**Short Biography for Jarmila Xymena Gorna**

Jarmila’s new album Aspaklaria has just been released. How did it all start?

She was very nearly born on stage in the Lodz Grand Opera House where her opera-singer mother was determined to go on with the show! Could it be this prenatal experience of being surrounded by multi-layered choir harmonies became the essence of Jarmila’s musical creativity?

She started composing at 5, first attempt at sound engineering at 12. Teenage flirtation with Beethoven’s sonatas and Bach’s fugues. Academy of Music, Jazz faculty. She has never stopped reinventing herself… First in Poland - 19th century English folk music with Sovay, keyboard player with rock bands…

Then in England – in a quest to ‘find her own voice’ – her multimedia Trance-Magic Piano Sessions at the bohemian Trolley Stop in Dalston, London, resulting in acclaimed album Hashgachah. Chosen for nomination by the BBC Radio 3 World Music Awards, guest lecturer at Cambridge University, composer of music for theatre and film. Performances at the ICA, Jazz Café, Vortex, Union Chapel etc. and European music festivals. Featured and interviewed by radio and TV around Europe. Inventor of a unique music teaching system – the Gorna Method. Built her own recording studio, where she works as a composer, songwriter, sound engineer, producer and arranger of music.

What did the critics have to say about her last album Hashgachah?

*‘A sophisticated, soul bearing vision. Audacious... incredible vocal harmonies... A stunningly cathartic tour de force.’ (The Herald, Scotland)*

*‘Totally unique... startling and original.’ (Jazz FM, UK)*

*‘Wordless vocal pyrotechnics: from deep sultry jazz to wild chants and soaring celestial choirs. The virtuoso piano is of the highest calibre: richly diverse and brilliantly conceived.’ (Kindred Spirit)*

*‘Incredibly captivating… she has built her own musical cosmos.’ (Folker, Germany)*

Jarmila’s performances have also attracted a lot of attention:

*‘Her impassioned vocalising swoops through the octaves’ (The Scotsman, Scotland)*

*‘All human emotions are featured with drama and searing conviction. Emotional honesty and vulnerability, choreographs epic soundtracks.’ (The Herald, Scotland)*

*‘Crucially, she has evolved a unique style of singing without words.’ (Jewish Chronicle, UK)*

*‘Some high-pitched scream-like cries nearly moved me to tears.’ (Women in Music, UK)*

**Full Biography for Jarmila Xymena Górna**

London-based artist, Jarmila Xymena Gorna [Yarmeela Kseemena Goorna] was born into a musical family in Lodz, Poland. Her mother was an opera singer in the Lodz Grand Opera House, and she was singing on stage until a few hours before Jarmila’s birth. Though her singing style isn’t operatic, Jarmila feels that the prenatal experience of being surrounded by multi-layered choir harmonies was a primary musical influence.

Jarmila started composing at the age of 5 and was sent her to a specialist music school at the age of 7. She trained there for 12 years to become a classical pianist. Her other instrument was guitar.

Jarmila graduated from the Karol Szymanowski Academy of Music in Katowice, Poland. While studying at the college she formed a band Sovay, whose repertoire consisted of traditional English ballads from the 18th and 19th centuries as well as American & British folksongs. The band toured around the country and was featured in a documentary on Polish TV. Jarmila had been acclaimed a ‘Queen of Folk Singing’ (Polish Radio Channel 3). She was also active in Poland’s rock music scene, contributing as a singer and keyboard player to several prominent rock bands, such as T.Love. She sang on Michal Lorenz’s soundtrack to the film ‘Zaklad’. She did in-field research throughout England and former Yugoslavia on the countries’ folk music.

Jarmila came to London in 1990, where by shedding the stylistic references of her musical past, she was free to reinvent a truly distinct sound and find ‘her own voice’, both literally and metaphorically. She was determined to remove all influences of jazz, soul and even folk from her vocal phrasing and her voice’s timbre. And so, a period of experimentation with voice and piano had begun.

Jarmila's new style really developed at the Trolley Stop, an East London venue, which programmed her Trance-Magic Piano Sessions fortnightly for a period of 2 years. These evenings of piano/voice improvisation developed into multi-media performances. People would come to see her collaborations with visual artists, presenting their super-8, video and slides projections as well as dancers and other musicians' improvisations. The Trance-Magic Piano Sessions grew into a ‘bohemian’, avant-garde night (‘Very popular' - Avant Magazine).

The fruit of this musical soul quest was her album Hashgachah, released on Jarmila Music in 2004, where Jarmila brings together her talents as a composer, vocalist, pianist and producer. Her passionate wordless singing takes full advantage of a wide vocal range. Gorna's accomplished piano playing is the backbone for her soaring vocal choirs, around which she builds subtle arrangements for double bass, percussion, brass and oud.

Gorna’s arresting performances have been seen in many London venues, such as the ICA, Jazz Cafe, Vortex, Union Chapel, The Spitz, Ray’s Jazz and Cargo. She performed in Catania, Sicily 2005, at the Big Big World Festival in Scotland 2005 and Women in Tune Festival in Wales 2006.

Jarmila is also active as a composer for theatre and film which has seen her scoring the soundtrack to the Brunton Theatre Company’s production of Bram Stoker’s ‘Dracula’ (‘The spirit of a fractured Eastern Europe is evoked by Gorna’s gorgeous score’ - Scotland on Sunday) as well as contributing to the multi-media show ‘The Singularity’ at the Albany theatre as part of the 1998 London International Mime Festival. She co-composed and performed the soundtrack to the documentary ‘Hidden Children’ by Sheldon Lazarus (2001). She sang on the soundtrack of the Italian feature film ‘Luna Rossa’, 2001 and has been a guest lecturer on the subject of extended vocal techniques at Cambridge University. BBC, Polish, Spanish and Macedonian Radio and TV have featured her work and interviewed her. In 2004, she was chosen for nomination in the category ofNewcomer by the BBC Radio 3 World Music Awards.

She is dedicated to her work as a private tutor in piano, voice, guitar, darbouka, composition and arrangement within the Torah-observant Jewish community of Stamford Hill, North London. She has developed a unique and highly successful method of teaching music without the use of notation - the Gorna Method, which focuses on the creative empowerment of her students. (‘She calls herself a “music facilitator” – giving the girls a magic key to enter the world of music making, which they can then develop themselves and become their own musical decision makers’ – Jewish Tribune). In 2006 and 2007 she produced two popular shows – ‘The Musical Malachim’, featuring an ensemble of her students (‘… a delight to experience’ – Jewish Tribune).

If only the 12-year old Jarmila could see herself now... At such a tender age she was able to work out how to put a few machines together to create a makeshift sound on sound tracking system. Today that dream is a reality! She built her own recording studio, where she works as a composer, songwriter, sound engineer, producer and arranger of music. Jarmila has recorded and produced her new album ‘Aspaklaria’, which was released on Jarmila Music in 2018. It was mixed by Grammy award-winning engineer Matt Lawrence, mastered by the multiple Grammy-nominee Stuart Hawkes and features collaborations with the 'Get to Know' producer Larry Holcombe and David Farren. David was not only part of the acclaimed rhythm section of legendary UK Ska band, Bad Manners, but is also an outstanding painter and illustrator. Much to her own surprise, she found herself breaking away from the wordless focus of the first album. She wanted to push beyond the luxury and safety of 'wordlessness'. In this album Jarmila is gathering the clouds into concrete form.