

A BUSINESS CORRESPONDENCE FROM JOHANN WILHELM HAAS IN THE YEAR 1719¹

Herbert Heyde

Translated by Richard Seraphinoff and Viola Roth

It is well known that during the 16th to 18th centuries even small principalities retained court trumpeters for purposes of regal display. As their instruments became worn out with time and needed to be replaced, it was the custom in Germany to entrust this task to the head trumpeter or one of the court purveyors, whose main duty it was to obtain all items required by the court, ranging from household wares to materials of war.

In small courts many trumpeters were also court purveyors, as was the case at the beginning of the 18th century at the court of Schwarzburg-Rudolstadt. In 1719 an order came from the court in Rudolstadt concerning the procurement of new trumpets from J. W. Haas in Nuremberg, of which an account appears in this article. The court of Schwarzburg-Rudolstadt existed, incidentally, until 1919, when it was absorbed into the German Bundesland of Thüringen after the land redistribution resulting from the first World War.

In 1719 the court- and field-trumpeter and court purveyor, Andreas Böhm was entrusted by his lord, Prince Friedrich Anton von Schwarzburg-Rudolstadt, with the task of procuring four silver trumpets.² The four silver instruments which had been in use until this date had become unplayable, and were to be given over as partial payment for the new ones. According to a document of 1716, Böhm was also placed in charge of maintenance of the trumpet banners and wrappings.³ He shipped the case with the four old trumpets to C. S. Dresde, a business agent in Nuremberg (shipping charge: 1 Reichstaler). Dresde took care of the business details in Nuremberg, including delivery of the four old instruments and the commission to the 70-year-old J. W. Haas, who received them on July 10, 1719. Haas inspected the instruments and found that two of them could be repaired. This however was not done because the repaired trumpets would not have matched the two new ones in appearance, for the following reasons: 1) The princely coat of arms was situated on the bell garland of the old instruments, in the location where Haas's maker's mark was usually placed on new instruments. On the new trumpets, therefore, the coat of arms would have to be engraved above the garland, on the bell itself; 2) the cast angels' heads and knob would be of a different form; 3) in order to ensure that all the instruments played at the same pitch level, new crooks would have to be made, as the old ones were worn out. The repairs, including gilding and the manufacture of new crooks, were estimated by Haas at a cost of 40 florins. The old trumpets were also decorated with angels' heads, though of a different form, and were

probably also of Nuremberg make.

After Haas had calculated the estimate for the work, he sent the following letter to Rudolstadt, addressed to Böhm, written in a German influenced by the Franconian dialect. To judge from the handwriting, the letter, as well as the invoice which will be discussed later, were probably not written by Johann Wilhelm Haas personally, but more likely by his son Wolf Wilhelm, who took over the operation of the workshop two years later, in 1721.

Nuremberg, 12 July 1719

Most Noble Sir, refined and right honored Lord, etc.

I have received your honorable communication, together with the four old silver trumpets on the 10th of this month, and after examining each and all, have found that two of them could be restored, so that they would look somewhat like the new ones. However, because the coat of arms cannot be engraved in the place where the hare now stands, these two would not look exactly like the two new instruments, on which the coat of arms will be engraved behind the garland, where the princely coat of arms is now placed. Moreover, the knobs and angels' heads on the garlands will be differently formed. Also, on the crook of one of the trumpets, where the label is situated, a piece* needs to be made. This same crook is open [at the seam], which was reason enough that it did not play in tune, and a new crook will have to be made. The cost, including the new crook, gilding, and decorations,** would come to 40 Florins. In this case the four instruments would not match, and two of them could not have the coat of arms on their garlands.

If it would please His Royal Highness, the making of two more new ones would not be particularly more expensive, as [the instruments which were sent] are [all] quite old, and then His Royal Highness could have four trumpets made so that they match in appearance and in tuning, but this decision rests with His Highness. I have now weighed the two old trumpets for melting. They weigh, according to the Nuremberg scale: 9 Mark, - Lot, 1 Quent, 1 Denar. After this [metal] was cleaned and purified, there was remaining 8 mark 15 Lot, 1 Quent, - Denar. Mr. Offerdick was present as the official [from the Inspection Office] and has given me the results of the weighing.

As to the princely coat of arms, I shall observe the prescribed proportions, and, due to the maker's charge, cannot deduct anything from the price, which is the amount I have always received for this, but will do work of such quality that it will do honor to your royal highness. Now I will take them [the trumpets] directly into hand and will soon have them finished.

In anticipation of a prompt reply, I remain, with cordial greetings, my honorable Lord's obedient servant,

Johann Wilhelm Haab
Trumpet, Trombone and Waldhornmaker

Translator's notes:

*[Haas uses the word "aufsezl." ("Aufsatzstück") here, which could mean "tuning bit" or any other applied piece, such as a ring or ferulle].

**[The word "auszubuzen" ("auszuputzen") is used in the original, which could be taken to mean either "to clean" (polish) or "to decorate." It is more likely that Haas refers to the cast decorations which he had to pay to have made elsewhere, rather than cleaning the instrument, which he would have done himself].

After conferring with Dresde, Haas had the old instruments melted, and informed him that this had been accomplished on July 19, 1719. On the same day Dresde wrote the following to Andreas Böhm in Rudolstadt:

Sir, my most esteemed Patron,

This letter, in response to your worthy communication of the 23rd [June?], shall serve to inform you that Mr. Haas has melted down all four of the old trumpets and will use the material in the making of four new ones. As to the cost, I was not able to come to an agreement with him for less than 14 florins per instrument, which, considering the work that he has promised to do, is not too much. There are others here who work for less, and offer to make instruments for 13 and 13 florins each; however, one would not want to have their work. But, as Mr. Haas is the best and most highly regarded, and makes the most beautiful merchandise, the extra half Florin can be overlooked, and I trust that our most gracious sovereign will not be opposed to this decision....

Sir, my Most Esteemed Patron,
your very humble servant,
C. S. Dresde

Dresde had apparently obtained estimates from other trumpet makers. We can be confident in Dresde's judgment that at that time J. W. Haas had the reputation of being the best and most respected trumpet maker in Nuremberg.⁴ His contemporaries, would have included J. L. Ehe II, Friedrich Ehe, Wolf Magnus Ehe I, M. Hainlein, J. C. Kodisch,

J. Schmied, and G. F. Steinmetz.

The making of the four trumpets extended through the remainder of the summer, and finally, on the 16th of September, Haas was able to inform the Rudolstadt Court Trumpeter Böhm that the instruments were finished, and prepared an invoice.

Nuremberg September 16, 1719

Most Noble Sir, Refined and Right Honored Lord, etc.

This will serve to inform My Highly Esteemed Lord that the four new silver trumpets with gilt decorations are now finished, and, may God be thanked, are beautiful and good and at the proper pitch level. They were weighed at the local examining office, and, according to the enclosed receipt their weight is 17 Mark 5 Lot 1 Quent 3 Denar. The cost per Mark of worked metal is 28 Florins.

Total fl 485 : 30 : 3¼ d
 for the engraving of the
 princely coat of arms,
at fl 2 : 15 each fl 9
 Total 494 : 30 : 3¼ d

Received for the old silver trumpets which weighed 17 Mark, 6 Lot, 3 Quent, 0 Dener with the Mark reckoned at 14 florins:

the sum of fl 243 : 54 : 1½ d
 Balance fl 250 : 36 : 2¼ d

I would request that My Honored Lord arrange for the trumpets to be collected soon, and for the full amount of this invoice to be paid. I hope that the trumpets will please His Royal Highness, and remain in anticipation [of a reply] under God's graceful protection.

My Honorable Lord's obedient servant,
 Johann Wilhelm Haaß
 Trumpet, Trombone and Waldhornmaker

The units of currency which appear in the invoice and the above letters are as follows, with the abbreviations used by Haas given in parentheses:

1 Florin (fl) = 60 Kreuzer = 240 Pfennige or Denare (d).

Those amounts which are given in the Invoice without monetary units are Kreuzer. For

the units of weight used by Haas, the following equations apply:

$$1 \text{ Mark (mr)} = 14.685 \text{ Lot (l)} = 0.5 \text{ Quent (q, qu)} = 256 \text{ Pfennige or Denare (d)}$$

In Nuremberg in 1719, 1 Mark was equal to 233.937 grams, and 1 Lot = 15.93 grams.⁵ Haas charged 14 Florins for the working of one Mark of silver and took 1 Mark of unworked silver as the equivalent of 14 Florins in payment, so that 1 Mark of worked silver, inclusive of material costs, would be 28 Florins. After the deduction of the value of the silver which was reclaimed from the four old trumpets, there remained a balance of 250 Florins, 36 Kreuzer and 2 Denare. Haas had to pay 9 florins for the engraving of the coat of arms, although he did the other simple engraving, such as the pomegranate, as well as his trademark and signature, himself. The invoice does not state definitely that Haas had the gilding (as well as the casting of the angels' heads and knobs) done elsewhere, but this can be assumed with reasonable certainty.

After melting down the trumpets and weighing the resulting metal, which was officially overseen at the inspection office, ["Beschau-Amt"] Haas had a free hand in the working of the silver, which he apparently received in sheet form after the melting. When he had finished the new instruments, including the engraving, he had to take them back to the inspection office, where they were weighed, the purity of the silver determined, and the quality of the workmanship inspected. When it had been officially determined that all was in order, the instruments received the Nuremberg city stamp as hallmark.⁶

In many other cities, Dresden for example, commissions for silver trumpets went to gold- and silversmiths, such as C. Ingermann or I. H. Schmey. It appears to have been common practice for them to place their names on the instruments, even when the commission had been handed over to a trumpet-maker, who would do the actual manufacturing of the instrument. The official inspection of articles in the silver- and goldworking professions, which was already a fairly well-established practice in the late Middle Ages, served not only to protect the customer, but also to prevent deterioration in the quality of the city's trades. When the Nuremberg trumpet-makers organized their guild in 1625, article 3 of their statutes provided for the inspection of brass instruments, in order to further improve their quality.⁷ As this custom gradually went out of practice generally, the inspection of silver instruments remained obligatory. Returning to the subject of the weight of the Rudolstadt trumpets: the two undecorated instruments weighed 2,303.756 grams, according to the metric system of today (approximately 1,152 grams each). The four new trumpets had a weight of 4,027.509 grams (17 Mark 5 Lot 1 Quent 3 Denars). Each new trumpet weighed, therefore, 145 grams on average less than one of the four old trumpets. The loss of weight can be attributed to the material loss during the manufacturing process. A brass trumpet in D of the more expensive type with spiral sleeves, cast knob and cast angels' heads on the bell weighs around 550 grams without mouthpiece and wooden spacer, 630 grams with mouthpiece. The greater weight of the silver trumpets is due to the greater mass of the silver itself, and to the heavier wall thickness of the tubing.

In the opinion of Johann Ernst Altenberg (1795), silver trumpets do not sound better than their "sisters" made of brass, but were purchased merely for purposes of display at the royal courts:⁸ "The silver trumpets, which are used for stately display at large courts, were generally made of Augsburg silver alloy number 13, but the opinion that they were superior to brass trumpets in terms of sound is unfounded. Moreover, experience confirms that the contrary is true. This is probably due to the density of the silver, which is not so easy to work as brass." The silver alloy # 13 of which Altenberg writes corresponds to modern alloys of approximately 80% silver. This alloy is somewhat harder than brass.

The silver Rudolstadt trumpets have unfortunately, not survived, but they were probably equal in quality to the silver trumpets by Haas in the Augsburger Maximilian Museum. After the death of Prince Friedrich Anton in 1744, Johann Friedrich succeeded to the throne. In 1748 he purchased six new trumpets for the court trumpet-and-kettledrum corps, which at that time probably included six trumpeters. These, however, became unusable after 14 years, so that in 1762, six more new trumpets had to be purchased. It is possible that the four silver trumpets of 1719 were given over in 1748 as partial payment for the new ones.

NOTES

1. This article appeared in "Schriftenreihe des Musikinstrumenten Museums der Karl-Marx-Universität," vol. 3 (Leipzig, 1977). This series, which ceased after the third volume, was typewritten and printed in a small quantity and had a very narrow distribution in Germany. The text has been revised and the complete text of the Haas letters is included, as well as photographic reproductions of the originals.
2. Rudolstadt, Thüringisches Staatsarchiv, B VII 4c Nr. 3 "Acta die Anschaffung einiger silbener Trompeten bey Hofe betr. 1719." Prince Friedrich Anton came to power in 1718.
3. Rudolstadt, Thüringisches Staatsarchiv, B VII 4c Nr. 3 "Von den Fourir Böhm gekaufte Banderolen Für Trompeten bet. 1716."
4. The often quoted opinion of J. E. Altenburg (see note 8), "For all that, those made in Nuremberg by W. Haas and decorated with angels' heads are generally considered to be the best . . ." refers in general to the instruments made in the Haas workshop, but most likely in particular to Wolf Wilhelm Haas (died 1760) and perhaps also to Ernst Johann Conrad Haas (died 1792). Altenburg's book was essentially finished by 1770.
5. Gram equivalents from H.-J. v. Alberti, *Maß und Gewicht: Geschichtliche und tabellarische Darstellungen von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* (Berlin, 1957).
6. For further information see H. Heyde, "Makers' Marks," in *The New Langwill Index of Wind*

Instrument Makers, forthcoming.

7. See W. Wörthmüller, "Die Nürnberger Trompeten- und Posaunenmacher des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts," *Mitteilungen des Vereins für Geschichte der Stadt Nürnberg* 45 (Nuremberg, 1954), p. 284.

8. J. E. Altenburg, *Versuch einer Anleitung zur heroisch-musikalischen Trompeter- und Pauker-Kunst* (Halle, 1795), p. 10. Cf. D. Altenburg, *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Trompete im Zeitalter der Clarinblaskunst* (Regensburg, 1973) 1, p. 241.

9. For a short description see Wörthmüller (see note 7), vol. 46 (Nürnberg 1955), p. 433.

Herbert Heyde was born in 1940 in St. Michaelsis (Saxony). After graduation from Leipzig University he was on the staff of the Musikinstrumenten Museum of the Karl-Marx University from 1964 to 1973. Since that time he has been an active free-lance scholar, and has written many important works on early brass subjects. Dr. Heyde has been working on music collections in the United States since 1992 at the Trumpet Museum in Pottstown, and since October 1992 at the Shrine to Music Museum in Vermillion, South Dakota.

Nürnberg. 12 Julij.
1719.

Wohlgebohrnen A. Böhm
 in Rudolstadt.

Ich habe Ihnen geschriben, sambt einem 4 gldern
 Silbrenen Taler, den ich Ihnen so eben erhalten, alle
 meine guldne Uhren geschriben, davon geschriben, das die
 2 alten Uhren zu repariren noch können
 gemacht werden, das die 2 neuen Uhren
 gleich gelienet, die 2 neuen aber auf die alte, alle
 angeze die Zeit nicht an das auf geschriben
 sind, und also die 2 neuen nicht gleich können
 in dem andern Uhr, die Uhr Kranz geschriben ist, die
 Goldene Stunden auf die Uhren können, sind
 auch auf den Kranz und Querspan die Figuren
 anders, und ist das beginn an die Uhr

6

Figure 1

Letter from J.W. Haas to A. Böhm in Rudolstadt, dated July 12, 1719, p. 1.
 Rudolstadt, Thüringisches Staatsarchiv.

Träumen, also das Zerkleinern, ein aufsteigen
 zu machen, deshalb ist offen, davon hat es genug
 das sie nicht gestört hat, und nicht ein
 beginn davon gemacht ist, das sie mit sich selbst
 einen groben beginn, zu demselben und auf die
 4. und 5. und 6. und 7. und 8. und 9. und 10.
 und 11. und 12. und 13. und 14. und 15. und 16.
 und 17. und 18. und 19. und 20. und 21. und 22.
 und 23. und 24. und 25. und 26. und 27. und 28.
 und 29. und 30. und 31. und 32. und 33. und 34.
 und 35. und 36. und 37. und 38. und 39. und 40.
 und 41. und 42. und 43. und 44. und 45. und 46.
 und 47. und 48. und 49. und 50. und 51. und 52.
 und 53. und 54. und 55. und 56. und 57. und 58.
 und 59. und 60. und 61. und 62. und 63. und 64.
 und 65. und 66. und 67. und 68. und 69. und 70.
 und 71. und 72. und 73. und 74. und 75. und 76.
 und 77. und 78. und 79. und 80. und 81. und 82.
 und 83. und 84. und 85. und 86. und 87. und 88.
 und 89. und 90. und 91. und 92. und 93. und 94.
 und 95. und 96. und 97. und 98. und 99. und 100.

Figure 1 (Cont.)

gestirriget, und aufgeben, ist geblicken
 zu mir. 15 l 2 q. - 23. Dabey ist 1/2 oft
 die dinsten gubten, welches nicht geringhändig
 hat die hochwürdig. Dessen weils ich nicht, dass ich
 weissen also überlassen, und weissen das weisse
 sein kann ich nicht davon abgeben lassen, und aus
 der allezeit so belommen hat, sondern aber selb
 weissen weissen, das hochwürdig. Dinsten
 ein legen über, ihm aber über sei gleich unter
 die hand nehmen und bald zu befehlen
 das ich mit dem ganzen. Abt Gott
 salutation Gharer
 Dinsten hochwürdig, Gharer
 Johann Philippen Gharer
 (Kampfer), Jos. Wallner
 marck 7

Figure 1 (Cont.)

Rudolstadt 16^{ten} Sept. 1719

Wohl Edl. Ritze Luyswolden
 J. W. Haas' Goldschmieds Haus s.

Es sind hiemit mein Goldschmieds Haus, das in
 die 4 alten Silbernen Zornen getriebene Instrumenten fertig
 und solch. Dornen, die damit, sitzen und gut, und jedes
 geschmiedete Horn sind, und solche alhier in des allertreuen
 R. an die gantzen, Landt beytragenden R. an die
 17 und 5. l. 19. 3. 2. In Markt. besichtigt pr. 485.
 A. 90. 3. 2.

Der die Goldschmieds Haus zu Aufg. 12. 15. 9. - - -

Summa 494. 30. 3. 2

J. W. Haas an alten Silbernen Instrumenten
 geschmiedete solche gantzen 17 und 5. l. 19. 3. 2.
 In Markt. pr. 114. angeworren. A. 243. 34. 1. 2

Zahl. 250. 06. 2. 4

bistt stempeln mein Goldschmieds Haus, das solch. Instrumente
 abgeholt ist, und solch. Instrumente in ganzem
 gold geschmiedet, in des besten die Goldschmieds
 durch die R. an die gantzen, Landt beytragenden R. an die
 nach Dornen, die damit, sitzen und gut, und jedes
 geschmiedete Horn sind, und solche alhier in des allertreuen
 R. an die gantzen, Landt beytragenden R. an die

Johann Wilhelm Haas
 Christoph. J. W. Haas
 meinst. R. an die

Figure 2
 Invoice of J.W. Haas concerning the four trumpets for the court of
 Schwarzburg-Rudolstadt, dated Sept. 16, 1719 preserved in
 Rudolstadt, Thüringisches Staatsarchiv.

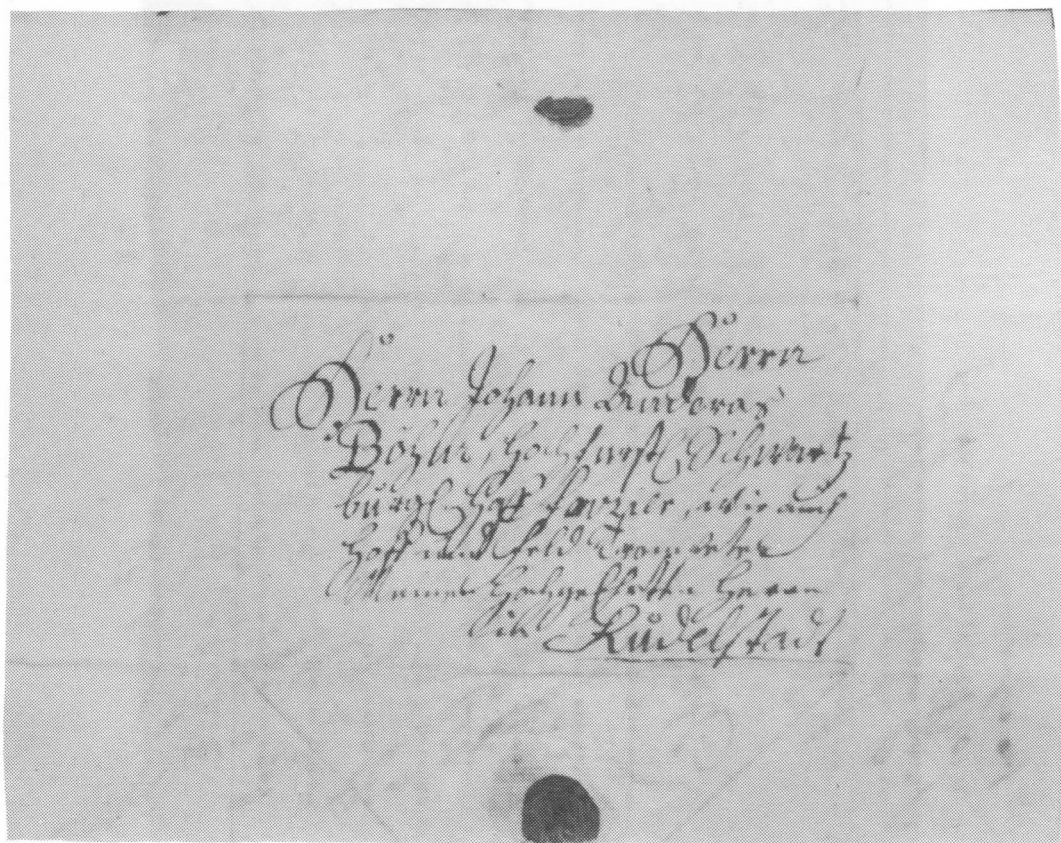


Figure 3

Envelope addressed to Andreas Böyer in Rudolstadt, from Haas.
 Rudolstadt, Thüringisches Staatsarchiv.