

## Heritage Choir Newsletter #18 – Rome, Italy

*It's Saturday, October 12<sup>th</sup>, during your 2019 Rome, Italy Performance Tour. Orvieto Continued - We will visit the Cathedral of Orvieto.....*



The Cathedral of Orvieto is also referred to as The Duomo of Orvieto, which is an Italian term.

**Duomo** (English: /'dwoʊmoʊ/, Italian: ['dwɔːmo]) is an Italian term for a church with the features of, or having been built to serve as, a cathedral, whether or not it currently plays this role.

The Duomo of Orvieto is the main church and symbol of the city, as well as one of the most striking and gorgeous cathedrals in Italy and the World. Its construction began in 1290, under direction of both the Commune and the Pope.

The main purpose was to build a large unique cathedral dedicated to Santa Maria Assunta in Cielo (Saint Mary), that could replace the two original churches in the square.

The Duomo is a magnificent building architecturally defined as a "unique example of Gothic and Romanesque styles mixed." Its façade is one of its most impressive features, with 4 spiers that lay on 4 large bas-reliefs, each representing scenes from the Bible (Old Testament, New Testament, and Judgment Day).

At first glance, when walking round to the front of the Orvieto Cathedral or the Duomo di Orvieto along the Via del Orvieto, the grand structure looks almost out of place in its location, a small town even by modern standards of around 20,000 people. Then one realizes that the Orvieto's spectacular location, perched high on volcanic rock above the hills that surround it, may be the perfect setting for this cathedral that seems to soar even further skywards

The cathedral's highlight is the Chapel of San Brizio, featuring Luca Signorelli's brilliantly lit frescoes of the Day of Judgment and Life after Death. Although the frescoes refer to themes of resurrection and salvation, they also reflect the turbulent political and religious atmosphere of Italy in the late 1400s. Signorelli's ability to tell stories through human actions and gestures, rather than symbols, inspired his younger contemporary, Michelangelo, who meticulously studied Signorelli's work.

Next, we will continue our journey through Orvieto during our guided tour.....**to be continued in next week's Newsletter.**

**Rome "Fun Fact" #18** A unique aspect of the Cathedral of Orvieto is that it has a striped appearance comprised of greenish-black basalt and white travertine.