

# Friday

**Jett  
still  
loves  
rock  
'n' roll**

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MUSIC

## Jett set to perform at Sunset Festival

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HERALD NEWS STAFF REPORTER

Joan Jett has survived where countless others have failed.

And she's not done yet, not by a long shot.

She survived the decade of decadence as the first woman to found her own record label where she created the No. 1 Billboard smash "I Love Rock and Roll," among many others, and continues to bring her own edgy style of rock 'n' roll to the music scene.

"When we were the Runaways in the '70s, our music was always about partying, going out and having fun and getting away from our parents," said Jett. "As you grow up, you expand that music into relationships and other experiences that are part of life — including politics."

Although the message of her music has changed through the years, the style of music, and the woman behind it, remains unchanged.

But even with her decades of success, nothing has come easy for Jett, not in the '70s when she started out or now as a seasoned rock veteran.

While still in her teens when she established the Runaways, Jett went to nearly two dozen record companies in hopes of getting a record deal. As a female in a male-dominated world, Jett took the rejection in stride. Instead of folding, Jett decided she would take charge of her own fate.

She founded her own record label, Blackheart Records, that would later yield her not a number of top 10 hits and a Grammy nomination for Best Rock Performance by a Group for the 1989 hit "I Hate Myself for Loving You."

"There was so much resistance back then, not only for people to break into music but for girl bands to do so," said Jett. "I took 'I Love Rock and Roll' to 23 record companies, and they didn't want to have anything to do with us."

Despite the success Jett and the Blackhearts have had through the years, she said the struggle to prove yourself each year and with each record or performance never goes away.

"It comes back every year, this sense that with your new music, you have to reprove yourself, even if



Joan Jett & the Blackhearts will perform at the 10th annual Sunset Music Festival in Newport, R.I., June 29.

you had success the last time," said Jett. "It's always a struggle, and I don't know whether it's a girl thing or a rock 'n' roll thing."

Jett somehow has found the time to act, including parts in the Michael J. Fox film "Light of Day," "Boogie Boy," the "Highlander"

television series and in a new independent film premiering at the Toronto Film Festival this summer called "The Sweet Life." She will also be the executive producer for the upcoming independent film called "Neon Girls," based on her creation of the Runaways.

Jett has a new album, "Sinner," and hosts "Joan Jett's Radio Revolution" Sundays on Sirius Satellite Radio.

Although many artists who have had chart-topping hits decades ago grow tired of playing the songs that made them famous, Jett said she

has come to grips with songs like "I Love Rock and Roll."

"I made peace with that song long ago, a song that has brought me so much success," said Jett. "It's an ego thing with these artists competing with their own songs. I can't understand those people that hate the songs that made them famous. They need to get over it and go out there and have fun and enjoy the fact that people are getting into their music. The song is part of who you are."

As for advice she would give to women looking to break into the music scene, Jett said they must make sure their heart is completely into it or it will not work.

"Because we formed our own record label, we didn't have to follow anyone's rules but our own, but people coming in now must try to keep control of their music and stay true to themselves," said Jett. "There are so many resources coming out these days that allow music to not be as difficult to be heard on a mass level, that gives people a good shot at being heard and getting their message out."

Take it from someone who's been there and still doing that.

"It's a brutal schedule, don't get me wrong," added Jett, with the recording, acting, producing and touring all rolled into one. "We started this in the '70s and we haven't stopped since. We won't stop."

Joan Jett & the Blackhearts will perform at the 10th annual Sunset Music Festival at the Newport Yachting Center, 1 America's Cup Ave., Friday, June 29. Tickets are \$35, \$30 in advance. For more information, visit [www.newportfestivals.com/Sunset-Music-Festival/entertainment](http://www.newportfestivals.com/Sunset-Music-Festival/entertainment).

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