



Harmonica

Jia-Yi He



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Complete artist information including video, audio and interviews are available at www.pricerubin.com

Jia-Yi He – Biography

Jia-Yi He, a world-class harmonica virtuoso, has received numerous awards in international competitions, including: 2nd Place at World Harmonica Championships in Germany, 3rd Place at International Harmonica Competitions in the United States and 2nd Place at International Harmonica Competitions in Japan. He has served as a member of the judging committees in the Asia-Pacific Harmonica Competition in Taiwan, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Hangzhou and Singapore. Mr. He has appeared as a soloist with the China National Symphony Orchestra, China National Ballet Symphonic Orchestra and the Nassau Pops Symphony Orchestra, among others. He has appeared at many television stations including ABC-News, NBC, News 12 Long Island, Queens Public Television and Sino Television in the United States. Mr. He has recorded harmonica music for a number of movies, radio stations and CDs. He was invited to perform at the General Assembly Hall at the United Nations. Former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg attended his seminar and learned how to play the harmonica at Harmonica Mass Appeal. The New York Mets have chosen him to perform a pre-game show at Shea Stadium. Mr. He is author of the music book *Recital Pieces For Chromatic Harmonica* published by Mel-Bay Music, Inc. Currently, Mr. He is on the wind faculty as a harmonica teacher at the Turtle Bay Music School in New York City.

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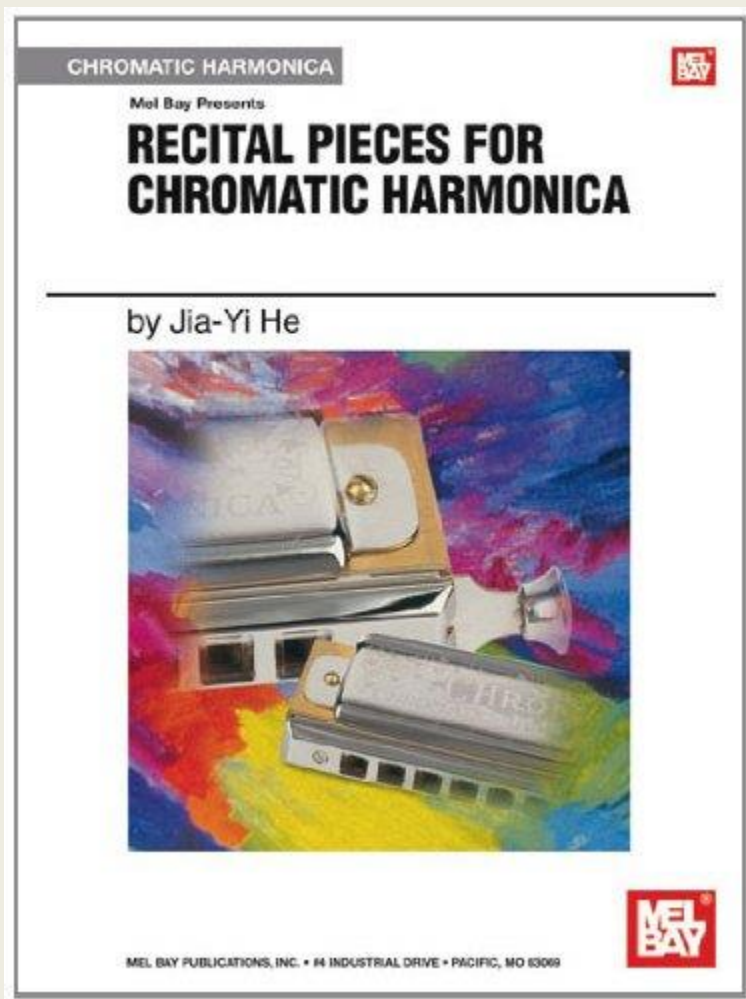
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Jia-Yi He – Biography

(See a description of his book below):



The author has played these pieces for recitals and concerts in many countries and taught these in his class at the Turtle Bay Music School. The notation clearly indicates the hole numbers, breath changes and slide controls on harmonica. Using common notation signs for players, this wonderful book is perfect for all levels, especially for advanced players to perform in recitals or concerts; a wonderful addition to all harmonica enthusiasts and students repertoire.

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Jia-Yi He – Biography

As a contestant on *America's Got Talent*, season 5 (2010), Jia-Yi He's audition consisted of playing Mozart's "Rondo Alla Turca" with four harmonicas simultaneously. Piers Morgan, Sharon Osbourne, and Howie Mandel all voted "Yes," sending the act to the Vegas Round.



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Jia-Yi He – Press

“Those of you who are old enough to remember the harmonica wizardry of Larry Adler, who could make the harmonica sound like a full symphony orchestra, will be delighted to see and hear the harmonica as it is played by Jia-Yi He. Mr. Jia-Yi He is exceptionally well-known as a performer and you will see why when you view this program.”

- Queens Public Television Program Guide

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Jia-Yi He – Repertoire

Harmonica Concerti:

Concerto for Harmonica and Orchestra - **Frank Lewin**
(Waiting to premiere)

Concerto for Harmonica and Orchestra - **Du Mingxin**
(Waiting to premiere)

Concerto for Harmonica, Percussion and Strings - **Naresh Sohal**
(Waiting to premiere)

Concerto for Harmonica and Orchestra - **Robert Russell Bennett**

Concerto for Harmonica and Orchestra - **Heitor Villa Lobos**
<http://youtu.be/b4ug1gRPWuk>

Concerto for Harmonica and Orchestra - **Malcolm Arnold**
<http://youtu.be/cp-HbPU1XG0>

Concerto for Harmonica and Orchestra - **Alexander Tcherepnin**

Concerto for Harmonica and Orchestra - **Henry Cowell**

Concerto for Harmonica and Orchestra - **Arthur Benjamin**

Concerto for Harmonica and Orchestra - **Michael Spivakovsky**
<http://youtu.be/kvpHvPDLQgQ>

Concerto “Yellow River” (use 16 harmonicas) - **Xian Xinghai**
<http://youtu.be/wTmHRI02PUw>

Concerto “Butterfly Lovers” (use 8 harmonicas) - **Chen Gang**
<http://youtu.be/lhcJEmBYXPo>

Concerto “Little Sisters on the Grassland” (use 8 harmonicas) - **Liu Dehai**

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Jia-Yi He – Repertoire

Concerto for Violins in A minor (RV 356) - **Antonio Vivaldi**

<http://youtu.be/mx4Kv7J3IGI>

Concerto for Two Violins in A minor (RV 522) - **Antonio Vivaldi**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tPz9hHKXB5M>

Concerto for Two Flutes in C major (RV 533) - **Antonio Vivaldi**

<http://youtu.be/rFYR06BSe9I>

Concerto for Violins No. 1 (BWV 1041) - **J. S. Bach**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Do4iWoDqUTM>

Concerto for Two Violins in D minor (BWV 1043) - **J. S. Bach**

<http://youtu.be/Bblo3abhRx4>

Solos with Orchestra:

Rhapsody in Blue - **George Gershwin**

<https://youtu.be/nwBjYOmlgf4>

Zigeunerweisen (Gypsy Airs), Op. 20 - **Pablo de Sarasate**

<http://youtu.be/QSIpuskvqHw>

Carmen Fantasy Op 25 - **Pablo de Sarasate**

<http://youtu.be/gtheGvyoO8M>

Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2 - **Franz Liszt**

http://youtu.be/gji1sRz9c_U

Romanian Rhapsody No. 1 - **George Enescu**

<http://youtu.be/PyPgTY3IViQ>

Flight of the Bumblebees - **Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov**

<https://youtu.be/OopNqA9HNow>

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Czardas - **Vittorio Monti**

<https://youtu.be/eCON3iddgi8>

Dance of the Comedians - **Bedrich Smetana**

<https://youtu.be/Zz6ezvylnc0>

Five Pieces for Harmonica and Strings - **Gordon Jacob**

Romance for Harmonica, Strings and Piano - **Vaughan Williams**

Harmonica Wizard - **John Philip Sousa** (1854-1932)

Reflection for Harmonica, Strings and Piano - **Naresh Sohal**

<https://youtu.be/Xx4eemTDv1E>

Hyperventilate for Harmonica and Strings - **Zane Merritt**

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Jia-Yi He – YouTube Links

America's Got Talent (winning solo audition with four harmonicas)

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

Concerto for Harmonica and Orchestra - **Heitor Villa Lobos**

<http://youtu.be/b4uq1gRPWuk>

Concerto for Harmonica and Orchestra - **Malcolm Arnold**

<http://youtu.be/cp-HbPU1XG0>

Concerto for Harmonica and Orchestra - **Michael Spivakovsky**

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<http://youtu.be/mx4Kv7J3IGI>

Concerto for Two Violins in A minor (RV 522) - **Antonio Vivaldi**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tPz9hHKXB5M>

Concerto for Two Flutes in C major (RV 533) - **Antonio Vivaldi**

<http://youtu.be/rFYR06BSe9I>

Concerto for Violins No. 1 (BWV 1041) - **J. S. Bach**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Do4iWoDqUTM>

Concerto for Two Violins in D minor (BWV 1043) - **J. S. Bach**

<http://youtu.be/Bblo3abhRx4>

Rhapsody in Blue - **George Gershwin**

<https://youtu.be/nwBjYOMlgf4>

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Jia-Yi He – Photo Gallery



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Jia-Yi He – Interviews

Jia-Yi He – Interview with “The Awl” online magazine

Thursday, February 10th, 2011

[RANDOM NEW YORKER](#)

Jia-Yi He, Professional Harmonica Player

Andrew Piccone | February 10th, 2011



Tell me about the harmonica.

In 1964 when I was 10 or 11, I started playing harmonica. I got a harmonica from my older sister, she had played for about two years. I found the sounds to be wonderful, and I loved it. After playing harmonica, I tried many other instruments. I played the Chinese fiddle, the violin, the cello, the piano, every instrument I wanted to try. But no matter what I always came back to the harmonica. I think the harmonica has a very special, unique sound. When

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playing the harmonica, I have an easier time controlling the music than with other instruments, it's just using your breath, it's so simple. I've been playing for 47 years! I'm still interested in the harmonica because it is so unique, it's such an interesting instrument. There is so much you can do with it.

There are harmonica concertos, classical music, everything. In the harmonica world there are not too many classical players, not like the violin or the piano. It's the same mentality though, you have to practice every day, take it seriously. I love classical music, that's what I play mostly with the standards thrown in there too.

How do you respond to the idea that the harmonica is a novelty instrument?

Well, I think the violin or the piano have very long histories that the harmonica does not. Most instruments have been around for hundreds of years, the harmonica has not. It's very young, it has 180 years of history. So if you think about it like that, the harmonica still has a very long way to go. The instrument is still evolving. Most people play the harmonica for fun, but if you want to play classical music on the harmonica you need to learn how to read music and practice. You must practice. I had learned all these other instruments growing up, and the classical music training helped me to learn classical music on the harmonica. I took many pieces written for other instruments and taught myself how to play them on the harmonica. There is very little music that is written for the harmonica, so you have to make do, improvise and do things differently. Over time the harmonica will progress and become an instrument you see more. Every year the harmonica you see in more and more places.

Where are you from originally?

I am from China, I was born in Beijing. I came to the United States in 1998. In China, I was a performer, I performed all over the country, and I traveled worldwide to play. Before I moved to the United States, I came here to compete in the national harmonica competition in 1991 and I came in 3rd place. When I moved here, I came with a performance visa, an artist's visa. I liked it here, so I

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applied for permanent residence status. I like New York, I like the music here, I like the audience here. I travel all over though. I like to travel. Playing in the United States is different than in China. Usually in China I play with other people, as a part of a larger show, or with a group. In the United States when I play I usually will play alone, and have solo concerts. I like it better to be playing by myself, right now I do both, but mostly I will play a concert solo. I live in Queens now, I like Queens, I like being close to both airports.

Have you heard any good jokes lately?

Um, oh, one time, this is very funny, I was hired to do a concert. Usually I come prepared and I read my music. This time I forgot to bring it. So when I get there and the concert starts and I don't have my music book! So what can I do? It was really terrible. But I realize I can play from memory. So in that concert I played with no music, and it was wonderful! So, because of that, right now, I try to memorize all the music I play.

You went on "America's Got Talent" a few years ago?

I did! That was a great opportunity to show a more mainstream audience what the harmonica is capable of. I used a few different kinds of harmonicas, sometimes I use one, sometimes I use five. In March I'm going back to Europe to play in Oxford, and for that show I'm going to use 16 harmonicas! The audience on "America's Got Talent," they seemed to like it a lot. The judges, too, and everyone stood up at the end. I was selected to move forward and play in Las Vegas. It was very good.

What's the best part about what you do?

The harmonica is a very easy instrument. Everyone can learn, one day, two days, three days, you can learn. Some people don't believe me, I tell people you can learn this. It's all breath, it's only from controlled breath. There are only a few holes, that's it! Everybody can learn, very quickly. There is no age limit to the harmonica, I teach people who are young, and over 70 years old! With the

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Jia-Yi He –Interviews

piano, your fingers change as you get older. With the harmonica, your mouth, your lips, they're always soft! If you can sing, you can play.



[Andrew Piccone](#) *is a photographer in New York.*

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Jia-Yi He - Interview

"International Musician Magazine", American Federation of Musicians

http://im.afm.org/doc/AFM_IM/marchim2013/2013022601/22.html#22

Harmonica player Jai-Yi He, a member of Local 802 (New York City) has been called world-class, a professional, and a virtuoso. He is a teacher and a performer. But he also holds some other titles that few musicians can claim: innovator and ambassador.

He, a permanent resident of the US originally from Beijing, China, has been an influential figure in shaping the harmonica's place in the music world. "The harmonica is a young instrument," he says. "It was only invented in 1821, so it doesn't even have 200 years of history, and it needs developing."

Though he, now 59 years old, has experimented with a half-dozen instruments over the years, the harmonica has been "his" instrument since he first tried one at 10 years old. "I love the harmonica's sound because there are so many special things you can do on the harmonica," he says.

Despite the harmonica's young age and lack of popularity in mainstream music, he found a comfortable niche teaching Chinese students in the 1980s. "There are not many schools in China that have a band or an orchestra," he explains, "so people have fewer chances to learn music. The education department wanted every student to learn at least one instrument, so they offered two choices for the students—the recorder or the harmonica—because they are both really easy to carry."

He has taught the harmonica just about everywhere people learn: primary schools, music schools, colleges, and even harmonica clubs. But his aspirations to bring the harmonica into the mainstream were bigger. Rather than teach a small number of students at a time, He saw an opportunity to increase the scale of the harmonica's presence.

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“I was told there were 250,000 schools in China, and they wanted students to learn harmonica. So they asked me to teach harmonica classes on television for music teachers to learn how to play and then they could teach the students,” he says.

His international performance credentials brought him to New York City in 1998 on a work visa. The musical atmosphere of the city has kept him there as a permanent resident and allowed him to expand his lifelong publicity campaign. “New York City is a wonderful city for music and culture, so I applied to be a permanent resident,” he says.

He now teaches at the Turtle Bay Music School, when he’s not sharing the harmonica’s sound at festivals and competitions around the world.

Now his ambitions center on growing repertoire for the harmonica. Because it is a relatively young instrument, it has not yet been adapted to all styles of music. While conventional thinking holds that the harmonica belongs in a specific set of genres such as folk and blues, He is pioneering the effort to change that.

He has successfully adapted jazz and classical standards such as “Rhapsody in Blue” and “Flight of the Bumblebee” to the harmonica. He is also attempting to revive a number of lesser-known harmonica concertos, specifically Concerto for Harmonica and Orchestra, composed by Frank Lewin in 1960.

He has set his sights big once again, promoting the harmonica around the world and at home as an instrument for the masses: “I want to make a harmonica seminar so people see that music education is not just for fun; that, for some people, the harmonica is another instrument they can understand.” He even gave a Harmonica lesson to New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg at a festival last summer.

Being a member of the Federation plays a big part in He’s mission. It provides him a platform to spread the harmonica’s presence through shows and festivals, while keeping him plugged in to the music world.

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Jia-Yi He –Interviews

He has won awards and competitions in England, Germany, Israel, Japan, and the US. He has performed at the General Assembly Hall at the United Nations, and been a featured soloist with the China National Symphony Orchestra, the China National Ballet Symphonic Orchestra, and the Nassau Pops Symphony Orchestra. Though he is certainly proud of his accomplishments as a performer, he says the real satisfaction lies in the instrument itself. “I think harmonica is the most popular instrument in the world,” He proclaims. “There are maybe 10 million harmonicas [made] every year. I think the harmonica will be ‘the people’s instrument.’”

His reasoning is succinct. “I teach all ages, from young kids up to close to 80 years old. The harmonica has no age limit,” he exclaims.

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