

Heritage Choir Newsletter #7 – Rome, Italy

It's Wednesday, October 9th, during your 2019 Rome, Italy Performance Tour. During your Guided Tour you will visit the Roman Colosseum.....



The Colosseum, also named the Flavian Amphitheater, is a large amphitheater in Rome. It was built during the reign of the Flavian emperors as a gift to the Roman people.

The Colosseum was the largest amphitheater in the Roman world. Unlike many earlier amphitheaters, which had been dug into hillsides to provide adequate support, the Colosseum was a freestanding structure made of stone and concrete. This magnificent monument was built with the man power of tens of thousands of slaves.

Construction of the Colosseum began sometime between A.D. 70 and 72 under the emperor Vespasian. It opened nearly a decade later and was modified several times in the following years. The massive structure measured approximately 189 by 156 meters (620 by 513 feet), towered four stories high, and included eighty entrances to the amphitheater—seventy-six for the patrons, two for participants of events, and two exclusively for the emperor to use. The sheer number of entrances proved to be necessary, as the Colosseum could hold more than 50,000 spectators at its maximum capacity.

When the Colosseum first opened, the emperor Titus celebrated with a hundred days of gladiatorial games. Emperors traditionally attended the games. The emperor Commodus is known to have performed in the arena on hundreds of occasions. Aside from the games, the Colosseum also hosted dramas, reenactments, and even public executions.

Below the Colosseum were numerous rooms and underground passages. Here is where the animals and gladiators were kept, waiting to meet their fate in the arena above. There were also 36 trap doors in the arena for special effects.

Eventually, the Romans' interest in the games waned. After the fall of the Western Roman Empire, the Colosseum began to deteriorate. A series of earthquakes during the fifth century A.D. damaged the structure, and it also suffered from neglect. By the 20th century, nearly two-thirds of the original building had been destroyed. Nevertheless, a restoration project began in the 1990s to repair the Colosseum. Today it is one of modern-day Rome's most popular tourist attractions, hosting millions of visitors a year.

Next, you will enjoy a Group Dinner and check-in to your hotel; experiencing Roman sites along the way..... **to be continued in next week's Newsletter.**

Rome "Fun Fact" #7

To protect Colosseum Spectators from the blistering sun and heat of Ancient Rome, there was the "**velarium**" – an awning that could be pulled over the top of the seating area to provide shade.