First Indian film song to win Oscar: ‘Natu Natu’ from ‘RRR’ makes history

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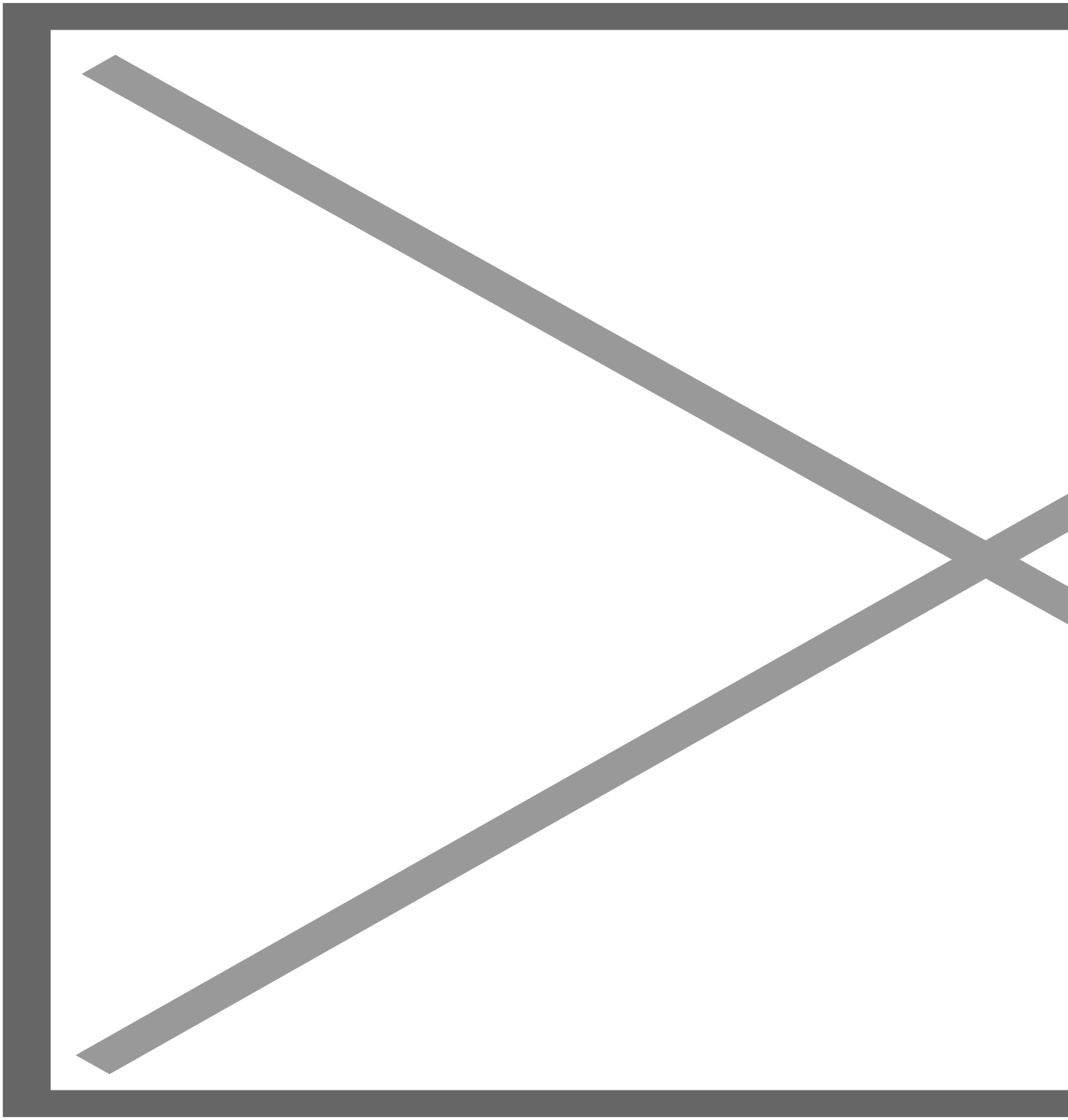
Online Desk: M.M. Keeravani has brought the spotlight back to India after a historic Oscar musical win. Keeravani won best original song for his joyously energetic anthem “Naatu Naatu” from the film “RRR.” The music was written by Keeravani and lyrics by Chandrabose.

“It’s just the beginning of everything,” Keeravani said backstage. “For the world, particularly the Western world, folks are more on India and Asian music. It’s just long due. I feel very happy to open doors and the world to embrace my culture.” “Naatu Naatu” is the first song from an Indian film to earn a nomination and win in the best original song category.

Keeravani delighted the Oscar audience by saying he grew up listening to The Carpenters and then began singing the band’s “Top of the World” with new lyrics, including “’RRR’ has to win/Pride of every Indian.” “Naatu Naatu” is one of the most memorable sequences from the the Telegu-language action epic “RRR” with its catchy tune and accompanying dance by actors Ram Charan and N.T. Rama Rao Jr.

The song has become a viral sensation outside of the film, racking up more than 122 million views on YouTube and inspiring a TikTok challenge where users attempt to recreate the acrobatic dance-off. South Korean Ambassador Chang Jae-bok’s rendition went viral. Chandrabose said he’s eager to show his trophy to his wife and children. He spoke about the challenges of writing a song in a language that has 56 letters.



“We have a lot of words, expressions, a lot of feelings in our language,” he said backstage. “Very great language and very literary language. Very musical language. If you write it all, it will sound like music. … With people like you loving the song, it means that kind of music and sound makes this all possible.”

In a recent interview, Keeravani said he felt compelled to use the Oscars’ platform to highlight other artists from India. “It’s important so that more and more music and talented artists from my country can have a chance to get this kind of recognition, so that the world embraces India music more than ever,” he said.

Other best original song nominees were Rihanna’s “Lift Me Up,” a song she collaborated on with Tems, director Ryan Coogler and composer Ludwig Goransson; Lady Gaga’s “Hold My Hand” with BloodPop,” Diane Warren’s “Tell It Like a Woman” and “This is a Life” from “Everything Everywhere All at Once.”

The latter track was created by Mitski, David Byrne and Ryan Lott, who along with his band Son Lux was also nominated for best original score.