



Musician Jill Jack the subject of documentary by Keith Famie to be shown on PBS

Published: Thursday, July 26, 2012, 5:25 PM Updated: Thursday, July 26, 2012, 9:28 PM



By **Zeke Jennings | zjenning@mlive.com**

When Emmy Award-winning documentary maker Keith Famie finally got a chance to see musician **Jill Jack** perform live, he had just one question.

"She's one of those people who you see that is just so incredible and so talented, and you say, 'Why haven't you made it big?'" Famie recalled.

It hasn't been for lack of trying. The Detroit-based singer-songwriter has released eight CDs and won 33 Detroit Music Awards since 1997.

Through all her successes, Jack has yet to become a nationally recognized act. Famie decided Jack's story was worth telling through a documentary that's already been picked up by PBS.

He's currently working on a documentary on Jack and will film footage for it at a performance at **Cherry Creek Winery**, 15750 U.S. 12, Cement City, at 6 p.m. Sunday. There is no cover charge, but donations will be accepted.

"This is a story of one woman's fight not to give up," said Famie, the head of Visionalist Entertainment Productions. "I pulled her aside one night to talk to her about this, and she said, 'I don't know. I'm kind of shy about that kind of stuff.'"

"It's a story of a woman in a man's world."

Jack may not be looking to brag – that's where Famie comes in – but she has plenty of experiences to talk about.



Michael Hacala

Jill Jack will perform at Cherry Creek Winery in southeastern Jackson County at 6 p.m. Sunday. The performance will be part of a future documentary by filmmaker Keith Famie.

Jack is a mother, works a full-time job at an accounting firm and is a breast cancer survivor. Both of her parents have been debilitated by arthritis.

The title of the documentary will be "Live Like There's No Tomorrow," which is one of Jack's songs.

"I heard that, and I said 'This is you!'" Famie said. "She says, 'Yeah, I wrote that,'

"I'm like, 'No, this is you! This is your story. It's everything and all your perseverance."

Famie already has plenty of footage, including Jill performing with the Detroit Children's Choir, but is planning to travel with her on an upcoming East Coast tour.

He plans to have the documentary finished sometime around January.

"We'll have a premiere somewhere – that's not finalized yet – but it will be a benefit for the Michigan Arthritis Foundation," he said.

Famie has had his own brush with fame in front of the camera. He was a cast member of CBS's **"Survivor: The Australian Outback"** in 2000.

"People still ask about that," he said laughing. "I usually give them all the standard one-liners – I went in at 170 pounds and came out at 143; it was an emotional, exciting 41-day camping trip."

"I also tell people that anyone can do what I did. You'd be surprised what you can rise up to when you have to."

In addition to the Jack documentary, Famie is working on **"Embrace of Aging,"** a detailed look at the way men

age.

"We've already got 90 hours of footage and we're not done yet," said Famie, who added the final cut will be around two hours. "It's an enormous project, but when finished, will look at the male perspective of aging in pretty much every way.

"We've interviewed doctors from all over the world, veterans, softball players ranging in age from 70 to 96. We've even been to the mountains of Sardinia to find out why men there live so long."

© 2012 MLive.com. All rights reserved.