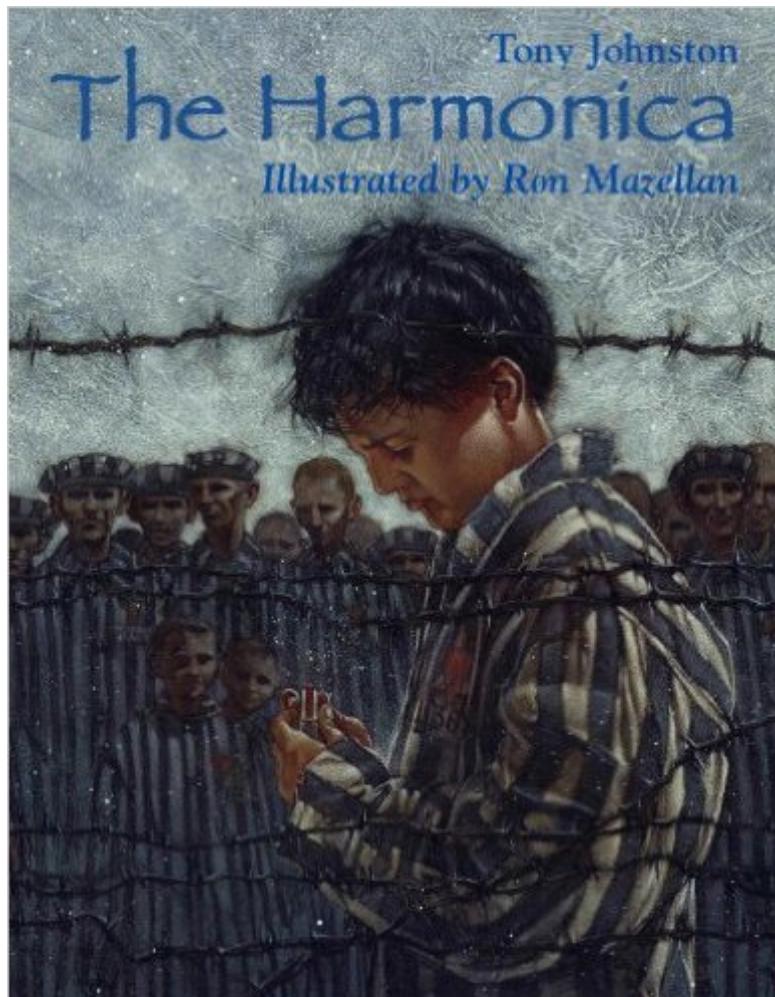


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# The Harmonica



## Synopsis

When the Nazis invaded Poland, a family is split apart. The parents are sent to one concentration camp, their son to another. Only his father's gift, a harmonica, keeps the boy's hopes alive and, miraculously, ensures his survival. Tony Johnston's powerful story, inspired by the life of a Holocaust survivor, is enhanced by Ron Mazellan's luminous artwork. A testament to the human spirit and the transcendent power of music.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 0620 (What's this?)

Paperback: 32 pages

Publisher: Charlesbridge; 1 edition (July 1, 2008)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 9781570914898

ISBN-13: 978-1570914898

ASIN: 1570914893

Product Dimensions: 8.5 x 0.1 x 10.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 5.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 starsÂ  See all reviewsÂ  (19 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #244,854 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #59 inÂ  Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > Holocaust #219 inÂ  Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > Europe #709 inÂ  Books > Children's Books > Arts, Music & Photography > Performing Arts

Age Range: 7 - 10 years

Grade Level: 3 - 5

## Customer Reviews

Sometimes a book falls into your hands that you know will carve a road through your heart before you open it. In this case, from the cover illustration and title, I knew that Tony Johnston's picture book; THE HARMONICA would be such a read. Inspired by the true story of Henryk Rosmaryn, this picture book takes readers on a journey through the nightmare of the Holocaust. The story itself is poignant, painful and full of the hope that human beings find in the worst of times. Our narrator is a young boy with the gift of music who lives in Poland. Despite their poverty, his father acquires a harmonica for him. But this joyous time is short lived when the Nazi's arrive, tearing his parents away and sending him off to live in a concentration camp. A commandant hears him playing

Schubert on the harmonica one night and demands the boy to play for him every night in exchange for bread. Ultimately, the boy finds strength through his playing and realizes it is a way to give his fellow prisoners hope in the darkness. There are, of course, many books on this subject-many good books. I think I can safely say this joins their ranks. Ms. Johnston's simple, lyrical text is both poetic and harsh in its narration. That is evident from the opening lines "I cannot remember my father's face, or my mother's, but I remember their love, warm and enfolding as a song." The text never falters, and never becomes overwrought. With a large font, and only a few lines per page, the story unfolds more like a poem than a straight narrative. This is illustrator Ron Mazellan's first children's book, and it is a stunning achievement. With a mixture of art mediums, the images come to life in rich color and texture.

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