

## RHODE ISLAND INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

### Forgotten '60s songwriter glad he 'made it'

By Joanne Casale

Some of you may remember Roger Salloom from the 1960s band Salloom, Sinclair, and Mother Bear. I am not one of those people. Being the ripe young age of 28, I'd never heard of this band, and wasn't interested in watching a documentary chronicling the periodic rise and fall of this ageing psychedelic rocker. Luckily for me as a film reviewer, I am forced to watch the movies that come across my desk; many of them gems that I may not have noticed otherwise. *So Glad I Made It* is definitely one of those films.

A Massachusetts native, Roger Salloom began his career at the age of 13 in Worcester, playing the banjo. By the time he was in his 20s, Roger was being hailed as the next Bob Dylan. So why is he America's best unknown songwriter? And why is he attempting a comeback after a 20-year sabbatical from the music industry? Director Chris Sautter takes on the intriguing task of bringing

Salloom's 40-year struggle to attain the elusive, promised success of the American Dream to the silver screen.

Sautter effectively uses old photos and video, as well as interviews with former friends, band members, and industry insiders to illustrate a career that includes such feats as performing with the legendary acts Santana, Van Morrison, BB King, and The Bodeans, to playing the annual free concert at the Pines Theater in Northampton, Mass. Throughout the film, Roger reminisces about the thrill of playing in such iconic places as the Avalon, and Fillmore and Carousel Ballrooms, having a hit with his 1975 song Gotta Get Out of Worcester, and the music legends that befriended his band. Moving from Worcester to Bloomington, then

on to San Francisco and Nashville, Roger's migrations throughout his lengthy career, only served to strengthen his singer/songwriter talent as he incorporated the sounds of local heroes into his own work, resulting in a sound some might call Americana, but Salloom himself deems "uncategorizable."

The film features interviews with Marshall Chess, who signed Salloom, Sinclair, and Mother Bear to his Cadet Concepts label in 1968, and asks the question we all want the answer to: "So what happened, man? We got airplay and we definitely got good reviews, but (why didn't it) happen," as well as a recent enlightening meeting with Daniel Glass, the President of Artemis records, on the impact of technology on today's performing artists.

Most poignant, however, is the warm way Roger describes the financial hardships and struggles between fame and fatherhood he had to overcome as a single parent raising two small sons. It is this side of Roger that brings us closer to understanding a neurotic, gentle soul who weaves his experiences, ideas, and emotions into simple, yet profound songs beautiful enough to rival his infectious smile.

- **So Glad I Made It**
- **Directed by Chris Sautter**
- **Documentary**
- **111 minutes.**
- **Sunday, Aug. 15, at 2 p.m.**
- **[www.sogladimadeit.com](http://www.sogladimadeit.com)**