



## Macomb musician featured at riverboat music, storytelling festival

MACOMB-Local musician Chris Vallillo, of Macomb, will be featured at an upcoming Illinois Arts Council performance.

Vallillo, a folk musician, songwriter and community scholar, draws his inspiration from the people and places of the rural Midwest. Former host of the award winning Public Radio series "Rural Route 3," Vallillo conducted the original fieldwork for the Illinois Mississippi River Valley Project.

The Illinois Arts Council (IAC) will host a special evening of performances on the Spirit of Dubuque, an authentic Mississippi riverboat, at 6 p.m. Saturday.

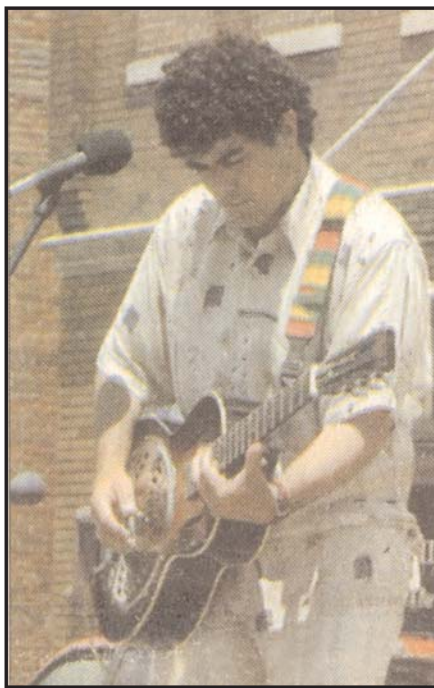
Beginning with music by the Mark Twain Riverboat Band, the program will conclude with a cruise on the Mississippi River. Illinois musicians, storytellers, and poets will provide performances and education based on the diverse artistic traditions found along the Mississippi River in Illinois from Galena to Cairo. Buses to the Spirit of Dubuque board at the DeSoto House Hotel in downtown Galena at 5:30 p.m.

This weekend serves as the culmination of the second year of the IAC's Illinois Mississippi River Valley Project (IMRVP). The IMRVP is designed to bring state and national attention to the artists, art forms, and arts organizations of the Illinois Mississippi River Valley.

Project activities have included field research to identify Illinois artists influenced by the Mississippi River, artist-in-the school and community arts residencies, curriculum and website development, professional development for artists and teacher, and special performances along the river. Funding for this program has been provided by the National Endowment for the Arts' Challenge America program and the Illinois General Assembly.

Saturday's event is free and open to the public. However, spaces are limited and tickets will be required, so please contact the Illinois Arts Council at Susan@arts.state.il.us or (312) 814-6740 today to reserve tickets.

The Illinois Arts Council is committed to the cultural, educational, and economic growth of the diverse people and communities of our state through support and



encouragement of artists and the arts.

A reception will be held at 6:30 p.m. on the riverboat with performances and the cruise at 7:30 p.m.

Spirit of Dubuque Riverboat is an authentic dual paddle wheeler, christened in 1977. It is a replica of a century-old Mississippi River steamboat with decorative smokestacks, a scalloped canopy over its open-air deck, and Victorian red and gold décor throughout the enclosed dining salon.

Also performing during the series will be:

Shelly Moore Guy, of Rock Island, is a storyteller who draws on her African American heritage and her life in Rock Island to weave compelling narratives and stories of the region. The Lodge Brothers (Jerseyville) Wayne Schell, Keith Dudding and John Nell perform traditional and period music of the Mississippi River Valley on mandolin, fiddle, guitar, banjo bass and vocals.

Marilyn Kinsella of Fairview Heights, alias, "Taleypo" is a storyteller from the deep dark bluffs of Fairview Heights overlooking the humid Mississippi River Valley. She performs a vast array of stories including Native American tales to original stories of growing up in the river bottoms.

Curt Carter and Tom Connelley, of Carbondale, are a contemporary folk duo from Carbondale that write and perform songs that speak of the environment and ecology of our region.

John Knoepfle, of Auburn is an award winning poet and author who spent many years interviewing and documenting rivermen on the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. These interviews were the inspiration for his collection of short stories, "The Dim Tales."

The Franz Jackson Trio, of Chicago by way of Rock Island, includes Franz Jackson, no 90, who was born in Rock Island but moved with his mother to Chicago at the age of 10. From 1930 through '45, he performed with bands of Albert Ammons, Carroll Dickenson, Jimmy Noone, Roy Eldridge, Fletcher Henderson, Earl Hines, Fats Waller, Cootie Williams, Frankie Newton, and Wilbur De Paris. Franz became a fixture in Chicago and formed his Original Jazz Band in 1956. He still performs regularly in Chicago and festivals around the world.