



FESTIVAL CORALE INTERNAZIONALE DI ROMA

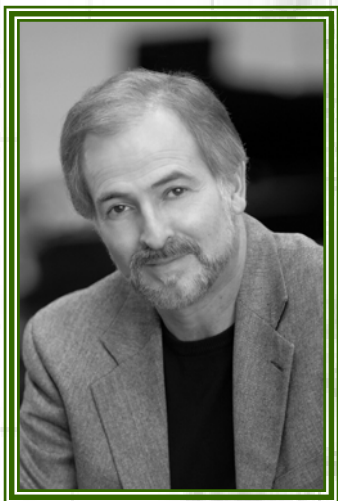
June 25 – 28, 2009

a festival for american and italian choirs

St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican

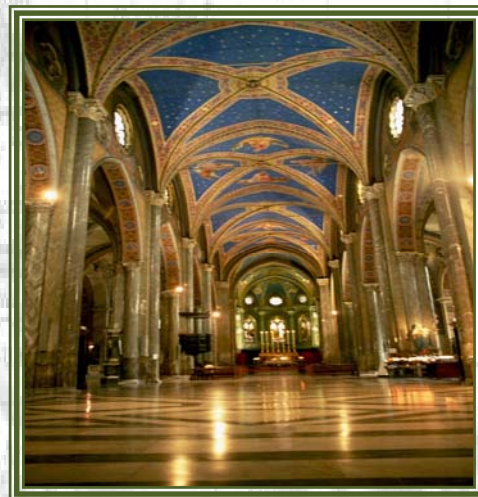


Santa Maria Sopra Minerva



artistic director

Z. Randall Stroope



organized by

Music Celebrations International

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WELCOME TO ROME!

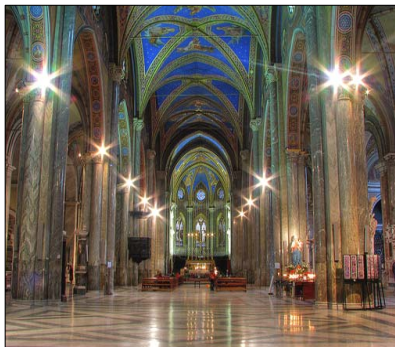
Music Celebrations International is pleased to announce the **Rome International Choral Festival**. This mass festival of American and Italian choirs will take place in *St. Peter's Basilica* in the *Vatican*, and Rome's famed *Santa Maria Sopra Minerva*.

The founding of Rome goes back to the very early days of civilization. It is so old, it is today known as 'the eternal city'. According to legend, the city of Rome was founded by the twins Romulus and Remus on April 21, 753 BC, but archaeological evidence supports the theory that Rome grew from pastoral settlements on the Palatine Hill but in the area of the future Roman Forum, coalescing into a city in the 8th century BC. The city developed into the capital of the Roman Kingdom, Roman Republic (from 510 BC, governed by the Senate), but finally the Roman Empire (from 27 BC, ruled by an Emperor); this success depended on military conquest, commercial predominance, as well as selective assimilation of neighboring civilizations, most notably the Etruscans and Greeks. Roman dominance expanded over most of Europe and the shores of the Mediterranean sea, while its population surpassed one million inhabitants. For almost a thousand years, Rome was the most politically important, richest and largest city in the Western world, and remained so after the Empire started to decline and was split, even if it ultimately lost its capital status to Milan and then Ravenna, and was surpassed in prestige by the Eastern capital Constantinople.



St. Peter's Basilica

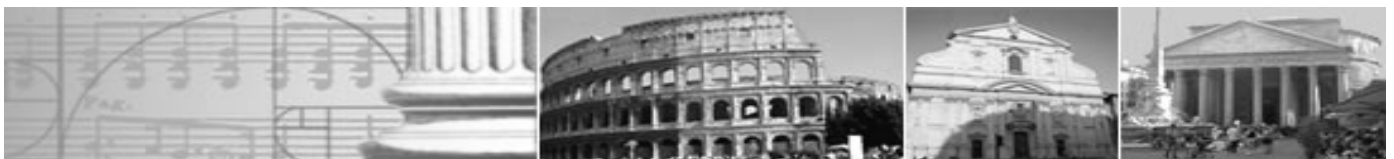
St. Peter's Basilica is one of four major basilicas of Rome. It is the most prominent building inside the Vatican City and built on the ruins of Old Saint Peter's Basilica. Directly to the east of the church is St Peter's Square (*Piazza di San Pietro*), built by Gianlorenzo Bernini between 1656 and 1667. It is surrounded by an elliptical colonnade with two pairs of Doric columns which form its breadth, each bearing Ionic entablatures.



Santa Maria Sopra Minerva

Santa Maria Sopra Minerva is considered the only Gothic church in Rome, and is the city's principal Dominican church. The basilica gets its name because, like many early Christian basilicas, it was built directly over (sopra) the foundations of a temple dedicated to the goddess Minerva. Behind a self-effacing facade, its arched vaulting is painted with brilliant red ribbing, and blue with gilded stars, a 19th century restoration in the Gothic taste. The basilica is located on the small piazza Minerva close to the Pantheon, in the rione Pigna.

Saint Catherine of Siena is buried here (except her head, which is in the church of San Domenico in Siena). The famous early Renaissance painter Fra Angelico died in the adjoining convent, and is buried here also, as is Pope Paul IV and the Medici popes Leo X and Clement VII. Before the construction of San Giovanni dei Fiorentini, the Minerva was the church of the Florentine nation, and therefore it houses numerous tombs of prelates, nobles and citizens coming from that Tuscan city.



FESTIVAL TOUR ITINERARY

Wednesday June 24th, 2009

Depart from USA via scheduled air service, including full meal, beverage service and in-flight entertainment. The destination is Rome, Italy.

Thursday June 25th

Arrive in Rome. Meet your MCI Tour Manager, who assists the group to the awaiting chartered motorcoach for an orientation tour of Rome, stopping at sites such as Spanish Steps, Trevi Fountain and Piazza Navona (lunch on own). Late afternoon transfer to the hotel for Welcome Dinner and overnight.

Rome - Popes, Vandals, the Borgias and Napoleon, Garibaldi, Michelangelo and Mussolini and, of course, the ancient Romans themselves all have left their physical and spiritual mark on Rome, but though she keeps the glory of an ancient day about her, she remains a wellspring of creative energy; in short, she really is the Eternal City.

Friday June 26th

Morning rehearsal. After the rehearsal, depart for a half-day guided tour of *Imperial Rome*, including entrance to the Roman Forum and Colosseum. Also view the Pantheon, Baths of Caracalla and Palatine Hill. Late afternoon at leisure for additional sightseeing, shopping or other planned activities. The center with its churches, ancient palaces and monuments, spacious parks, tree-lined boulevards, fountains, outdoor cafes and elegant shops, makes Rome one of the world's most attractive cities.

Saturday June 27th

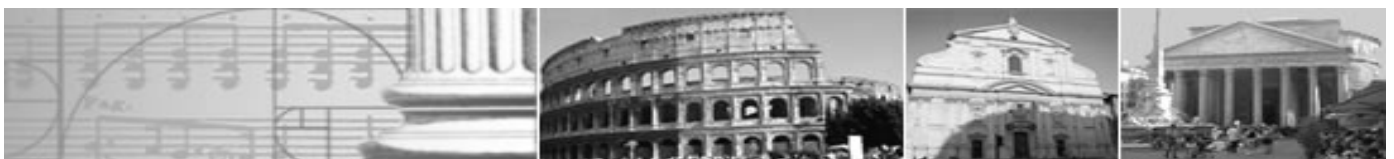
Morning rehearsal. After the rehearsal, depart for a half-day guided tour of *Religious Rome*. Visit Vatican City, the home of the Pope and the center of Roman Catholicism, as well as the Vatican Museum (using the whisper system), St. Peter's Basilica and the Sistine Chapel (featuring Michelangelo's Ceiling Frescos and *The Last Judgment*). **Combined choirs will participate/sing in a late afternoon Mass in St. Peter's Basilica.**

Sunday June 28th

Morning rehearsal. After the rehearsal, depart for half-day sightseeing, including entrance to Ostia Antica with its beautifully preserved ruins. It was founded, probably in the 4th century BC, as a military colony to guard the river mouth against seaborne invasions. Later, during the centuries when virtually all imports reached the Capital via Tiber, Ostia gained prominence as the domestic landing for cargo boats. By the 2nd century AD, it had become a flourishing commercial center inhabited by upwards of 100,000 people, whose apartment buildings, taverns, and grocery shops are still intact. Afternoon at leisure. Dinner in a local restaurant. **6:30 pm dress rehearsal. 9:00 pm Festival Finale Concert in S. Maria Sopra Minerva.** Late return to the hotel.

Monday June 29th

Transfer to Rome's International Airport for return flight to USA. Arrive home in the evening of the same day.



SUGGESTED FESTIVAL TOUR EXTENSIONS

Through our years of experience, we at Music Celebrations know most choirs that participate in a European festival will want to spend additional time in Europe before or after a festival in order to explore and experience the rich musical and cultural heritage Europe has to offer. Through our exclusive associations with various governmental and tourist offices, MCI is able to help choirs perform in stand-alone concerts as part of the **American Celebration of Music in Italy** concert series. The following are examples of possible pre or post-festival tour extensions to consider. Remember that MCI is more than happy to use these itineraries as a starting point to then create a completely customized tour for any choir.

Extension Tour #2: Naples/Sorrento (add two nights): Transfer to the Naples/Sorrento area. Visit the ruins of Pompeii which was buried by an eruption by Mount Vesuvius in August, 79 AD. **Evening concert in Naples.** Full-day guided tour of the Amalfi Coast, visiting Sorrento Peninsula, Positano, Furore Valley and Salerno. Late afternoon transfer to Rome for an evening Farewell Dinner and overnight.



Extension Tour #3: Siena/Florence (add two nights): Transfer to Florence via Siena. A guided walking tour of Siena includes the famous Piazza del Campo (famous for its matchless harmony and the famous horse races during the festival Palio delle Contrade), the Town Hall, built in the 13th Century, and the Duomo (cathedral). **Continue to Florence for an evening concert.** Take a half-day orientation tour of Florence. Then drive to Fiesole overlooking Florence before driving back into the city. Afternoon at leisure. Late afternoon transfer to Rome for evening Farewell Dinner and overnight.

Extension Tour #4: Siena/Florence/Venice/Milan (add four nights): Transfer to Florence via Siena. A guided walking tour of Siena includes the famous Piazza del Campo (famous for its matchless harmony and the famous horse races during the festival Palio delle Contrade), the Town Hall, built in the 13th Century, and the Duomo (cathedral). **Continue to Florence for an evening concert.** Take a half-day orientation tour of Florence. Then drive to Fiesole overlooking Florence before driving back into the city. Transfer to Venice and then on to the main island of San Marco via public boat. **Evening concert in the Venice area.** Transfer to Milan via Verona. Continue to Milan for Farewell Dinner.



Extension Tour #5: Siena/Florence/Lucerne (add four nights): Transfer to Florence via Siena. A guided walking tour of Siena includes the famous Piazza del Campo (famous for its matchless harmony and the famous horse races during the festival Palio delle Contrade), the Town Hall, built in the 13th Century, and the Duomo (cathedral). **Continue to Florence for an evening concert.** Take a half-day orientation tour of Florence. Then drive to Fiesole overlooking Florence before driving back into the city. Transfer to Lucerne. Take a walking tour of this picturebook-like town includes the Covered Wooden Bridge, Mussegge Towers, the Lion Monument and the old town. **Evening concert in Lucerne.** Farewell Dinner.