

[Government of Dubai Media Office](#) / [News](#)

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

Wednesday, July 8, 2026 2:09 PM



Dubai Culture and Arts Authority (Dubai Culture) celebrated the remarkable achievement of the National Youth Orchestra Dubai's Strings Camerata Orchestra following the successful conclusion of their string of debut performances across some of Vienna's most prestigious concert halls, including the Wiener Konzerthaus, the Musikverein (Golden Hall), and the ORF RadioKulturhaus, becoming the first UAE-based orchestra to perform at these iconic venues.

Organised with the support of Dubai Culture through its Dubai Cultural Grant programme, the Vienna visit included the National Youth Orchestra Dubai (NYO Dubai) and its Strings Camerata Orchestra's participation in the 18th Summa Cum Laude International Youth Music Festival, held under the patronage of His Excellency Dr. Alexander Van der Bellen, President of Austria, and under the auspices of the Austrian Commission for UNESCO.

World premiere

During the festival's opening concert, the ensemble presented the world premiere of 'Threads of Light' by acclaimed Emirati composer 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 reflected music's power to spotlight local creative talent, express Emirati identity through a universal language, and foster meaningful cultural exchange.

The National Youth Orchestra Dubai's Strings Camerata, under the musical direction of Conductors Jonathan Barrett and Eva Gräsbeck, achieved a remarkable milestone by securing third place in the prestigious competition. The achievement came after competing against leading youth orchestras from around the world before an international jury, with the competition being held in the legendary Golden Hall of the Musikverein under the artistic direction of Saul Zaks.

Masterclasses and training sessions

The programme also featured a series of training sessions and masterclasses with Maestro Saul Zaks and Maestro Alexander Grandé, providing musicians with valuable opportunities to refine their skills and engage with leading international artists, in line with Dubai Culture's commitment to nurturing emerging talent and empowering them to realise their full potential.

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. 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 added: "The tour also reflects our commitment to positioning the arts as a bridge for cultural dialogue while strengthening collaboration with leading international cultural and creative institutions. Such partnerships create new opportunities for knowledge exchange, the development of joint initiatives, and meaningful opportunities for Emirati creatives to grow and engage with global experiences, further

enhancing Dubai's presence on the international cultural map."

Cultural component

The Dubai Culture delegation and orchestra members also explored Vienna's rich artistic heritage through a cultural and educational programme featuring visits to some of the city's most renowned cultural and historical landmarks. These included the Haus der Musik, home to interactive exhibitions celebrating the lives and legacies of some of history's greatest composers, and the Kunsthistorisches Museum, which houses a world-renowned collection of historical musical instruments linked to some of the world's most celebrated musicians.

Amira Fouad, Artistic Director of the National Youth Orchestra Dubai, said: "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. This week has shown what our young musicians are truly capable of and what becomes possible when that talent is nurtured and believed in.

I would like to thank the Summa Cum Laude Festival and Dubai Culture for their support. We could not be more proud of our conductors Jonathan Barrett and Eva Gräsbeck and everyone who performed with such excellence, and represented the UAE so beautifully on these prestigious stages."

The delegation also visited the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna (MDW), where orchestra members took part in the String Music Lab, organised in collaboration with Thomastik-Infeld, the renowned string manufacturer. The visit also included a series of specialised workshops led by Maestro Saul Zaks and Maestro Alexandre Grandé.

The Summa Cum Laude International Youth Music Festival is held annually each July at Vienna's two principal classical concert venues, the Golden Hall of the Musikverein and the Wiener Konzerthaus. Operating under the patronage of the Austrian Commission for UNESCO and Austria's Federal President, the festival brings together talented young musicians from around the world in Vienna, the capital of music, to perform in an inspiring international environment.

It offers young musicians the opportunity to express their creativity through the universal language of music, foster intercultural exchange, and build bridges that span continents.

MORE ON THESE TOPICS

[Dubai News](#) [News](#) [Culture](#)

SHARE NOW



dubai.ae



البوابة الرسمية لحكومة الإمارات
THE UAE OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT PORTAL

Contact Us

One Central, Dubai World Trade Center, The Offices2, Level 7

☎ [+971 \(0\) 4 383 3333](tel:+971043833333)

✉ info@mediaoffice.ae