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UAE

National Youth Orchestra Dubai makes history with international award and landmark Vienna performances

Dubai Culture-backed youth orchestra secures third place at Summa Cum Laude Festival and becomes first UAE-based orchestra to perform at Vienna's most prestigious concert venues

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Supported by the Dubai Culture and Arts Authority (Dubai Culture) through its Dubai Cultural Grant programme, the orchestra's Strings Camerata concluded a series of performances at the Wiener Konzerthaus, the Musikverein (Golden Hall) and the ORF RadioKulturhaus.

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Dubai: The National Youth Orchestra Dubai (NYO Dubai) has achieved a historic milestone, securing third place at the 18th Summa Cum Laude International Youth Music Festival in Vienna and becoming the first UAE-based orchestra to perform at some of the Austrian capital's most renowned classical music venues.

Supported by the Dubai Culture and Arts Authority (Dubai Culture) through its Dubai Cultural Grant programme, the orchestra's Strings Camerata concluded a series of performances at the Wiener Konzerthaus, the Musikverein (Golden Hall) and the ORF RadioKulturhaus.

International recognition

The orchestra participated in the annual festival held under the patronage of Austrian President Dr Alexander Van der Bellen and the auspices of the Austrian Commission for UNESCO.

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Under the musical direction of Jonathan Barrett and Eva Gräsbeck, the Strings Camerata secured third place after competing against leading youth orchestras from around the world before an international jury. The competition took place in the renowned Golden Hall of the Musikverein under the artistic direction of Saul Zaks.

World premiere by Emirati composer

During the festival's opening concert, the orchestra presented the world premiere of "Threads of Light", composed by acclaimed Emirati musician Ihab Darwish, Founder and Chairman of the Emirates Musicians' Association.

Inspired by the values of unity, hope and the collective voice of youth, the composition showcased Emirati creativity on an international stage while promoting cultural exchange through music.

Dubai Culture support

Shaima Rashed Al Suwaidi, CEO of the Arts, Design and Literature Sector at Dubai Culture, said: "What the National Youth Orchestra Dubai has achieved during its Vienna tour reflects Dubai Culture's commitment to supporting the music sector, empowering local talent, and enabling young musicians to reach some of the world's leading artistic platforms."

She added: "We are proud of this outstanding achievement, which demonstrates the exceptional calibre of Emirati talent and reaffirms that sustained investment in music education and capacity-building produces a generation capable of representing the UAE with distinction on the international stage."

Al Suwaidi noted that the tour also supports Dubai Culture's efforts to strengthen international cultural partnerships and create opportunities for Emirati creatives to gain global exposure.

Developing young talent

The programme included masterclasses and training sessions led by Maestro Saul Zaks and Maestro Alexandre Grandé, providing participants with opportunities to further develop their technical and artistic skills.

The delegation also visited the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna (MDW), where musicians participated in the String Music Lab organised in collaboration with renowned string manufacturer Thomastik-Infeld.

Cultural exchange

In addition to their musical engagements, orchestra members explored Vienna's cultural heritage through visits to prominent institutions, including the Haus der Musik and the Kunsthistorisches Museum, gaining insight into the history of classical music and musical instruments.

Proud moment for the UAE

Amira Fouad, Artistic Director of the National Youth Orchestra Dubai, described the achievement as a defining moment for the orchestra.

"To bring the National Youth Orchestra Dubai to Vienna and to see our musicians perform at the Golden Hall of the Musikverein, the Vienna Konzerthaus, and the Radio Kulturhaus as the first orchestra from the UAE ever to do so, is something I will carry with me for the rest of my life," she said.

"This week has shown what our young musicians are truly capable of and what becomes possible when that talent is nurtured and believed in."

She also thanked Dubai Culture and the Summa Cum Laude Festival for their support and praised the orchestra's conductors and musicians for representing the UAE on the international stage.

The Summa Cum Laude International Youth Music Festival is held annually in Vienna and brings together young musicians from around the world to perform, compete and engage in cultural exchange in one of the world's most celebrated centres of classical music.



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