

**ANALYSIS AND EVOLUTION OF THE MUSIC IN THE
SRI LANKAN PASSION PLAY:
DUWA AS A CASE STUDY**

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Submitted by

Kamalinie Samarakoon

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Abstract

This thesis is titled “An Analysis and Evolution of the Music of the Passion Plays of Sri Lanka: Duwa as a Case Study”. Its focus is to study the musical compositions of the native Passion Plays enacted since the Portuguese period with special attention paid to the Passion Play of Duwa; a small fishing village off Negombo.

This thesis further analyzes the evolution of the musical compositions of the native Passion Plays enacted during the Portuguese, the Dutch and the British periods. In Chapter 5 it discusses where the Passion Plays (*Passo*), a form of Liturgical Drama is said to have been performed in the Jesuit College of Colombo during the Portuguese period.

Though the performance of the Catholic Passion Plays ceased during the early period of the Dutch rule due to persecution, with the arrival of the two Oratorian Indian missionaries; Fr. Joseph Vaz and Fr. Jacome Gonsalvez, there had been new innovations in the musical compositions of native Passion Plays. The novel musical compositions of Fr. Gonsalvez’s is the key influence on the Music of the Sri Lankan Passion Plays ,which lasts for over four centuries within the country. His contribution and the music is discussed in chapter six.

Finally in the British era, the evolution of the Passion Play takes a nationalistic turn towards a more localized production under Fr. Marcelline Jayakody, which results in a new idiom of Musical Christian worship. Thus it can be seen that two prominent figures, namely Fr. Gonsalvez and Fr. Jayakody has been influential in the evolution of the Passion Play music in Sri Lanka. Chapter seven discusses the aspects of Fr. Jayakody’s compositions.

This research is oriented in examining the influences that molded and changed the authentic compositions of Fr. Jacome Gonsalvez as well as Fr. Marcelline Jayakody, and to what extent the Passion Play and its music has evolved.

An analysis of the structures of the Passion Plays, the musical compositions, and comparisons form the core of this thesis. Individuals who worked closely with Fr. Marcelline Jayakody in Jaffna (Mr. Ernest Mcintyre) and while producing the Duwa Passion Play (Mr. Clement Fernando) were also interviewed to get an in depth idea of Fr. Jayakody's thoughts and concepts in producing the play. Fr. G. Pilendran of Jaffna was interviewed to gain information on the *Viyakula Pirisangam* which is seminal for the composition of Fr. Gonsalvez original Passion Play. Subsequently Fr. Josephmary of Batticaloa and Fr. Saveri of Jaffna were interviewed as they personally direct Passion Plays in the two districts in later years, to observe how far the Passion Play has evolved in those areas since the early 1700's The authentic chants have been recorded as audio and video recordings to analyze and transcribe the authentic music of Jaffna, Mannar and Negombo.

The music of the *Duwa Passion Play*, and the *Pasan* and *Latoni* of that area too has been recorded and transcribed. The thesis focuses on tracing the evolution of the Passion Play of over five centuries along with its music and to the idiom it has evolved to within the context of the Passion Play of Duwa.

Keywords : Sri Lankan liturgical music, *Duwa*, Passion Play, *Pasan* chant, colonial influence