

Sautter Films

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Award-Winning Filmmaker Shooting Documentary In Northampton Film To Focus On Singer Songwriter Roger Salloom

(Washington, D.C.) — Award-winning filmmaker Chris Sautter will be in Northampton next week to shoot a documentary film on area singer songwriter Roger Salloom. Sautter's previous film is *The King of Steeltown* (2001) which won "Best Political Documentary" at the New York International Independent Film & Video Festival 2001.

Sautter said, "I am very excited about this project. Roger Salloom is one the most talented singer-songwriters of his generation, yet he is virtually unknown outside a small circle of friends and fans. Now, Roger has recorded a first-rate collection of new original songs, his first recording in over 20 years. The film will be tracking his efforts to get his new music out to a wider audience."

Sautter said his interest in Salloom dates to the late 1960's when both were students at Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana. "In those days, Roger Salloom was a very charismatic folk singer turned rock-and-roller who some hailed as the next Bob Dylan," Sautter said.

One of those was Marshall Chess of Chess Records who signed Salloom and his band to a recording contract. The band, *Salloom, Sinclair, and the Mother Bear*, released a critically acclaimed album which received considerable air play in some markets, including Cleveland, Philadelphia, and Boston. But shortly thereafter Chess Records was sold, and Marshall Chess left the label to become President of Rolling Stones Records. With that, Salloom's band had lost its most effective promoter. Salloom and his band continued to play, opening for many of the legendary San Francisco groups. But without support from his record label, Salloom's career stalled. After stints in the 1970s as a songwriter in Nashville and with the remnants of Creedence Clearwater Revival, Salloom returned to Western Massachusetts where he had grown up, eventually settling in Northampton.

"This film is about more than the music of a talented singer songwriter," Sautter said. "It's also about the struggle of an artist to be who he really is. It's about refusing to give up on your dream, even if that dream necessarily changes over time," Sautter said.

Sautter said the current state of the music industry presents Salloom with an even more daunting challenge than he faced earlier in his career. "The music industry is almost corrupt today in ways that make the payola scandal of the 1950's look tame. The industry dictates to virtually all but a few stations what they will play." Sautter added, "The days of free form play lists are but a vague memory. Yet, there is clearly an audience among Baby Boomers and others for Roger's kind of music."

Sautter will be filming Salloom's annual concert at The Pines on July 17. The concert is in its 19th year. The film will also feature the music of Grammy Award winners *The Blind Boys of Alabama* and blues legend James Cotton, as well as Boston and area singers Michelle Willson, Susan Angeletti, and Janet Ryan.

The King of Steeltown, Sautter's first film, premiered in Los Angeles last July to rave reviews. *The King of Steeltown* is an offbeat, humorous look at Chicago-style machine politics in a Midwest rust-belt city struggling with the demise of the steel industry. *LA Weekly* called it a "definite standout," adding "Sautter has a finely honed feel for the fading machinery of old-school party politics." *The LA Times* compared it favorably to a Michael Moore film.

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