

Joy Harjo Bio

Joy Harjo is a multi-talented artist of the Mvskoke/Creek Nation. She is an internationally known poet, performer, writer and musician. She has published seven books of acclaimed poetry. They include: She Had Some Horses, In Mad Love and War, The Woman Who Fell From the Sky, and her most recent How We Became Human, New and Selected Poems from W.W. Norton. Her poetry awards include the Arrell Gibson Lifetime Achievement Award, Oklahoma Book Awards, 200; The American Indian Festival of Words Author Award from the Tulsa City County Library; the 2000 Western Literature Association Distinguished Achievement Award; 1998 Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Award; the 1997 New Mexico Governor's Award for Excellence in the Arts; the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Native Writers Circle of the Americas; the William Carlos Williams Award from the Poetry Society of America. She co-edited an anthology of contemporary Native women's writing: Reinventing the Enemy's Language, Native Women's Writing of North America. It was pronounced one of the London Observer's Best Books of 1997; and wrote the award-winning children's book from Harcourt, The Good Luck Cat. She also contributed poetic prose to photographs by Stephen Strom in Secrets from the Center of the World. Forthcoming is a book of stories from W.W. Norton.

Harjo's first music CD, Letter from the End of the 20th Century was released by Silver Wave Records in 1997. Harjo co-produced the album and is featured as poet and saxophone player. The album was honored by the First Americans in the Arts for Outstanding Musical Achievement and called by Pulse Magazine the 'best dub poetry album recorded in North America'. Her recently released second CD or original songs, Native Joy for Real crosses over many genres and has been praised for its daring brilliance. Harjo has performed internationally, from the Arctic Circle in Norway at the Riddu Riddu Festival, to Madras, India, to the Ford Theater in Los Angeles. She has been featured on Bill Moyers, The Power of the Word series, and will be featured this spring on a new Garrison Keillor show. Harjo was also the narrator for the Turner The Native Americans series and the narrator for the Emmy award-winning show, Navajo Codetalkers for National Geographic.

Harjo's other accomplishments include co-producer and talent of the music video "Eagle Song", nominated for best music video at the American Indian Film Festival 2002. The American Indian Film Festival awarded her the Eagle Spirit Achievement Award that year. She has served on the National Council on the Arts. She is the Joseph Russo endowed professor at University of New Mexico, and when not teaching and performing she lives in Honolulu, Hawaii, where she is a member of the Hui Nalu Canoe Club.