

Roger Salloom bio

Official Bio : **Roger Salloom**

Roger Salloom started his life and career in Worcester where he first studied banjo at 13 years old. He was influenced then by Pete Seeger, Bob Dylan, Geoff Muldaur, Woody Guthrie, Sonny Boy Williamson, Jimmy Reed, and the singing brakeman, Jimmy Rodgers and the Kingston Trio.

At 19 he was opening for Jose Feliciano. In 1975, he immortalized the town in what the New York Times called, "his own version of Springsteen's 'Born to Run,' called 'Gotta Get Out of Worcester.' "

Roger went to Indiana University in Bloomington in 1966. He chose his major by walking around the campus trying to feel the "vibes" of the various buildings. There and in San Francisco he found his poetic self and started to truly take his song writing seriously.

He migrated his Bloomington band to San Francisco in 1967 playing the Avalon, Fillmore and Carousel Ballrooms with Salloom, Sinclair and Mother Bear. During that time he played with Santana, Van Morrison, BB King, Procol Harum and many other greats.

In 1968, he signed his first recording deal with Chess Records' subsidiary, Cadet Concept. Salloom, Sinclair and Mother Bear received rave reviews and was #1 on the charts of the top FM rock stations in Philadelphia, Cleveland, Boston. It has since become collectible 30 years later.

Before long Marshall Chess, Roger's champion at the label, went off to be the president of the Rolling Stones' new record label.

The band broke up, but not before Roger Salloom and Robin Sinclair recorded again with Chess in Nashville in 1971 using the Grammy nominated group Area Code 615.

Intrigued with Nashville, Roger spent several years with artists including Guy Clark, Rodney Crowell and Richard Dobbins all of whom were a support team for each other all the time honing their writing skills.

Roger returned to San Francisco where he was sponsored as a songwriter by the former manager of Creedence Clearwater Revival, Jake Rohrer, and CCR's former bass player, Stu Cook.

Roger left California and settled into Northampton, Massachusetts in 1980 to raise his children as a single father. In 1983 he released a recording on the local label, Yellow Plum Records, a recording which became a Billboard Top Album Pick and garnered heavy airplay on some of the most influential stations in the northeast, the exclusive area of its release. It was chosen as Charles Laquidara's Big Mattress Song of the Week on Boston's radio giant WBCN.

He continued to play with greats including The Band (6 times), John Prine (2 times), Jerry Jeff Walker, Rick Danko, The Bodeans, Joan Armatrading, Leon Russell, Jonathan Edwards and many others.

Presently every year Roger performs at the Pines Theater in Northampton. It is the largest outdoor free concert of the year in Western Mass. Thousands of residents of the area have grown up listening to Roger's music. This concert is celebrating its 22nd year.

He has performed with Van Morrison, Santana, Cheech and Chong, Doc Watson, NRBQ, Maria Muldaur, Jonathan Edwards, Paul Butterfield and many others.

Roger is still playing, writing and singing better than ever. "It baffles me that I am still getting better!"

In his spare time, Roger and his son,



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Official Bio : **Roger Salloom** (continued)

Salem also co-created the nationally syndicated newspaper piece, "Leold" and it was chosen for an animated television show to be executively produced by Mike Scully, executive producer of *The Simpsons*.

Chris Sautter, winner at the New York International Independent Film Festival for best political documentary, has completed a film about Roger titled, "So Glad I Made It, The Saga of Roger Salloom, America's Best Unknown Songwriter."

"One thing I know is that I am a decent songwriter and my songs can be good for some people. I also know that hardly anyone knows about me. But that does not stop me from being a decent songwriter."

"I have been my own worst enemy for years. At times, I have tried to ignore my music because it brought me pain and exposure, and I thought it was hopeless anyway. But deep in my thoughts I always had the fantasy that I would do one more tour. But first I realized I had to go back to that gorilla in the middle of my living room and have a face-to-face friendly talk...maybe not so friendly."

"I record because I love hearing the play-backs when the band has created something exhilarating. And I love the song and myself when I have written a good song. Sometimes I need to love myself, you know."

"Why do I do it? Well, partly because I am able to do it. And it makes me come alive. I guess, in general, I also love truth and beauty."

"My wife was a catalyst for me. Without her I would likely have not done anything. It's the same old story....talented guy gets lost and someone saves him, but will music lovers be grateful?"

"Recently a president of a new small record company exclaimed that I was not just a good songwriter but a 'great songwriter' and he 'loved the music.' He asked my manager not to show the music to anyone for two weeks while he wrapped up some other business. But after two weeks he said he wouldn't sign me because he did not know how to promote my music. Well, I don't get that, though I am lucky to have escaped his grasp!"

"Some people call my music Americana, while others try to find a label for it and can't. They find it strange that my music is somewhat uncategorizable. What's so strange about that? The real music listeners simply like good music, they are not in love with a category."

"Anyway, I will maybe make something of myself and maybe not. But for those of you not in the music business, this might sound as if it is unfair... if I am good why won't it get noticed. Well, that is not always the way it goes."

"See you somewhere, in my dream or yours."



Roger Salloom Events

Career Highlights...

APPEARED ON STAGE WITH

Santana
Van Morrison
BB King
Procol Harum
Jose Feliciano
Guy Clark
Rodney Crowell
Richard Dobbins
The Band
John Prine
Jerry Jeff Walker
Rick Danko
The Bodeans
Joan Armatrading
Leon Russell
Jonathan Edwards
Cheech and Chong
Doc Watson
NRBQ
Maria Muldaur
Paul Butterfield

CLUBS / VENUES

Roger Salloom has performed over 1,500 shows at every major club or live venue in the Northeast and nationally!



AWARDS

**“So Glad I Made It:
The Saga of Roger
Salloom,
America’s Best Unknown
Songwriter.”**

Best Documentary

Spudfest Music & Film Festival
Teton Valley / Jackson Hole,
Wyoming

The Providence Award

Rhode Island International Film
Festival

Honorable Mention

Best Documentary

New York International
Independent Film & Video Festival

Honorable Mention

Best Documentary

Independent Film & Video Festival
Las Vegas



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Roger Salloom quotes

What They're Saying About Roger Salloom

"Roger Salloom is a superb story teller with a good sense of rhythm and a great sense of timing, and the music is incredibly infectious."

- **Rolling Stone Magazine**

"He's still writing tunes which worm into your heart."

- **Brian Goslow, Worcester Phoenix**

"For every singer-songwriter that manages to flirt with the spotlight, there are too many who get lost in the madness we call rock 'n' roll. Salloom has been described as 'America's best unknown songwriter' and whilst many will dispute that claim, there's no denying that the man is a gifted artist in the folk-pop style and if you can imagine a hybrid of Dylan and McCartney, then you might come close to imagining the music of Roger Salloom."

- **Kevin Mathews, Fufkin**

"The first album by Salloom has to be one of the most important albums of the year."

- **Rob Baker, Chicago Tribune**

"It's hard not to like him and his band, The Stragglers. A prince among the Valley's musicians."

- **John Stifler, Daily**

"The question of why some people make it while others - often equally talented - don't, is at the center of the fine documentary 'So Glad I Made It: The Saga of Roger Salloom, America's Best Unknown

Songwriter.' The film, directed by Chris Sautter, is more than just a backwards look at the ups and downs of the music business. It's an exploration of what success actually means in a life - whether it's measured by stadiums or true friendships. A chronic self-deprecator, he'd be the first to point out that you can't come back from somewhere you've never been. And that right there might be one clue to his obscurity.

Salloom doesn't have the ego of a star. He's good natured, laid back and more inclined to laugh than rail against his misfortune. His voice is the most extraordinary thing. It has something of Bob Dylan's rasp in it, but it's warmer, with a richness all its own. His singing casts a spell - your attention is immediately riveted to its smooth, honeyed texture. It's the "radio-worthy" sound that defined many '70s singers from Gerry Rafferty to Neil Diamond. It's painful to hear him judge his past.

We can all look back at things we regret in our lives (except Nobodygirl, she's too young). Salloom comes across as a warm, well-adjusted human being, which is success of another kind.

- **Kristy Eldredge, GloriousNoise.com**

"Roger Salloom knows how to throw a party. Salloom's songs can be ballads, rockabilly, swing or classic Americana. Great stories....dancing barefoot to timeless music. 'So Glad I Made It' ... a tune both wistful and celebratory. It encapsulates Salloom's warmth and vulnerability. Salloom's music comes from the heart, with an honesty and directness often lacking in today's Top 40."

- **Daily Hampshire Gazette, Reviewing Roger's live show**



Roger Salloom press

The Film: The Saga of Roger Salloom

by
Larry Parnass
for
The Daily
Hampshire
Gazette

"So Glad I Made It: The Saga of Roger Salloom, America's Best Unknown Songwriter," a documentary about the career of Northampton musician

Roger Salloom, uses the riddle of commercial success, capably, as an organizing device.

As filmmaker Chris Sautter sifts through the affable songwriter's eventful life - so many thrills, so many setbacks - he slyly exploits our scorecard culture. It enables him to straighten the win-loss columns in one artist's legacy.

Then the auditors, as it were, arrive. Why wasn't this son of Worcester able to cash in on his early promise? Salloom came close to breaking through in 1968, when a psychedelic rock record he made with an esteemed Chicago label was named the year's best by the *Chicago Tribune*. Salloom made connections and followed advice. Big names bankrolled him.

But money and fame rode on by. Salloom didn't make it. At least not in the way success is usually cast - as an either-or deal, in which the victor gets celebrity, the loser anonymity.

Sautter's film, which gets its first local showing tonight, uses the genuineness and unpredictability of cinema verité to explain not just why Salloom never played *The*

Tonight Show but to capture something more profound.

"So Glad I Made It" celebrates Salloom's love of music, his self-effacing humor and his disarming honesty. It is a portrait of the way creativity can both lighten and burden a soul.

In the course of the documentary, much of it filmed in Northampton in 2002, viewers come to understand that while Salloom set his dream of fame aside decades ago to raise two

young sons, he could never bring himself to give up on music.

Except for his yearly free concerts at Look Park in Northampton, music might have remained the hidden heart of Salloom's life, if not for his wife, Donna, who urged him to perform more.

And now, the nudge comes from Sautter, an independent filmmaker and lawyer from Washington, D.C., who had known Salloom in the 1960s, when both were attending Indiana University.

Among those most interested in Sautter's film is Salloom himself. He said this week he's honored the filmmaker's request that he wait to see the hour-and-a-half work on the Academy's big screen at 7 p.m. tonight. The screening is a benefit for Academyarts, a nonprofit entity that raises money for the Academy of Music and for the Northampton Arts Council.

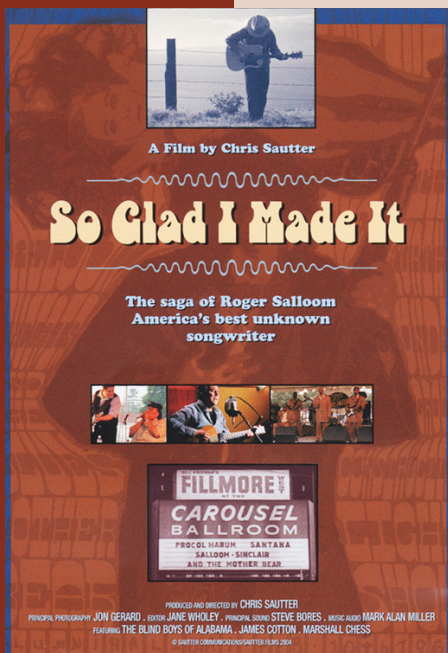
Salloom and Sautter will take questions from the audience after the film is shown. Sautter's first documentary, "The King of Steeltown," the story of "hardball" politics in East Chicago, was named best political documentary at the New York Independent Film Festival in 2001.

A fan's project

About a year ago, it occurred to Salloom to ask Sautter once again why the filmmaker was so interested in telling his story, roughly two decades after the songwriter had quit performing.

Sautter had gotten in touch with Salloom after a Web search turned up the musician's website. He'd become curious about what had happened to Salloom, long after the musician seemed poised to become Indiana University's most famous graduate.

When pressed to justify his interest, Sautter told Salloom this, in an e-mail message: "The reason why some people value art is that it somehow speaks to the joy and struggle that is inherent in all of life." He then stepped back a bit, saying he simply wanted to pay homage as a fan. "I'm just trying



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Roger Salloom press

The Saga of Roger Salloom (continued)

by
Larry Parnass
for
The Daily
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Gazette

to make a good film about someone whose music I like a lot."

To be sure, this is a movie that could have been made about scores of talented musicians all over the country, people with devoted but limited followings.

In spirit, "So Glad I Made It" is a tribute to all musicians who perform because it defines who they are. It confers a blessing on a generation for whom music was a deeply liberating force.

The film mixes scenes from Salloom's life today with trips back in time, using old photos and film, to moments when the musician seemed to be a rising star. It revisits the San Francisco music world of the late '60s, when Salloom shared stages at the Fillmore West and Avalon Ballroom with Santana, Love and Van Morrison.

As he makes his rounds in Northampton in the film, including stops at WRSI-FM and the Daily Hampshire Gazette, Salloom comes across as a man who loves every day of his life.

With its many pans of Northampton scenes, the film inventories the ordinary places that, today, make Salloom feel at home. His is an intimate world. Sautter tries to suggest in these images how much the songwriter values - and trusts - ordinary places and experiences.

Naturally, music is everywhere in the film. Salloom performs in scenes in the Valley recording studio run by Mark Alan Miller, in the WRSI studio and in an impromptu version of a song-in-progress. "We get Roger at this house to play a song that he's working on," Sautter said. "It's an interesting song - and kind of a gem - that is essentially unheard."

Sautter has been preparing

a soundtrack CD to accompany the film's release. It contains examples of Salloom's current music as well as a demo record he cut in 1976 and a recording of a show by his Salloom's band - Salloom, Sinclair and the Mother Bear - at the Avalon Ballroom in San Francisco.

Salloom is not haunted by questions about what could have been, to the distress of some old friends, managers and bandmates. They tell the filmmaker of times when Salloom seemed to hold back from closing a deal. As he got close to scoring a breakthrough, Salloom would let it elude him.

And yet the story makes clear Salloom invested many, many years in pursuit of "making it." Surely, there comes a time when a sane person lets go of a dream that doesn't seem to be his destiny.

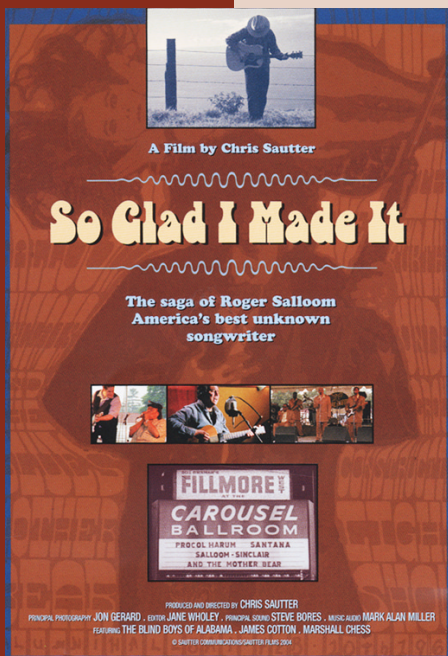
"I found him to be extraordinarily open and honest in the course of this film, beyond what I expected," Sautter said from his office in Washington, D.C.

That honesty is searing in a scene that comes late in the film. Sautter and his crew follow Salloom to Woodstock, N.Y., for a visit with Marshall Chess, the record-industry executive who signed Salloom and his band to a contract in the 1960s. The album Chess produced was well-received critically.

Both men, who haven't seen each other for three decades, pose the inevitable question. Why didn't Salloom make it?

Salloom says it might have been because he lost Chess' support soon after, when the producer went to work for the Rolling Stones. But it might also be, the musician ventures, that he just wasn't not good enough.

What lingers, after the credits roll, isn't disappointment. It is the warmth of Salloom's personality, the beauty of his music and smile and the wonder of a man who always knew what made him happy.



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Contact: Eastern Entertainment (413) 584-6324

Web: www.rogersalloom.com

Photo credit: Jake Rohrer