



Diego Ortiz
Recercadas from Tratado de Glosas

Marin Marais
Suite in G from 3me livre, pieces de violes

JS Bach
Sonata No2 D Major BWV 1028
Adagio
Allegro
Andante
Allegro

Jan Zahourek gamba
&
Laurence Cummings harpsichord

Picture Egg and Spoon, Linda Mason & James Rattee
Sound / Post Tom Mungall
Producer Kirsten Fehring
Location Menier Penthouse

LAURENCE CUMMINGS

Laurence Cummings is one of Britain's most exciting and versatile exponents of historical performance both as conductor and harpsichord player. He has been Musical Director of the London Handel Festival since 1999 and Artistic Director of the Internationale Händel-Festspiele Göttingen since 2012. He is also Music Director of the Orquestra Barroca Casa da Música in Porto.

He has conducted productions for English National Opera, Opera North, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Buxton Festival Opera, Royal Academy of Music, Garsington Opera, English Touring Opera, Opera Theatre Company, Linbury Theatre Covent Garden, Göteborg Opera, Opernhaus Zurich, Opéra de Lyon, and Handel and Haydn Society.

He regularly conducts The English Concert and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and has worked with the Hallé, Bournemouth Symphony, Britten Sinfonia, Royal Northern Sinfonia, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, Ulster Orchestra, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Royal Academy of Music Baroque Orchestra, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, Kansas City Symphony, Wiener Akademie, National Symphony Orchestra (Washington), Zurich Chamber Orchestra, Jerusalem Symphony, Basel Chamber Orchestra, Musikkollegium Winterthur, and Moscow Chamber Orchestra.

His numerous recordings include the first recording of Handel's newly discovered Gloria with Emma Kirkby, and Handel Arias with Angelika Kirchschlager and the Basel Chamber Orchestra for Sony BMG.

JAN ZAHOUREK

Jan is the founder of ZAREK and a double bass, gamba and violone player, now based in London but originally from US, via Italy where he was a long standing member of the chamber group Ensemble Musagete. After his move to London he added a Masters Degree in viola da gamba at Trinity College of Music, and started playing with orchestras and ensembles such as the Philharmonia, the Orchestra of the Age of

Enlightenment, Le Cercle de l'Harmonie and Solomon's Knot; focusing often, but not exclusively, on performance practice in the renaissance, baroque and the classical period, and finding insight through that focus into works by Bartok, Dvorak, Mahler, Prokofiev, Stravinsky, Tchaikovsky and other pillars of the modern repertoire.

All was fairly clear sailing until the COVID pandemic... now, reevaluating, Jan resolved to create some of his own opportunities. And with some very generous funding decided to revisit his beloved chamber music by putting together various projects involving the different instruments in his "arsenal" with the collaboration of fantastic colleagues. And so the idea of ZAREK was born.

www.janzahourek.com

ZAREK

Zarek aims to capture and bring to the fore the joy and musical exchange amongst the artists, in this case the particular thrill of chamber music. The potential of new and evolving performance spaces is huge and we embrace it wholeheartedly.

We cherish the rehearsal as much as the concert, connecting with the music, each other, the audience, places, people and ideas - through innovative ways in amazing spaces - in London and beyond, on stage and on film. **www.zarek.co.uk**

This concert is the second in our **CITYSCAPES** series of recordings to be shown on OnJam, and later available via the Zarek website, and on the usual streaming platforms. For release dates and more info check our website and / or join our mailings for updates (link on our website).

Still to be released in our **CITYSCAPES Series**

Serge Prokofiev

Quintet G Minor op.39

for oboe, clarinet, violin, viola and doublebass

Salvatore Macchia

Fantasia Supra Santa Maria Amar

Trio for clarinet, violin and doublebass

with **John Roberts** (oboe), **Benjamin Mellefont** (clarinet),

Jonathan Stone (violin), **Nicholas Bootiman** (viola),

Jan Zahourek, (doublebass)

at St John the Evangelist Church, Upper Norwood, London

We recently premiered

Dvorak's String Quintet No 2 Op. 77

with the

Consone Quartet and Jan Zahourek

on OnJam. If you missed it, don't worry, we will make it available via
our website soon

PROGRAMME NOTES

The experience of playing the doublebass is hard to imagine for anyone who has never tried it. Already the understanding of what it means to fill the “bass” role in an ensemble is less than intuitive for most casual music lovers. Harmonic underpinning and rhythmic drive are two common features... the chords giving harmonic structure to the music that is happening struggle to be perceptible without a clear bass. This bass can be fulfilled by any instrument, as long as it is the lowest. So, even a violin can play bass, if the rest of the ensemble playing in that passage are high

instruments. In a vocal choir the bass register is the lowest of the voices. Instrumentally this range is covered by the cello, or the bassoon, or any other instrument that can play at that pitch. The doublebass, however, is most frequently used an octave below that. On its own, this sound is odd, but in the context of the whole orchestration, the double bass adds an immense depth and colour to the sound. This is a big part of the ecstasy of being a double bass player.

The spiritual difficulty of being a double bass player is in being alienated almost entirely from the realm of melody. The sound of song that draws all of us musicians to our profession, at least partly, is perennially out of reach, or at least seems so. (There are some double bass players who excel at melody, but they are the exception to the rule) Almost all of us, once we notice the lack, strive in one or another to reach that sonic sphere where song lies easy in our imagination. For some it is listening to recordings, to others it is singing, and for some it is taking up a different instrument part of the time. For me it was this last.

One day I met my friend Paolo Zuccheri in Bassano del Grappa, at the feet of the Italian Alps. He placed a viola da gamba in my hands, and showed me how to hold the bow, and how to hold the instrument (it does not have a spike). The viola da gamba has frets and, as I had played guitar in my teens, it felt very familiar. The tuning system is also very similar to the guitar (and the double bass). Then my friend explained to me how much repertoire there is for this instrument, and how beautiful. The viola da gamba was an extremely important instrument for centuries until it died out in the late 18th, early 19th century. It was an instrument of the nobility, as compared to its cousin the violin, which was an instrument of the tavern and the square. However, as nobility was displaced by modern democratic views, the viola da gamba was displaced by its louder, more astounding violin cousins; who were filling large concert halls with their brilliant sound.

Nonetheless, the viola da gamba and its repertoire hold a unique appeal to this day. In this video you can hear music written for it in the mid 1500's by Spanish composer Diego Ortiz. These pieces are supposed to be examples of improvisation, from his book on the art of improvisation *El Tratado de Glosas*. "Recercada" translates as *ricercar*, or *fantasy*. To me

they are introspective pieces, and the sonority of days long past is very strong. The second major offering is a suite of dances by Marin Marais. There are books and books of music in this French baroque vein. Extravagant and filigreed, these pieces are often short and structurally simple, but the melody is inventive and compelling. Finally, Bach; this sonata is one of the works I was so desperate to play that I chose to perform it on the double bass as part of my final university recital before leaving the United States in 2000. I loved playing it then, though the experience was a pale shadow to playing it with the proper instrument, at the proper octave. This is what I mean about being a double bass player... for some of us it takes another instrument to feel like we can really sing.

I met **Laurence Cummings** about 15 years ago on a trip to Croatia to play Pergolesi's Stabat Mater. His stature in the musical community was intimidating, but he was so friendly and open that I felt instantly at my ease, though I was simultaneously aware of his incredible skill and musical insight. Over the years our paths crossed now and again, and there grew to be an affinity... possibly because Laurence is also a doublebass player, albeit primarily for fun. When I approached him for this project it was imagining that he would be too busy, but I wanted to ask, because if you don't ask.... To my delight he said yes, and what followed was a number of days rehearsing, passing my conclusions through the expert filter of his musicality. One important aspect of Laurence's work is in preparing opera singers. I felt like I had a taste of what that experience would be like, even as we also spent much of the time finding our feet in the repertoire in the same way that I have rehearsed in jazz ensembles... feeling our way mostly wordlessly to consensus. (JAN ZAHOUREK March 2022)

BEHIND THE SCENE

When Jan called to see if I was up to joining him in his quest to make music in lockdown happen, plan for future concerts, get together with other musicians, I of course said 'hell, yes!! Let's!'

So we set out to research and plan to see what was possible. From early spring 2021 musicians were able to get together for rehearsal and recording sessions. Jan put together a list of repertoire he had always wanted to play. His colleagues were able and keen to devote more time

than usual to rehearsing and digging deep. We also wanted to make London another focal point of this, ZAREK's first concert series and as many buildings stood empty still, we filled a furniture showroom, a church, a theatre and an empty apartment with a view with life and lots of music. We are so grateful for all the generous support we received from everyone involved. The enthusiasm, goodwill, flexibility and assistance we experienced was just amazing.

Showcasing an exciting repertoire, some amazing musicianship and London was the aim, we hope you will enjoy the result as much as we loved the process. (KIRSTEN FEHRING January 2022)