Mozart: 21 locations in Vienna

**Even if the triumphant premiere of “Don Giovanni” was in Prague, and Italy, England and Germany marked the first flowering of his gifts, without Vienna, his most important “hometown”, Mozart would never have become what he still remains – the greatest musical genius in history.**

Seriously, how many musicians entertain the upper crust of society as six-year-old kids? Or conduct their own compositions at the age of twelve, to the ovations of more than just family and friends? And who goes on from such an early career to bless posterity with melodies like the “Queen of the Night” from “The Magic Flute” (1791)? Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791), as a composer and musician, was an exceptional phenomenon and Vienna is closely connected to him, particularly as he spent the last ten years – his most successful – in the city. Around 20 Viennese locations can rightly boast that “these rooms”, “this palace”, “this church” once played host to what was probably the greatest phenomenon of musical genius to appear in the last 250 years. At the beautiful cemetery of St. Marx, it is different: there, Mozart remains to this day, as one of the deceased.

Let us begin, as did Mozart, with the social and political elite. Schönbrunn Palace: it is 1762 and Mozart, just six years old, is already being called the “prodigy from Salzburg”. Admittedly, his father Leopold, himself a well-known musician in the service of the Prince-Archbishop of Salzburg, has had a hand in it all. And the “Mozart family business” marks up a major success with the Habsburgs when Little Mozart plays in the Hall of Mirrors at the imperial summer residence, and the “mother of the nation”, Empress Maria Theresia and her family are duly impressed. And when, as the story goes, the six-year-old afterwards jumps up on to the Empress’ lap, their enchantment knows no bounds.

Four years later, in 1768, Empress Maria Theresia and Mozart, still very much a child, meet again on two occasions. At the Vienna Hofburg, the Empress grants Mozart, now an artist of considerable international experience, an audience of two hours. And for the consecration of the Waisenhauskirche on Rennweg, Mozart, at the tender age of twelve, writes his Waisenhausmesse, which he conducts himself in the presence of Maria Theresia. Back to the Hofburg: years later, in 1781, Mozart spends Christmas Eve here – more precisely, in the imperial apartments. The host this time is Austria’s enlightened Emperor Joseph II.

Five years have passed. It is 1786, in the Schönbrunn Orangery, and Mozart faces a more serious challenge. The 30-year-old composer, already at the zenith of his career, is before the musical “Argus eyes” of Joseph II, in direct competition with Joseph’s court Kapellmeister Salieri. Mozart’s “Impresario” is going into the ring with Salieri’s “Prima la musica e poi le parole”. Posterity shakes its head over the Habsburg ruler’s decision, but Salieri wins. Mozart, for his part, is confirmed in his distaste for the court, its ceremonial, and above all, for “playing the lackey”.

The “Viennese” Mozart, however, is not only a denizen of the court. The vivacious artist, who is forever challenging society’s conventions, also has a private life. He is even a caring father, as shown by his efforts to secure his oldest son, Carl Thomas, a place at the school of the Piaristen (Order of the Pious Schools). In a letter to his wife Constanze, on October 9, 1791, he wrote: “…at 10 o’clock I’ll be going to the offices of the Piaristen, because Leitgeb told me that I can speak to the headmaster then.” To this day, the Piaristen run not only an excellent school, but also a good restaurant – the Piaristenkeller – where guests can enjoy one of Mozart’s favorite dishes, “Kapaundl” (capon) with morels.

In 1781, in the wake of a dispute, Salzburg’s head chamberlain Count Arco, ends Mozart’s employment with the Prince-Archbishop with a kick in the rump at Vienna’s Deutschordenshaus /House of the Teutonic Order (“sent out the door with a kick in the arse”). Mozart, forced to fend for himself, turns once again to the Vienna nobility and their patronage. Even as a child, he appeared at the Auersperg, Harrach, Kinsky and Pallfy palaces with his sister Nannerl, under the watchful eye of his father. In 1786, as a 30-year-old, Mozart conducts a private performance of the opera “Idomeneo” at Palais Auersperg.

Another patron is the director of the National Library, Gottfried van Swieten – the son of Maria Theresia’s famed personal physician Gerard van Swieten, who is immortalized to this day as a pillar of the monarchy in the monument to the Empress between the Museums of Fine Arts and Natural History. In 1786, the same year as the Auersperg appearance, the younger Van Swieten invites Mozart to a “Sunday academy”, that is, a concert. Van Swieten junior has gone down in history as one of Mozart’s most important supporters and patrons.

The private but above all the happy Mozart can best be seen at Mozarthaus Vienna, which was opened in January 2006 as a Mozart center in and around one of the original Mozart locations. It was at Domgasse 5, in the heart of Vienna, that the creator of “The Magic Flute” (1791) and “The Abduction from the Seraglio” (1782) probably spent his happiest and most successful years. From 1784 and 1787 he lived on the first floor. Entering this apartment with its four large and two small rooms, and its own kitchen, one still senses the prestigious ambiance of this address. Small wonder that these lodgings saw the creation of what was perhaps Mozart’s most enjoyable opera, “The Marriage of Figaro” (1786). Covering one thousand square meters, the Mozart center is an absolute must for Mozart fans in Vienna.

Let us remain in the heart of the city. A place with equally fond memories for the Mozart family must have been St. Stephen’s Cathedral, where Wolfgang married his beloved Constanze (née Weber) in 1782. Even if Mozart scholars tell us that the newlywed husband was rather lukewarm in describing his wife’s beauty (“she is not ugly, but also far from beautiful”), there is no doubt as to her cheerfulness and loyalty even at the most difficult points in his career. This strong bond is further indicated by their six children – of whom only two, however, survived infancy. The “Steffl”, as the Viennese affectionately call their cathedral to this day, also played a role in the end of Mozart’s life. After Mozart’s death on December 5, 1791, his remains were carried here in a funeral procession, to receive their final blessing in the adjoining Kruzifixkapelle.

Mozart’s death also took place in the heart of the city, at Rauhensteingasse 8. The actual deathplace has long since vanished. Today it is the site of one of Vienna’s best-known department stores, “Steffl”. Mozart’s famous, unfinished Requiem – in a sense his musical legacy to the world – cannot be heard here.

St. Marx Cemetery is the final resting place of Europe’s greatest musician, the creator of numerous operas, masses and immortal melodies. No one can point to the precise location of his grave with one hundred percent certainty to this day: Mozart was buried in an unmarked “shaft grave” with four or five other deceased, as it was the custom of the time.

Mozart’s resurrection began just a few days after his premature death. A requiem service was held at St. Michael’s Church at the instigation of Emanuel Schikaneder – director of the Theater an der Wien and commissioner of “The Magic Flute” (1791), during which Mozart’s last piece, the unfinished Requiem, is believed to have been heard for the first time.

As to Mozart and posterity, even if he was denied consistent acclaim during his own lifetime, the situation changed immediately upon his death. “The Magic Flute” became an unparalleled success, and his many other pieces were increasingly recognized as pinnacles of music-making.

Prominent among the many spots that recall the composer is the Mozart memorial in the Burggarten, created in 1896. At Vienna’s large Central Cemetery, a further monument to Mozart has stood among the Graves of Honor since 1891 – in direct proximity to those of other composers such as Beethoven and Strauss. Also worth a look is the Mozart Fountain at Mozartplatz in the fourth district, also known as the Magic Flute Fountain, since this group of bronze figures (unveiled in 1905) portray the main characters of the opera, the flute-playing Tamino in the embrace of Pamina. For those in need of sustenance, the great musician can also be remembered at Café Mozart, just behind the State Opera.

The Haus der Musik (House of Music) takes a different approach. It devotes a room to Mozart where original objects from his life are on display, and modern infotainment media allow visitors to “conduct” an unforgiving Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra in “Eine Kleine Nachtmusik” (1787). "Namadeus”, the interactive computer programme based on Mozart's musical game KV 516f, offers visitors the opportunity to playfully turn their names into original Mozart interpretations.

### Addresses of the Vienna Mozart locations:

*Mozarthaus Vienna, Domgasse 5, 1st district, www.mozarthausvienna.at*

*Schönbrunn Palace, Schönbrunner Schlossstrasse, 13th district, www.schoenbrunn.at*

*Orangery (Concerts), Schönbrunn Palace, 13th district, www.imagevienna.com*

*Hofburg, Kaisertor, Innerer Burghof, 1st district, www.hofburg-wien.at*

*Waisenhauskirche, Rennweg 91, 3rd district, www.pfarrerennweg.at*

*Mozart’s Deathplace, Rauhensteingasse 8, 1st district, (building no longer in existence)*

*National Library, Josefsplatz, 1st district, www.onb.ac.at*

*Mozart memorial, Burggarten, 1st district*

*St. Marx Cemetery, Leberstrasse 6-8, 3rd district*

*St. Stephen’s Cathedral, Stephansplatz, 1st district, www.stephanskirche.at*

*Central Cemetery, Simmeringer Hauptstrasse 234, 11th district, Mozart Monument: Grave 32A, No.55, www.friedhoefewien.at*

*House of the Teutonic Order (Deutschordenshaus), Singerstrasse 7, 1st district, www.deutscher-orden.at*

*Palais Auersperg, Auerspergstrasse 1, 8th district, www.auersperg.com*

*Palais Harrach, Freyung 3, 1st district*

*Palais Daun-Kinsky, Freyung 4, 1st district, www.palaisevents.at*

*Palais Palffy, Josefsplatz 6, 1st district, www.palais-palffy.at*

*Mozart Fountain, Mozartplatz, 4th district*

*Piaristenkeller, Piaristengasse 45, 8th district, www.piaristenkeller.at*

*Café Mozart, Albertinaplatz 2, 1st district, www.cafe-mozart.at*

*Michaelerkirche, Michaelerplatz, 1st district, www.michaelerkirche.at*

*Haus der Musik, Seilerstätte 30, 1st district, www.hdm.at*

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