

## The role of music in shaping choreographic identity in Sri Lankan contemporary dance

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Contemporary dance refers to prioritizing improvisation as a central creative method and a key element of performer skill. The specialty of contemporary dance lies in its freedom, versatility, and expressive depth. Unlike classical dance forms that follow strict structures and codified techniques, contemporary dance embraces experimentation, individuality, and innovation. As a non-structured form, its movement patterns often emerge from the dancer's individual improvisational style. This study explores the role of music in the creative identity of contemporary dance in Sri Lanka. Using a qualitative approach and grounded theory, the study employed narrative analysis to interpret the data through in-depth interviews with the participants. It investigates how music is selected, composed, or manipulated in the creation of contemporary dance patterns. The research further examines the dynamic interplay between sound and movement, emphasizing how music contributes to narrative construction, emotional depth, and interpretation within contemporary dance practice. The findings reveal diverse musical approaches ranging from traditional reinterpretations to experimental soundscapes, each reflecting the choreographer's artistic vision and sociocultural context.

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