

Music troubadour returns home to teach workshop

What: Songwriting Workshop with Dan Vaillancourt

Where: Creative 360 (formerly Creative Spirit Center) at 1517 Bayliss in Midland.

When: 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 6

Cost: \$28 (\$25 for Creative 360 members)

For more information: Call (989) 837-1885 or visit www.becreative360.org

Midland -- When singer/songwriter/guitarist Dan Vaillancourt leads a "Songwriting Workshop" Sunday, Dec. 6, at Creative 360 (formerly Creative Spirit Center), trust it that he knows his topic thoroughly.

"I have written somewhere around 600 to 800 songs in the past decade," says the 1999 graduate of Midland High School. "Just this year I wrote and recorded demos for 63 songs between July 4 and Oct. 1 as part of the International 50 Songs in 90 Days Songwriting Challenge. I was one of only 37 participants to complete the challenge."

Coupled with all that writing, the 28-year-old full-time musician also has taught lessons for more than 13 years, has performed nearly 1,000 shows in 33 states as a wandering troubadour and has recorded five CDs. Several of his songs also have received international radio play.

The workshop at Creative 360, 1517 Bayliss, runs from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. Open to ages 16 and up, it will follow the format Vaillancourt says he uses in workshops for music camps -- one which presents several methods and techniques of lyric writing and discusses basic song structure.

"I absolutely wouldn't say that everyone will write an entire song in the workshop's two hours. But everyone will be given an assignment to write a song and will get a good start on a song. From there they will be able to use the tools

and techniques they learned to continue pursuing the writing of that song and other songs.”

What he stresses is that the workshop is open to all skill levels, from beginner on up. “And no, they do not need to know how to read music. In fact, there are many musicians who don’t read music and many lyricists who do not play music.”

Participants are welcome to bring an instrument, but it is not required.

Vaillancourt’s own style, he says, is acoustic and encompasses influences from folk, rock, country and even hip-hop. One writer even labeled him as the Jimi Hendrix of folk because of his funky take on things.

Wrote Bob Gottlieb, of the Folk and Acoustic Music Exchange, “Vaillancourt is truly one of the eclectic original and iconic wordsmiths writing songs today. The songs are those of the natural born storyteller put to some idiosyncratic music that will constantly keep the listener on edge.”

Visit www.danvaillancourt.com to read more critical acclaim about Vaillancourt and hear some of his music. A link there also will allow visitors to hear and read the lyrics from the International 50 Songs in 90 Days challenge.

The cost of the songwriting workshop at Creative 360 is \$28, or \$25 for Creative 360 members. To register, call (989) 837-1885 or register online at www.becreative360.org.

About Creative 360

Creative 360, formerly known as Creative Spirit Center, is a not-for-profit community arts and wellness organization founded in 1994. The Center’s mission is to create an environment for people of all ages to experience the creative process through ongoing classes, art exhibits, events, concerts, speakers and outreach programs; and its goal is to enhance the development of physical, mental and spiritual wellness through the arts and humanities. Visit www.becreative360.org for more information about the winter roster at Creative 360, or call (989) 837-1885 to request a mailed copy.

Creative 360 1517 Bayliss Street Midland, MI 48640 (989) 837-1885
fax: (989) 837-1817 www.becreative360.org

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