

## Heritage Choir Newsletter #34 – Rome, Italy

*It's Monday, October 15<sup>th</sup>, during your 2019 Rome, Italy Performance Tour. Next.... We will continue to enjoy the beautiful surroundings of Siena, as we have a Guided City Tour.*



Our Guided City Tour of Siena will include Piazza del Campo (reviewed in last week's newsletter), The Cathedral and Palazzo Pubblico.

If Piazza del Campo, is the heart of the city, then the Siena Cathedral is the soul the city, one of Italy's most illustrious Romanesque and Gothic cathedrals filled with treasures by Pisano, Donatello and Michelangelo as well as frescoes by Pinturicchio.

Built between 1215 and 1263 on the site of an earlier structure, the cathedral is in the form of a Latin cross with a slight projecting dome and bell tower. The exterior and interiors are decorated in white and greenish-black marble in alternating stripes, black and white being the symbolic colors of Siena.

Great art, including Michelangelo statues and Bernini sculptures, fills the church interior. Nicola Pisano carved the wonderful marble pulpit in 1268. It's crowded with delicate Gothic storytelling with scenes from the life of Christ and the Last Judgment.

Next, the Palazzo Pubblico has always represented the centre of civic life for the citizens of Siena; it has frequently been at the centre of the most significant events in the history of the city. Its construction demonstrated an intense commitment during a relatively short period (1297-1308) that resulted in one of the most elegant and functional buildings of all time, notable for its harmonious, almost symbiotic, relationship with its surroundings.

The outside of the structure is an example of Italian medieval architecture with Gothic influences. The lower story is stone; the upper crenellated stories are made of brick. The facade of the palace is curved slightly inwards (concave) to reflect the outwards curve (convex) of the Piazza del Campo, Siena's central square of which the Palace is the focal point. The campanile or bell tower, Torre del Mangia, was built between 1325 and 1344 with its crown designed by the painter, Lippo Memmi. The tower was designed to be taller than the tower in neighboring rival Florence; at the time it was the tallest structure in Italy.

Next, we will say Buon giorno to Siena as we travel to our hotel in Florence for overnight...**to be continued in next week's Newsletter.**

**Rome "Fun Fact" #34** – Work started to enlarge the Siena Cathedral in the early 14th century but, in 1348, the Black Plague swept through the city and decimated its population. Work was stopped and was never restarted. An unfinished wall now provides a great platform to climb up to (access is through the Museo dell'Opera) and enjoy a wonderful panoramic view of Siena, including the nearby Piazza del Campo.