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PERFORMING
ARTS
INSTITUTE
SHARJAH
ACADEMY

Message from the Executive Director



Peter Barlow FRSA

Welcome to Sharjah Performing Arts Academy (SPAA). SPAA is a place where invention and reinvention is at the heart of everything we do. Invention requires many ingredients, including imagination, skills, and talent.

I have been teaching and training actors, performers, and theatre technicians for more than 30 years. My work as CEO of Guildford School of Acting, as a consultant to various drama schools and courses, and my lead role as Chair of the Conference of Drama Schools, has led me to this unique, extraordinary opportunity to create a new performing arts academy.

There is a recent general assumption that talent is a gift that does not need developing or nurturing, and this myth is spread by the overabundance of talent shows across the world. In the world of performing arts talent is a starting point. Talent alone is not enough because it has no basis in knowledge or skill. Those who are truly gifted know there are hours of devotion, determination and practice, alongside absolute commitment to improvement and a constant search for ways to sharpen one's skills.

SPAA takes talented individuals and turns them into credible professional performers dancers, actors, designers, technicians and stage managers through a deep exploration of the world of drama. Becoming skilled professionals in this world requires hours of practice and dedication. Our outstanding new academy is a place that will nurture the skills of dedicated individuals and pave the way for a successful future on and off the world stage. We have set out to ensure that the most innovative teaching techniques will create Olympians of the performing arts world.

Some of the very best educators, directors, choreographers, designers, stage managers and theatre technicians from around the world will be employed to ensure every student, who is prepared to work for it, has the best chance of continuous and successful work in professional performing arts and production arts.

His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Mohammed Al Qasimi, Member of the Supreme Council of the UAE, and Ruler of Sharjah, had the vision to create a performing arts academy, which has everything a contemporary performing arts student would desire – two theatres, a gym and physio room, dance studios, acting studios, a fully equipped green screen television studio, an extensive reference and lending library, and much more, including onsite accommodation.

This unique, new academy will see performers and technicians hone their craft while receiving global qualifications in a world-class facility. At SPAA we welcome everyone from all backgrounds, and we celebrate the very best in professional preparation for the performing arts world. It is our mission to do as His Highness wished. To create a new theatre revolution, find common paths for the development of international theatre and performing arts, and to train and educate the new creative citizens of the world.

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Welcome to Sharjah

Born from the progressive vision of His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Mohammed Al Qasimi, Member of the Supreme Council and Ruler of Sharjah, and designed by Chief Architect, Hisham Abdel Fattah of CAB Consultants, Sharjah Performing Arts Academy (SPAA) is a world-class facility galvanising communities, showcasing local and international creative talent, and leading the way in higher education for professional performing arts.

Freeing the imagination is at the heart of all we do. Creativity is manifestly important to SPAA. It is the core component of every course, of every class and rehearsal. From creativity comes performance and to perform well requires the highest level of skill and craft to interpret creativity imaginatively and effectively. However, performance cannot exist in isolation and requires of the practitioner a deep and insightful understanding of cultural context, political and social conditions and the human condition in all its guises. SPAA equips its graduates with the means to be credible contenders for work in the professional performing arts.

We will produce graduates with a competitive edge in an international market, with all the necessary skills to develop a lasting career within this expanding creative industry. The reputation of the faculty and visiting teachers, the unrivalled quality of the facilities, the unbeatable location of the Academy and the determination to succeed provide the strongest platform in achieving these aims.



Performing Arts Academy

SPAA is a centre of excellence. We strive to find answers and are never satisfied with now. Students and staff have to work hard, never assume anything, rethink and challenge each other's ideas and constantly recognise that innovation and new practice will mean better bodies and stronger voices will be needed to achieve excellence.

Importantly, SPAA is breaking down barriers. Imagination, creativity and innovation are not bound by borders or cultures, and live and recorded arts can help to share universal themes that concern all humanity.

Professional employment in the performing arts world not only requires talent, but also a great deal of hard work and dedication. SPAA nurtures the talent and commitment of its students, by using the best to produce the best.

SPAA embraces, celebrates and encourages the creativity, diversity and unique talent of each individual student. However, it is more than just being about the individual. SPAA understands the power that the performing arts can have in galvanising whole communities, creating a sense of connectedness through shared experiences, events and performances.

As the only Academy of its kind in the Middle East, SPAA is already creating history. It is leading the way in training the new generation of outstanding professionals in performing arts.



Why SPAA exists

We fundamentally believe that the performing arts has the capacity to affect and benefit every single person.

Our teaching is:

Personal – we enable the development of individual student skills and passions.

Cultural – we develop students' knowledge and understanding of the world around them.

Work focused – we work with students to ensure they have the necessary skills to be productive in the workplace and have the means to earn a living.



Mission

- ♦ Provide students with specific and focussed training and education which includes individual coaching and mentoring by a dedicated, professionally qualified, motivated and caring staff
- ♦ Encourage students to direct their natural gifts and abilities into developing the skills required for their chosen career
- ♦ Expand concepts of intelligence beyond academic ability
- ♦ Prepare students for professional work in the performing arts.

“THEATRE IS THE DOOR TO DIALOGUE BETWEEN PEOPLE.
THEATRE IS A TRAVEL IN THE HUMAN PSYCHE, AND LITERARY
THRESHOLD TO SEE THE DEPTHS OF THE SOUL.”

His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Mohammed Al Qasimi
Member of the Supreme Council, Ruler of Sharjah

Values

- ◆ Creativity with focus
- ◆ Freedom of thought and expression
- ◆ The active participation of the Academy community in its life and development
- ◆ Diversity of applicants, students, staff and partner organisations
- ◆ Responsibility to the artistic, cultural and economic lives of communities beyond the Academy.



Official Opening Ceremony: His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Mohammed Al Qasimi, Ruler of Sharjah with Peter Barlow, Executive Director, and Sheikha Hoor Al Qasimi, Vice Chair of SPAA Board of Trustees.

“WE ARE NOT SIMPLY TRAINING ACTORS, PERFORMERS
AND STAGE TECHNICIANS - WE ARE INVESTING IN THE NEW
CREATIVE CITIZENS OF THE FUTURE.”

Peter Barlow - SPAA Executive Director

Our Programmes

Bachelor of ARTS (Acting)

SPAA's BA Acting programme positions its graduates as the leaders, forward thinkers and change makers of the performing arts world.

The BA Acting programme is dedicated to producing credible, professional actors who are at the forefront of the region's theatre revolution, while establishing themselves as international contenders for a global, performing arts career. Bringing together an intense, imaginative and collaborative learning environment, students are exposed to a variety of industry-leading training techniques, genres and styles. The average day comprises of skills-based morning sessions, which include dance, singing, voice and acting. Here the focus is on improving technique and technical skills. The afternoon sessions focus on project work, which affords students the opportunity to put into practice the skills and techniques learnt throughout the morning sessions.

The four-year, full-time Acting degree is designed to inspire, challenge and expand performers' skills and techniques. The programme offers students the opportunity to explore and rediscover the world of performing arts through interdisciplinary approaches to contemporary teaching and learning.



Programme Leader - Christopher Gould



Chris trained as an actor at Guildford School of Acting. After graduating, he worked as a director and actor in various film, television, internet, touring and fringe theatre. Chris trained as a drama teacher at the University of Reading and University of Northampton where he gained his teaching qualifications (OTS & PGCE). Chris also holds a Masters degree in Teaching Shakespeare from the Royal Shakespeare Company and the University of Warwick. Before coming to SPAA, Chris was Head of Drama, and was part of the Theatre team at Hurtwood House, a prestigious performing arts college in Surrey, UK. Many of his past students have gone on to have successful careers on stage and screen.

Bachelor of ARTS (Production Arts)

In the Production department we understand that to study and work in the Production Arts is a privilege and a joy, and one that all of the staff and students within the Academy thrive on. To work backstage or as part of a creative team in the theatre requires imagination, enthusiasm and invention. We're looking for students who love theatre, live performance and events. The theatre is always at the cutting edge of new technology and at SPAA we aim to be at the forefront of this technology. So if you have a passionate interest in all things Production then this could be the course for you.

The BA in Production at SPAA consists of three strands and underpinning these are the key skills that make the best Stage Managers, Technicians and Designers of today's industry. They consist of Technical: Lighting, Sound and Video; Stage Management: Stage, Event & Production Management, and, Design Realisation: Scenic Construction, Paint, Props and Costume Making, and Maintenance. By the final year students will be working on Academy Productions and an external professional placement, providing the opportunity for practical, hands on experience ensuring a smooth transition into the industry upon graduation.



Programme Leader - Jacqui George

Jacqui has been working professionally in Stage and Production Management for more than 20 years, with a major focus on Conservatoire training. Since graduating from St Mary's, London, she has taught at a number of Academies and Universities, including Guildford School of Acting, Guildhall School, Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama, Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts, and Middlesex University.

At Mountview Jacqui was Deputy Director of Production Arts, and responsible for a programme of more than 25 productions across London venues, and the delivery of a two-year fast track undergraduate degree. She has co-authored a published digital resource for paper props and frequently contributes to industry quarterlies.

Jacqui has worked with professional companies such as, National Theatre Wales, National Youth Theatre of Great Britain, English National Ballet, Wales Millennium Centre and Shared Experience, and, has Company and Production Managed Olivier award winning creative teams. Jacqui has toured the UK extensively, produced Rep seasons in the West End and internationally she has worked in Shanghai; World Expo, Berlin; Berliner Festspiele and Paphos; City of Culture.



Bachelor of ARTS (Musical Theatre)



The BA Musical Theatre programme offers a combination of world-class training and facilities, with professional connections, and opportunities for international collaboration. It is a four year, full time programme. Students will acquire industry ready skills in acting, singing and dance, as well as an option to gain a qualified dance teacher status (DDE) through ISTD and with Estill International in gaining a CMT vocal tutor certification.

The Musical Theatre programme looks for students who are passionate about Musical Theatre and have strong skill sets in either dance, acting or singing. Beyond skilled, the programme seeks those who are curious, ambitious about their own development, and passionate about language of Musical Theatre. Students will spend time working with lecturers and creative teams on new work, contemporary material, and traditional repertoire from the established global Musical Theatre network. The teaching week will consist of a minimum 30 contact hours per week. Daily classes include, dance; body conditioning; acting; voice; singing; workshops and productions.

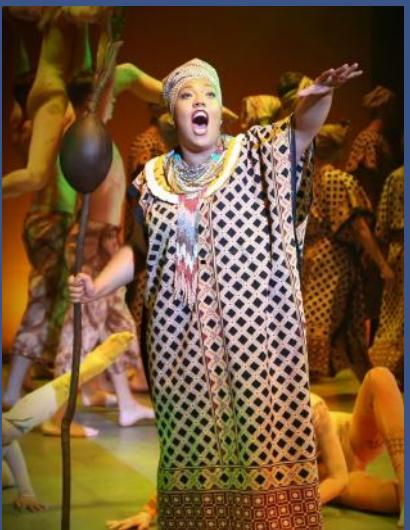
SPAA Musical Theatre students will graduate having undertaken rigorous multidisciplinary training, which provides the necessary skills for a sustainable career in the professional international Musical Theatre market, and the tools to be adaptive creatives with the capacity to shape the future of the industry.

Programme Leader - Andy Sullivan

Andy has been a performer, musical director, arranger and vocal coach on over 40 professional productions in Japan, Canada, UK, Europe and America. These include: Blood Brothers (UK tour), Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat (UK tour), Annie (UK tour), and UK Productions on many shows and pantomimes across the UK. As a vocal arranger Andy provided vocal arrangements for Bill Kenwright LTD and Jean-Ann Ryan productions (Florida). Other credits include: children's MD for the BBC proms (The Water Diviner's Tale), Blue Peter (Music Makers), Dora! (Her Majesties' Theatre) and Gizmo Theatr Clwyd. Andy has composed three short musicals for NYMT, YMT:UK and the Manchester youth project, in association with the Royal Exchange theatre.

Andy's former role was resident Musical Director at Hurtwood House School and before that he wrote and managed the Musical Theatre Foundation at Guildford School of Acting. Andy has developed his vocal practice in the UK and also clients from Les Misérables, The Phantom of the Opera, Wicked and Jersey Boys. As a tutor Andy has worked extensively at The Bristol Old Vic Theatre School, Arts Educational, Mountview, LAMDA, Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama and Sylvia Young Theatre School. Andy was the vocal advisor for, Merlin entertainment UK (Chessington World of Adventures/Alton towers/Shrek's adventure at London's South Bank. Andy holds a first class Honors in Musical Theatre, a Masters in vocal studies and a fellowship in Musical Theatre teaching with London College of Music.





Children and Young Performers

The Children and Young Performers classes are a wonderful addition to the main Academy. Conducted on Saturdays and after school throughout the school term, the classes in singing, acting, dancing and musical theatre are for young performers aged 4 – 19.

We create a fun and caring environment where each and every one of our students are valued and encouraged to be creative. The classes focus on vocational training with the opportunity for children to be creative and expressive in a safe environment.

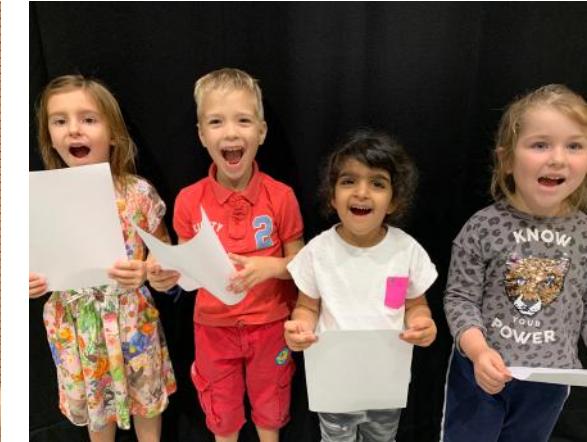
Highly qualified and experienced tutors aim to enhance children's social and life skills through the Performing Arts. The Children and Young Performers classes at SPAA give our students creativity to embrace life and make the most of their talents and opportunities.

Children learn how to sing, act and dance, while developing a broad range of life skills. Our students become more self-assured, expressive, sociable and imaginative and they learn how to tackle situations with resilience, creativity and bravery. Importantly it is all done through a lot of play and fun physical challenges.

Children and Young Performers Core Values

- Imagination
- Self-expression
- Courage
- Safe risk-taking
- Achievement and growth
- Freedom
- Inclusivity and participation





Facilities

- ◆ 432 seat theatre
- ◆ 126 seat studio theatre
- ◆ Main stage rehearsal studio and theatre
- ◆ Gallery / exhibition space
- ◆ Green screen TV studio
- ◆ Fully-equipped gymnasium (with qualified health and wellbeing staff)
- ◆ 8 dance studios
- ◆ 4 acting studios
- ◆ Library
- ◆ 12 singing rooms/voice recording studios
- ◆ Production workshops
- ◆ Laundry
- ◆ Costume store
- ◆ Make up studios
- ◆ Changing rooms
- ◆ Locker rooms
- ◆ Breakout spaces
- ◆ Administration Offices
- ◆ Box office
- ◆ Reception
- ◆ Café
- ◆ Onsite student accommodation





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Why SPAA?

SPAA informs, challenges, educates, questions, discovers and shares diversity in a safe environment, where everyone strives for excellence and the best means of storytelling by embracing all cultures and all styles.

SPAA is a centre of excellence. We strive to find answers and are never satisfied with now.

SPAA graduates will be strong, confident, independent individuals with life skills that enable them to make a significant contribution to society. Our graduates will be enterprising, creative skilled artists, entrepreneurial, socially mobile and generous human beings. They will be world wise and capable.

Applying to SPAA



- Research our full-time undergraduate degrees at **www.spaa.ae/courses**
- Read the eligibility requirements and choose your preferred undergraduate programme



- Prepare any documents required, such as a copy of your valid passport, secondary school grades, transcripts, and (Academic) English/EmSat/TOEFL/IELTS scores



- Apply directly for an audition (Acting/Musical Theatre) or interview (Production Arts) by registering through our Application Management System (AMS) at **<https://ams.spaa.ae/>**
- Confirm and Activate your AMS account
- Complete all relevant details required
- Select your preferred audition/interview date and location
- Take a deep breath, relax and prepare well for your audition/interview day*

Once your application has been accepted you will receive an official letter from our Admissions team confirming your audition/interview, what to bring and what to expect from the day.

*All expenses including travel, accommodation and food for the auditions / interview are not covered by SPAA. These arrangements will need to be organised in advance by the candidate.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Are programmes being offered in English or Arabic?

Our programmes are taught in English. Students are fully immersed in the English language to ensure as graduates they are prepared and equipped to enter a professional career in the international world of performing arts.

2. Can I do the programme part-time?

Our Bachelor degrees are full-time, intensive, practice-based programmes. Part-time study is not an option.

3. Can I start the programme mid-year?

The programmes have been designed to coincide with the start of the academic year, which allows for all units and course requirements to be completed within the designated four years. At present, there is no scope for students to commence mid-year.

4. Can I receive recognition of prior learning / transfer of credits for courses already completed?

SPAA does not currently accept transfer of credits from academic programmes at other universities. In exceptional circumstances, prior learning may be taken into account if candidates demonstrate outstanding ability and prior experience at audition or interview.

5. What do I have to do to be accepted into my chosen undergraduate programme?

We are looking for students who are confident, independent learners, are willing to embrace diversity, work with imagination, and commit to rigorous work and long hours of practice and study in the performing arts.

* There is an audition / interview process for entry into the BA Acting and BA Musical Theatre programmes.

* There is an interview process and practical test for entry into the BA Production Arts programme.

6. How much does it cost to apply / audition / interview?

There is no cost to apply to SPAA.

7. What are the fees for the undergraduate programmes?

AED 60,000 per year (for each BA programme)

8. What are the admission requirements?

Students are normally expected to be at least 18 years old and have completed at least 12 years of schooling prior to the date of application.

For applicants with General Secondary School Certificates that follow the UAE Ministry of Education curriculum, the minimum secondary school average required for admission is 60% (Scientific and Literary streams). Other streams will require a minimum score average of 70%.

In general, holders of the National High School Certificate from a foreign country are eligible for admission if:

The certificate is accepted for admissions to public universities of the country in which it was obtained.

The certificate was obtained after at least 12 years of schooling.

The certificate includes a minimum of six subjects covering the four subject areas: Mathematics, Sciences, Languages and Social Sciences & Humanities or Arts. Holders from countries of two-level High School Certificates must submit the certificate of the highest level.

Applicants are required to submit a certificate of equivalency for their High School Certificates from the UAE Ministry of Education.

For all Academy programmes students must be proficient in English. A minimum standard is required in any of the following:

EmSAT which is the national system in the UAE, with a score of 875-1225 (B1) or above

TOEFL PBT with a score of 6.5 or above

The Cambridge Test of Advanced English, with a score of 160 or above, OR,

The City & Guilds International Test of English for Speakers of Other Languages TESOL (IESOL), with a score of B1/B2 or above, OR,

The Pearson Test of English Academic (PTE Academic), with a score of 44 or above.

9. Are Scholarships available?

Scholarships are available for eligible students.

Students who are eligible will be able to apply for these once they have received their acceptance letter from the Academy. Further details regarding scholarships will be given once letters of offers have been made.

What Our Students Say



The beautiful thing about our Academy is it does not just make you a good actor, singer or dancer, or better performer. It's about knowing yourself and making you a better human being. I'm really proud we have this international academy in our region.

Kadhim (Iraq)
BA Acting

My teachers are so friendly and helpful. I really like my teachers and the way they are so focused on making sure we are industry-ready when we graduate.

Ramy (Egypt)
BA Acting

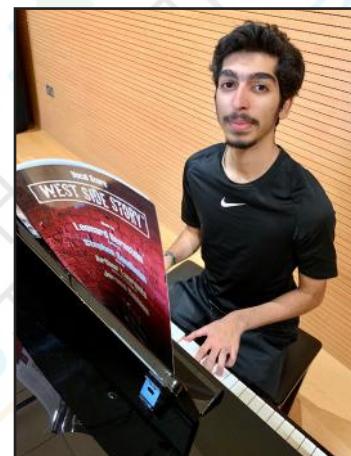


I am so proud to have realised my dream. It was my dream to be here. It was my dream because SPAA has the highest education level, and when I came here I discovered it was more than I expected.

Salma (Tunisia)
BA Acting

The wonderful thing about SPAA is that here we study everything that has to do with theatre. I am a Musical Theatre major, but I also take classes in Acting and Production Arts. This is very important for any theatre maker to know everything that has to do with theatre.

Ahmed (UAE)
BA Musical Theatre



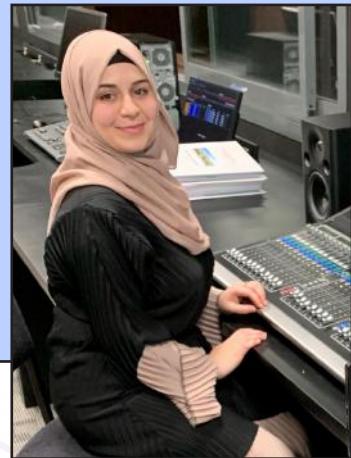


The home you love.
Where the Arts be.
Magical castle...

Where you find yourself.

Saeid (Egypt)
BA Musical Theatre

The first of its kind in the region, SPAA is a truly beautiful Academy. I'm so proud to be pursuing my goals and making history at the same time. We are so thankful to HH, Ruler of Sharjah for having such an amazing vision.



Aida (Syria)
BA Production Arts



After just one week when I came to SPAA I started to feel like I was home. SPAA is such a wonderful place, exactly like the people in it. It is one of the most safest places in the Arabic World. It's really a dream come true to be studying here.

Ayoub (Morocco)
BA Acting

Before coming to SPAA I had a lot of dreams about learning new things related to the theatre – SPAA has exceeded all my expectations.



Murtaja (Saudi Arabia)
BA Production Arts

About Sharjah

While visitors to the United Arab Emirates might easily be drawn to Dubai based on its glitz and larger-than-life reputation, Sharjah can be likened to the ‘quiet achiever’ in the family of emirates. Sharjah has a strong commitment to education, art, culture and preserving its rich heritage through exhibitions, concerts, festivals, the Mleiha archaeological site and the charmingly restored Sharjah Heritage Area, renowned for its museums, galleries, souks and authentic eateries. The emirate was named Cultural Capital of the Arab World, by UNESCO in 1998; Capital of Islamic Culture in 2014 and UNESCO’s World Book Capital for 2019.

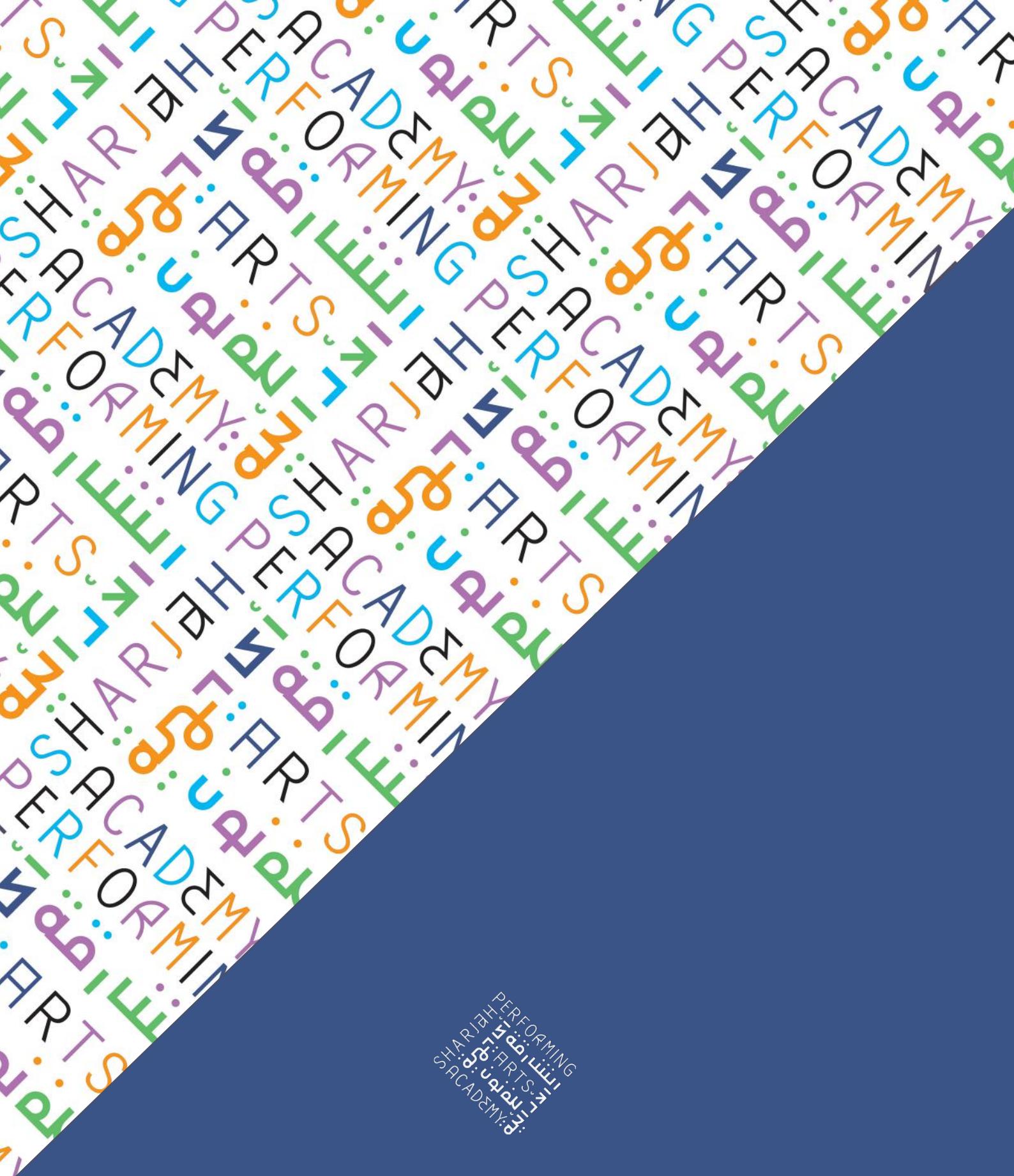
Ruled by His Highness Sheikh Dr Sultan bin Mohammed Al Qasimi, Sharjah is the third largest emirate in the country, with a population of approximately 1.6 million, and an area that covers 2,590 square kilometres. The official national language of the UAE is Arabic, although, English, Hindi and Urdu are widely spoken throughout Sharjah, due to the strong, expat labour force working here.

Nestled amidst the lapis-blue Persian Gulf, dramatic Fujairah mountains, and the aquamarine Gulf of Oman, Sharjah is spectacularly and geographically diverse. The emirate boasts of beaches, botanic gardens, desert and sand dunes, theme parks, museums, wildlife centres, historical monuments, ancient forts, public parks, and waterfront dining on manmade lakes and canals.

Sharjah Performing Arts Academy is located within Sharjah’s University City, a vibrant community home to more than 20,000 students and 15 higher education institutions. Established in 1997 by HH, Ruler of Sharjah, University City asserts Sharjah as a forward thinking emirate of education excellence, open to inviting academic exchange, curiosity and experiences in many fields of study.







SHARJAH PERFORMING
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**The only dedicated Performing Arts Academy in the Middle East.
A centre of excellence: creativity our focus; performing arts our world.**



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