

KS Chithra to perform in Coimbatore for animal welfare

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At a time when animal rights activists and jallikkattu supporters are at loggerheads over conducting the bull-taming sport in the state; veteran playback singer KS Chithra is all set to perform live in Coimbatore this month to raise funds for animal welfare. The proceeds of the event will go towards a full-fledged animal clinic and care of the abandoned and injured animals. The occasion is the tenth anniversary celebrations of the animal welfare organisation in the city, Humane Animal Society.

"I am an ardent animal lover and I have two dogs and cats at home. I was deeply hurt when my 13- year-old dog passed away. I still miss his presence everywhere at home. I was disheartened when the Kerala government decided to cull stray dogs in the state. Why should you resort

to killing, when there are other measures to control their population, like sterilization? There are shelter homes available for dogs as well. Stray dogs breed around mounds of garbage as they become their source of food and hence, it's vital that we address the issue of waste management first."

When asked about her views on jallikkattu, the hot topic in the state, she said, "My knowledge of jallikkattu is restricted to what I have seen in movies and television. I have never witnessed the sport in person. But, I am aware of the protests by the youngsters."

The singer shared few fond memories of the city as well, where she is about to perform after more than a decade. "I had come

here a few years ago with music director Ilaiyaraaja Sir and KV Mahadevan Sir to perform for a fund-raising event. Singer Mano and I were the youngest in the group. I had a really good time here."

The veteran playback singer now runs a fund-raising organization, Sneha Nandana that raises funds for the welfare of retired musicians. "We didn't start off with that name. I had completed 30 years in the film industry and fans wanted to celebrate the occasion. Hence, they decided to name the organization after my daughter. (Eight-year-old Nandana passed away six years ago after she fell into a swimming pool in Dubai and drowned) At least 22 musicians have been benefitted from the organization so far. My recording label, on the other hand, has been releasing devotional songs."

When quizzed about the recent trend where actors are testing waters in singing, pat comes the reply. "Some of the actors do sing well; but, technology plays a major role today. There are quite a few instances where the music composer and singer have wrapped up a song in their studio, and later technology and chorus have been included. I have even been asked to refer singers who can't sing Tamil very well. But, at the end of the day, there is a huge difference between trained singers and the ones who haven't undergone any training."

When asked about singers of Kollywood getting together to demand their due in terms of royalty from the songs they've performed, Chithra replied, "Singers do have a contribution to the songs, right? There were controversies around the issue, but there is no denying the fact that singers have been a medium to reach the audience. Today, most of the radio channels don't even mention the name of the singers. Even in the film credits, singers name get buried. By the time they appear on screen, people would have already left the theatre. This has to change. Singers should be recognized. Today, there are many singers on the block. It's important that they get at least 4 to 5 songs every month to keep them going. If we get the royalty, we will be more than happy."