



NSO
Symphony Orchestra
ان.اس.او. الأوركسترا السيمفونية

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NSO OPERA'S "AM AHL & THE NIGHT VISITORS" ENTHRALLS THE CAPITAL'S OPERA-LOVERS

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Abu Dhabi, UAE. 25 January 2015 - NSO Opera attracted an appreciative audience at the weekend for its first-ever musical venture in the capital - Menotti's "Amahl & the Night Visitors".

The fully staged, one-act performance at Abu Dhabi's Brighton College, featured international and UAE-based opera singers, who were supported by the NSO Chamber Orchestra and Chorus, conducted by American music professional Ron Malanga.

Lameece Bouarroudj gave an enchanting performance as the poor, crippled shepherd boy, Amahl, her clear soprano voice blending well with that of award-winning American Soprano Gretchen Hewitt, who gave a stunning performance as Amahl's Mother.





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Visiting Amahl and his Mother on their way to Bethlehem were the Night Visitors: King Balthazar – London-based Bass-Baritone Thomas Isherwood; King Kasper - Abu Dhabi-based Tenor Domenico Cannizzaro; and King Melchior - Dubai-based Baritone Jerzy Olsson-Nagorski, along with their Page, Carlos Páez, whose mellifluous voices united for a number of beautiful arias and whose colourful robes and glittering gifts were in stark contrast to a stage set depicting Amahl's bleak hut, set in the rolling hills of the Holy Land.

The addition on stage of a chorus of shepherds bringing food and children giving a folk dancing display gave light relief to the drama and drew an enthusiastic response from the audience.

Ron Malanga kept the performance to a lively pace, masterfully conducting the very professional NSO Chamber Orchestra.

Janet Hassounah, NSO Founder and Executive Director, said: "NSO Opera's "Amahl & the Night Visitors" proved to be an ideal work for our very first undertaking. As a family opera, it attracted quite a number of children whose parents wanted them to experience the wonderment of opera, with its music, costumes and stage sets, by a work especially written for children. We hope to stage this opera every year, in keeping with the traditional year-end festive season."





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As an introductory highlight, Emirati young people performed a charming sketch in English beforehand to explain the story of the opera. Emirati filmmaker Manah al Badah performed the role of the Mother and was joined onstage by Zayed Al Nauwis (the boy) and Omayya Al Kudsi (the girl).

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

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 Three Tenors and the NSO Three Sopranos.

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.

