

Heritage Choir Newsletter #4 – Rome, Italy

It's Wednesday, October 9th, during your 2019 Rome, Italy Performance Tour. During your Guided Tour of Piazza Navona you will visit Fontana del Nettuno (fountain of Neptune)....



Fontana del Nettuno (fountain of Neptune)/ Fontana dei Calderari (Fountain of Coppersmiths)

In Rome there are two fountains which bear the name of the Greek deity of water. One is located at Piazza Navona, and the other in Piazza del Popolo. **Fontana del Nettuno in Piazza Navona** enhances the architectural landscape of the square, counterbalancing, by its own monumentality, from north extremity of the venue, the imposing presence of the Moor Fountain (located on the east side of the square).

The fountain was formerly called Fontana dei calderari (Fountain of the Coppersmiths) because it was located close to a small alley with blacksmith's workshops, makers of pots and pans and of other metal-based businesses and merchants that sold copper vessels in the nearby Piazza Sant'Apollinare. Some say; the name of the fountain derives from the close Via dei Calderari, on which the workshops of these sculptors were located.

As it can be viewed today, Fontana del Nettuno was completed by 1878, though its foundations were laid in 1570. Giacomo della Porta designed the basin of the fountain, built of marble and Pietrasanta stone. The plan was to supply the locals of Campo Marzio with clean water brought to this part of the city by the Acqua Virgo aqueduct. The building of Fontana del Nettuno took place in this context, under Pope Gregory XIII.

Enhancing the look of the fountain became a necessity after the unification of the Kingdom of Italy, Rome being the capital of the newly formed state. The base was left virtually intact, but the added statues completely changed the sight. The statuary consists of a sculptural representation of Neptune killing an octopus (which is the centerpiece) surrounded by statues of nymphs, cupids, walruses and horses captured in clenched playful movements. The centerpiece was realized by Antonio della Bitta, whereas the peripheral statues were carved by Gregorio Zappala.

Next, you will visit Sant'Agnese in Agone Church at Piazza Navona...**to be continued in next week's Newsletter.**

Rome "Fun Fact" #4 Rome became the capital city of a unified Italy in 1870 after taking the title from Florence.