BIOGRAPHY
Updated OCT 2026

Li Shan Tan

lishantheharpist@gmail.com

www.lishantheharpist.com

SHORT BIOGRAPHY (242 words)



Singaporean harpist Li Shan Tan is known for her dynamic artistry and elegance across orchestral stages, solo appearances, and contemporary collaborations. She is Principal Harp of the New Haven Symphony Orchestra and performs regularly with the Boston Symphony Orchestra and the Boston Pops.

Highlights of her career include performing as a soloist alongside Yo-Yo Ma with the Boston Symphony Orchestra at the 2024 Tanglewood Music Festival. She was awarded First Prize at the VI Mexico International Harp Competition, leading to her debut with the *Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional* at Mexico City's *Palacio de Bellas Artes*. She has also appeared with The Metropolitan Opera, Jacob Collier, and The Beach Boys, and serves as a personal harpist for NBA star Jaylen Brown.

Beyond the stage, Li Shan is an educator, arranger, and writer whose work explores new possibilities for the harp. She writes for HarpColumn, presents *Writing for Harp* workshops for composers, and she advocates for contemporary harp repertoire through performance, arrangements, and collaborations on new works.

Li Shan was the first harpist admitted to the doctoral program at New England Conservatory, where she earned her Doctor of Musical Arts with a minor in music theory under Jessica Zhou. She also holds a Master of Music from Boston Conservatory at Berklee and a Bachelor of Music (First-Class Honours) from the Royal College of Music–Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts joint program. When away from the harp, Li Shan can be found sipping coffee, reading, or boxing.

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY (175 Words)

Singaporean harpist Li Shan Tan is known for her dynamic artistry and elegance across orchestral stages, solo appearances, and contemporary collaborations. She is Principal Harp of the New Haven Symphony Orchestra and performs regularly with the Boston Symphony Orchestra and the Boston Pops. Career highlights include appearing as a soloist alongside Yo-Yo Ma with the Boston Symphony Orchestra at the 2024 Tanglewood Music Festival and winning First Prize at the VI Mexico International Harp Competition. She has also appeared with The Metropolitan Opera, Jacob Collier, and The Beach Boys, and serves as a personal harpist for NBA star Jaylen Brown. Beyond the stage, Li Shan is an educator, arranger, and writer. She writes for HarpColumn, presents *Writing for Harp* workshops for composers, and she advocates for contemporary harp repertoire. Li Shan was the first harpist admitted to the doctoral program at New England Conservatory, where she earned her Doctor of Musical Arts with a minor in music theory under Jessica Zhou. When away from the harp, she can be found sipping coffee, reading, or boxing.

FULL BIOGRAPHY (369 words)

Singaporean harpist Li Shan Tan is known for her dynamic artistry, elegance, and versatility across orchestral stages, solo appearances, and contemporary collaborations. Raised in Singapore and now active internationally, she has built a multifaceted career as a performer, educator, writer, and recording artist. She is Principal Harp of the New Haven Symphony Orchestra and performs regularly with the Boston Symphony Orchestra and the Boston Pops.

As a soloist, Li Shan has appeared alongside Yo-Yo Ma with the Boston Symphony Orchestra at the 2024 Tanglewood Music Festival. She was awarded First Prize at the VI Mexico International Harp Competition and Festival, leading to her debut with the *Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional* at Mexico City's *Palacio de Bellas Artes*. Other highlights include two sold-out opening night concerts with the Vista Philharmonic Orchestra by invitation of Bruce Hangen, the 2025 St. Botolph Club Foundation Emerging Artist Award, and a fellowship at the Tanglewood Music Center.

She has also appeared with The Metropolitan Opera, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Sarasota Orchestra, New World Symphony, Borromeo String Quartet, and artists such as Jacob Collier, Jon Batiste, Joshua Bell, Joe Hisaishi, and The Beach Boys. Her recording credits include *Feminine Voices at Christmas* with Ensemble Altera, an album for women's voices and harp selected as BBC Music Magazine's 2025 Christmas Choice. Li Shan also serves as a personal harpist for NBA star Jaylen Brown.

Beyond the stage, Li Shan is an educator, arranger, and writer whose work explores new possibilities for the harp. She writes for HarpColumn and presents *Writing for Harp* workshops that deepen composers' understanding of the instrument. Through original arrangements spanning Debussy to Metallica, collaborations on new works, and advocacy for contemporary harp repertoire and techniques, she champions new perspectives on the instrument.

Li Shan was the first harpist admitted to the doctoral program at New England Conservatory, where she earned her Doctor of Musical Arts with a minor in music theory under Jessica Zhou. She also holds a Master of Music in Harp Performance from Boston Conservatory at Berklee and a Bachelor of Music (First-Class Honours) from the Royal College of Music–Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts joint program. When away from the harp, Li Shan can often be found sipping coffee, reading, or boxing.