



## VERNER COLLEGIUM

The Verner Collegium is a professional chamber ensemble comprising members of one of Prague's renowned musical families, the Verner family, whose musical roots can be traced back to the nineteenth century.

The talent of past generations comes down to us in the family's most senior member, the outstanding oboist and teacher Pavel Verner. As Pavel's children themselves launched their own musical careers, the family's domestic music-making activities naturally and logically evolved into the top-standard professional performances that are given by the ensemble today. Above all critics praise the group's tone quality and expressive spontaneity, as well as a stylistic unity that is the result of years of working together and of a high degree of talent.

All the ensemble's members play a significant role in the musical life of Prague. The group is particularly interesting in terms of the versatility of the instrumental combinations it offers. Most of its players are able to play on more than one instrument, which makes for an exceptionally varied palette of possible colours and timbres: oboe, cor anglais, violins, violas, violoncello, double bass, bassoon, recorders, organ, harpsichord, trumpet, flugelhorn, Baroque trumpet and percussion. This broad range of instruments facilitates performance in larger groups (sextet, septet or octet) as well as in smaller chamber combinations (trio, quartet and quintet). The ensemble also works occasionally with vocal soloists Ludmila and Jan Verner.

The Verner Collegium not only performs within Prague and the Czech Republic but also makes appearances abroad. In April 2006 the ensemble undertook a highly successful concert tour to Spain and Germany in sextet combination, and its subsequent activities during that year included a performance to launch the Antonín Dvořák Festival in the composer's birthplace of Nelahozeves in May and a performance at the Musica ecumenica festival in Prague in June. This year (2007) the Verner Collegium appears in full, octet forces in concerts in Germany.

## Verner Collegium members:

Oboist **Pavel Verner** (\*1934), artistic director of the Verner Collegium chamber ensemble, is indisputably one of the cornerstones of the renowned Czech school of woodwind playing. An exceptional musical intelligence and imagination, a highly individual instrumental tone, and an immense artistic integrity matched with an inexhaustible personal vitality have enabled him to remain a leading virtuoso on his instrument for over half a century to date. In 1959, shortly after his graduation from the Prague Conservatory, he was awarded first prize in the oboe competition of the Prague Spring international music festival. Destined primarily for a career in the position of first oboist, he first spent two years as a member of the Czechoslovak Radio Symphony Orchestra and, simultaneously with that, five years with the Prague Chamber Orchestra. There then followed a thirty-eight-year period as principal oboist with the Prague Symphony Orchestra (FOK). In addition Pavel Verner has consistently pursued his career in solo and chamber performance, appearing with the Philharmonic Quintet, the Prague Philharmonia, the Sebastian Orchestra, the ensemble Ars rediviva and, in particular, Musica da camera Praga. His musical activities also include a twenty-year period of teaching at the Prague Conservatory, and he has sat on adjudication panels at a number of international performance competitions (Bayreuth, Concertino Praga). Pavel Verner has made a large number of solo and chamber recordings for radio, television and various recording companies.



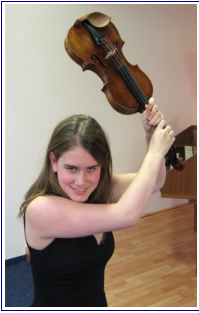
Violinist, violist and conductor **Petr Verner** (\*1963), son of Pavel Verner, began his viola studies with outstanding Czech viola soloist Jan Pěruška. He was then a pupil of Jiří Zíka at the Prague Conservatory, graduating from that school in 1986 to continue his studies with Milan Škampa, Lubomír Malý and Jan Pěruška at the same city's AcaQuartet demy of Music (1986-1991). From here it was primarily the celebrated Czech violinist and conductor Josef Vlach who was to have a fundamental influence on his career. Petr Verner participated in international chamber music courses under the guidance of F. Beyer, C. Poppen and E. Feltz in Germany, and with the Melos in Switzerland. In 1985 he became Principal Viola with the Czech Chamber Orchestra and a member of the Vlach Quartet of Prague, with whom he appeared until 2005. With the latter ensemble he gave concerts in the USA, Japan, New Zealand and most countries within Europe. He is currently a member of the Verner Collegium, the New Pražák Quartet and the Gabriela Demeterová Collegium, and principal conductor of the BKO. In 2006 he entered into a regular conducting partnership with the prestigious Roxy Ensemble chamber orchestra, whom he has directed in works by Mozart, Tchaikovsky, Haydn, Schönberg and Marko Ivanović to date. He has made solo appearances with a number of orchestras including the Prague Chamber Orchestra, the Jenaer Philharmonie, the Czech Chamber Orchestra, the South Bohemian Philharmonia and the Talich Chamber Orchestra. His discography comprises forty CD recordings covering a wide range of chamber and solo repertoire from all periods in music history.



Bassoonist **Michael Verner** (\*1960), eldest son of oboist Pavel Verner, studied at the Prague Conservatory and then at the same city's Academy of Music under František Herman, in 1983 becoming a member of what is now the Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra. Since 1993 he has taught at the Prague Conservatory. For more than ten years he appeared with the ensemble Symposium Musicum, directed by Miloslav Klement, as a player of historic wind instruments, in which area of music he continues to work today with the ensemble Rožmberská kapela. Michael Verner has recorded several dozen solo and chamber works for Czech Radio and appears on CD recordings for a number of labels including Supraphon, Panton, Arta Records, Bohemia Music and Studio Matouš. He is a regular member of the Verner Collegium 'family' ensemble, participating in a variety of projects including recordings as well as concerts both at home and abroad.



Violinist **Julie Vernerová** (\*1988), daughter of Petr and Radka Verner and granddaughter of the oboist Pavel Verner, has participated in the playing of chamber music since a tender age and was a member of the Prague Youth Orchestra for a number of years. She is currently a pupil at the prestigious Jan Kepler Grammar School in Prague, studying violin with Ludmila Štětinová, renowned teacher at the Prague Conservatory. She has been a member of the Verner Collegium since 2005 and has already successfully accompanied the ensemble on tours to Spain and Germany. Thus the Collegium gains not only a third-generation representative from among the ranks of this musical family but also, and primarily, a capable and spontaneous violinist. Julie is also a member of the managerial team of the Roxy Ensemble chamber orchestra.



Violinist and violist **Radka Vernerová** (\*1964), wife of Petr Verner, studied violin with Miloš Macháček at the Plzeň (Pilsen) Conservatory, continuing her studies with the celebrated teacher Nora Grumlíková in Prague. Following graduation she participated successfully in auditions to the Prague Chamber Opera. She is currently teacher and deputy head at the Lounských Music School in Prague and is a violin-playing member of the Atlantis chamber orchestra. Besides playing both violin and viola with the Verner Collegium, she is also the ensemble's chief organizer and archivist. She is currently studying management at the Charles University in Prague.



Cellist **Pavel Verner jr.** (\*1963), nephew of the oboist Pavel Verner, was a pupil of Pravoslav Sádlo at the Prague Conservatory, continuing his studies at the Academy of Music under Alexandr Večtomov and Stanislav Apolín. From 1988 he was a member of the Eberle Quartet, which in 1989 gained a prize for its performance of Leoš Janáček's *String Quartet no. 1* at the string quartet competition in Evian. He has been principal cellist with the State Opera in Prague and a member of the Czech Philharmonic. Since 1993 he has been a member of the Apollon Quartet, which performs jazz as well as works from the classical repertoire. Pavel Verner is also director of the St. Thomas's Choir in Prague, with whom he has already made three successful CD recordings.



Following a musical upbringing at home, double bassist **Lukáš Verner** (\*1970), son of the singer Jan Verner (sr.), began his double bass studies with Jan Balcar, continuing under Václav Fuka at the Prague Conservatory between 1983 and 1990. He completed his studies at the Prague Academy of Music under the guidance of Radomír Žalud. In 1991-93 he was a member of the State Opera, and since 1993 he has been section co-principal with the Prague Symphony Orchestra (FOK). He is much sought-after as a performer of chamber music and is a member of the Czech Collegium ensemble, also appearing frequently with the Prague Chamber Orchestra and the Prague Philharmonia as well as with other ensembles and orchestras.



Trumpeter **Jan Verner** (\*1964), nephew of the oboist Pavel Verner and younger brother of cellist Pavel Verner, studied his instrument with Josef Svejkský at the Prague Conservatory and in 1984 was winner of the Conservatories' Competition in Teplice. He gives concerts in a number of European countries (Spain, Italy, Germany, France) and has also appeared in Japan. He is currently principal trumpeter with the Music of the Prague Castle Guard, representing the President of the Czech Republic on state ceremonial occasions. He also records for Czech Radio and television. Besides being a member of the Verner Collegium he also appears as soloist – most frequently with fine Czech organist Vladimír Roubal – and participates in services of worship at the church of the Assumption in Strahov, Prague, and at the cathedral of St Vitus at Prague Castle.



Her musical versatility and uniquely pure and bright voice make soprano **Ludmila Vernerová**



– niece of Pavel Verner – one of her country's leading and most sought-after performers. “Ludmila Vernerová is a highly musical singer with an exquisite and deeply impressive virtuosic technique. Her abilities particularly as regards vocal ornamentation are truly outstanding,” conductor Helmut Rilling has written of her (February 2002).

Following her graduation from the Academy of Music in Prague (1986) Ludmila Vernerová made her debut at Prague Chamber Opera and was then accepted by the city's National Theatre opera studio. There followed participation in singing masterclasses with Jiří Kotouč, Edith Wiens and Luisa Bosabalán, and from 1981 she was invited regularly to take part in the Bach Academy in Stuttgart under the direction of Helmut Rilling. In the 1988-89 season she made guest appearances at the State Opera in Prague, accepting a permanent position there in the following year. She continues to make regular and highly successful appearances with that company in a wide variety of roles: Michaela in Bizet's *Carmen*, Rosina in Rossini's *Barber of Seville*, Musetta in Puccini's *La Bohème*, Hero in Berlioz's *Beatrice et Bénédict*, Isabelle in Meyerbeer's *Robert le Diable*, Fiordiligi in Mozart's *Così fan tutte*, Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*, Pamina in *The Magic Flute*, Angelica in Vivaldi's *Orlando furioso*, the first Wood Sprite in Dvořák's *Rusalka* and Liu in Puccini's *Turandot*. Her engagements also include appearances in Opera Mozart's seasonal summer performances at the Estates Theatre in Prague. Works of sacred music in period performance also feature significantly in Ludmila Vernerová's repertoire. She has made more than forty CD recordings of oratorio works of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries for the Supraphon, Bonton, Lupulus, Discovery and Orfeo labels. She has performed in most European countries and appeared repeatedly in Japan (as Pamina), the USA (Donna Anna) and Canada. She works with a large number of Czech and foreign orchestras (including the Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Prague Chamber Orchestra and the Virtuosi di Praga) and conductors (among them Rilling, Dohnányi, Neumann, Delogu, Albrecht and Gönnerwein). She is a member of the chamber ensembles Trio cantabile (with flute and harp) and Collegium flauto dolce and makes frequent guest appearances with a large number of other groups.

Singer **Jan Verner**, younger brother of oboist Pavel Verner, studied with Zdeněk Jankovský at the



State Conservatory in Prague. His field of performance is as vocal soloist in oratorios and cantatas of the Renaissance and Baroque eras. He has made appearances with numerous orchestras and ensembles including Ars rediviva, Musica da camera Praga, the Prague Baroque Soloists, the Prague and Czech Madrigalists, the Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Karlovy Vary (Carlsbad) Symphony Orchestra, the Janáček Philharmonia of Ostrava, the Luxembourg Chamber Orchestra and the Leningrad Philharmonia. In the field of sacred church music he has spent a total of twenty-five years with Cantores Pragenses and for more than ten years has been putting his talents and experience to use in his work with the ensemble Collegium Strahoviensis. Jan Verner, whose repertoire also comprises song, has made solo appearances not only in his home country but also in Italy, Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg, France and the USA.

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