

SLEPÁ KOLEJ – HISTORY

Slepá kolej was formed in November of 1994. After they had completed compulsory military service, the guitarists Jirka Seifert and Honza Růžek together with a singer Iva Valečková renewed their original band and were looking for new musicians. As the first one they approached a congist Vláďa Dušek, then Hanuš Klůs, a bass guitarist, and Gábina Hrubá, a violinist, answered their ad.

Thanks to joining of Hanuš Klůs, whose big beat band Karolina of that time took a so called „artistic” time out, the pure folk orientation of the band began to diverge of the style.

The first public performance was a concert in the Theatre Dialog situated in Měšťanská Beseda in Plzeň on December 15, 1994. The band already presented itself with ten author songs by Honza Růžek, Jirka Seifert and Hanuš Klůs.

At the beginning of 1995 the singer Iva Valečková left and was replaced by Julie Štroblová, who replied an ad. At that time Julie was a student of the conservatory in Pilsen. The repertoire of Slepá kolej began to extend successfully. The band started to visit various festivals, play in concerts, and among others participated in a regional round of Porta in Rokycany. Here Jarda Studený took notice of the band and invited them to his, at that time prestigious, festival Sokolovský dostavník, which took place in the fall of 1995. The band took part in the preliminary round of the competition. They easily qualified in the main program. The band became a regular guest in the next years.

During the year 1995 the violinist Gábina Hrubá announced leaving and after several changes Bětka Hladečková, who occasionally cooperated with the band, became a permanent member of Slepá kolej.

In the spring 1996 Slepá kolej recorded five songs for the Czech Radio in the studio in Pilsen. In the effort to support rhythmic they invited the drummer Míra Kočí as a guest. The members of the band liked the resultant sound so much that after a mutual agreement Vláďa Dušek left and congas were replaced by an automatic drummer – unusual for this style of music. The year of 1996 was the wedding one for Hanuš Klůs and his son Tomáš was born soon.

In this line-up the band worked until 1998. Slepá kolej regularly played in concerts, participated in many festivals (Porta – the national finals '96 and '98, Zahrada '98, Sušické folkové léto, Loketský kotlík, Sokolovský dostavník, Struny na ulici in Pilsen, Žlutická struna, Rýzmborský hradní guláš, ...), and recorded a demo cassette „Nahé zdi” in the studio Jumbo in Týmákov belonging to J. S. Lenk (March 1997) as well as three other songs for the Czech Radio Pilsen (April 1998). Since 1997 the band had been cooperating with Jaromír Komorous, who became an author of the most of the lyrics. Music was exclusively composed by Hanuš Klůs.

At the end of 1998 the violinist Bětka Hladečková left the band. She was replaced by keyboards played by the singer Julie Štroblová. The band started to cooperate occasionally with the drummer Míra Kočí and the violinist Helena Parisová.

In January of 1999 Míra Kočí became a permanent member of Slepá kolej. In April the band took part in the competition Konkurs Zahrada and earned participation in the national final and inclusion of two songs in the live record „Konkurs Zahrada '99”. The band also won through to the national final of Porta again. Late in July a part of Slepá kolej went on an unforgettable trip to Italy as a reward for the achieved success. In September the singer Julie Štroblová got married and became Julie Pondělíková. In October and November the band returned to work and in the studio PyHa recorded a profile CD „Album”, which, among others, included five new songs on which a supervision of the studio owner and experienced musician Přemek Haas

was apparent. He also participated in recording some instruments. A solo guitar in one of the songs was recorded by another experienced musician Míša Röhrich. After the studio experience the sound of Slepá kolej became more straightforward and guitar-like stressing rhythmic and melody pattern.

Besides the regular live performances in the year of 2000 the band was preparing a recording of the first official CD. It took place between September 18 and 29 in the studio Avik in cooperation with Přemek Haas again. Sound and musical direction was provided by Pavel Brom. The CD's title is „Dlouhé noci“. Slepá kolej invited the following guests to cooperate on the CD: Vladka Haasová, Michal Röhrich, Pavel Egermaier and Pavel Brom.

After the year 2000 the band abandoned various competition festivals and started rather to concentrate on their own concerts in clubs and performances on bigger stages such as Majáles, Oslavy osvobození, Struny na ulici because of quite complicated sounding and preparation before a performance. The band held onto the festival such as Sokolovský dostavník thanks to the people they were meeting at these actions in the course of years.

At the turn of the years 2001 and 2002 Slepá kolej recorded the second official CD „Noemi“, this time at the studio PyHa belonging to Přemek Haas, who also contributed as an author. During the year 2002 a CD „Bonusovky 1994-2002“ was made. It was also a wedding year - Honza Růžek as well as Jirka Seifert got married.

In the years 2003-2004 besides the regular concerts the band had to face with an increasing lack of time of the singer Julie Pondělíková, which resulted in her leaving in the fall of 2004. In spite of that Slepá kolej managed to perform at several unforgettable events such as performance at Bolek Polívka's farm or a concert at the castle Helfenburk. In the same year Míra Kočí got married. A farewell party for Julie „Veverka“ Pondělíková took place in Pilsen in Divadélko JoNáš in Měšťanská Beseda in November of 2004. Divadélko JoNáš is a modernized stage of the former Theatre Dialog, where Slepá kolej performed in public for the first time.

At the occasion of the end of one long period in the band's life in September 2004 Slepá kolej released a commemorative album „Letňák“, which was a profile of the band's works for the ten-year existing. It also contained four new songs still with Julie Pondělíková.

Searching for a new singer for Slepá kolej can be described with a part of an interview with Hanuš Klůs:

„When, after ten years, our singer Julie „Veverka“ Pondělíková left us and moved to Prague we started to look for a new one immediately. But we weren't very successful. Suddenly we found out we were rather solving it in the pub drinking beer and actually we were not playing at all. Therefore we decided to perform without a girl-singer in order to do at least something. I have known our new singer Julie Těťálová since she was a child. When I used to take part in judgment panels in various children competitions, which she used to participate in and always won, I always thought I would like to have her in my band. When I had found out she had grown already, I asked her Mom whether she would let her to perform with us. It works so far.“

Since 2005 Slepá kolej has been performing in the following line-up: Hanuš Klůs, Julie Těťálová, Jirka Seifert, Honza Růžek, and Míra Kočí. The band recorded the CD „Slepá kolej 2005“ that contains four songs representing the new sound of the band. Míra Kočí became a sole lyrics writer and Hanuš Klůs still writes music.

In 2005 se Slepá kolej became larger by Honza Růžek's son Ondřej, at the beginning of 2006 by Jirka Seifert's daughter Barbora and in the middle of 2007 by Honza Růžek's daughter Adéla. During these years the band settled in this new line-up and concentrated mostly on the concerts in clubs.

In 2008 the own official website of the band was established - www.slepakolej.cz; the web pages are regularly updated and show the life and work of the band. In this year the band performed not only in clubs but also participated in several open air events such as Liberation Festival or The night for the monastery in Chotěšov. During the year we came to an idea to record a maxi-single with three new songs which was realized in the studio ExAvik in October. The new CD "Slepá kolej 2008" was christened at the annual concert in December.

In the beginning of 2009 we were quite passive as for public performances. The band concentrated on the work at rehearsals. In April the band welcomed a new member - Míra Kočí's son Ondřej was born. The singer Julie Těšlová successfully passed school-leaving exams and then also university entrance exams. In September Slepá kolej was forced to leave the rehearsal studio (as well as the nearby "club" U Kostečků) where it prepared for concerts for 13 years which meant searching for new space for rehearsing. As a consequence the band was also forced to renew completely the own loudspeaker system therefore it is able to install a sound system for club performances on its own. In November the annual concert on the occasion of 15 years of the band existence was held. The former singer Julie "Veverka" Štroblová appeared as a guest at this concert. On the occasion of the 15th anniversary of the existence of Slepá kolej we also published a summary Songbook that contains 58 songs from the years 1994-2009.