

Who is Miss Judy? And how does she share her musical talents?

By Edna Brown

“Hey, there’s Miss Judy! Where’s Jerry?” children in Tompkins County may call out when they see Judy Stock, children’s musician and educator. Stock is a local singer-song-writer and lover of musical instruments who shares her talents with children in area schools, camps and libraries.

Arriving in Ithaca five years ago, Stock began working at an after-school program and as the religious education

minstrel at the First Unitarian Society in Ithaca. There she taught children in church school classes songs related to the curriculum they were studying.

Aided by funding through Ithaca Public Education Initiative, she used music to enhance early literacy in Sarah (Hubberman) Smith’s Cayuga Heights Pre-K classroom for three years. She has also shared her love of music and instruments with kids in Enfield and Newfield Pre-K classrooms, the Caroline After School Program, Brooktondale Summer Camp, the

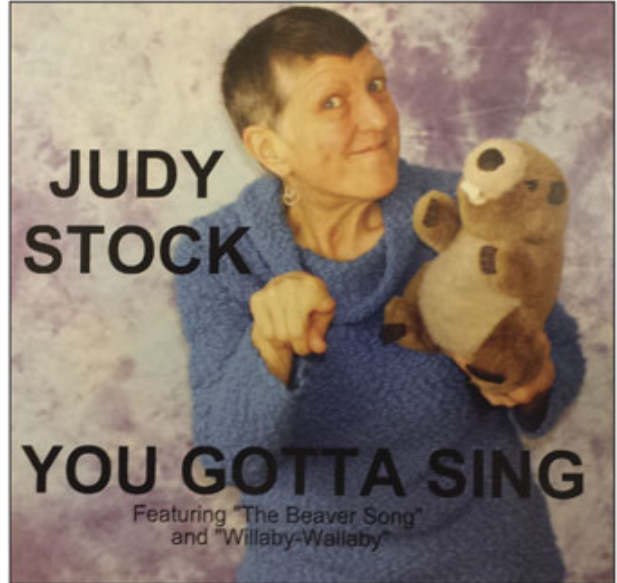


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Ithaca Festival, the Family Reading Partnership’s Bookfest (twice, including this year) and at the kids’ tent at the GrassRoots Festival of Music and Dance.

Stock took a video production class at Pegasys and produced her own half-hour show for the local public access television station. The show, which won local and national awards, prominently featured her stuffed animal friend, Jerry the Beaver, and popular children’s songs.

Older adults are also able to enjoy her songs as she performs for them at Longview, Clare Bridge and Sterling House. Though her repertoire is different for this crowd, her audiences are no

less enthusiastic.

Her love of music began when Stock learned how to play the clarinet in fourth grade. At 18, she bought a guitar because she loved to sing. As she jokes, “You can’t sing and play clarinet!”

While working a factory job, Stock memorized songs from slips of paper and lyrics written on her hands. She was influenced by and enjoyed the songs of Carly Simon, Linda Ronstadt and John Denver. She started learning any instrument she could get her hands on, including the banjo, mountain dulcimer, penny whistle and spoons. She played in various bands, but won a talent contest in 1977 as a solo act. The prize was to sing at the venue on New Year’s Eve. Stock sang “Crazy,” a Patsy Cline hit.

Stock approached the Plymouth, Wis., library and began singing to children there. After a move to New Orleans in 1985, she was hired to work with children with special needs through the Very Special Arts program, a nationally recognized program for students with disabilities in self-con-

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