

Heritage Choir Newsletter #37 – Rome, Italy

It's Wednesday, October 16th, during your 2019 Rome, Italy Performance Tour. Next, the City of Venice!



Venice, Italy, is known by several names, one of which is the ‘Floating City’. This is due to the fact the city of Venice consists of 118 small islands connected by numerous canals and bridges. Yet, the buildings in Venice were not built directly on the islands. Instead, they were built upon wooden platforms that were supported by wooden stakes driven into the ground.

The story of Venice begins in the 5th century A.D, when the inland populations resolved to seek shelter from the barbarian invasions (mostly Huns and Longobards). The Venetians moved therefore towards the lagoon, that was composed of many small islands. In order to build the city, the Venetians used millions of oak poles. They planted the poles in the ground until they reached the solid land under the mud layer. The space between the poles was filled with shards, stones and other waste materials. Over the layer of poles, they put wooden boards that formed the base. Over these boards Venetians built their houses.

Piazza San Marco is in the heart of Venice. It is 590 Ft (180 m) long and 230 ft (70 m) wide, and is the only “piazza” in Venice, since the rest of the squares are called “piazzales” or “campos”. It was established during the ninth century, but adopted its current size and form in 1177, and was paved one hundred years later.

The Piazza San Marco is one of the most beautiful in the world. Napoleon called it “the world’s most beautiful drawing room”. It is the lowest point in Venice; therefore, when there is Acqua Alta, it is the first place to be flooded. When this happens, the authorities place wooden footbridges for the locals and tourists.



Tomorrow, we will enjoy a Guided walking tour of Venice and San Marco Basilica .to be continued in next week’s Newsletter.

Rome “Fun Fact” #37–When building Venice, since there were no forests in the area, the Venetians gathered the wood in Croatia, Slovenia and Montenegro and then transported it by water. The oak poles used to build Venice are more than 10 million. Many buildings in Venice today are still standing on 1000-year-old piles of wood.