

Toy Symphony (Cassation in G for Orchestra and Toys) (1769)  
Attr. to Leopold Mozart (1719 – 1787)

I. Allegro

II. Menuetto – Trio

III. Finale: Allegro

Over the years, this so-called Toy Symphony, which is actually a Cassation or a Divertimento (a lighter form of 18th-century composition comprising anywhere from three to seven short movements), has been attributed to various composers, including Edmund Angerer (a Tyrolean Benedictine monk and composer), Joseph Haydn, his brother Michael, and (currently) Leopold Mozart, Wolfgang's father.

Since Wolfgang's death in 1791, music-lovers have focused so intently on him, his life, and his music, that his father Leopold until recently received little attention as a composer, although much has been written about the positive and negative aspects of his relationship with his son, whose brilliant career he both nurtured and exploited. He was, in fact, an able and well-respected composer, who wrote a surprising amount of music and whose works were performed frequently in his own time.

Whether this Cassation supposed to be taken as serious music is a moot point, but it's certainly great fun to watch and to hear, and also to perform. There are several different editions of this work, and the number of movements varies in the different editions. The scoring, which varies from edition to edition, typically calls for strings (usually without violas), plus a wide variety of instruments seldom associated with serious music, such as toy trumpet, toy drums, bird whistles (e.g., cuckoo and nightingale), rattle, ratchet, and triangle.

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