

Mozart's "Musikalisches Würfelspiel" (Musical Dice Games) is a fascinating example of 18th-century algorithmic music composition. Originally published in 1793, the work is attributed to Mozart and provides musicians the ability to create a waltz by rolling dice and following a series of charts that determine the sequence of pre-written musical fragments. Each chart corresponds to a different measure in the waltz, and the resulting piece is assembled by selecting the appropriate musical phrase based on the numbers rolled on the dice. This playful integration of chance and composition allows for numerous variations, making each performance unique. The outputs displayed on the opposing page illustrate this process, with each example showcasing how Mozart ingeniously crafted sections such as the repeated last two measures of the phrase, identical regardless of the dice rolls.

While "Musikalisches Würfelspiel" is no longer under copyright due to its age, it's intriguing to consider its status if it were created today. In such a scenario, while the original score fragments, which form the foundation, could be protected under copyright, the outputs generated by different dice rolls — visible on the side page — would remain uncopyrighted due to the originality tied directly to the performance. The musical pieces developed in each performance would thus sit in a copyright limbo, as they result from an interaction between Mozart's coded composition and the randomness of the dice rolls, manifesting no singular fixed expression. The multitude of outputs further emphasizes their **unfixed** nature, existing in countless states influenced by both human and computational input.

In proposing a percentage allocation of copyright authorship, the "Musikalisches Würfelspiel" could be considered 80% Mozart and 20% human performance. Mozart's genius in designing a comprehensive system of variable musical phrases encapsulates the entirety of creative possibilities, making the dice a symbolic intermediary rather than an independent author. The creative impetus provided by Mozart's charts encompasses all potential outcomes, thus capturing the dice's role entirely within his portion. Meanwhile, the performer, through their role in realizing the piece audibly, contributes an essential yet smaller share, earning a justified portion for their interpretive execution.