

# CantaRode International Choral Festival 2014

*By Fanny Eijdem*

As a result of international interest, the first choral festival CantaRode opened with a concert on Friday, 13th June 2014, in the atmospheric Abbey Church of Rolduc in Kerkrade, The Netherlands. Ensembles of Musica Sacra International Marktoberdorf (Germany) were on stage and gave a surprising opening concert. The musicians and singers from Morocco, Lebanon, India and France kept the audience spellbound.

□It is not surprising that an initiative for just such an international chamber choir festival should begin in Kerkrade. Kerkrade and the surrounding areas are rich in choirs. There are often high level performances and many choirs with a long tradition have been designated “Royal”, according to international standards. The promoters of CantaRode want to encourage choral singing. One of the aims is also to improve international cultural exchanges. These goals will be realised by organising high quality concerts and will be enriched by an international competition for chamber choirs. Furthermore CantaRode recently started a children’s education programme, called CantaYoung.

The CantaRode festival is acknowledged internationally by the Choral Festival Network.

## **City of music**

Kerkrade is known far afield as a city of music, culture and attractions. The many music societies, the scores of works of art in the city and its specific cultural traits form the breeding ground for the city’s rich and varied cultural life.

Kerkrade is host to two music festivals generating national and international pulling power: the World Music Contest for wind music and the Orlando Festival for chamber music. More than 20,000 musicians visit Kerkrade for every iteration of the WMC, performing for 550,000 visitors and music lovers. The city of Kerkrade aims to organize the music event CantaRode every two years to mark the Ascension, drawing choirs from all over the world to present their high level in choral music.

Kerkrade is well-known not only for music; in recent years it has also built up a reputation as a city of attractions. Kerkrade has a broad spectrum of activities and places of interest. GaiaZ00, Discovery Center Continium and Rolduc Abbey have put the city on the map, and the eighteenth-century castle, Kasteel Erenstein, is another lovely place worth visiting.

### **Kerkrade, border town**

The beauties of the Limburg region are many and varied. However, this captivating area is just part of a wider region that extends on all sides into neighbouring Belgium and Germany. In addition to the diversity of recreational, historical and cultural attractions in Limburg, Belgium and Germany are within a stone's throw of the region, with major towns and cities such as Aachen, Hasselt and Liège within striking distance.

The towns and villages have a rich history and tradition, and the high level of cultural activity throughout the whole of society is a typical feature of beautiful Limburg which holds a strong international position within Europe.



## Chants Sacrés Gitans en

**Provence**

### **Rolduc Abbey**

All singers are hosted at Rolduc Abbey, founded in the twelfth century. Rolduc Abbey merges the age-old tradition of monastic hospitality with contemporary service. The modest and tranquil atmosphere make it a unique and inspiring location for the participants of CantaRode.

An overnight stay at Rolduc Abbey means finding oneself on historic grounds. The imposing abbey complex was founded in 1104 and religion, culture, science and hospitality have gone hand in hand since the twelfth century. Evidence of this rich tradition can still be found in the wonderful abbey church, the Romanesque crypt, the eighteenth-century Rococo library and the elegant cloisters, providing an atmosphere like nowhere else.



**Kamerkoor Limburg, the Netherlands**

### **Programme 2014**

After the opening concert, an open singing activity with local people took place in the market place of Kerkrade on Saturday. A professional entertainment team was assisted by an occasional chorus of sixty-five volunteers from local choirs.

In the evening the guests enjoyed the international concert with the Kamerkoor Limburg/Netherlands, Cantando/Belgium and Cantabile/Germany. The concert was completed by the impressive world-première *Avé* by Rudi Tas in memory of Dolf Rabus and Monique Lessene.

After a round table conference with international participants, held on Sunday morning, to discuss the position of choir festivals in Europe, the first edition of Cantarode was brought to a close by the performance of Cantayoung, an initiative that aims to bring children into contact with music. During the concert the children experienced for the first time ever the meaning of making music together on stage in front of an audience, a great and exciting experience!

All the details for Cantarode 2015, can be found on the website [www.cantarode.nl](http://www.cantarode.nl)

*Edited by Kiri English-Hawke, Italy*