



## **NSO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA FACILITATES EMIRATI COMPOSER DEBUT IN FLORENCE**

*Pianist Hamad Altaee performs with Orchestra da Camera Fiorentina*

**Abu Dhabi, UAE. 28 March 2018** – In a cross-cultural collaboration, the [NSO Symphony Orchestra](#)'s Music Director, Andrew Berryman, conducted the Orchestra da Camera Fiorentina in Florence, Italy, on 25 March, in a concert that featured NSO Principal Flutist Christian Plouvier and Emirati Composer and Pianist, Hamad Altaee, performing his own compositions for piano and orchestra.

For the first time for an Emirati musician in Italy, Hamad performed his compositions, which included *Le Cheval* and *Journey of Life*.

NSO Music Director Andrew Berryman conducted the 16-piece string ensemble, the Orchestra da Camera Fiorentina at the Auditorium di Santo Stefano al Ponte in Florence, which was attended by music enthusiasts, including the UAE Consulate General to Rome Italy, His Excellency Mr Saqer Nasser Ahmed Abdullah Al Raisi.

NSO's participation in the concert was a cross-cultural collaboration, following a visit by Giuseppe Lanzetta, Music Director for Orchestra da Camera Fiorentina, who conducted works during NSO's concert in November 2017, *A Night at the Symphony*, at Abu Dhabi's Emirates Palace Hotel Auditorium.

NSO Founder & Executive Director, Mrs Janet Hassouneh, said: "It was a tremendous honour for NSO to participate in a concert by one of Florence's leading orchestras. I was especially pleased to present Hamad Altaee, as the first UAE composer to perform to an Italian audience. He performed magnificently and his compositions were received enthusiastically.

Meetings were held with Prof. Paolo Ciardi, Director of the prestigious Conservatorio di Musica "Luigi Cherubini", who invited both Hamad, Maestro Berryman and Flutist

Mr. Plouvier to perform with the conservatories own orchestra later in 2018 and hold master classes for their students. NSO hopes this cross-cultural collaboration will become a tradition for both parties in years to come.”

Hamad Altaee is a pilot and, in his free time, plays piano and composes music. He finds his greatest inspiration to write music is when he’s flying and discovering the planet. Hamad says his goal is to share his happiness, simplicity and positivity with everyone he meets along the way.

Over the past seven years, NSO has performed superb orchestral pieces in concert, such as, Tchaikovsky’s *4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> symphonies*, Bernstein’s *West Side Story Symphonic Dances*, and a full production of the opera *Hansel & Gretel*.

The orchestra has also been contracted to accompany Andrea Bocelli when he sang for some 10,000 people at du Arena in 2016, and to perform live at the screening of Disney’s animated film, *Frozen*, in 2016, the BBC’s *The Blue Planet* with Sir George Fenton for the opening ceremony of the Volvo Ocean Race in 2014, at the World Skills event in 2017, and to worldwide TV audiences such as the World Cup horseracing extravaganza in 2014.

NSO Symphony Orchestra will perform publicly for the last time on Friday 27 April. The evening gala on Friday 27 April is at 7.30pm; younger adults may like to attend the matinee at 4.30pm, which is also an 'open rehearsal', a fascinating opportunity to watch the orchestra and chorus at work and see how a piece of music is shaped and polished by Maestro Berryman and the musicians as they prepare for the gala evening. If possible, the conductor and artists may speak to the attendees following the rehearsal.

NSO’s season finale is sponsored by Abu Dhabi media hub [twofour54](#) as Presenting Sponsor, in addition to Platinum Sponsors [Gulf Capital](#), [Abu Dhabi Classic FM](#), and [Emirates Palace Hotel](#). NSO is supporting the [Make-a-Wish Foundation UAE](#), which will be present at the concert venue.

Tickets are available online now at [Ticketmaster](#):

Matinee: Platinum AED250; Gold AED200; Silver AED150; Balcony AED100.

Gala: Platinum AED350; Gold AED250; Silver AED175; Balcony AED125.

Food stations with finger-food, popcorn and beverages will be available before the

performances and during the interval.

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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 twofour54 [www.twofour54.com](http://www.twofour54.com)**

twofour54, home to Abu Dhabi's media and entertainment industry, aims to cultivate Abu Dhabi's media free zone and provide products and services to attract local, regional and international media businesses to the emirate. Tasked with enabling a new generation of creative leaders and building Abu Dhabi as the Middle East's leading hub for content creation, twofour54 provides world-class production facilities, talent development initiatives and training, and business support services for media companies.

Since establishment, twofour54 is home to more than 450 Arabic and international media and entertainment companies including Sky News Arabia, Image Nation, Ubisoft, CNN, Fox, Flash Entertainment, M&C Saatchi, and Flat6Labs, in addition to a pool of 600 bilingual talented freelancers.

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