

# spectrum

## VERVE

2265079

**Firehall Theatre**  
 You're a Good Man  
 Charlie Brown  
 April 26, 27 @ 8 pm  
 May 3 @ 7 pm  
 May 5 @ 2 pm

For Tickets Call  
 Theatre Office at  
 905-356-4953  
 www.firehalltheatre.com



## Niagara Weave III

Maestro Beth and the Young Strings  
 Fiddle Fingers  
 The Mallet Heats  
 Terrance Cox  
 Penner MacKay and the Drumming Fools  
 Steve Goldberger and the Fringe Locals with Maja Bannerman  
 Songwriter's circle with Jacqui Tracy, Kathy Evans and James Brown  
 Sean O'Sullivan Theatre, Brock University, St. Catharines  
 April 26 at 7:30 p.m.; Tickets \$15  
 Call 905-688-5550, ext. 3257

**Steve Goldberger and The Fringe Locals are one of the performers at next week's Niagara Weave III. "Some people get really down after heart surgery. I went the other way," he says.**  
staff photo by Bob Tymczynski

# The heart of the matter

*Post-surgery reflection convinced Steve Goldberger to continue playing music without compromise*

By CHRISTOPHER WATERS

Standard Staff

**S**teve Goldberger calls every performance by his band The Fringe Locals an "unrehearsed adventure."

The 47-year-old bass player, who divides his time between Toronto and Niagara-on-the-Lake, said the band only gets together to play live. The far-flung players meet on stage, plug in and let loose.

"When I was younger I used to rehearse all the time," Goldberger said. "Now we're learning the songs as we perform."

It's not such a slapdash affair, he insisted, when you surround yourself with extraordinary musicians, such as Niagara-on-the-Lake residents Perry Quinn and Penner MacKay and Toronto's Eric Mahar.

The Fringe Locals perform as part of Niagara Weave III, a variety show featuring music by The Malletheads, James Brown, Kathy Evans and The Drumming Fools and a reading by poet Terrance Cox. Tickets for the April 26 event at Brock's Sean O'Sullivan Theatre are \$15. Call 905-688-5550, ext. 3257.

Goldberger's casual attitude towards music and life — in the best circumstances, he'll tell you the two are inseparable — came while he recovered from open heart surgery in November 1998.

An irregularity was discovered during a routine examination. After years of monitoring his conditions, doctors elected to open him up and replace a heart valve.

"The heart is so incredibly symbolic," Goldberger said, placing his hand over his own for emphasis. "Some people get really down after heart surgery. I went the other way."

He threw himself into his music. He also wrote a 20-plus chapter journal about his hospitalization, *The Bum Ticker*, which is posted online at [www.stevgoldberger.com](http://www.stevgoldberger.com). The personal account still elicits e-mail from people who stumble across Goldberger's Web page.

"I was lying helplessly in my hospital bed feeling lucky to be alive. I had a lot of time to think about my musical career and where I wanted to take it," he writes in the liner notes for *Come From the Heart*, the first independent CD produced by The Fringe Locals.

"I figured that I was really just where I wanted to be, performing music with my friends... I've the freedom to play the music I want to play and sing my favourite songs without compromise."

*Come From the Heart* was followed by *The Niagara-on-the-Lake Rhythm Project*, an exploration of world music that embraces a wide variety of talent from the region. A third CD, *Gumbo Dreams*, is due for a summer release.

Asked to describe the rootsy blend of influences — the homebred fusion of folk, rock and world beat sounds that merge to become Fringe Local music — Goldberger shakes his head. Instead he plays a track in progress for *Gumbo Dreams*, Friday at Cuvee. The song has a jazzy Spanish vibe which is enhanced by a sultry Spanish rap by Maja Bannerman, who will be joining the band during the Brock performance.

"What do you call this music?" he asked back.

It is what it is.

The coming Brock performance triggers memories from his days in folk rock band Black Creek, the Toronto-based band that won a Genie Award in 1971 for work it did on a children's film. They beat Bruce Cockburn, who was nominated that year for the soundtrack to *Goin' Down the Road*.

Black Creek performed an afternoon gig at Brock opening for Arlo Guthrie, who was still riding high on his 1972 hit *The City of New Orleans*.

"We played and hung around to have a beer with Arlo before we had to get going. We had another gig that night," Goldberger said.

Almost three decades later, he returns to a Brock that looks nothing like the campus he last visited. It's difficult to say, however, which has grown more: Brock or Goldberger's passion for performing music.