



BALQEES AL FATHI INTERVIEW

EMIRATI SINGING SENSATION ON PERFORMING WITH THE NSO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

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Rising Emirati singing sensation Balqees Al Fathi is performing with the National Symphony Orchestra. We spoke to her about her career so far.

- **Did you ever think you'd be doing these kinds of big events when you first started out in music?**
To be honest with you, no. When I started, I started as a traditional Emirati singer. And then, I think it was destiny that took me to the NSO; I'm keen on supporting local talent, and we don't have too many sopranos here. They're very scarce. The first concert that happened was at the university on November 29 2012, and then it was on a smaller scale – but it's much bigger now.
- **Do you ever get nervous performing live?**
Of course! It's a great responsibility for me, and for anyone who gets on stage performing with the symphony orchestra. Even the biggest stars in the world in classical music get nervous before they go on stage and they get really worried. The audience of the opera is a premium class audience, and you need to perform on a premium level in order to impress.
- **Apart from music, what other art do you enjoy?**
Naturally, music is the number one art form in my life. But as for other art that I appreciate, anytime I travel outside UAE, the first thing I do is go to the museum because I know that the culture there represents all civilisation, throughout that country.
- **How do you enjoy performing in Abu Dhabi?**
Abu Dhabi is my homeland. I know its people very well, and its preferences when it comes to music. Every time I perform in Abu Dhabi, I feel so proud, and the people I'm speaking to know my music – I speak their language, even in terms of music.
- **Why do you think people should come to see the new NSO season?**
It's an entirely new side of music – it's coming from the West, with some Eastern flavour. By having some UAE Nationals performing on stage, and myself as an Emirati soloist, what we want to do is showcase our local talent at an international level, starting with the UAE and then to the whole world. Balqees performs with the NSO at select upcoming events. Visit www.uaenso.org for more information.