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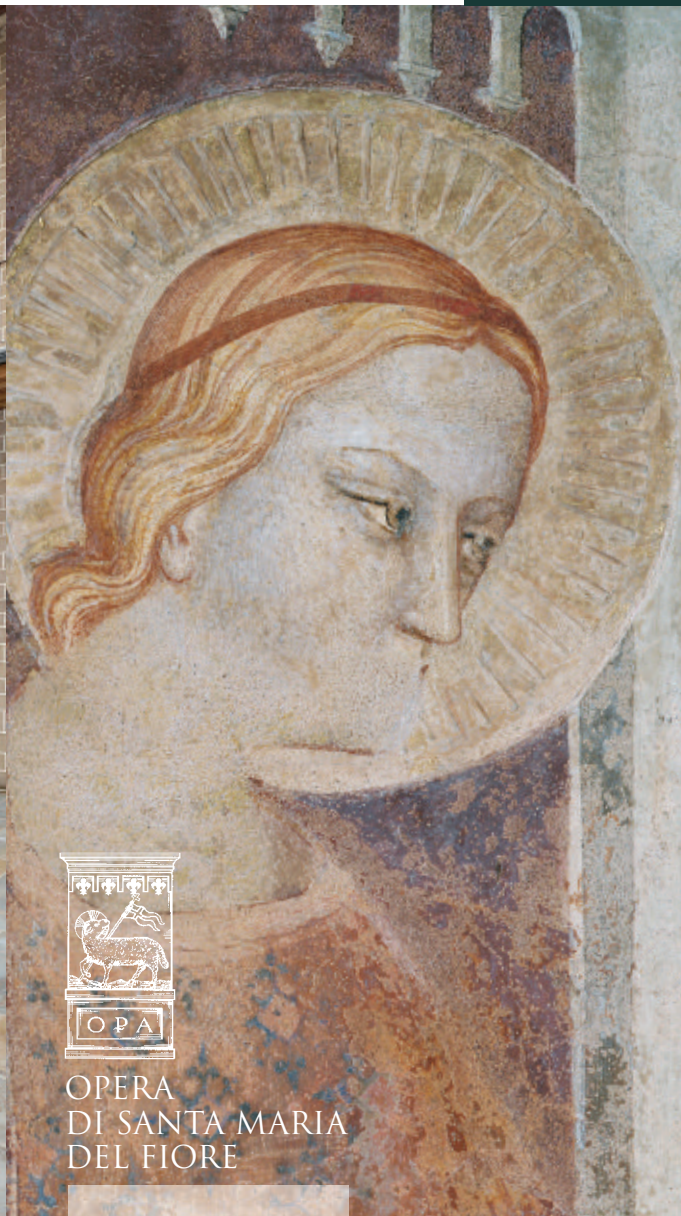
CONFERENCE ROOMS

GUIDED TOURS

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

BOOKSHOP

TOILETS



OPERA
DI SANTA MARIA
DEL FIORE



The ancient seat of the Opera di San Giovanni is located in the heart of Florence, a few steps away from the Baptistery. After years of neglect during which it no longer played a significant role in the everyday life of the city centre, it has now been restored to its original splendour.

The Opera di Santa Maria del Fiore took over the building at the end of the 18th century at the behest of Grand Duke Peter Leopold of Lorraine. Repair work was carried out repeatedly during the following century, until high maintenance costs forced the Opera to sell portions of it, while others were rented to shops. Careful restoration has re-established its primary vocation as a public facility.

Recent archaeological excavations have unearthed coins, amphorae and everyday objects dating back to Roman Imperial times through to the Renaissance, thereby confirming that the site is as old as the city itself, with a history spanning 2000 years. The 15th-century portal deserves special mention. It is surmounted by a lunette housing a terracotta statue of young St John the Baptist by Michelozzo (the one now in place is a copy—the original is at the Bargello Museum), on both sides of which are the eagles of the Arte di Calimala, the guild of merchants entrusted with the patronage of the Baptistery.

Thanks to the efforts and generous contribution of the Opera di Santa Maria del Fiore, this historic building is now a multipurpose centre providing information and services to

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visitors of the cathedral complex and of the city centre in general.

Inside the new centre, aptly named OPA Centro Arte e Cultura, there are 5 conference rooms designed to host meetings, lectures, educational activities and other cultural events.

The Talenti, Giotto, Arnolfo and Ghiberti rooms can accommodate up to 40 people each, whereas the Brunelleschi Room holds up to 90 people. Every room is equipped with state-of-the-art AV systems with DVD and MP3 players, cable and satellite TV, Internet access, direct, USB and wireless connection, and video-conferencing hardware all combined in a single console; digital video-projectors, motorized screens and microphones are also available. All rooms can be set up in different layouts (theatre, U-shape, boardroom) to suit the occasion. The OPA Centro Arte e Cultura also offers registration desk and cloakroom services; a presidential desk, paper boards and other such implements are supplied upon request.

The OPA Centro Arte e Cultura provides guided tours of the monuments in the Piazza del Duomo and walking tours of the city centre. Special educational tours and workshops focusing on the history of the monumental complex have been developed for students and families.

An interesting if small collection of archaeological findings is open to visitors inside the building. Also inside are a large bookshop and 22 toilet facilities (with baby changing tables).

