



**2005 INTERNATIONAL TRUMPET GUILD® CONFERENCE**  
**GRAND HOTEL BANGKOK, BANGKOK, THAILAND**  
**TUESDAY – FRIDAY, JUNE 21 – 24, 2005**

**Thursday, June 23**

**8:00 - PERFORMANCE/LECTURE: Douglas Hedwig**

**“The Posthorn and Mail-Trumpet in Art Music of the 18th and 19th centuries”**

**with Sandra Arndt, piano**

**Grand Hotel Grand Ballroom**

Neville Young, reporter

Special delivery: Dr Doug Hedwig forced open the rusted mailbox of this sleepy, early-morning audience's attention, and delivered a bumper package of fascinating sounds and facts straight onto the breakfast table of our awareness.



Stamped with the authority of Hedwig's extensive research in this field, the lecture-recital's central point was to demonstrate how the utilitarian, non-artistic usage of trumpet-like instruments for postal and coaching communications has spread into art music. Hedwig was at pains to point out what a common sound the posthorn would have been at one time: parts of Western Europe during earlier centuries must have positively *rung* to the sound of these instruments as they announced arrivals and departures and warned of the coach's passage. Something like a horn or bugle is still the badge of many postal services,

and appears on the stamps of more than 100 countries, a distinctive symbol of governmental communication and (we trust) efficiency.

The sound of post- and coach-horns, bugles, and signal trumpets were a regular and welcome part of people's everyday lives in the 18th and 19th centuries throughout much of the western world. The calls and music that were performed on these instruments may well be described as one of the earliest forms of “wireless” communication. Although military calls are today the most familiar and most often heard type of signals, far more familiar to the average person in earlier times were the calls and tunes associated with passenger and mail coach transportation, as well as civic ceremonies. The importance and prevalence of these instruments and the music they produced was such that many composers of “art” music have been inspired to utilize, borrow, or adapt such calls and signals within their compositions. The program today will seek to illustrate the extensive influence of such calls by performing works by major and minor composers of the 18th and 19th centuries who were inspired by these instruments; both serious and “light classical,” in style. Also included will be a variety of original calls and short pieces, selected to demonstrate the wide musical variety that such instruments are capable of producing.

Sinfonia alla Posta in Eb Major - Johann Friedrich Grenser (1758-1795)  
 II. Alla polacca  
 I. Allegro

Serenade in D Major, K. 320, “Posthorn” - Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)  
 VI. Menuetto – Trio II

Cantata, St. Rupert (1778) - Johann Michael Haydn (1737-1806)  
 Marcia in A Major, with Posthorn

Symphony in A Major, P. 15 - Johann Michael Haydn (1737-1806)  
 III. Menuetto

Notturmo, Op. 34 - Louis Spohr (1784-1859)  
 Polacca

German Dance, No. 12, WoO8 - Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)  
 Coda

Die Post, from “Winterreise,” Op. 89 - Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

Die Post im Wald, Op. 12 - Heinrich Schaeffer

Plus, various original posthorn calls, signals, and songs

Hedwig's format for the talk was to introduce each selection and the instrument on which he would play it, and then, crucially, to play just the horn call on which the "art music" was based, before performing the actual piece. This gave us a good opportunity to concentrate on the horn call and its role in the composed music, and perhaps even, if it is not too fanciful, to imagine the transition in the recital – from the solo call to the accompanied piece – as a microcosm of the transition from the purely functional to the service of art.



(unaccompanied) of the period;  
to be announced.

Performed on "natural" posthorns in A, C, F, and Eb, and  
"valved" posthorn in Bb

All piano transcriptions and arrangements by Douglas Hedwig,  
unless otherwise indicated.

In the earlier history of these instruments they were shorter, and hence restricted to calls spanning no more than an octave, with only the fifth in the middle to add interest. Hedwig's first musical example illustrated this vividly, with two movements from a *Sinfonia alla Posta* by the German-Swedish composer Johann Friedrich Grenser where the composer restricted himself to this older usage.

As instruments became longer and the players developed their range, so the posthorn calls could become more interesting and varied, and we heard this as the programme progressed through works by Mozart and Michael Haydn. The Mozart K320 Serenade – probably the best-known work in this recital – was here heard, unusually, on the correct instrument, a posthorn in A. Hedwig pointed out that the call used is one for departure, a reference that would have not been lost on the audience for this piece, written for a university graduation in Vienna: a metaphor for the students departing the university and embarking on another stage of their life's journey.

Later in the recital we progressed yet further, as the longer instruments then went on to acquire one or two vent holes, and then, eventually, valves. It's difficult to believe now but at one time all postal carriers in parts of the German-speaking world were required to play these horns, and play them well. Hedwig made the point that the hornists, by the end of this period, were actually putting something back in, and acting in effect as a cultural service by playing folk and popular melodies, in a deliberate effort by their employers to enrich people's lives – the wheel, if you like, having come full circle. By the end we were hearing the rich romantic harmonies of Beethoven, Spohr, and Schaeffer as Hedwig continued to illustrate the crossover between the post horn and art music and the important symbolism in this relationship. It was a real treat to hear the Schubert Lied *Die Post* played on the fully chromatic valved posthorn, in Hedwig's own arrangement: a truly dramatic performance in which the vocal role – a young woman yearning for a letter from her love – was taken over by the horn and, continuing the idea of role reversal and evolution, the original horn call was heard only in the piano part. We left the recital with lots of new ideas about how these relationships developed, and with the warm sound of Dr Hedwig's posthorn still ringing gently round the Grand Ballroom, echoing what the presenter aptly called the "wireless network" of former times.