

Parmela Attariwala – violinist, ethnomusicologist, improviser, pedagogue

Described as “one of Canada’s most original and compelling artists”, violinist/violist **Parmela Attariwala** has been active in genre-bending music and performance since moving to Toronto in 1994. She has toured and recorded with an array of musicians that includes Carla Bley, Ravi Nairpally, James Campbell, Anthony Braxton, Ed Hanley and Quinsin Natchov. She has also collaborated extensively – as composer, musician and movement artist – with a diverse range of choreographers, including Keiko Kitano, Claudia Wittmann and Karen Kaeja. An ardent improviser and proponent of improvisational pedagogy as a tool for cross-genre musical communication, Parmela performs regularly at AIMToronto events. In addition to traditional symphonic work, she also performs contemporary music with the Esprit Orchestra, Toca Loca, New Music Concerts and the Queen of Puddings Theatre Company. Parmela finds her creative home, though, in *the Attar Project*. Conceived as a vehicle to integrate the eclectic strands of her own musical background, *the Attar Project* engages artists across musical genres and artistic practices in virtuosic collaborations that maintain the essence of each while challenging the boundaries between them. Parmela’s current collaborators include Montreal-based tabla player Shawn Mativetsky and Toronto choreographers Gitanjali Kolanad and Kelly Arnsby.

Hailing from Calgary, Parmela received her formal training at Indiana University and the Bern Conservatory in Switzerland. She holds a Masters degree in ethnomusicology from the School of Oriental and African Studies (London, UK), and is currently a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Toronto, where she is also on faculty in the jazz department. Parmela has released two critically acclaimed recordings: *Beauty Enthralled* (1997), described as “a cross-cultural handshake to set the mind spinning” (NOW magazine); and *Sapphire Skies* (2003), which features her own compositions and was called “a recording to treasure.” (Wholenote magazine) In February 2010, Parmela and Shawn Mativetsky released a new disc of commissioned Canadian works for violin and tabla (*The Road Ahead*).