

# **The Diverse Musical Traditions of Sri Lankan Passion Plays**

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The primary objective of this study is to present an analysis on the different genres of music that is embedded in Sri Lankan Passion Plays. Sri Lankan Passion Play music is influenced by musical disciplines of several countries such as Portugal, India, and Sri Lanka.

The Sri Lanka Passion Play tradition can be traced as far back as 1602 with the arrival of the Franciscans (1553) and then the Jesuit missionaries (1602). When the Passion Plays were enacted in different parts of Sri Lanka they were accompanied by different regional musical traditions. Thus through the Sri Lankan Passion Plays one can trace European, South Indian as well as Sri Lankan musical elements with regional cultural and linguistic differences.

To achieve my objective I have selected three Sri Lankan Passion Plays, namely, Pesalai (1907), Boralessa (1924) and Duwa (1939).

**Keywords:** Sri Lankan Passion Play, missionaries, genres in music.