

Sweet music: SUNY Broome graduate lands deal with music producer

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By John Miller

Johanna Jane Stark, class of '15 and third place finisher in the Visions Hit Maker Challenge, has just signed a deal with a music producer.

Listen to Johanna Jane sing: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WnxpdtPzZs8>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=644YnMnbdLY>



Johanna Jane Stark

Johanna Jane started singing at a very young age, whether it was in front of the mirror in her room, on the school bus or in her barn to an audience of horses. Music became her way of dealing with life and helped her work through many a tragedy. However, she never sang in front of an audience, a human audience that is, until high school.

“Suddenly one day during my junior year of high school, I decided to [participate in] the Drama Club auditions. I sang; the teachers had tears in their eyes, down their cheeks, and chills on their arms,” she remembered. “I never

knew I could do that to someone just by singing a song. That's when I knew I wanted to pursue singing in front of people."

She sang with the Drama Club for the remainder of her high school career and, after graduating, performed "Please Remember Me" by Carrie Underwood at the Cincinnati town fair.



Education got in the way of her singing and Ms. Stark did not perform again until one New Year's Eve when her friends pressured her into karaoke night at a local bar, Sebeers Tavern in Smithville Flats, NY. Her dazzling vocals led her to perform a few original songs every Wednesday night on that stage.

Johanna Jane's big break came this spring.

"One day, I was listening to 98.1 *The Hawk* and heard Rich Birdsall on the radio talk about sending in a 30 second clip of an a capella version of a song for the Visions Hit Maker Challenge," she said. "It was the last day and I did it — I sent in that 30 second clip. All of a sudden I made top 12, [and gained] so many supporters, I couldn't believe it. Then I made top five and I was blown away. I couldn't believe I made it this far and out of hundreds [of contestants]. Now my dream was coming back, I thought to myself— maybe this is my plan...."

As mentioned earlier, Johanna Jane placed third and signed a deal for her single. To afford the costs associated with music production, Ms. Stark has started a GoFundMe campaign at <http://www.gofundme.com/johannajanemusic>.

When asked what she'd like other students to think when they heard her story, Johanna Jane replied, "I want them to be encouraged and know that when people say you can do anything you set your mind to, they are right. Life is this crazy roller-coaster and, yes, sometimes you don't know where you'll end up, but having faith in what

you believe in and love is the most important thing because having that will help you get to where you are going.”

Johanna Jane Stark

Writer John Miller is a SUNY Broome student.

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