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Mozart comments on "Haydn's" *Toy Symphony* (1793)

David Black

***Wiener Schriftsteller und Künstler Lexikon oder alphabetisches Verzeichniß aller gegenwärtig in Wien lebender Schriftsteller, Künstler und Künstlerinnen* ... Wien: Im F. J. J. von Reillyschen Verlage. 1793.**

[58]

Joseph Heyden. *[...]*

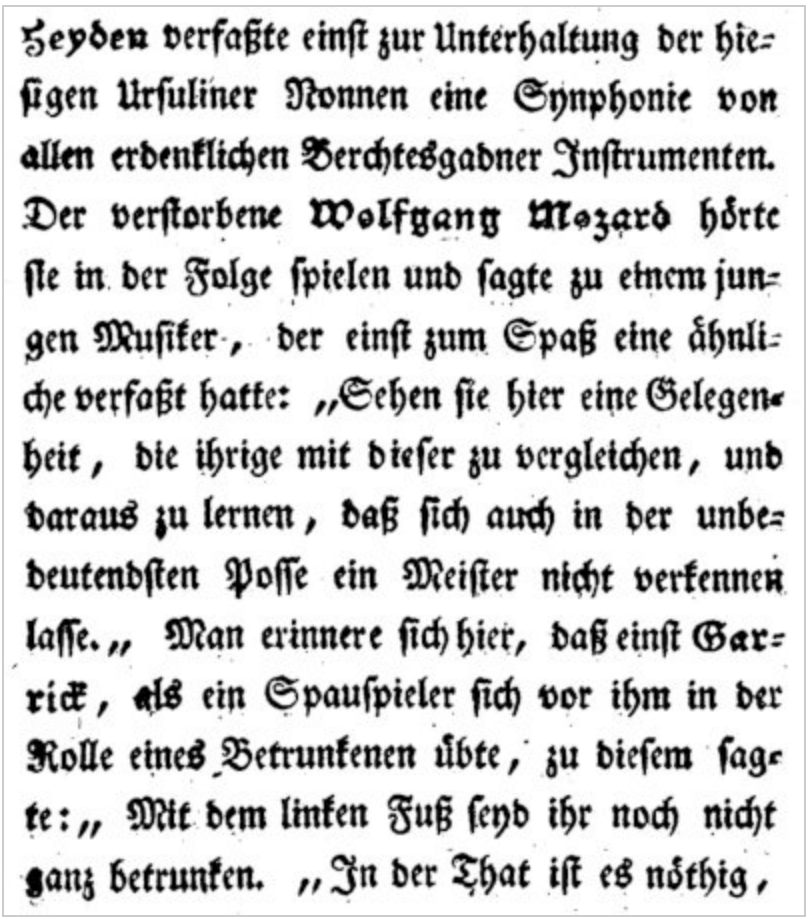


[59]

[...]

Heyden verfaßte einst zur Unterhaltung der hie=
sigen Ursuliner Nonnen eine Synphonie von
allen erdenklichen Berchtesgadner Instrumenten.
Der verstorbene **Wolfgang Mozard** hörte
sie in der Folge spielen und sagte zu einem jun=
gen Musiker, der einst zum Spaß eine ähnli=
che verfaßt hatte: "Sehen sie hier eine Gelegen=
heit, die ihrige mit dieser zu vergleichen, und
daraus zu lernen, daß sich auch in der unbe=
deutendsten Posse ein Meister nicht verkennen
lasse." Man erinnere sich hier, daß einst Gar=
rick, als ein Spauspieler sich vor ihm in der
Rolle eines Betrunkenen übte, zu diesem sag=
te: "Mit dem linken Fuß seyd ihr noch nicht
ganz betrunken." In der That ist es nöthig,

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Heyden verfaßte einſt zur Unterhaltung der hie-
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allen erdenklichen Berchtesgadner Inſtrumenten.
Der verſtorbene Wolfgang Mozard hörte
ſie in der Folge ſpielen und ſagte zu einem jun-
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ganz betrunken. „In der That iſt es nöthig,

[60]

jede Kleinigkeit in Ausübung der Kunst zu be=
achten, wenn man Meister werden will.



jede Kleinigkeit in Ausübung der Kunſt zu be-
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Commentary

The (in)famous “Toy Symphony”, known in German as the *Kindersinfonie*, is a short three-movement work for three-part strings with seven “Berchtesgadener Instrumente”: cuckoo, quail, trumpet, drum, rattle, “organ hen,” and *Zimbelstern*. The instruments are so-called because they were said to be manufactured in the Bavarian town of Berchtesgaden near Salzburg. The symphony has a complex transmission history with attributions to Joseph Haydn, Michael Haydn, Leopold Mozart, and most plausibly to Edmund Angerer, *regens chori* at Stift Fiecht (Herrmann-Schneider 1996; see also here).

This anecdote appears in the entry for Joseph Haydn in an anonymous collection of short biographies of living Viennese writers, artists and musicians, "collected and edited by an association of their friends," with a preface dated Feb 1793. By this time the *Kindersinfonie* had achieved wide distribution under the name of Haydn, and the writer almost certainly had this piece in mind. Here Haydn is said to have written the symphony "for the entertainment of the Ursuline nuns here"—that is, for the nuns of the St. Ursula convent situated near the Hofburg. Although the convent maintained a lively musical life (see Page 2014), and Haydn apparently composed music for the entry of his sister-in-law Theresia Keller into another Viennese convent, there is no surviving evidence of a connection between Haydn and the Ursulines outside this anecdote.

It is not inconceivable that Mozart heard the *Kindersinfonie* or had access to it during his time in Vienna. The symphony was performed at a benefit concert for the Musikdirektor of the Theater auf der Wieden, Joseph Suche, on 13 Apr 1791, and was attributed on the poster to Joseph Haydn (Gerlach 1991, 166). Given that Mozart was probably engaged in the composition of *Die Zauberflöte* at the time, and Suche was presumably involved in the preparations for the new opera, a visit to this theater is not out of the question. The copyist and music dealer Johann Traeg advertised the symphony as a work of Joseph Haydn in 1792, and it appeared in Traeg's 1799 catalog anonymously (Gerlach 1991, 167). The symphony was not the only work to feature "Berchtesgadener Instrumente" in Vienna: in one of the more unusual juxtapositions in music history, Paul Wranitzky later added such instruments to Mozart's "Sparrow" Mass in C, K. 220, for the entertainment of Empress Marie Therese (Rice 2004).

Although it is possible that Mozart was aware of the *Kindersinfonie*, the idea that he would have commented on it in this way seems doubtful. It is difficult to imagine Mozart accepting the Haydn attribution without question, and none of the "young musicians" of Mozart's acquaintance is known to have written a similar work at this time. The anecdote is rather a very early example of the historical Mozart becoming distinct from the "Mozart" who acts as a mouthpiece for the writer's beliefs. This process reached its apogee with Friedrich Rochlitz's notorious "authentic" anecdotes (Solomon 1991).

The quip from the celebrated English actor, playwright and impresario David Garrick appears in numerous sources from the time; the earliest appearance we have located is found in a long review attributed to Johann Georg Jacobi of a poetry collection in *Der Teutsche Merkur* (1773): "Der Schauspieler Garrick sagte zu einem französischen Schauspieler, mit welchem er um die Wette einen Trunknen vorstellte: mit dem linken Beine sey er noch nicht völlig trunken" ("The actor Garrick said to a French actor whom he was trying to outdo in portraying a drunk: that his left leg was not yet completely drunk").

This anecdote from the *Wiener Schriftsteller und Künstler Lexikon* is known in the Haydn literature (Zeman 1976, 35) but not as yet in Mozart studies. Gerlach (1991, 166) cites the first sentence but omits the Mozart reference.

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