The music of Mozart and the music of Beethoven belong to a child growing up in Kodambakkam or Chengalpet as much as they belong to a kid in Vienna or New York,” says George Mathew, Singapore-born Indian conductor. “We are at a place where great treasures of world music belong to us and we have the possibility in engaging children, in order to enlighten, enrich, transform and condition them.”

The founder and artistic director of Music for Life International, who was recently in the city to participate as a speaker at TEDxKCG, adds, education in the field of music is as vital as that in any other area. “Nobody assumes that as long as you can pick up the basics and have the passion, you can become a good cardiologist or a pilot,” he validates. “One can probably jump in and do something – but we’re talking about extracting the potential inside music, you can’t do that if you don’t have a working knowledge.”

In his talk at TEDxKCG, he explained how music can be used as a behavioral model for institutions, corporations, educational organisations and governments. This concept is clearly something close to his heart. “Five years ago, when we did our first humanitarian concert, there were ways in which music seemed to suggest a mission,” he begins. “It is not philanthropy so much as that music is deeply connected to everything we do. The actual process by which music is made and the way in which people interact with each other are a model in which we can behave in other parts of our lives,” he explains.

For him, that music, rather than being an avenue to raise funds, is emerging as an engine of action. “Music itself generates possibility for change,” he puts it concisely.