# A Study on Repositioning Papara for Contemporary Performance

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## Abstract

Papara is a genre of music unique to Sri Lanka, which was shaped by South Indian and Western influences. Papara is generally played at religious, cultural, and sports events employing wind and percussion instruments. However, Papara is often used as background music at such events, rather than a primary stage performance. This study explores the gap between traditional Papara and its potential as a primary stage performance, focusing on additional musical and structural elements that can be adopted into Papara. The research question this study delves into is, "What is the significance of developing Neo Papara as a subgenre of Papara?" The objectives of this study are to develop a Neo Papara performance and explore methods of arranging and scoring that suit such requirements. This study was done within a Practice-as-Research framework, and by using a practice-based research methodology, the study involves performing a Neo Papara concert and analyzing observations of performance, rehearsals, and audiovisual data. A phenomenological approach was used to analyze the researcher's self-reflection and thematic interpretation. The performance was a one-hour long Neo Papara concert, consisting of a repertoire of Jazz, Papara, and Classical standards, along with Papara and Neo Papara originals. The research outcomes were introducing Neo Papara exploration, development, and publishing Neo Papara forms and arranging methods, exposing Papara to various communities, positioning Papara within a concert context, developing Papara literature, and providing more performance opportunities for Papara in the music industry. In conclusion, this study demonstrates the potential of identifying Neo Papara as a distinct musical subgenre while demonstrating its importance by appreciating both the innovative elements, and the preserved traditional elements and cultural essence of Papara. This exploration facilitates a path for international musical collaborations and cultural exchanges through Papara music, and promotes it on global platforms. This study suggests that promoting and preserving Papara can be achieved through the development of sub-genres, performance frameworks, and methods.

***Keywords:*** *Papara, Neo Papara, Papara Standard, Subgenres*