



 *Classical Movements*

ORCHESTRA, CHOIR AND  
BAND TOURS TO:  
**The United Arab  
Emirates**



319 Cameron Street, Alexandria, VA 22314, USA  
Tel: +1 (703) 683-6040 • Fax: +1 (703) 683-6045  
E-mail: info@ClassicalMovements.com  
Website: www.ClassicalMovements.com

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*Travel Specialists for Music and Performing Groups*

## WHY THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES WITH CLASSICAL MOVEMENTS

**United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.):** The contrasts between old and new in the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.) are not only dramatic—they're often deliberate. The leaders of this oil-rich nation, made up of seven emirates along the Persian Gulf, have launched a major campaign to attract tourists with new hotels and new diversions including exciting extensions of the Louvre and Guggenheim Museums in country. But they have also maintained policies to conserve the country's traditional culture. As a result, you can easily maneuver between past and present in the United Arab Emirates.

The constituent emirates are **Abu Dhabi**, Ajman, **Dubai**, Fujairah, Ras al-Khaimah, **Sharjah**, and Umm al-Quwain. The capital is Abu Dhabi, which is also the state's center of political, industrial, and cultural activities. The main attractions in the United Arab Emirates include beaches, Arab culture, desert scenery, watersports, sand sports, horse and camel racing, shopping, mosques and historical sites. The United Arab Emirates also host to top concert halls and musicians, new opera houses and festivals, growing audiences of locals as well as tourists and diplomats especially in Abu Dhabi and Dubai.

**Abu Dhabi-** Prior to the discovery of oil in 1958, the emirate of Abu Dhabi was basically a poor, rural wasteland. Today, it has one of the highest per capita incomes in the world. The emirate is characterized by three political or geographic divisions: the city of Abu Dhabi, Al-Ain and the offshore islands. The city of Abu Dhabi, the seat of government of the United Arab Emirates and the nation's second largest city, is quite modern and clean. Date palms nestled between the glass and steel high-rises give the city a bit of soul, but it is still primarily an administrative and business center. However, it is emerging as a highly desirable destination. There's a vibrant downtown with interesting streets and abundant sidewalk cafes. Abu Dhabi's coastal area consists primarily of swamps and salt flats, but as you go inland, the view becomes classic desert: Nomads tend their sheep (often by truck or four-wheel-drive vehicle) among the oases, date palms, sand dunes and gravel pits.

**Dubai-** Epitomizing an oil-rich sheikhdom isn't a bad life, but what Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates, really wants is to entertain visitors. Dubai's tourism appeal includes big-time horse races and sporting events, a month-long shopping festival and a skyline that commands the attention of Dubai's visitors—not to mention such fascinating hotels as Dubai's own **Burj Al Arab** and the world's tallest building, the towering **Burj Khalifa**. For jaded, been-there-done-that tourists, Dubai, on the Persian Gulf, can throw in camel racing, sand boarding, sand skiing, ice-skating, snow skiing and unique cultural activities. Dubai's rapid transformation has left it with a slice of old Arabia and a chunk of modern infrastructure. In Dubai, you'll find souks selling gold jewelry and traditional wares not far from modern shopping centers selling electronics and luxury items. Visitors to Dubai will also see **wind towers** and **minarets** rising up from old neighborhoods, dwarfed in turn by Dubai's office and hotel towers. The economic downturn hit the country hard with the seemingly endless stream of new building projects slowed down to a mere trickle, but for visitors, the city is still an experience not to be forgotten.



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But the biggest contrast can be seen in Dubai's landscape: A splendid coastline and beaches are backed by an expansive desert, which in itself is a magnificent paradox of impressive sand dunes and starkly beautiful mountains.

**Sharjah**-The United Arab Emirates' third-largest emirate, Sharjah has beautiful beaches on both the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman. It's replacing its diminishing oil revenues by fashioning itself as a regional business center. There are two ports in Sharjah: Khor Fakkan, on the east coast, on the Indian Ocean, and Sharjah on the west coast, on the Arabian Gulf, 9 mi/15 km northeast of Dubai. The ports are developing their coastlines for tourism. Like Dubai, Sharjah is relatively progressive (women drive cars, have jobs and dress in western fashions). Sights in the city of Sharjah include **Government House**, the **Al Mahatta Aviation Museum**, **Al Hisn Fort**, the **Arts Center** with the **Sharjah Art Museum**, the **Heritage Area** with the **Museum of Islamic Civilization**, the **Maritime Museum**, the Aquarium, numerous house museums and the old **Al Arsah souk**, as well as an air-conditioned souk, called the Central Souk, with beautiful architecture and 600 shops. Museums worth seeing outside the city center include the Archaeological Museum and the Science Museum. Take time to walk around the Sharjah Corniche and see the huge fountain in the lagoon. Other towns of interest in the emirate include the inland oasis Dhaid (near the Hajar Mountains) and the village of Maleiha (fourth-century Hellenistic archaeological site). Be sure to take the scenic desert and mountain drive across Sharjah.

## **PERFORMANCES AND CULTURAL IMMERSION**

Venues include **concert halls, culture and art centers, museums, university halls**, and others.

## **YEARS OF EXPERIENCE**

Classical Movements starting traveling to the Middle East in 1994, with its brochure program under Blue Heart Tours with over 50 different trips and in recent years to mainly countries like The Sultanate of Oman, Turkey, Egypt, Israel and Jordan for the **National Symphony Orchestra, Collegiate Chorale, Yale Symphony Orchestra, Yale Alumni Chorus, George Washington University, Yale Glee Club** and the **Yale Institute of Music**.

Many of the countries in the Middle East have been issued Travel Warnings by the State Department. Travel Warnings are issued when long-term, protracted conditions that make a country dangerous or unstable lead the State Department to recommend that Americans avoid or consider the risk of travel to that country. A Travel Warning is also issued when the U.S. Government's ability to assist American citizens is constrained due to the closure of an embassy or consulate or because of a drawdown of its staff. Please contact Classical Movements for up to date information on travel to this region and specific countries.



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## TESTIMONIALS

**James Undercofler, President [Philadelphia Orchestra]**

“Through these many visits, we have developed rich friendships with many wonderful people, who share our belief that the transformational power of music bridges cultural differences and brings people together.”

**Jeffrey Smith, Music Director [Philadelphia Boys Choir and Chorale]**

“As always, Classical Movements created a fantastic tour for our choir. We were booked in excellent venues with great audiences, and the boys were exposed to some amazing culture experience. Having worked with the top professional musical ensembles in the world, the staff members of Classical Movements care a great deal about the logistics of performing, and they never miss a beat.”

**Bill Weber [Yale Alumni Chorus]**

“Just a note to say what a terrific job I think you did on the recent YAC tour. Quiet, unassuming, dependable, thorough and consistently effective. All of that and a real pleasure to deal with, too. Congratulations and thank you for all that you did to make the tour such a success. It was a real pleasure to meet you.”

**Judy Brophy [Choral Arts Society of Washington]**

“The best tour agents in the world.”

**L. Clancy [Virginia]**

“Culturally and historically Turkey was a delight and your tour offered value and enjoyment...All in all, I thoroughly enjoyed myself.”

**M. Stagg [Delaware]**

“Our guide was excellent. Extremely knowledgeable, great people skills, very well organized and a super personality.”

**Miriam Da Costa-Willis [Washington, DC]**

“I was very impressed with the staff and the organization of the tour. The value and cost of the tour were tremendous”.

**Eric Conway, Music Director [Morgan State University]**

“Thank you for Classical Movements' attention to making this tour so memorable... I would definitely use Classical Movements again! Thank you for your part in making this tour so very successful!”

**Timothy Lynch, Production Manager [Dallas Symphony Orchestra]**

“The great thing about Classical Movements is that they seem to be one step ahead of the unexpected. It's difficult to think of how they could have been more prepared.... Hats off to Classical Movements.”



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## PRESS

A Limited Selection

“Classical Movements founder Neeta Helms delivers musicians and singers all over the world with the precision of a Steinway piano tuner.”

**The Washington Post, Tom Heath, September 15, 2013**

“A life-changing cultural, social and educational opportunity to travel to another country.”

**The Washington Informer, Gale Horton Gay, April 24, 2013**

“Classical Movements is the go-to company for ensembles planning concert tours. The firm's who's-who list of clients includes the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Morgan State University Choir and National Symphony Orchestra, not to mention the New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra and Vienna Philharmonic.”

**Baltimore Sun, Tim Smith, June 29, 2012**

“Neeta Helms, president of Classical Movements, Inc., explains... ‘We are very aware that parents of the children pay a lot to give their children this [travel and music] experience. For them it’s a trip of a lifetime, and we want to deliver a high-quality music product.’

But it’s not just a whirlwind European vacation, as Mrs. Helms tells *Opus Osm*: ‘The choirs who come as part of the tour learn a lot of music during their trip.’”

**Opus Osm, Mary Matz, August 9, 2011**

“Classical Movements is based in Alexandria but works mainly overseas, arranging tours by American orchestras and choruses and running music festivals in [all over the world].

‘In the process of taking American groups around the world, we have had so many exchanges and collaborations, and we’ve had a great number of groups that wanted to come to the States,’ Helms says.

‘Choral music is becoming so international,’ Helms says. ‘There was a time when it was all Handel, Bach, Mozart and such. But now there are so many fantastic composers. And in the course of their tours, so many American groups have started learning Maori, Chinese, South African and Brazilian songs.’”

**The Washington Post, Mark Jenkins, June 22, 2011**

“The Iraqi National Symphony Orchestra visit involved a human element that transcended the usual business of arranging orchestra tours for Neeta Helms, executive vice president of Classical Movements.

She (Helms) ushered the musicians from their first nerve-wracking security checks at New York’s JFK Airport to their last tourist stop at Rockefeller Center on the way out of the country. “It was very hard to say goodbye. Usually when a tour ends we say, ‘See you next time.’ That’s not true in this case,” she says.

**Symphony Magazine, Rebecca Winzenried, March – April 2004**