music career back on track. Sautter's documentary, titled *So Glad I Made It: America's Best Unknown Songwriter*, "will be tracking his efforts to get his new music out to a wider audience," the filmmaker said.

Sautter, who also attended IU, made the documentary *The King of Steeltown*, which won the 2001 New York International Film Festival's

**WHO:** Singer-songwriter Roger Salloom, with special guest Peter Aceves Narvaez

**WHEN:** 8 tonight

**WHERE:** John Waldron Arts Center, 122 S. Walnut St.

**HOW MUCH:** \$10 at the door

**INFO:** Call 334-3100.

award for Best Political Documentary.

"There's nothing like someone making a movie about you," Salloom said. "There's just nothing like it. He shoots me on-stage, he shoots me off-stage, he shoots me at home. It's hard to be natural in front of the camera, but I try to be natural because that's what he wants."

Salloom and his music are certainly ripe subjects for a documentary.

The musician freely admits that his career, which stalled for more than 30 years because he suffered from various personality disorders, hasn't exactly been a roaring success. From falling asleep during meetings with producers to being obsessed with and overcome by fantasies, "I did a lot of things that didn't make any sense at the time," Salloom said.

"Even now, my mind is very scattered," he added. "And I'm mildly manic-depressive. I have good points and bad points. But I've learned how to deal with all that stuff."

Salloom, who currently resides in Northampton, Mass., said both his music and his outlook on life have changed since his early days in Bloomington.

"I'm much more aware of the roots of American music than I was at that time," he said. "I've listened to lots of rootsy music, bluesy music. I've learned lots of musical things ... how to write a song better than before. I just learned by listening to everybody. And I listen very carefully.

I can hear a melody once and then learn it quickly. I'm going to do a song called 'Delicatessen,' where I take a song I wrote in the 1960s and put a new bridge to it. So, I collaborate with my younger self."

It's fortunate that such a collaboration is possible, because in his younger years Salloom's long-term prospects weren't bright. He took LSD and chose his major — English — based on the "vibe" he got from the building.

"That was a wild way to do it," Salloom said. "Originally I came to IU to study psychology."

As it turns out, Salloom said, he ended up experiencing the IU psychology department first-hand — as a subject of studies and experiments.

"I never saw myself living past 30," Salloom said. "In fact, I saw myself dying on a motorcycle that was on fire, going over a cliff or something. And now, I wouldn't ride a motorcycle because it's dangerous. But playing music saved my life. Now, I live a quiet life. And many of my friends from the old days are dead."

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**Roger Salloom**