

Jan Zahourek, double bass, violone and gamba player, an American, with an Italian past, a London outlook and founder of **ZAREK**, has been on a quest - in his own words: ... "to become a better musician.

Though this is obviously the quest of any musician, for me it has not been a straightforward journey. This is certainly in large part due to my terrible stubbornness that I have required an extra long time to become somewhat proficient with my tools, the instrument and the bow, and to understand how my body needs to work and respond.

The coordination of this dance has often eluded me, and still does in many ways. And although I see this fact of lifelong practice and discoveries as an exciting and rewarding path ahead, the reality of the seeming impossibility of it all does sometimes overwhelm me.

Chamber music especially makes me feel most comfortable, most stimulated, and most able to see and hear my flaws and mistakes. And because playing chamber music places so much responsibility on each musician, it is also the kind of music making which makes me the most determined to improve.

They say that the best in any field always stand on the shoulder of giants... so I called on personal friends, and friends of friends, who are certainly extraordinary giants in their fields to help me make the music videos you might want to watch.

Working with these people has challenged and enabled me to really put my thoughts about technique and sound into a context where the air is, as they say, thin. The absolute mastery of these musicians and friends has inspired me so much, that I feel like I have improved greatly. I can also see the road ahead to further improvement so much better (and it looks less rocky).

For this I am extremely grateful.

I hope to have given my friends and colleagues an unusual experience by planning unusually extensive rehearsals (a rarity under normal circumstances), where we played, laughed, and considered; and came to consensus naturally. We ate together, we drank together, and we became closer as friends in the process of creating something that I am extremely proud of.

ZAREK was named after my great uncle Emil Zahourek, who, as a dancer in Hollywood movies, became Emil Zarek... for stage name purposes. This greatly angered the rest of the family, who felt betrayed by the change in name. Nonetheless, Emil later moved heaven and earth to rescue his family from war torn Europe, and was in many other ways a remarkable and artistic human being. This project is dedicated in part to my imagination of him, and his commitment to both art and being a quality human being."

Jan Zahourek