

Judy Sherman

Beginning Balalaika



Judy Sherman began playing prima balalaika with the U.C.L.A. Balalaika Orchestra in 1972. Under the direction of Steve Wolownik, this group evolved into a professional ensemble, the Odessa Balalaikas. Judy performed with this group until 1980, and also studied balalaika with Emmanuil (Misha) Sheynkman.

In 1980, Judy moved to Philadelphia, where she, Alan Zemel, and Steve Wolownik formed another professional ensemble, the Gypsy Balalaikas, a group that has lasted for 20 years. Judy was also a director of Steve Wolownik's Penn Balalaika Orchestra in 1981, and from 1983 until the present, the alto balalaika player and Gypsy-style singer with the New York based Balalaika Russe. She has also taught learning disabled students in the Philadelphia public school system for 12 years. Now living in Morro Bay, CA, Judy has formed a group called the [Big Rock Balalaikas](#). Unable to make a living from tips, Judy still teaches "emotionally disturbed" youth at a nearby high school.