



Harmonica

Jia-Yi He

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- Selected Repertoire
- Interview

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 festivals and competitions in England, Germany, Israel, Japan and United States. 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, 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. 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.

(See a description of his book and his faculty personality profile below):

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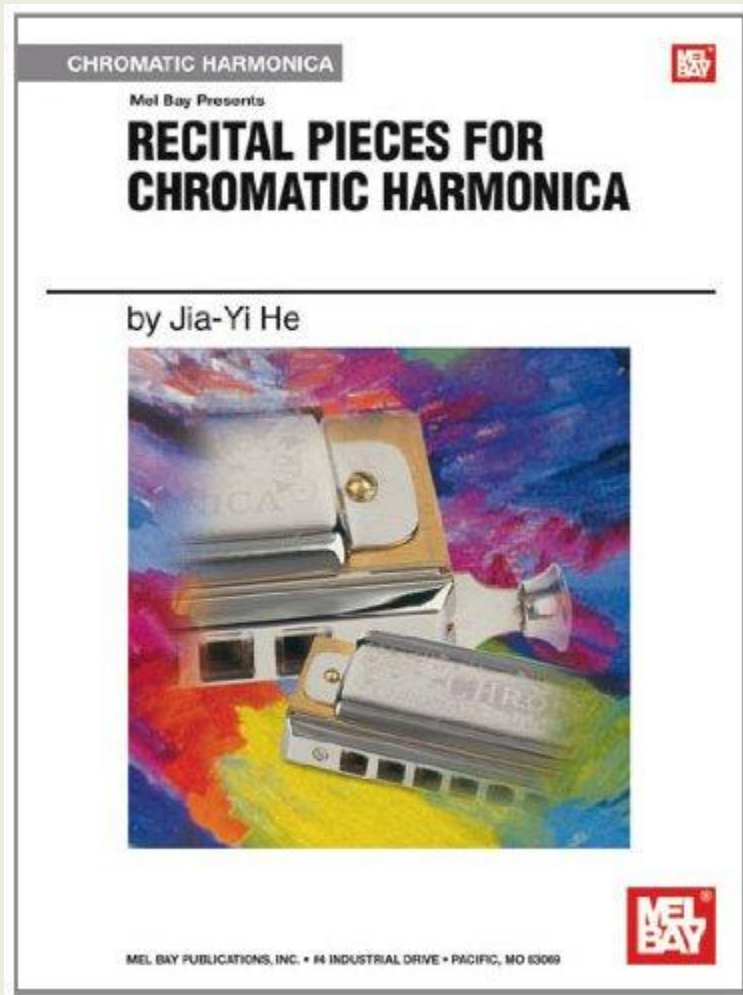


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Jia-Yi He – Biography



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.

Instrument you teach: Harmonica

Do you play any other instrument in your spare time? No

Education: Self-taught

Where are you from? China

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Jia-Yi He – Biography

Favorite age group to teach: Any

Favorite style of music to teach: Classical to modern

Favorite song: Rhapsody in Blue

Favorite piece of music: Bach

Favorite food: Chinese

Favorite color: Gold

Do you have a pet? (Describe them) No

What's your favorite musical memory? The Sound of Music

What do you like best about teaching music? Talented students

What is your favorite composer or musician? Bach, Gershwin

What is the first piece of music you ever learned? A school song

How many hours a day do you practice? Three to four

Accomplishments: World competition winner – England, Germany, Israel, USA, and Japan; International competition judge – Taiwan, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Hangzhou, and Singapore

Fun Facts: After two lessons, students will be able to play simple songs!

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.



03:31

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TRupAHogVJY> (winning solo audition with four harmonicas)

http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xnm949_successful-america-s-got-talent-2010-auditions-ny-day1_shortfilms

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Jia-Yi He – Biography

http://agt.wikia.com/wiki/Jia-Yi_He?file=Armonica_Players_and_Acrobats_Compete_%27E_America%27s_Got_Talent,_Vegas

http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xnn932_armonica-players-and-acrobats-compete-america-s-got-talent-vegas_shortfilms

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ff1R4N-Be7k> (judges decision whom to promote to Hollywood live audition Quarterfinals)

Jia-Yi He was one of the Judge's Favorites in the Vegas Round. He was sorted into the "Harmonica Players" category. His performance consisted of performing the "Carmen Overture" by Bizet with five harmonicas simultaneously. Although he was not passed onto the next round to the Quarterfinals, he is still one of the few classical artists to place this high in the *America's Got Talent* competition.



05:55



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Jia-Yi He – Selected Repertoire

Jia-Yi He, harmonica soloist, Selected YouTube Videos

Appearance on America's Got Talent Season 5 (2010)

Mozart: Rondo Alla Turca on Four Harmonicas

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

Tiomkin High Noon with String Quartet

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dwo7gZVN1M8>

Rimsky-Korsakov Flight Of The Bumble Bee with the California Pops

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OTJcaofjSz8>

Sarasate Zigeunerweisen with the Skidmore College Orchestra

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

Brahms Hungarian Dance No. 5 with the Skidmore College Orchestra

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AqbgGN5IMn4>

Malaguena with the Skidmore College Orchestra

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Trxej1mTiRI>

Oh! Susanna with the Nassau Pops Orchestra

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=muUdB1Fo-AY>

Schumann Traumerei with the Nassau Pops Orchestra

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TgLC51_DxdI

Clarinet Polka with the Nassau Pops Orchestra

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HNux5yoxlec>

Gershwin Our Love Is Here To Stay with String Quartet

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vHMHIGvy-kk>

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Jia-Yi He – Selected Repertoire

Gershwin Prelude #2 with String Quartet

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=58AI5YN-ubU>

Bach Siciliano (BWV 1031) with String Quartet

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JH1T5eS81RY>

Santa Lucia with String Quartet

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HCXbbzpY63M>

Gershwin Rhapsody In Blue with the California Pops

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CVEiU-ihGQE>

Peg o' My Heart with the California Pops

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2wVE3dEifcs>

Monti Czardas with the California Pops

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ss4ACMb251Q>

Smetana Dance Of The Comedians with the California Pops

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pEe-KleOE3I>

Mozart Rondo alla Turca with the California Pops

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gLB6QN0-7T4>

Johann Strauss Blue Danube Waltz with String Quartet

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h90mWajlcJs>

Gershwin It Ain't Necessarily So with String Quartet

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T3jm2qJbURw>

Gershwin Summertime with Piano and String Quartet

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z8f1FCw9hD0>

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Jia-Yi He – Interview

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 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

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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.

YouTube link to America's Got Talent episode

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

YouTube embed code of America's Got Talent episode

```
<iframe width="640" height="390"
src="//www.youtube.com/embed/TRupAHogVJY" frameborder="0"
allowfullscreen></iframe>
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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

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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 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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