

## Concert by Classical Singer Yesudas in Support of SN Chennai

Indo American News on September 28, 2017.



The volunteers and Board members of the Sankara Nathralaya OM Trust joined Yesudas on stage after the event. Photos: Venkat Kuttua Photography

**By Moorthy Rakapalli**

**MARIETTA, GA:** OM Trust-USA, the Maryland-based fund-raising arm of Sankara Nethralaya hospital in Chennai, India, organized a fund-raiser on Sunday, September 17, at Lassiter High School, in Marietta, Georgia. The event included a classical music concert by the renowned musician, Padma Vibushan K. J. Yesudas and the 1,000-seat capacity auditorium filled up hours before the start of the program.

After a welcome speech by Bala Indurthi, S. V. Acharya, President of OM Trust, USA spoke about the objectives of the OM Trust and how it had been instrumental in supporting the charitable work of Sankara Nethralaya. He was followed by the event that the audience was eagerly waiting for, the concert by Yesudas and an introduction of the artists.

Yesudas, who is 77, began the concert with a Navaragamalika varnam. After requests from the audience, Yesudas sang many of the kritis that he has popularized over the years. Before singing the very well-known Vathapi Ganapathim in Hamsadwani, invoking Lord Ganesha, Yesudas jokingly remarked that Vathapi is not the only song on Ganesha that he knows and

that he would be happy to sing another composition on Lord Ganesha. The audience, however, insisted that he sing Vathapi and he obliged. Yesudas was accompanied by Srikanth on the violin, T. S. Nandakumar on the Mridangam, Santosh Chandru on the Ghatam, and Varshney on the Thampura.

After the concert, Dr. Ram Sriram, President of the Carnatic Music Association, said that it “was a scintillating two and a half hours of music.” Sriram related how each composition that Yesudas sang during the concert inspired an emotional and spiritual feeling in the minds of the listeners. He remarked that “only when an artist feels the emotions in his own heart, can he, in turn, inspire such feelings in the hearts of the audience.”



Indian classical and devotional musician and film playback singer K.J. Yesudas performed at a fundraiser for the Chennai-based Sankara Nethralaya hospital on Sunday, September 17, at Lassiter High School, in Marietta, Georgia.

Sriram said that Yesudas was travelling in the “Sapthaswara Chari” – the universe of melody that seven notes create and that he was taking the audience with him in that journey.

After the concert concluded, the artists were honored with presents. Following this, Antony Thaliath and Subash Razdan, trustees of the Gandhi Foundation of Atlanta presented the Gandhi Foundation Peace Award to Yesudas for his contribution to world peace and harmony.

The audience was overwhelmed by emotions when Dr. Ravi Sarma spoke about his mother and how, during her later years of her life, she suffered significant loss of eyesight. He announced that a major donation to OM Trust for a sum of \$160,000 would be made by his family foundation named in honor of his mother, Pudipeddi Ramalakshmi. On behalf of Dr. Ravi Sarma’s family, Yesudas handed the check to S.V. Acharya, President of OM Trust.

The credit for putting together this event goes significantly to Dr. Seshu Sarma whose dedication and leadership brought together prominent community leaders and

organizations and a group of dedicated volunteers to help make the event a great success. Sarma, Moorthy Rekapalli, Bala Indurthi, Krishnadas Pisharodi, Uma Narayan, Srikrupa Eashwaran, Rajeev Menon, Antony Thaliath, Ashok Kumar, Raj Rengarajan and Raghava Thadavarthi worked tirelessly for months to make this event a reality. The event raised \$150,000 which that will be used to restore vision for thousands of indigent patients served by the Sankara Nethralaya Hospital.

Sankara Nethralaya is a charitable non-profit hospital in Chennai, India started in 1978 by the renowned ophthalmologist, Dr. S.S. Badrinath to offer high-quality eye care to the rich and the poor. In rural areas there is both lack of awareness of preventive eye care and availability of qualified doctors. SN has a program to take eye care to where the poor patients live through thousands of eye-camps in villages around Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Maharashtra. The poor are not charged any fees for the pre-operative or post-operative care. To defray the costs of these treatments SN depends on donations from philanthropic individuals and organizations and SN OM Trust helps to raise funds in the US.