

let's *Go!*

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in the Northeast Valley

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Saying it in song

by Mike Scharnow

Special to *Let's Go*

Scott Hallock defies stereotyping and would rather not be pigeonholed, thank you very much.

He is a musician, first and foremost, but he's also a teacher, a perfectionist, singer, musical historian, songwriter and studio producer.

What kind of musician, you ask?

Just about any kind...

Hallock is just as comfortable performing at a wedding reception as he is jamming on the street with a couple of bluegrass boys.

He can play electric guitar, acoustic guitar, the 12-string, bass mandolin, har-

monica, zube tube and various percussion instruments – and, really, who knows what else...?

“Writing and recording my own songs is my most favorite aspect of music,” he says.

“Doing your own songs is kind of like having a kid...you're giving birth to something that didn't exist before.

“But it's a tough market out here for that type of thing.”

Hallock remains in tune with the music world on both coasts as well as down Nashville, Tenn. way.

Yet, he is a New Jersey native who transplanted here in 2000, and he doesn't seem inclined to move anytime soon.

He's busy every day, whether it's giving music lessons to youths at his Barrel Cactus Studio or packing

up to hit the road for an evening gig somewhere in the Valley.

Hallock knows more than 200 cover songs by heart and has a collection approaching 600 cover songs that he can perform.

He performs solo or with various bands and/or singers, including his girlfriend, Suzie Kiraly, and the always popular Nancy Damone.

Hallock has made his name known throughout the Valley music scene, playing at festivals, county and street fairs, coffee houses, restaurants,



Scott Hallock has his own production studio in Fountain Hills, Barrel Cactus Studio, and he and his girlfriend, Suzie Kiraly, often perform together as a musical duo.

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SCOTT HALLOCK

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bars, libraries, bookstores, casinos, private parties and more.

His love of music stretches back through the family generations. A Hallock CD called "Stories" features a cover photo of his great-great grandfather, Rudolph A. Shaffer, plucking away on a banjo. And that was more than 100 years ago (in 1910, to be exact).

His musical training started at an early age. Hallock was always in a band, beginning in high school and continuing through college.

His musical "career" was informally launched during his sophomore year when he started playing in English pubs. The response was positive, and he hasn't stopped.

His studio is chocked full of music memorabilia, from a modern-day iPod to a huge mixing board. Old-fashioned musical equipment is plopped over there. Thousands of CDs and records (yes, he still has a turntable) are stored over here. The walls are studded with photographs of musicians he has played with and met through the decades. His Facebook page has tons of similar photos.

He can drop musical names with the best of 'em.

"By hanging with fellow musicians, it makes your songs so much better," he relates. "I've been influenced by all of them.

"I'm adding songs all the time, trying out new material. It's been fun. I get inspired by people I've listened to and admired over the years.

"But the industry has definitely changed in the last 10 years or so."

Trade shows, concerts and such are fine, but in 2011 one also has to use websites (free ad warning: www.scotthallock.com) and social media. He's working on an album, but individual songs are being posted on iTunes for digital download by fans. By next year, he hopes to have enough songs posted to compile a record.

He was recently inspired by the news that a friend he used to jam with in Phoenix – Dom Flemons – joined a band called Carolina Chocolate Drops, an old-time string band based in Durham, N.C.

Their 2010 album, "Genuine Negro Jig," won the Grammy for Best Traditional Folk Album at the 53rd annual Grammy Awards.

Rather heady stuff.

"It gives me hope," Hallock says. "We used to play together in Phoenix, and look what he's done. He started out busking (playing street corners for change) and playing coffee houses.

"It gives me encouragement, hope. It gives me a big smile. The common thread is that everyone sticks with it and they

work hard."

He relates that work ethic to his music students, allowing them the opportunity to jam once a month at Fountini's on La Montana Drive in Fountain Hills. He said playing in front of family, friends and other music lovers has inspired his students.

"With the jams, I think the kids stick with learning music longer," he observes. "It gives them a purpose. They work hard, and they like playing in front of people."

While Hallock enjoys many genres of music – he even listens to some rap artists – he's still drawn to stringed instruments of all kinds.

"There is a place for rap, but people have to be aware of the message," Hallock says. "They have a lot of drumming, the constant beat.

"For me, it all centers around the guitar. I've always been drawn toward stringed instruments.

"And I like to think my music has a universal message. It's not negative or doesn't put anyone down. The common thread for me is good lyrics, good melodies, harmony.

"I like telling stories and expressing emotions."

For a side business he refurbishes old guitars, and he sees the instruments as being vital to what a musician is attempting to express.

"All instruments sound different, and a particular guitar will give you a particular sound," he says. "Bands don't have a bunch of guitars lined up for ego. They are all tuned differently and sound different.

"Sometimes the guitar has the song in it."

And for Scott Hallock, it's his life calling to get that song out and present it to fellow music lovers.

May full for Valley Singles

May is a busy month for Valley Singles Club.

Here's the plan for May:

Happy Hour at Modern Steak, Scottsdale Fashion Square, Thursday, May 5, 5-7 p.m. RSVP Debbie, (480) 837-9449.

Theater Event at the Herberger Theatre Center, 222 E. Monroe in Phoenix.

The Mystery of Irma Vep, Saturday, May 14, 8 p.m. RSVP, Marco, (480) 231-7570.

Happy Hour at Brio Restaurant, 15301 N. Scottsdale Rd., Thursday, May 19, 6-7 p.m.. RSVP, Debbie (480) 837-9449.

Happy Hour at the Monastery, 4810 E. McKellips Rd., Mesa., Saturday, May 28, 6 p.m. RSVP, Debbie, (480) 837-9449.