



## *The Teatro della Concordia of Monte Castello di Vibio good of the Italian cultural and artistic heritage*

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## *Introduction*

Monte Castello di Vibio, as one of the most beautiful Villages of Italy, positively enriches the experiences of the tourist visiting the Middle Tiber valley, and contributes to the territorial economic growth especially thanks to the Teatro della Concordia (XIX century) attraction. Estimated as the smallest existing Theater for its remarkable architectural peculiarities, it can be used by visitors as atypical location for business/leisure events, civil and cultural marriages. The positive impact is to the pursue of commercial cooperations with territorial stakeholders (accommodations/restaurants and service/agency companies) bringing to a widespread income increase and following expenditure power, as from the Keynes's multiplier. The **aim** of the Teatro della Concordia Association – social promotion association – to manage the Teatro della Concordia, since 2 July 1993, arises from a passion of the non profit association components for their own roots and the peculiarities of this wonderful architectural jewel, and from the wish to increase its value to the best possible. The main project of the first twenty years of activity (1993-2013) was to approach the culture to different targets of population (young people, artists, couples longing to marry, business and non-business companies wishing to strengthen their own team spirit, school children and retired) through the proactive participation to the custody of this Italian artistical and cultural heritage and its sustainable use. This has been done with the tourist reception activities organized by the Association, and allowing for using it as an atypical functional location. It has been so possible to support its maintenance (fundraising connected to the cultural rent and free visitors contributions), giving emotions, too. Briefly, the **history of the architectural structure** is the following:

"After being closed for 42 years, in 1992 the Teatro della Concordia gave back life to one of the most Beautiful Villages of Italy, Monte Castello di Vibio. People was emotionally attached to this Goldoni structure opened in 1808 by 9 local families because, until the post-war time, it represented the village aggregation heart. Later on, the operational activity of the Teatro della Concordia Association joined the passion, and the managing and promotion of the Theater, through atypical cultural activities, increased its value and contributed to a positive economical growth on the territory. In 1997 the Teatro della Concordia, esteemed "the smallest in the world", started a partnership with "the biggest" one, the Farnese theater of Parma. On 7 September 2002, it was honored by the emission of a Poste Italiane stamp for being an "Artistic and cultural heritage", and by a greeting message from the President of the Italian Republic. A second Poste Italiane cancellation mark followed on 7 September 2008, on the occasion of the Bicentennial.

From 1808 realization until now, the Teatro della Concordia beheld the fil rouge of many emotional moments, from the masquerades of the nine owner families to the involvement of the whole countryside people; from the overcoming of the two world wars resisting the risk of being broken down to enlarge the opposite square, to its closure in 1951 for 42 long years of inactivity.

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## TEATRO DELLA CONCORDIA data sheet

Umbria Region started the recovery of its historical theatres with the FIO 1984 funds, among which the **Teatro della Concordia (1808) of Monte Castello di Vibio** was included; A contemporary document reports: "The theater was built small, on its village scale, but civilization is not estimated in cubage, nor square meters". Strengthened by this, the Municipality of Montecastello di Vibio and the Association of the Teatro della Concordia – which, in agreement, deals with its management – have adopted the slogan of having here "the smallest theater of the world", well aware that "culture" cannot be estimated in meters, and also that such a "primacy" must not be a self-seeking matter of pride. On the contrary, it is a matter of pride for the community of Montecastello to have such an invaluable heritage with a special architectural and artistic esteem.

### POSTE ITALIANE STAMP:

It is the first historical theater among the restored ones opened to the public by Umbria Region to be taken as an example and to benefit with such an important celebration by Poste Italiane. Therefore, we can undoubtedly assert that the event is significant not only for Monte Castello di Vibio, but for the whole Umbria, one of the few Italian regions that can legitimately be proud for having recovered the historical theaters opening them to the public as unique cultural heritages.



The President of the Italian Republic Carlo Azeglio Ciampi sent the following greeting message:

**"The emission of a commemorative stamp confers the right and proud value to the Teatro della Concordia of Monte Castello di Vibio, exemple of recovery and promotion of the Italian scenic and representative tradition. The theater, a little gem in a little Comune, was built on the scale of the village that lodges it. Its restoration testifies the care and commitment for the custody of the Italian identity. Renovatinga this institution like a meeting centre, gives value to the memory of the past and relaunches today the concept of culture like a further reason for a serene and comune civility. I therefore congratulate the event organizers and I send all the participants my sincere greetings".**



## ATTRACTOR FOR CULTURAL TOURISM

The Municipality of Monte Castello di Vibio, since the reopening of the Theater in 1993, had the sensibility to entrust an external subject for its management. So the cultural Association "Società del Teatro della Concordia", today social promotion Association, has been established.



### The activities:

#### TOURS OF THE TEATRO DELLA CONCORDIA

**It is opened on Saturday, Sunday and Holidays:**

- from April to October: 10,00 am-12,30 pm and 4,00 pm-6,30 pm
- from November to March: 3,00 pm-5,30 pm

**It is also opened from Monday to Friday:**

- July 10,00 am – 12,30 pm
- August 10,00-12,30 pm and 4,00-6,30 pm

For any other time by prior appointment on [prenotazioni@teatropiccolo.it](mailto:prenotazioni@teatropiccolo.it)

**Since 1993 the Teatro della Concordia counted more than 175.000 visitors and 70.000 spectators**

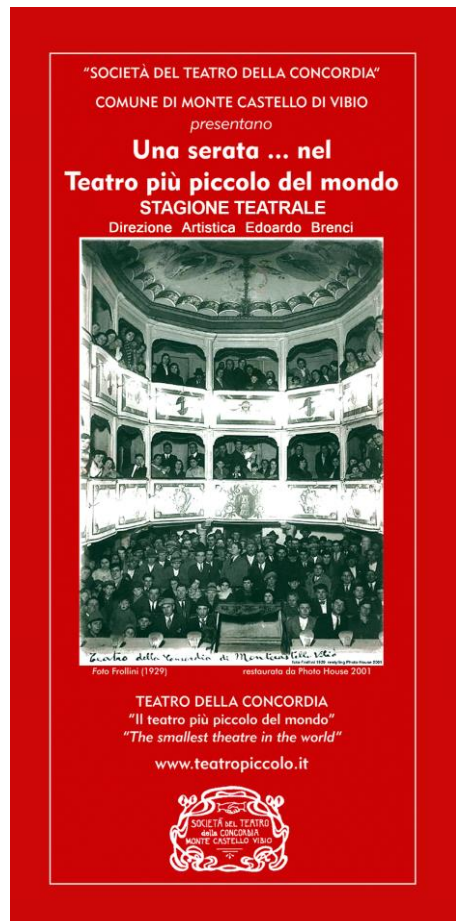
*The Cultural heritage visitor is the center of our attention to exalt the visit experience, rise and make more enjoyable and stimulating the approach to the heritage, understood as heritage to share.*



Teatro della Concordia  
(Monte Castello di Vibio)



N. 8 di 719 Siti d'interesse a Umbria  
Perfetto: Luoghi e punti d'interesse



Un week end in Umbria  
nel Teatro più piccolo del mondo



*The Theatrical season addresses a National and International public, although affording only 99 seats*



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## ATYPICAL LOCATION

The Teatro della Concordia offers itself like attractive location for happenings such as

- celebrations of civil marriages
- meetings and conventions
- creative and educational laboratories for cultural and educational exchanges of European significance.



**99 posti per sognare**

foto Photo House

**Sbrigatevi. Il centesimo resta fuori.**  
L'atmosfera ottocentesca del teatro nell'intimo spazio di un salotto culturale. Dove nessuno è solo un semplice spettatore, ma un ospite da accogliere. Dove il teatro non è vissuto solo per il teatro ma diventa un luogo unico per i vostri *Convegni in Miniatura* e per un Grande "si" nel piccolo scrigno.

Per approfondimenti:  
[www.teatropiccolo.it](http://www.teatropiccolo.it)

*Teatro della Concordia*  
Il teatro più piccolo del mondo



**99 places to dream**

foto Photo House

Hurry up! There's only room for 99 people in this early XIX century theatre, squeezed into the intimate size of a period drawing-room. Where no one is merely a simple spectator, but a warmly welcomed guest, and the theatre is regarded not just as a stage but as a unique venue to hold *small gatherings* and to celebrate the big "I do" in a jewel casket.

To deepen:  
[www.teatropiccolo.it](http://www.teatropiccolo.it)

*Teatro della Concordia*  
The Smallest Theatre in the World

Concept & planning by Serena Brenici Pallotta

The result is the following communication

These activities bring values to the benefit of everyone:

- for the tourism growth with positive economic effects in the territory;
- for the protection, development and promotion of the environmental and cultural heritage;
- in terms of aggregation and social life development. The collaborator members, directly involved in giving their voluntary work, prove to be strongly motivated in their active participation; they act in the interests of the associative activities with a positive and propositive spirit. It is important to state that within the Association there is a specialized and organised school able to teach the young fellow the respect of the valuable community heritage and its preservation for future generations.

On web: [www.teatropiccolo.it](http://www.teatropiccolo.it)

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[Umbria video-guide from Don Matteo anticipation \(Raiuno\)](#)

[Twenty years of activity of the Associazione del Teatro della Concordia](#)

[France 3, Des Racines et Des Ailes: le plus petit théâtre dans le monde](#)

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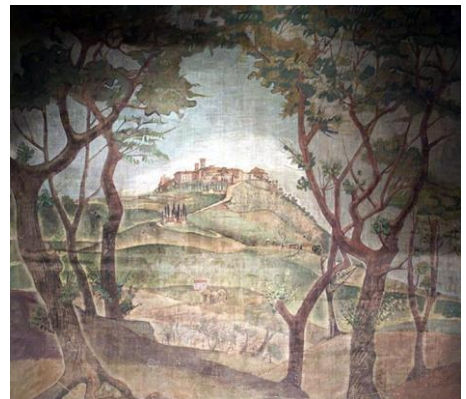


## ITS HISTORY

In the heart of the heart shaped village of Monte Castello di Vibio (Umbria – Province of Perugia), on the top of its 422 meters high hill, is located an invaluable structure: a one of a kind jewel, “the smallest theater in the world”. Ninety-nine places to dream! Divided between boxes and stalls.

The Teatro della Concordia was planned during the post 1789 French revolution time, and later named after exactly that “concord among Nations” feeling that was resetting Europe at the beginning of the nineteenth-century, when nine prestigious families of the village decided to build in Monte Castello a place of entertainment and meeting, a coffee lounge. Its opening dates 1808, during a time of maximum cultural splendor, like an exemple of redemption from centuries of vicissitudes and predominance over the Montecastello inhabitants. “The fine parlour of the fashionary Monte Castello“, it was built small purposely, fitting the inhabitants and the village measurements. After all – they wrote – civility doesn't have to be estimated in volumes, nor in square metres”. Made “to their measurements” (of the nine families) they ordered the master carpenter to build two orders of boxes placed in nine columns, but no one owned a specific box. In the name of concord, indeed, it was established that each month every family had to move to the side box, so that everyone could enjoy the central view. The structure of the little boxes is entirely in wood, for an excellent acoustic sound, so that nowadays it is even used like a recording room.

In 1827 the owners of the theater, “i caratanti”, established the management association named "Accademia dei soci del Teatro della Concordia". In 1861 the painter Cesare Agretti, from Perugia, who loved to spend his holidays in this place, began the first paintings of the boxes frontals, representing, in the central one, sharing hands as a gesture of “concord”. He also presented the theatre with the stage background where he painted the view of Monte Castello di Vibio at that time. Cesare left Umbria to move to La Spezia, in Liguria, but he remained in close relations with the owners of the Theater and, when in 1892 he came to know about its first restoration, he sent his fourteen years old son Luigi to fresco the ceiling, the fanlights on the side of the stage, the frontals of the stage boxes, and the foyer hall of the second order. Luigi Agretti, this “young boy from the Tyrrhenian sea”, as mentioned in a poem dedicated to him for his frescos, imprinted in his works the feelings of his precocious vitality through the use of bright colours. Monte Castello di Vibio appears like an oasis of peace: along the foyer staircase he paints a foreshortening of the medieval walls and writes: “Hail pleasant hill, our country”. The years 1930-40 record a number of performances of the local amateur company, the band and the Choral of Monte Castello di Vibio, with a keen participation of “villagers and countrymen”. In 1945 the Teatro della Concordia of Monte Castello di Vibio witnesses the first steps of another celebrity: here on vacation, a very young Gina Lollobrigida played Corinna in “Santarellina”, directed by Eduardo Scarpetta. In 1951 the theater was closed because not safe.. Only in 1981 the Municipality of Monte Castello di Vibio started the steps for the expropriation, so allowing its restoration using a European Community financing. In 1993, after seven years of works (under the direction of the architects Paolo Leonelli and Maurizio Struzzi), the restoration was over. The same original wooden structure of the boxes was kept, passing every load and safety tests required. So, keeping the original frescos, a patrimony of a very high architectural value was preserved. A miniature symbol of the eighteenth-century theatre in “bibienesco” style.



## ***Is it the smallest Theater in the world?***

Here in the small village of Montecastello, the nine landowner families who bravely and happily decided to build the theater made it "small as their village was. After all, civility is not estimated in volumes, nor in metres"... (quote from a letter dated 1800). Surely there are other theaters with less than 100 seats, the so-called "Court theaters", for instance, that we can find in many parts of Europe. The Teatro della Concordia of Montecastello di Vibio is named "the smallest in the world" because it is a perfect miniature reproduction of the large Italian and European theaters. Like them, it is entirely made out of wood, with the bell-shaped, or "Italianshaped", plan (in "Goldoni" style); with the typical proscenium, fresco decorations all over the open surfaces, foyer and ceiling included (this last one in "camorcanna" technique). There is a coffee room, a dressing room, a meeting room, trellis, the elegant entrance staircase, the hall and the box-office. The main stair to the boxes orders, and a secondary stair. Considering all this in such a small space, and with such a wealth of details; considering its artistic and architectural value and the perfect acoustic, we can say that the slogan assigned to it, since always, is for sure the most suitable and appropriate. Priceless, accurate in every single element, exemple of taste and proportions, it is a place where you can breathe lightness and pleasantness. A real artwork. Unique in its kind in the Italian and European theatrical panorama, therefore incomparable to any other small theater. An artwork that, since Settembre 2002, claims its own stamp honouring its being part of the "Italian artistic and cultural heritage".

The architects Mario Struzzi e Paolo Leonelli, who directed the latter restoration in 1993, in their technical Report refer:

*The Teatro della Concordia is remarkable because it is for sure one of the smallest in the world, but also because it can be considered unique in its kind, being cleverly halfway between the sixteenthcentury theater setting in pre-existent structures, and the typical "Italian" theater. It is characterized by a well-ordered balance among its three specific settings: entrance, hall and stage. The other details that make a little jewel of it, and something absolutely special, out of any Umbrian theatrical typology, are:*

- *the measurements of the three main areas, with a usable surface of: 29sq.m. for the entrance, 68sq.m. for the hall, 50sq.m. for the stage;*
- *the boxes structure entirely made out of wood, whose sound box produces the perfect acoustic for the hall ;*
- *the stalls space, emphasizing the horse-shoe shaped perimetry;*
- *the polygonal cove of the boxes;*
- *the gallery absencee*



Stalls and view from the second box order of the Teatro della Concordia of Monte Castello di Vibio



## References:

[www.teatropiccolo.it](http://www.teatropiccolo.it)



This musical production wants to bring out the acoustic particularity of the Teatro della Concordia, characterized by its wooden structure and the ceiling that, built with the “camorcanna” technique gives the hall the sound box perfection.



<http://www.teatropiccolo.net/blog/il-teatro-per-te/>



**Prezi** [Discover the smallest theater](http://www.teatropiccolo.net/blog/il-teatro-per-te/)



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