

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's "Musikalisches Würfelspiel" (Musical Dice Games) is a fascinating example of early algorithmic composition. Published in 1793, the work was an experiment in composing that involved the use of dice, allowing for variations of a waltz to be composed through chance. Unlike traditional compositions, the work provided a series of musical fragments and a table of dice rolls to determine the sequence of measures, enabling performers to create diverse results while adhering to Mozart's structured randomness.

The performance of "Musikalisches Würfelspiel" involves rolling a pair of dice to select musical fragments from a chart, assembling them into a cohesive waltz. The chart divided into measures, allows the performer to construct a unique composition each time, adhering only to Mozart's prescribed pattern that ensures musical cohesion, such as the repetition of the last two measures identically, no matter the result of the dice. The outputs on the opposing page illustrate examples of Mozart's meticulous process, reflecting his ingenious yet playful approach to composition.

From a copyright perspective, the specific nature of "Musikalisches Würfelspiel" presents intriguing questions. Although the work itself is no longer under copyright protection, if it were composed today, the score fragments and the underlying chart itself would be protected, but the resulting performances — created anew with each roll — would not be individually copyrighted because they are essentially **unfixed**. In the hypothetical allocation of copyright based on contribution, Mozart's role would be significantly weighted, with 80% of the authorship attributed to him for the original composition and intricate system that dictates the music's structure. Meanwhile, the performer who enacts Mozart's framework, breathing life into the music with their execution—despite being guided by Mozart—demands recognition for their important role, meriting a 20% authorship share in this dynamic partnership.