

# Salzburg during Mozart's Lifetime

During Mozart's lifetime, the City of Salzburg was an ecclesiastic principality of the same name. The territory it covered was a little larger than today's province and over a third of it—the so-called "Rupertigau"—was forfeited during the Napoleonic wars.

The Prince-Archbishop ruled as an absolute sovereign of his state. Elected for life by the Cathedral Chapter, he was subject only to the Holy Roman Emperor, his own conscience and Almighty God. Development of his principality depended solely on his own skill and resources.



*The Mozartplatz (late 18th century oil painting on canvas). Up to the end of the 19th century, the square was called "Michaelerplatz" (after St. Michael's Church).*

In the 18th century, the principality was not always in the best of hands. This period was marked by political, economic and social decline. While the archbishops succeeded in avoiding war-like confrontations during the 17th century (i. e. the Thirty Years War), Salzburg was drawn into the Austrian Succession War (1742/43) and the Seven Years War (1756). These conflicts cost the archbishops a lot of money. Military expenditure rose and the salt trade on the Dürrenberg hills underwent drastic decline.

In the aftermath of the Seven Years War, a shortage of meat was experienced between 1764 and 1770 followed by a serious dearth of grain from 1770 to 1772. Prices doubled within a short period. Millers and bakers were unable to go about their trades and breweries were forced to cut back their production.

A further consequence of this crisis was a decrease in population during the latter half of the 18th century. During this period, marriages and births declined in Salzburg, offset by an increase in the mortality rate. Yearly averages recorded from 1761 to 1780 reveal 60 marriages, 246 births and 341 deaths. A depressing account of the poverty-stricken population



*Oil painting of the City of Salzburg. The former pyramid-shaped roof of St. Peter's Church can be seen. The onion tower was not added to the Abbey Church until 1756 when it formed part of the baroque reconstruction.*

dating back to 1772 brought to light that almost 15% of the population lacked proper sustenance. A census conducted in 1771 showed that the City was then inhabited by a population of 16,000.

The 18th century also went down in Salzburg history as a dark period as it was associated with the expulsion of the Protestants. During the Reformation, Archbishop Leopold Anton von Firmian ruled with absolute power and forced over 20,000 Protestants to emigrate.

### ***The Archbishop's Law on Morals from 1736***

The archbishop's Law on Morals from the year 1736 is a good example of his narrow-minded police surveillance. An excerpt from this decree follows: "... children of different sexes are not allowed to share the same bed after the age of three, and are not to share the same room after the age of seven; men are not to leave their beds without wearing shirt and trousers, nor women without wearing shirt and petticoat. Trousers must be waist high, fastened in front. Women's skirts must cover half the calf; shirts and bodices must be made wide enough as to overlap and lace properly. Absolutely forbidden, is the irritating, bestial and fiendish habit occurring in the public baths, where men and women bathe together almost naked and then dry each other off ..."





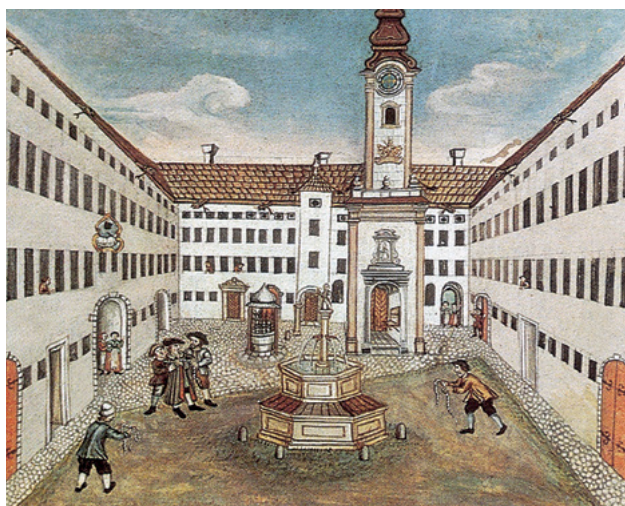
## St. Peter's Peep-Show-Boxes

Very few paintings remain of the City of Salzburg as it presented itself during Mozart's lifetime. That is why these peep-show boxes, now belonging to St. Peter's, are of such great importance. Originating during the second half of the 18th century, they were initially used as stage settings for the Salzburg University Theater. Later, they were converted into peep-show boxes, a popular form of entertainment before the advent of the cinema.



*Residenzplatz and Cathedral.* Not much has changed here; horses and carriages still form part of today's setting; only the canons have disappeared.

*Loreto-Gasse.* Situated on the right is the former summer house owned by the Haffner family, where the Haffner Serenade (KV 250) received its first performance on July 21st, 1776.



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*St. Peter's Courtyard.* Neither of the fountains has undergone alteration since the 18th century.