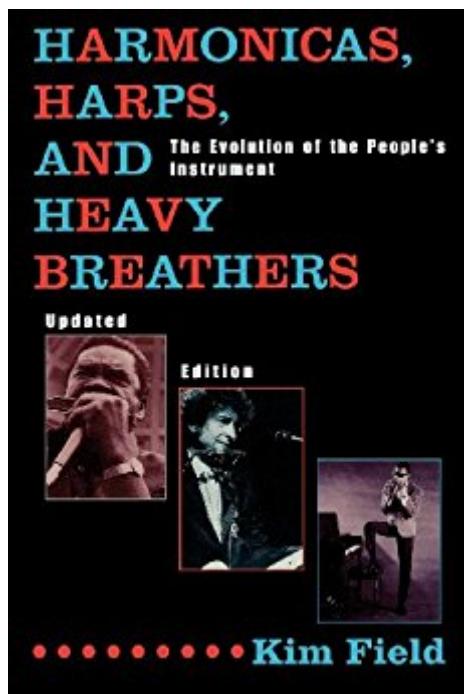


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# Harmonicas, Harps And Heavy Breathers: The Evolution Of The People's Instrument



## **Synopsis**

The harmonica is one of the most important, yet overlooked, instruments in music. This definitive volume celebrates the history of the world's most popular musical device, its impact on various forms of music, folk, country, blues, rock, jazz and classical music. The author traces the development of the harmonica from the ancient Chinese sheng to futuristic harmonica synthesizers. Nearly seventy harmonica masters are profiled including Stevie Wonder, Little Walter, Bob Dylan, Jimmy Reed, Charlie McCoy, Sonny Terry, and John Popper. This updated edition includes an extensive new afterword, an expanded discography of the finest harmonica recordings, and a listing of the best harmonica resources on the internet.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Mr. Field has written a book that no self-respecting harmonica should miss. It gives a comprehensive overview of the harmonica's rich and illustrious history. I learned more from a single reading about my instrument and its players, than I did in the previous twenty years. Mr. Field should be applauded for a most outstanding effort.

"Harmonicas, Harps, and Heavy Breathers" is a comprehensive, authoritative, well-written examination of the harmonica's role in musical culture. The author seems to have heard and understood the work of every major harmonica player of this century and many of the lesser-known ones, regardless of style or idiom. The book surprises us often simply by reminding us of the ubiquity of the instrument, as when the author points out that 3 of the Beatles's earliest hits featured harmonica prominently. The book is heavily illustrated with photos. It is likely to serve as the standard reference for its subject for years to come. Anyone who wants to learn about the traditions of harmonica music should have a copy.

Hats off to Kim Field! This is a great book and a much needed one. His excellent research is augmented with great writing. Every harp player in the land should own one.

Generations of harmonica players waited for this superb book. Nothing like it existed until its first publication and now it has been republished (thank you Cooper Square). It is certain to become a classic. Field is a wonderful writer with a great eye for detail and a journalists instinct for interviewing his subjects. To some the harmonica hardly qualifies as a musical instrument, but to millions of others blowing into the pocket-sized "tin sandwich" is the breath of life. The Dutch call it the "moothy", the Scotch call it a "gob iron" and American's call it a "harp," shortened from "French Harp," the label on early imports of the instrument [from Germany]. Field's book can leave no doubt that the harmonica is a serious instrument on which one can make great art. From the Grand Old Opry to Carnegie Hall, from Little Walter the pioneer of amplified blues harmonica to country great Charlie McCoy to classical concert musician John Sebastian (Sr.), Field covers them all with zest and style. All that's missing is a musical CD to illustrate the styles! Let us hope it stays in print for many years.

This book is a fascinating read for anyone who's interested in life stories, and history. It will definitely hold your interest, and keep you coming back for reference each time you hear one of the players or songs covered in it's pages. The author's extensive knowledge of, and love for, his topic is infectious. If you like Blues, Folk, Jazz (even Classical) music, that features the harmonica, then you will LOVE this book. I bought my first copy in the early 1990's, and I still appreciate the ability to pick it up today. The new copies contain audio, which is a dream come true, as you can read about, and then hear, the players and styles that the author describes with such passion. A must have for

anyone who enjoys the sound of the harmonica, and a very good book for anyone who just likes to read. Kim Field is a writer who's style is akin to having a friend (in book form) chatting with you in your living room. He's written something truly unique and enjoyable. Like the harmonica itself, this book is a fun, and lively thing to own. A treasure!

Very inspirational to me and others who keep trying to swipe my copy. This is so well written and organized that I keep reading much of it over and over again. It is one of those books that you savor every word. It is very inexpensive for such a valuable, meaty, entertaining resource. Mr. Field, thank you for this tremendous read. This material would make a great PBS Ken Burns type documentary.

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Fields' (sic) book, in addition to being very well written and well researched, covers much more ground than its title might imply. Although this book DOES cover the history of the blues harmonica very comprehensively, it also explores other genres of music and the harmonica's role in them. Along the way, seemingly disparate musical styles are linked and the reader is made aware of a number of excellent musicians who have been somewhat marginalized or unfairly overlooked. By itself, this book is a rewarding reading experience. However, those readers who follow some of Fields' leads and actually listen to the music of some of the book's more obscure subjects will be further enriched. Nick Morrison Music Director KPLU-FM

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