Bharathiar-based song 'Varuvaaiy' gets a Grammy nomination

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News

The nominations for the 69th Grammy Awards were announced on 16 November 2026. 'Varuvaaiy', composed and sung by Devan Ekambaram featuring Susha (Subhiksha Rangarajan), was nominated in the 'Best Global Music Performance' category. Media including DT Next and ETV Bharat reported it as the first Tamil song ever nominated for a Grammy. It is a contemporary musical version of a devotional poem to Krishna by Mahakavi Subramania Bharati, blending Carnatic music, raag Desh and neo-jazz. It competes in the category with Angélique Kidjo, Shakira and Burna Boy, Rosalía and others. The ceremony will be held on 7 February 2027 in Los Angeles, USA. Devan Ekambaram described it as his first Grammy nomination.

Key facts for the exam

Point	Details
Song	'Varuvaaiy' – based on Bharati's devotional poem to Krishna
Artists	Devan Ekambaram, Susha (Subhiksha Rangarajan)
Category	Best Global Music Performance
Award	69th Grammys; nominations announced 16 Nov 2026
Ceremony	7 February 2027, Los Angeles

Point	Details
Distinction	First Tamil song nominated for a Grammy (media reports)
Music	Carnatic, raag Desh, neo-jazz
Album	Susha's debut album 'Love Language' (Aug 2026)

Background

- The Grammy: given by America's Recording Academy for achievement in music; the first ceremony was held in 1959. The Oscar for films is given by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. The 'Best Global Music Performance' category has been awarded since 2024; its first award went to 'Pashto', by Béla Fleck, Edgar Meyer and Zakir Hussain, featuring Rakesh Chaurasia, and the same year 'This Moment' by the group Shakti, with Zakir Hussain and Shankar Mahadevan, won Best Global Music Album.
- Indians and the Grammy: Pandit Ravi Shankar became the first Indian Grammy winner in 1967 for the album 'West Meets East' with Yehudi Menuhin. Zakir Hussain (1992) and Vishwa Mohan Bhatt (1994) also won. A.R. Rahman won two Grammys in 2010 for 'Slumdog Millionaire' (including the song 'Jai Ho'). Devan Ekambaram made his playback debut in 1999 in Rahman's 'Kadhalar Dhinam'.
- Literature – Bharathiar: Subramania Bharati was born on 11 December 1882 at Ettayapuram (in today's Thoothukudi district) and died in Chennai on 11 September 1921. Facing arrest by the British, he lived in French-ruled Puducherry from 1908 to 1918. 'Kannan Pattu', 'Kuyil Pattu' and 'Panchali Sabatham' are among his famous works; he edited the journal 'India' and worked on 'Swadesamitran'. 'Kudumba Vilakku' is by his disciple Bharathidasan.

Tamil Nadu link: Bharathiar is Tamil Nadu's national poet. Tamil Nadu has observed his death anniversary, 11 September, as 'Mahakavi Naal' since 2021; his birthday, 11 December, is observed nationally as 'Bharatiya Bhasha Divas' (Indian Languages Day). His memorial house is at Ettayapuram.

Frequently asked questions

What is this news about?

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What are the key facts to remember for the exam?

Song: 'Varuvaaiy' – based on Bharati's devotional poem to Krishna; Artists: Devan Ekambaram, Susha (Subhiksha Rangarajan); Category: Best Global Music Performance; Award: 69th Grammys; nominations announced 16 Nov 2026.

What is the background to this news?

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Practice questions (with answers)

1. Facing arrest by the British, in which French territory did Bharathiar live in exile from 1908 to 1918?

A) Karaikal

B) Puducherry

C) Mahe

D) Chandernagore

Answer: B – Explanation: Puducherry – 'Kuyil Pattu', 'Panchali Sabatham' and more were written here. Mahe – Keralam coast; Chandernagore – Bengal.

2. Which organisation presents the Grammy Awards for music?

A) Motion Picture Academy

B) BAFTA

C) Golden Globe body

D) Recording Academy

Answer: D – Explanation: America's Recording Academy; first ceremony 1959. Oscars – the Motion Picture Academy; BAFTA – Britain.

3. Who became the first Indian Grammy winner, for the album 'West Meets East' with Yehudi Menuhin?

A) Zakir Hussain

B) A.R. Rahman

C) Vishwa Mohan Bhatt

D) Pandit Ravi Shankar

Answer: D – Explanation: Ravi Shankar (sitar) – 1967. Zakir Hussain 1992, Vishwa Mohan Bhatt 1994; A.R. Rahman won two in 2010 for 'Slumdog Millionaire'.

4. Which of the following is NOT a work of Subramania Bharati?

A) Kannan Pattu

B) Kuyil Pattu

C) Kudumba Vilakku

D) Panchali Sabatham

Answer: C – Explanation: 'Kudumba Vilakku' is by Bharathidasan. The other three are Bharati's celebrated long poems.

5. Ettayapuram, Bharathiar's birthplace, is in which present-day district of Tamil Nadu?

A) Tirunelveli

B) Virudhunagar

C) Thoothukudi

D) Tenkasi

Answer: C – Explanation: Thoothukudi district; his memorial house and memorial hall are here. Born 11.12.1882.

Sources: Recording Academy – grammy.com/songs/varuvaaiy (nominee page; Best Global Music Performance 2024 winners); DT Next (17 Nov 2026) – dtnext.in/entertainment/cinema/devan-ekambaram-sushas-contemporary-rendition-of-bharathiars-varuvaaiy-becomes-first-tamil-song-to-earn-grammy-nomination; ETV Bharat (17 Nov 2026); AP (ceremony date and venue); DT Next (11 Sept 2021 – Mahakavi Naal). © Shanmugam IAS Academy.