



## **NSO ORCHESTRA, OPERA, BALLET & CHORUS TO PERFORM SPOOKY & FANTASTICAL OPERA HANSEL & GRETEL!**

*Humperdinck's fully staged opera on 10 & 11 March at The National Theatre,  
Abu Dhabi*

**Abu Dhabi, UAE. 8 February 2017** – NSO Opera, under the umbrella of the NSO Symphony Orchestra will present Engelbert Humperdinck's fully staged opera 'Hansel & Gretel' on 10 and 11 March at The National Theatre, Abu Dhabi, a deliciously spine-tingling, musical fairytale opera that's sure to thrill!

The 45-piece NSO Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Music Director Andrew Berryman, will enthral all the family with Humperdinck's sweeping arrangement, in the musical style of Wagner.

Under the stage direction of dynamic Spanish-Jordanian Haya Nasser, Mezzo-soprano Louise Merrifield will take the principal role of Hansel, while Soprano Julia Teal Kermott is flying in from the US to take the principal role of Gretel. Both have performed previously with NSO in the UAE.

Dramatic Soprano Susanna Lauer will be the children's Mother whilst Thomas Isherwood is flying in from the UK to perform the role of Father. Dramatic Soprano Helen Kerr will be the wacky but scary Witch. Tenor Robert Millner as the Sandman and Coloratura Soprano Lauren Nieuwland as the Dewfairy, complete the professional principal role line-up.

A fence of traditional gingerbread-cookie-shaped panels surrounds the witch's gingerbread house. When Hansel and Gretel defeat the witch, shoving her in the oven, those gingerbread cookies become human – the spirits of the children the witch had eaten were trapped inside.

And, since it's an opera, the children break out in song.

A full cast of 80 Abu Dhabi-resident children in the joyful Gingerbread chorus, whacky Witch's Dance and stunning Angel ballet, will support the principle line-up, bringing colour and excitement to the National Theatre's stage.

"Hansel & Gretel is going to be a colourful and fantastical production, complete with magic spells and exploding ovens," said Janet Hassouneh, NSO's Founder & Executive Director. "It will be a little like watching 'Harry Potter' in an opera."

Some 10,000 people loved the orchestra's spectacular accompaniment of Andrea Bocelli's concert at the du Arena last April, and younger audiences were enthralled earlier by the orchestra, with Elsa and friends, as they performed live at the screening of Disney's animated film, *Frozen*.

The Abu Dhabi premiere is under NSO's 'Working with Children for Children' community initiative in support of a worldwide children's charity.

NSO wishes to express its appreciation of the following event sponsors: The UAE Ministry of Culture (Event Sponsor); Universal Hospital (Presenting Partner); Abu Dhabi Classic FM (Season Media Partner); Gulf Capital (Season Partner); Gas & Equipment Factory (Strategic Partner); and Baker Botts (Season Partner).

Friday 10 March 2017, 7.30pm Gala Evening

Saturday 11 March 2017, 2.30pm Matinee

The National Theatre, Abu Dhabi

Tickets – Platinum Dhs250, Gold Dhs150, Silver Dhs100, Balcony Dhs75

Box Office – [www.ticketmaster.ae](http://www.ticketmaster.ae) and the Concert Box Office

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**About NSO [www.nsouae.org](http://www.nsouae.org)**

NSO comprises the NSO Symphony Orchestra, the NSO Chamber Orchestra, the NSO Symphonic Pops Orchestra, the NSO Opera & Chorus and the NSO Music Agency.

More than 100 musicians of some 20 nationalities, who live in six of the seven emirates, make up the various formations of NSO and are professional musicians and musical educators who have performed regularly for their own national orchestras.

NSO performs numerous major symphonic and operatic works, as well as a more popular classical and music theatre repertoire. Every concert endeavours to feature musical contributions from the UAE, whether a composer, solo singer or musician, such as a pianist or *Oud* player.

NSO presents concerts throughout the year for the general public and is regularly called upon to perform for private, corporate and government events. NSO also outsources, through its NSO Music Agency, smaller groups such as the NSO Symphonic Brass, the NSO Big Band, the NSO String Quartet, the NSO Jazz Ensemble, the NSO Three Tenors and the NSO Three Sopranos. NSO is the official supplier for Cleveland Clinic Abu Dhabi's 'Arts for Health' programme, providing musicians for inspiring live music performances for patients and their families.

Entrepreneur and former Opera Singer Janet Hassouneh founded NSO in 2011 to meet the region's cultural aspirations. Originally from the USA, where she obtained her master's in musical performance, she has worked in the music business in the UAE for the past 30 years, performing, teaching and organising music theatre and opera concerts featuring international guest artists from New York and London.

Numerous performances were staged for charitable causes, under the auspices of the UAE authorities. NSO UAE was formed to reciprocate the government's hospitality.

**About Universal Hospital [www.universalhospitals.com](http://www.universalhospitals.com)**

Since its inception in 2013, Universal Hospital has established a name for itself as a multi-specialty health care facility where technology and comfort provide a seamless culture of improved care. The tertiary care facility in Abu Dhabi is rapidly paving the way for better service to the ailing with care and compassion. It is equipped with a pharmacy, 24-hour emergency and ambulance services, a fully equipped Laboratory and Radiology Department with a 128 slice CT scan, a 1.5 Tesla MRI, a Dual Plane Cath Lab, a Digital Fluoroscopy, a Digital Mammography with Stereotactic Biopsy, a Dialysis Unit, and advanced delivery suites, among other services.

The hospital information system has been designed keeping in mind the need to evolve and adapt according to the dynamic requirements of a digital health care enterprise. Records are digitalized for faster and smoother benchmarking in different areas. In addition to the sophisticated infrastructure, Universal Hospital has a highly qualified medical and nursing team, committed to quality service and patient safety. Each department boasts physicians who have ample experience in their respective area of expertise. Universal Hospital is set to take the next leap in health care standards and expand its complete care package with a view to reaching out to the ailing across communities. A new tower has been added to the Abu Dhabi facility, and the hospital is also spreading its wings across Dubai (Gulf Medical Center), Sharjah (Lifeline Clinic) and Baniyas (Universal Hospital Clinics LLC). The clinics provide personalized care services by qualified doctors ranging from general practitioners to visiting specialists.

**About Gulf Capital** [www.gulfcapital.com](http://www.gulfcapital.com)

Gulf Capital is one of the leading alternative asset management firms in the Middle East, investing across several asset classes including Private Equity, Private Debt and Real Estate. The firm currently manages over AED13 billion of assets across 10 funds and investment vehicles. Gulf Capital's mission is to grow capital and build value with world-class expertise and best practices to generate sustainable superior performance for all stakeholders. Gulf Capital, which is celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year, invests its own capital alongside its fund investors' capital in all of the funds it launches. Gulf Capital received regional and international recognition from industry peers and experts. The firm was awarded the "Best Private Equity Firm in the Middle East" Award by *Banker Middle East* magazine in 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015 and the "Best Private Equity Firm" in the Middle East and North Africa by *Private Equity International*, as well as "Best SME's Credit Fund in the Middle East" in 2015. The firm is actively involved in real estate development through Gulf Related, its joint venture with the Related Companies, the leading private real estate developer in the United States. Gulf Related is focused on pursuing marquee, large-scale, mixed-use and residential real estate development opportunities in the UAE and Saudi Arabia. Gulf Capital also launched a Private Debt business, Gulf Credit Partners, which offers credit and mezzanine financing to meet the funding needs of fast-growing companies and to provide acquisition finance across the Middle East, North and Sub-Saharan Africa, as well as Turkey. With its private equity, real estate and private debt initiatives, Gulf Capital is today one of the largest and most diversified alternative asset managers in the Middle East.

*Issued by Borouj Consulting on behalf of Gulf Capital. For more information, please contact: Randa Mazzawi [randa@boroujconsulting.com](mailto:randa@boroujconsulting.com) or Mayssa Makhoulouf [mayssa@boroujconsulting.com](mailto:mayssa@boroujconsulting.com) at Tel: +9714 3403005, Follow us on Twitter @Borouj.*

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