



**Name in English:** Hao Jiang Tian

**Name in Chinese:** 田浩江

**Name in Pinyin:** Tián Hàojiāng

**Gender:** Male

**Birth Year:** 1954

**Birth Place:** Beijing, China

**Current location:** Beijing, China & New York City, NY

**Opera Singer, NY Metropolitan Opera**

**Profession(s):** Opera Singer, Writer

**Education:** Bachelor of Vocal Singing, Central Conservatory of Music of Beijing; 1983, Master of Music, Lamont School of Music, University of Denver

**Awards:** 1987, Rosa Ponselle International Competition for the Vocal Arts Award, Rosa Ponselle Foundation; 1988, Winner, Bel Canto Foundation Voice Competition; 2008, Professional Achievement Award, Denver University Alumni Association, Denver University; Winner, Sullivan Foundation Voice Competition; Winner, San Francisco Opera Competition

### **Contribution (s):**

Hao Jiang Tian was the son of parents who had been underground communists in the struggle against the Japanese and the Nationalist Chinese Government during the 1940s. In the aftermath of the communist takeover of China in 1949 they occupied a privileged position in the new society with a better social position, food, and clothes. They were a musical family and Tian's parents encouraged him to play the piano.

This all changed during the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s when Mao began the persecution of old party comrades and a struggle against all those seen as Western influenced or under the sway of the "old society." Tian's parents, although they were loyal communists, were sent to perform hard labor in the countryside while their adolescent son was forced by necessity to work as a boilermaker in a factory. He learned to play guitar and accordion on his own but there was little formal musical training available in China in those wild years. Most of the music conservatories had been shut down and teachers had been imprisoned or killed. A few students with the "correct" party background were allowed into the remaining music schools where young revolutionaries taught music praising Mao and the Cultural Revolution. Millions of people died in those years, and the disruption to the education system was duplicated across the entire country, leaving a whole generation of Chinese children with little formal education.

Although Tian's initial aspiration was to become a painter, he eventually discovered his calling while singing popular songs and ballads of the day. He was overheard by a local professional singer who told him he had a "big voice" and may have a career as a singer.

This encounter changed his life. When music conservatories re-opened in the late 1970s, Tian landed a spot at Beijing's Central Conservatory of Music. He was the only one of 500 applicants to gain entry for singing talent. After he graduated he performed with the Central Philharmonic Society of Beijing before emigrating to the United States.

Although he got a fairly late start on his education, only finishing his graduate work at the University of Denver when he was 30, Tian quickly rose as a reputable talent. That he is also one of the very few Western opera singers to come out of China added to his popularity and recognition. He first held a variety of supporting roles with Opera Colorado, most notably in an Aspen production of Verdi's "Falstaff" with an almost all-Asian cast. He made his debut with the Metropolitan Opera in New York City during the 1991/1992 season. Then in 1993, he received worldwide recognition when he appeared opposite Luciano Pavarotti in Verdi's "Lombardi." Hao Jiang Tian has received worldwide acclaim as one of today's most talented *basso cantantes*. He was the first Chinese to sing Verdi in Italy and to appear in Beethoven's "Fidelio" in Germany. He has been cast in 40 operatic roles, and appeared in over 1,300 performances. Tian has performed in many acclaimed theaters around the world in opera houses in Argentina, Belgium, Italy, Canada, the United States, France, Spain, Holland, Portugal, Chile, Japan, and China. He appeared as the leading bass in Tan Dun's December 2006 premier of "The First Emperor" opposite Placido Domingo in the title role. In September 2008, he appeared as "Chang the Coffinmaker" in the San Francisco Opera's production of "The Bonesetter's Daughter" based upon the Amy Tan novel.

Tian published a memoir, *Along the Roaring River*, in 2008.

**Publications/Patents:**

*Along the Roaring River: My Wild Ride from Mao to the Met*, Wiley, John & Sons, Inc., 2008

**External Links:**

<http://www.tianhaojiang.com/>

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=90965367>

[http://www.committee100.org/aboutus/member\\_bio.php?member\\_id=85](http://www.committee100.org/aboutus/member_bio.php?member_id=85)

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