

Cantonigròs International Music Festival

By Andrea Angelini, ICB Managing Editor

Cantonigròs: a delightful village in the Pyrenees where the brick-faced houses display bright red geraniums in their window boxes. Small as it is, the village is well-known, having been for the last twenty-eight years the venue for a major Music Festival. This event takes place out of doors, trusting that the July days will always be sunny. The Festival welcomes Choirs and Dance Groups from all over the world, and every year provides stirring moments. This event is not just a meeting of immensely differing cultures, but also a meeting of people, individual persons who all come away greatly enriched by this kaleidoscope of sounds and colours. Catalonia is a proud land: proud of its history, its traditions, and its language. "I have a long-term project in mind" says Josep Maria Busquets, President of the Festival. "I want to found a multi-purpose theatre large enough to accommodate the Festival audiences, and adaptable enough to be used on other occasions as an auditorium for plays, for chamber music, and so on." Here at Cantanigròs, the whole world parades before you as you watch and listen, enthralled by the sound of the many choirs and by the energy and vitality of the various dancers. The musical instruments used and the colourful costumes combine to communicate instantly the spirit of a people. Narendra Kotiyan, President of the Jury responsible for evaluating the dance groups, remarks with obvious approval: "They are traditional", referring to the Città di Canicattì Folk Group from Italy, which won first prize. The days of the Festival are very full, enlivened with varied events which are played out against the magnificent backdrop of the mountains; and in the evening, when the concerts are over, the lights of the

nearby villages and the deep silence of the woods keep you company. Faultless and very highly trained, the Choir of Santo Tomas University, Manila (Philippines) was the winner in the Mixed Voice Choirs and Folk Music Choirs classes; well-trained and very attentive to their conductor the young members of the Hangzhou Aiyue Tianshi Choir (China) who took first place in the Children's Choirs class. The much-applauded winner of the Female Voice Choirs class was the Cantilena Choir from Prague (Czech Republic).

And of course, a visit to nearby Barcelona is a "must". The innate friendliness and "joie de vivre" of its inhabitants extend a very warm welcome to visitors to this splendid city. Among the many highlights of the city, the magnificent fourteenth-century Cathedral – situated at the heart of the Barrio Gotico – has twenty-eight side chapels with superb Baroque altarpieces, and the Sagrada Familia, Gaudì's unfinished masterpiece, is utterly captivating. The famous architect's creation combines simple plain materials – wood, rough-hewn stone, fragments of brickwork – with meticulously-worked wrought-iron and stained glass. From Cantanigròs, you can also visit the little town of Cadaqués, somewhat remote at the end of a bumpy track, where the peaceful atmosphere evokes everywhere the great artist Salvador Dalì.

For information on the Cantonigròs Festival, visit:
www.fimc.es

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Translated from the Italian by Gillian Forlivesi Heywood