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Special Issue on
Dr MSS birth centenary



Sankara Nethralaya OM Trust Inc.,

**Sankara Nethralaya
OM Trust, USA**

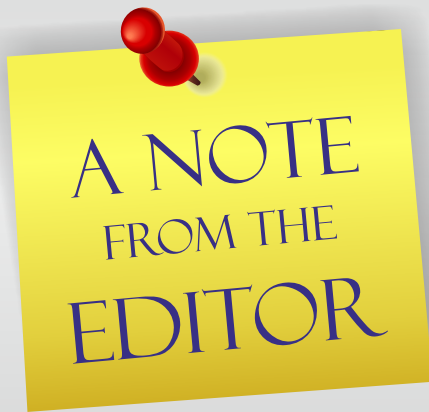
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A divine singer who raised spirits, kindled hope and brought relief is remembered with reverence on her birth centenary!



Sankara Nethralaya's thanksgiving and musical tribute to its beloved MS Amma reverberates across America's skies!





Dear friend and well wisher,

As you may be aware we paid our humble Pranams and tributes and expressed our sincere gratitude and love to MS Amma on her birth centennial observed last year the world over, through 11 concerts across the USA, including two non-ticketed concerts at the UN by maestros and exponents of their school of music and stalwarts who had spent a good part of their life accompanying the legend in her tours and playing their instrument to perfection at her concerts. SN's centennial celebrations started in June 2016 and extended to November 2016 and rasigas like your good self made it a most memorable event.

We take pleasure in reliving the glorious moments exactly a year later with a special edition of 'eyelights America'- 'MS Amma Birth Centenary Special issue', we hope you will enjoy the wonderful recall and relive the excitement as you turn the pages of this issue.

A grateful institution and its chief architect shower their love and reverence on the very epitome of Compassion and Charity!



A divine voice rises at SN in praise of the Almighty, in the exalted presence of the Pontiffs of Kanchi

The 68th Pontiff of the Kanchi Mutt, His Holiness Chandrasekarendra Saraswathi Mahaswamigal, referred to with reverence and love as 'Mahaperiyava' was a Saint revered for his total mastery over the ancient scriptures, his total detachment from worldly things, strict penance and bhakthi, the living God was also known for his boundless love, compassion and concern for mankind; stories abound about how his divine grace came to the rescue of his bhakthas during their testing times, illnesses, financial difficulties and so on.

The meeting of Dr.SS.Badrinath- Founder, Sankara Nethralaya and his wife Dr Vasanthi Badrinath with Bharat Ratna Dr MS.Subbulakshmi and her husband Shri Sadasivam seems in retrospect as a most touching instance of the Mahaperiyava's hand paving a path of relief and joy to millions of vision impaired and bringing that much needed change in their destinies. It was his 'Divine Will' that the celestial voice of one of his ardent bhakthas raises support for the noble cause of an institution created by

another ardent bhaktha, support to an institution which owes its very existence to his grace. The Badrinaths struck an emotional chord with the noble singer and her husband in their very first meeting. There seemed to be a pre-ordained relationship between the noble institution and its illustrious benefactors, the singing legend and her noble husband soon became MS Amma and Mama to members of the Sankara Nethralaya family; she visited the institution several times, graced its functions, performed at its premises and became a powerful ambassador expounding its cause. The noble singer gave several charity concerts under the banner 'Voice for Vision' which raised significant funds towards supporting the community services of the institution, she bequeathed the 'Royalty' accruing on some of her best selling audio records to the institution, her voice supporting its cost free initiatives long after she was no more.

A man highly impressed and influenced by the human values and path laid by the ancient Tamil treatise the



The Badrinaths share a warm moment with their beloved MS Amma

'Thirukural' the verse 'Ennandri Kondraarkkum Uyvuntaam Uyvillai Seynnandri Kondra Makarku', expounding the virtues of gratitude and reciprocity is one which has a special place in Dr. SS.Badrinath's heart. The concerts across 8 cities of the USA in celebration of Dr. M.S Subbulakshmi's birth centenary is a reflection of his deep commitment to these values.

While the man who conceived the idea and acted as the driving force behind the year long celebrations wanted the same to be an exclusive 'expression of gratitude' and 'Thanksgiving' to a noble soul who exhibited boundless love and concern to his institution and showered her generous support to its cause, the all pervasive 'Spirit of Giving' could not be alienated from any event associated

with MS Amma and the gate collections and donations at the Dr. MS Subbulakshmi Birth Centenary celebration concerts raised enough funds to support 3000 cost free cataract surgeries to poor patients back in India! her 'spirit of giving' had prevailed long after she had left this world and MS Amma was bringing the lost smile and light back into the face of the visually impaired, as her birth centennial gift to them, at the very institution she held close to her heart.

MS Amma centenary celebrations take off to a flying start at California's Bay Area!



Srimathi Asha Ramesh regales audience at San Jose

The yearlong MS Amma centenary celebrations being organized by the Sankara Nethralaya and the Sankara Nethralaya Ophthalmic Mission Trust, as a thanksgiving and homage to one of the institution's greatest friends and supporter got off to a great start at San Jose off the bay of the California coast. It was the fruits of more than 3 months of toil and planning and dream come true for Shri Parthasarathy Chakravarthi, Shri Ram Akella the SN OM trustees from the California chapter and Srimathi Hema Partha and their innumerable friends, well wishers and volunteers, as the screen went up at the CET Anthony Soto Theatre at 4:00pm sharp on Sunday the 10th of July 2016, marking the splendid kickoff of the yearlong centenary celebrations.

The bright evening witnessed Canatic music at its best, as well known vocalist and founder of the Ragamalika school of music Srimathi Asha Ramesh and the highly talented students of her school gave a spell binding performance to the accompaniment of Shri Jay Shankar Balan on the Violin and Shri Vignesh Venkatraman on Mridangam.

If the mellifluous music was honey to the ears the poignant images of MS Amma thoughtfully displayed at the foyer by the organizers helped in capturing the glorious relationship between the virtuoso singer and the institution she cherished and supported;

The images on Sankara Nethralaya's community eye care underlined the purpose of the event. The concert turned out to be a wonderful get-together for the Indian diaspora and an ideal platform for Sankara Nethralaya to express its gratitude and respect to one of its greatest supporters, create awareness on its philosophy and raise funds towards its cost free community eye care a cause which MS Amma held close to her heart; the yearlong Centenary celebrations got off with a great bang indeed!



Singers from the Ragamalika School of Music join their Guru's musical tribute

A mesmerizing concert at the world's highest seat of peace and harmony - the high point of Sankara Nethralaya's centennial homage to its beloved MS Amma



Sankara Nethralaya's musical extravaganza entralls an August audience at the UN General Assembly

It was an event of truly 'EPIC' proportions, a birth centennial homage to a virtuoso who strode the world of music like a colossus, an unparalleled vocalist who had given a divine quality to music by making it a vehicle of relief and support to the sick, homeless and suffering, an electrifying performance by a double Oscar awardee, the nationalist and patriotic singer was being honoured on the nation's 70th Independence Day, at the world's highest seat for Peace, the 'United Nations General Assembly' where she gave a historic 'Concert for Peace' on United Nations Day, exactly 50 years ago at the invitation of the Secretary General of the UN, making her the first Indian to perform at the UN and last but not the least by an institution governed by service to mankind, by bringing back the light of vision and joy as the very purpose of its existence. The high octane event started off with the inauguration of an exhibition of rare MS Amma photographs capturing the great moments in her life by Mr MJ Akbar, Minister of State External affairs, Dr SS.Badrinath Founder and Chairman Emeritus Sankara Nethralaya and Sri S.V.Acharya, President of the Ophthalmic Mission Trust Inc, the fund raising arm of Sankara Nethralaya in the USA, the specially chosen photographs capturing the rare and great moments from the life of the legend won great admiration of the attendees. The musical event began with the rendering of a set of mellifluous invocation songs by long time friend and supporter Srimathi Vanitha Sudheendranath. This was followed by some highly engaging talks on the institution, its goals, philosophy, association with MS Amma and the birth centennial celebration by Dr SS.Badrinath, Dr Vasanthi Badrinath and Dr Tarun Sharma.



Dr SS.Badrinath gives a spirited talk at the UN

The double Oscar awardee was in his elements and A.R Rehman LIVE 2016 his musical homage combined the superlative melody of his orchestra and a magnificent 3D spectacle making it a musical extravaganza never seen before, it kept a close to 1000 strong distinguished, multinational, multiracial audience spell bound and transfixed broken only by thunderous claps. The blend of Sanskrit, Tamil reverential songs in Carnatic music and Hindustani, quawwali and Islamic songs captured the 'Universality of the Spirit' and 'oneness of God' values so close to the person in whose honour the event was being held. The high point of the show was a performance by the 'Sunshine Orchestra' a troupe consisting of underprivileged kids from Chennai, whom Sri AR Rahman complimented as 'specially privileged performers'.

The event was well covered by the local Media; we take pleasure in sharing a sample of the response it evoked from the distinguished audience.



The music legend shares a light moment with members of the SN family

'Music is what links us as individuals to eternity'

– Laura E.Flores, Panama's Permanent Representative to the UN

'The music was simply amazing'

– David Roel, Israel's Deputy Permanent representative to the UN

'A mesmerizing and magical treat'

– Peter Wilson, Britain's Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN

Showcasing and awarding of local talent marks high point of Dr MS Amma centennial celebrations at Atlanta



Engrossed audience savouring the melody at Atlanta

The 3rd of September 2016 was a Labour Day weekend that would remain etched in the minds of the local Indian community at Georgia for many years to come. The Atlanta chapter of the Sankara Nethralaya Ophthalmic Mission Trust presented an extraordinary, 3 day centennial homage to Bharat Ratna Dr.M.S.Subbulakshmi. The curtains went up on the well prepared and organized event on the 3rd of September 2016 with a brief talk on Sankara Nethralaya and its achievements in research, education and cost free community eye care to indigent patients, by Dr. Seshu Sarma, Vice-President, Sankara Nethralaya, Ophthalmic Mission Trust, Inc, the fund raising arm of Sankara Nethralaya in the USA. Dr. Sarma also gave an interesting account about the 'Mobile Eye Surgical Unit' (MESU) which performs sight reviving cataract surgeries, totally cost free, right at the doorsteps of patients living in the most remote regions of India, with no access to quality eye care.

This was followed by a warm greeting and welcome to the rasikas assembled in large numbers and dignitaries by Dr. Rao, President of the Hindu Temple of Atlanta. Speaking on the occasion, Chief Guest of the day, Mr. R.Srinivasan Consul Indian Consulate Atlanta, lauded Smt. M. S. for making India and Indians proud by her music. The most touching and inspiring speech of the afternoon however, was the one given by eleven-year old, Raveena Allie, who was born with no eyes. Her life story of being brought up by loving foster parents in the US and working her way up by overcoming her disability to become a honor student in middle school and excelling in innumerable extracurricular activities filled the listeners with a sense of confidence that if one is determined, nothing in life is insurmountable. The audience gave her a standing ovation for her rousing message and indomitable spirit.

This was followed by the main event of the day, an enthralling concert for three hours and more with a generous inclusion of MS Amma favorites by Padmabhushan Sudha Ragunathan and party; the resounding applause and requests for more songs captured the spirit of the day. Dr. Ram Sriram, President of the Carnatic Music Association of Georgia (CAMAGA), made the concluding remarks and a brief review of the concert. Mrs. Anu Nathan, chair of the essay competition being held to highlight the contributions of Smt. M. S. Subbalakshmi, as part of the Centenary celebrations announced the winners for different age groups

Another recognition being bestowed as part of the Centenary celebration the 'Bharat Ratna M. S. Subbulakshmi award' for years of contribution to Indian classical music was awarded to Smt. Subhashini Krishnamurthy – musician, composer, Vocalist, teacher, and Veena player. Ms. Subhashini was presented with a plaque and a blue silk saree, similar to the one that was popularized by Smt. M. S. Subbulakshmi. The awards were given to the winners by Smt. Sudha Raghunathan who spoke admiringly of the winners and their accomplishments.



SN OM Trustees from Atlanta Dr Seshu Sarma, Shri Murthi Rekapalli, friend and supporter Dr Ravi Sarma with the exponent of Carnatic music



A pat on the back for budding talent at Atlanta

Dr MS Centenary birth centennial celebrations make it a melodious and memorable 'Ganesh Chaturthi' for California rasigas



The Cabrillo School Auditorium at Santa Fe, Long Beach, CA presented a picture of gaiety on the 5th of September 2016, the occasion was the birth centennial tribute to the 'Tapaswini' and Nightingale of India Dr MS Subbulakshmi and rasigas had gathered in large numbers with great expectancy and excitement. Their expectations were more than matched by a mellifluous shower of classical, devotional and bhajans from the repertoire of the great singer, by Srimathi Sudha Ragunathan among today's leading exponents of the art form and her group of seasoned musicians. It was 'Ganesh Chaturthi' day and the maestro wished the audience a happy Ganesh Chaturthi and sang a special Ganesha Slokam in praise of the God of auspicious beginnings. Shri Raja Krishnamurthi the SN OM Trustee from the area gave an absorbing account of Sankara Nethralaya, its mission and philosophy and made a fervent appeal to the audience on behalf of the SN OM Trust to support the large number of cost free cataract surgeries that were planned to be performed as a birth centennial tribute by Sankara Nethralaya to a noble singer who had identified herself with its cause and supported it most generously.

Mellifluous music, memorable portraits and fervent appeals moves hearts at Chicago on Dr MS Subbulakshmi Birth centennial day



Rasigas and friends share a memorable moment with Srimathi Sudha Ragunathan at Chicago



The organizing team in a jubilant mood

The Sama Rathi Auditorium at the Hindu Temple of Greater Chicago at Lemont wore a festive look on the 10th of September 2016, the occasion was the celebration of the Dr MS birth centennial with a concert by Carnatic music exponent Ms Sudha Ragunathan and her group. Rasigas from across Chicago began gathering at the venue for an evening of mellifluous music. An exhibition of rare photographs at the venue capturing the golden moments in the life of the great singer struck an emotional chord and the sale of 'MS blue sarees' which had become an identity of the singer came as a pleasant surprise and great memento to the audience. Well known personalities from the local India Diaspora shared the dais with Dr. Raj Rajaram and Shri Sudhakar Mattu, SN OM Trustees from the area to extend a warm welcome to the large audience, give them a background of Sankara Nethralaya and the SN OM Trust and make a fervent appeal to donate generously towards the good number of cost free cataract surgeries planned as a birth centennial tribute to the Singer who had made her voice a vehicle for relief and joy.

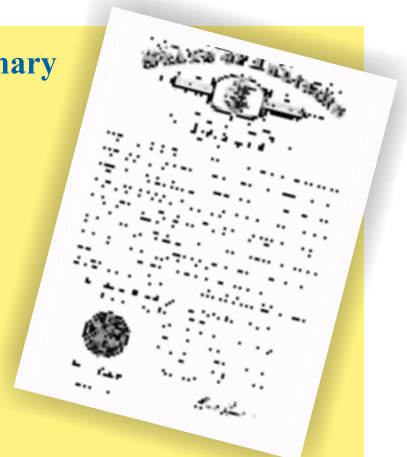
A highlight of the Chicago celebrations was the proclamation of Saturday the 16th of September 2016 as M.S.Subbulakshmi Day by Mr Bruce Rauner, Governor of the State of Illinois.

State of Illinois honours MS Amma on her birth centenary



Therefore I, Bruce Rauner, Governor of the state of Illinois, do hereby proclaim Saturday September 16, 2016, as M.S.SUBBULAKSHMI DAY in and join the Indian Ammerican Community to honour and celebrate M.S. Subbulakshmi's music and humanitarian mission

Mr Bruce Rauner,
Governor of the State of Illinois



Leading Indian cultural body joins SN in its musical tribute to MS Amma at Dallas



SN OM Trustees and friends smile with the Carnatic music exponent at Dallas

The Dallas chapter of the Indian Fine Arts Academy (IFAA) the well known champion of Indian music and culture in the region joined hands with the local chapter of the Sankara Nethralaya OM Trust to organize a grand musical tribute to MS Amma by Srimathi Sudha Ragunathan and her group at the Unity Church of Dallas, Texas on the 11th of September 2016. The large gathering of rasigas were warmly welcomed by Shri Santhanam Mullur the SN OM Trust member representing the region. Shri Mullur gave an interesting overview of the Dr MSS Centenary Celebrations and the association between the legendary singer and Sankara Nethralaya, the institution she supported passionately. This was followed by an absorbing video presentation on Sankara Nethralaya and the reach of its cost free community services to the poor and needy.

Srimathi Shanthi Murali, Trustee, Indian Fine Arts Academy, Dallas, who had contributed significantly for the successful organizing of the program, extended a warm welcome to the distinguished musicians and introduced each of them, to the excited applause of the rasigas.

A highlight of the event was the presentation of prizes to a group of highly talented young singers who had made their mark in the 'MSS Amma Online Music Competition' a novel online voice evaluation exercise for budding amateurs, by seasoned Carnatic singers, conducted by Shri Prabhu Sivaraman, SN OM Trustee from the region. It was an occasion to rejoice and remember for the young winners as Dr Sudha Ragunathan, among the leading exponents of the art form congratulated them warmly, encouraged them and presented the awards.

Delivering the Vote of Thanks Dr Arvind Neelakanthan an alumni of Sankara Nethralaya presently with the Glaucoma Center of Texas gave a passionate account of his Alma Mater's contribution towards eliminating blindness through its research, knowledge dissemination and cost free community eye care services and how its yeoman service to society brought back the dignity and joy into the lives of the indigent visually impaired, by bringing back their lost vision and making them independent, self supporting individuals. He made a fervent appeal to the audience to donate generously towards supporting the large number of cost free surgeries to indigent patients in India that Sankara Nethralaya planned to perform in memory and as a tribute to MS Amma on her birth centennial.

Shri Prabhu Sivaraman, Trustee, SN OM Trust extended a warm thanks to the artists, audience, the IFAA, Dr Arvind Neelakanthan and Srimathi Sudha Ragunathan for presenting the awards and encouraging the young winners.



Proud winners of the MSS Amma online voice competition with the Master, at Dallas

Sankara Nethralaya's centennial tribute to the universal singer assumes a global flavor at Houston



Srimathi Sudha Ragunathan, her musicians and local friends with the Mayor of Pearland

The MS Amma birth centennial celebration at Houston on the 17th of September 2016 was an event of truly Texan proportions and had a distinct global flavor too, the event was co-sponsored by the Asia Society, the association actively involved in educating the world about Asia and forging closer ties between Asia and the West through Arts, education, policy and business outreach. Ms Stephanie Todd Wong the Director of the Society, a good friend of Shri Sesh Bala and Srimathi Prabha Bala well wishers of Sankara Nethralaya played a major role in organizing the program and making available the prestigious 'Texas Center' as a venue for the program, she was ably assisted in her efforts by Ms Cori Capetillo and Ms Bridget Bray, Director & Curator of Exhibits. The proceedings started on a high profile with Guest of Honour Shri Anupam Ray, Consul General of India at Houston and distinguished members from the local community Mr Thomas J.Reid, Mayor Of Pearland, Ms Heidy Weiss, ED, City of Pearland, Mr Chris Brown, Houston City Controller, Ms Debbie McNulty, Director, Office of Cultural Affairs, City of Houston and Ms Nancy Allen, Founder Member of the Asia Society, Texas Center, inaugurating the 'Dr MS Subbulakshmi Photo Exhibition' by a customary cutting of the ribbon in the August presence of Mr. Bonna Kol, President of the Asia Society, Ms Anne Chao, Mr Albert Chao, Asia Society Texas Center members and major supporters, Mr Mickey Rosenau, Ms Ellen Gritz, Ms Stephanie Todd Wong from the Asia Society, Dr KS. Vasan, SN OM Trustee from Houston and Managing Director Sankara Nethralaya, Srimathi Leela Krishnamurthy, SN OM Trustee, Shri Sam Kannappan, SN OM Trustee and several well wishers and friends of Sankara Nethralaya.

If the compeering of the program by Shri Sesh Bala added a special touch to it, the well chosen photographs capturing the great moments of MS Amma's life, a riveting video clip of the legend's concert at the UN exactly 50 years back and interesting anecdotes from the Singer's life by Srimathi Anuradha Subramaniam and Srimathi Prabha Bala transferred the audience to a glorious era. A video clipping of Sankara Nethralaya's service, especially to the poor and needy and an absorbing talk on the subject by Dr KS.Vasan helped in communicating Sankara Nethralaya's philosophy and goals to the August audience.

The highlights of the event was a rich tribute to the legend by Shri Anupam Ray, Consul General of India to the USA at Houston, Proclamation of the Day as M.S.Subbulakshmi Day and M.S.Subbulakshmi Centenary Celebration Day by Mr Sylvester Turner, Mayor of the City of Houston and Mr Tom Reid, Mayor of the City of Pearland and the issuing of a 'Certificate of Recognition' to the 100th Birthday celebrations of M.S.Subbulakshmi by Mr Joe R Zimmerman, Mayor of Sugar Land.

City of Houston honours MS Amma on her birth centenary

Therefore I, Sylvester Turner, Mayor

of the City of Houston, hereby

proclaim September 16,2016, as

M.S.SUBBULAKSHMI DAY

Mr Sylvester Turner

Mayor of the City Houston

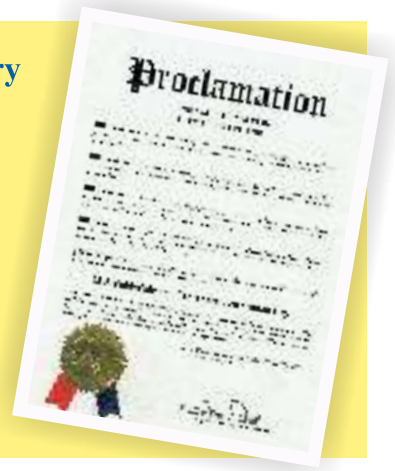




City of Pearland honours MS Amma on her birth centenary

Therefore I, Tom Reid, By The
Power Vested In Me As The Mayor of
The City of Pearland, Texas, Do
Hereby Proclaim September
17,2016, as M.S.SUBBULAKSHMI
Centenary Celebration Day

Mr Tom Reid - Mayor of the City Pearland



City of Sugar Land honours MS Amma on her birth centenary

City of Sugar Land issues a
'Certificate of Recognition' to the
100th Birthday Celebrations of
M.S.Subbulakshmi

Mr Joe R Zimmerman
Mayor of sugar land, Texas



A tribute to MS Amma from India's Consul General at Houston

Indian Consul General to the
USA at Houston sends his
greeting message to the
M.S.Centenary Celebrations

Mr. Anupam Ray - Consul general of India, Houston



Participation of India's Consul General, prominent Houstonians and local rasigas make it a global event at Houston

Maryland rasigas participate in MS Amma birth Centenary celebrations with great zest



The President of the SN OM Trust, well wishers and friends with Srimathi Sudha Ragunathan

The huge auditorium at the Eleanor Roosevelt High School at Hanover Parkway, Greenbelt, more used to assemblies of students, witnessed a gathering of a different kind on the 18th of September 2016. The SN OM Trustees from Maryland were celebrating the Birth Centennial of Dr MS.Subbulakshmi at the venue and Carnatic music rasigas and MS aficionados had gathered in large numbers. The rare MS Amma photographs displayed at the hallway of the venue was a major attraction for the audience and won their high admiration. The proceedings started with a mellifluous invocation and interesting note on the long association between the singing legend whose birth centennial was being observed and Sankara Nethralaya the institution she cherished and supported, by Shri Ramarao Mysore a member of the SN OM Trust from the region. Extending a warm welcome to the gathering Shri S.V. Acharya, Founder and President of the Sankara Nethralaya Ophthalmic Mission Trust underlined that Maryland has a special place in the history of Sankara Nethralaya as it is the place where the SN OM Trust, its fund raising arm in the USA which raises significant funds for its community services was born. He used the occasion to convey his heartfelt thanks and admiration to the Indian community in the USA whose continued support had brought the critical change in the lives of the visually impaired in India. His observation that their generous contribution had helped in performing 7000 minor and major cost free surgeries to poor patients in India was received with thunderous applause. Speaking on the occasion Ms Nandini Mouli a long time friend and supporter of Sankara Nethralaya in the USA and an active member of the MS birth centenary celebration organizing team in MD expressed her gratitude and appreciation to the musicians for their outstanding performance on behalf of Sankara Nethralaya and the SN OM Trust. The joyous function concluded with a warm vote of thanks by Shri Shankar Iyer SN OM Trust member from the region.

A favourite daughter of the 'Father of the Nation' honoured on his birthday at the highest seat of peace and amity



A voice for non-violence, peace and compassion rises gloriously at the UN

Among the legends that abound about MS Amma there is one about the passion that the Father of the Nation had for her voice that touches one's heart, the Mahathma in his characteristically straight forward approach had sent word to Shri Kalki Sadasivam, husband of Srimathi MS Subbulakshmi through Srimathi Suchetha Kripalani, freedom fighter and wife of Shri Acharya Kripalani also in the freedom struggle, expressing his wish to listen to the rendering of his favourite Meera Bhajan 'Hari Thum Haro' by the legendary singer. MS Amma reacted to this request with her characteristic humility that not being familiar with the song it may not be appropriate that she renders it, for which the Mahathma remarked that he would rather listen to the great MS merely recite the verse than anyone singing the same. MS Amma could not refuse the request anymore and with some quick practice was born one of Amma's greatest songs, the song was taped by All India Radio (AIR) and the tape was sent to Delhi where the Mahathma listened to it with fascination, the bhajan soon became his favourite song and was played wherever he camped during the days of the freedom struggle. All India Radio which recorded the song broadcasted it repeatedly as the nation's tribute to the Father of the Nation soon after his assassination, moving the heart of millions to tears.



The United Nations Organization releases a commemorative postal stamp honouring Dr. M.S. Subbulakshmi on her birth centenary on Sunday, October 2nd, 2016

MS Amma was a great patriot and a champion of peace and harmony and dedicated many of her concerts to raise funds for the freedom movement and a concert honouring her birth centennial at the UN on 'Gandhi Jayanthi' being observed the world over as 'World Non-Violence Day' was a most befitting tribute indeed. It was a crowning glory to the legendary singer that the United Nations Organization released a commemorative postal stamp honouring her on this momentous occasion.



Temple of the Eye pays tribute to the 'Suswaralakshmi' at the temple of Vallabha Vinayaka



A divine performance at the feet of the 'Lord of auspicious beginnings'

The role of the benign hand guiding and accomplishing Sankara Nethralaya's noble endeavours was very apparent in the Dr. MS Amma birth centenary celebration too!

The Sudha Ragunathan Concert at the UN on the morning of 2nd October observed as 'World Non-violence Day' could not be attended by a large number of MS Amma rasigas as the auditorium was filled to capacity. It was an earnest effort by the SN OM Trustees of the region to organize a similar concert on the same day at a different venue in the city to give the rasigas another opportunity to enjoy her music that resulted in a concert at the Maha Vallabha Ganapathi Devasthanam auditorium, Flushing, New York. The concert was not part of the original agenda and it was the blessings of this divine hand that made it a reality within short time frames. The SN OM Trustees did a remarkable job of identifying an alternative venue and persuading the authorities of the temple to make the same available and organizing the concert in short notice to avoid the disappointment to a large number of audience who could not be accommodated at the UN and it goes to the credit of Srimathi Sudha Ragunathan and her musicians that they rose to the occasion and agreed to play most gracefully at a venue which was not part of their original itinerary. The concert was among the finest in the series and regaled the large gathering of audience assembled.

Recreating MS Amma's favourite attire becomes a part of SN's birth centennial tribute to her



A strand of freshly woven jasmine, a pair of lustrous ear studs, a divine smile, a rich, resplendent mid-sea blue saree glimmering with elements of black and green became a very symbol of MS Amma, the saree was specially created for MS Amma by philanthropist, admirer and a leading weaver of those times, Shri Muthu Chettiar and named by him as MS Blue as a tribute to her.

Sri Nalli Kuppasami Chetty a patron of music and fine arts and an old friend and admirer of Sankara Nethralaya and its founder Dr. SS Badrinath gracefully accepted his request to recreate the magic of the MS Blue saree on her birth centenary year, a limited edition of these sarees were designed as perfect replicas under his direct supervision. The sarees were showcased at all the MS centenary concerts in the USA as a beautiful memorabilia and became a big hit with the rasigas. The sale proceedings of the same were channeled to support something which had become the very purpose of Amma's music "Cost free community service"

Shri Nalli Kuppaswami Chetty



An iconic music group performs at its iconic birthplace in celebration of the birth centennial of an Icon



'The living Indian legend' exchanges greetings with members of a legendary orchestra

The music of MS Amma had an element of universality, it was adulated by musical geniuses of different genres of music and world leaders who lived during her times and she had acquired a global stature far beyond that of a musician. A western classical concert featuring the Sitar Concerto No-2, Ragamala composed by Sitar legend Pandit Ravi Shankar, by his daughter Ms Anoushka Shankar, renowned Sitar player, in accompaniment with Maestro Manfred Honeck of the New York Philharmonic, was truly a fitting tribute to the universality of her music and persona. The leading American orchestra rated as being among 'The Big Five' orchestras paid its musical tribute to the Universal Singer at the 'Geffen Hall' at the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, known as the 'Home of the New York Philharmonic'. Extending a warm welcome and introducing Dr SS.Badrinath and Dr Vasanthi Badrinath to the audience Mr. Matthew Van Besien the President of the New York Philharmonic remarked that his orchestra was honoured to pay tribute to MS Subbulakshmi the cultural Icon of 20th Century India and foremost exponent of Carnatic music, a form of classical music with a rich tradition spanning 1,600 years on her birth centennial. Delivering a spirited speech Dr SS.Badrinath touched upon diverse subjects such as the divine quality of MS Amma's music which transcended the audience to a world of bliss, the honours showered on her, her influence in transforming his life that made him stay back in India and start the Sankara Nethralaya, her support with seed capital and continued patronage which helped in its growth. Observing that the concert by Maestro Manfred Honeck and Sitarist Anoushka Shankar was the grand finale to a series of 11 concerts organized by Sankara Nethralaya in honour of the humanitarian musician on her birth centenary, he expressed his sincere gratitude to all those who made the program a reality. He closed his talk with an invitation to Srimathi Vanitha Sudheendranath a long time friend of the institution to render the prayer song for world peace composed by Mahaperiyava for MS Amma's 'Concert for Peace' at the United Nations General assembly exactly 50 years back.



The Badrinaths and friends after the grand finale at Lincoln Center



Srimathi Vanitha Sudheendranath rendering the prayer song



The Badrinaths with Dr Sudhir M.Parikh of Parikh Worldwide Media and Family