

Chapter Five

History of Music Recording in Sri Lanka

The history of music recording in Sri Lanka may be classified under four major headings as follows:

- (1). Mechanical recording,
- (2). Magnetic recording
- (3). Tape based multi-track recording and
- (4). Hard disk based digital recording.

5.1 Mechanical recording -Recordings in Gramophone Era

Similar to the world recording history, Sri Lankan music recording industry was established with the introduction of gramophone as a mechanical recording device. According to the Sri Lankan music history, it is believed that the gramophone was brought to Sri Lanka in 1903. This newly introduced device was commonly known as the ‘talking machine’ or *katha-pettiya* in Sinhala. Subsequently, a number of companies such as *Apothecaries Ltd*, *T. E. Bevan Company of Calcutta*, *W.E. Bastian & Company*, *D. William Pedris & Company* and *Columbia Disc and Sons* imported different types of gramophones in different names. Among these brand names *Colombia Disc Gramophone*, *H.M.V*, *Annexophone*, *Microparaphone*, *Vabkophone*...etc. were very popular at that time¹. However, the most famous model at that time was the gramophone with “tulip shaped horn”. These gramophones might have been used only for listening purposes other than as recording devices. Using a gramophone was considered to be an elite practice at that time. Generally, gramophone was played a vital role in the Sri Lankan music history as a playback machine.

Musical tradition in the gramophone era in Sri Lanka can be classified with regard to different time periods as follows:

- (1). From 1905 to 1930s - Indigenous music - (*Nurthi gee*, folk songs...etc.)
- (2). From 1930s to 1939 - Patriotic songs - (*Nurthi gee*, Buddhist and, Patriotic songs)
- (3). From 1939 to 1947 - Devotional Songs - (devotional songs)
- (4). From 1947 to 1970- Film songs - (Film songs)

Accordingly, these types of musical genres were recorded on gramophone discs from 1905 to 1960s. Before the establishment of proper recordings by engineers, some gramophones with recording facility were sold by several companies.

In 1903, an advertisement published in the newspaper- *Sinhala Samaya* had mentioned that there was a special brand of a recording device called *Q-Grapherphone* and *QQ-Grapherphone* which were imported to Sri Lanka by the Apothecaries Ltd. in Colombo in the same year². Furthermore, this advertisement described that with the *QQ-Grapherphone*, one empty recording disc had been given to make own recordings along with five other song records.

However, the content of this advertisement has been misinterpreted by Prof. Sunil Ariyaratne, the author *as* “by producing his own recordings is not clear. Sometimes it would have referred to the possibility of performing their own songs”³.

That device had been sold at Rs. 60.00 with all records. This is the only valid and predictable fact that could be found in Sri Lankan recording history and it was used to cut self-recordings as a domestic device. In this *Grapherphone* the diaphragm could have been equipped as a microphone while doing recordings.

However, the proper history of music recording in Sri Lanka can be traced back to 1905. *The Gramophone and Type Writer Company of India* had conducted three recording tours. In their second recording tour in 1904-1905, they had decided to visit Burma and Ceylon while recording had been in progress in India. Accordingly, they had arrived Sri Lanka in 1905 in order to record indigenous music and other recordings (at that time the country was known as Ceylon). The recording team was led by *William Sinker Darby* and was associated by *Max Hampe*⁴. Later on the group sent recordings to Germany, Hanover for pressing and developing purposes.

According to discography, seven inch “g” suffix series under “3924g 3-12640” numbers, the 10 inch “h” suffix series under “3384h 3-12387”⁵ and the 12 inch “I” suffix series under “430i to 434i”⁶ belonged to Sinhalese recordings and had been recorded in 1905. However, it is rather difficult to find names of the earlier recording artists who belonged to series numbers “3924g 3-12640” and “3384h 3-12387”. Songs of a person called N. Silva had been recorded to the series of “430i to 434i” in 1905 by recording technicians who came from India. Even though it can be argued that there were recording series before N.Silva’s recordings, it is difficult to find names of the singers whose songs were recorded to “g and h” suffix series. However, according to the current evidence the above mentioned artist can be considered the first Sri Lankan singer who had recorded his songs on gramophone discs.

However, there are three views on the first Sri Lankan singer who recorded on gramophone discs. Late L.D.A. Rathnayaka who was the author of “The History of Proctor John de Silva Dramatic Literature” has mentioned Mrs. Margaret D. Silva Warnakulasuriya as the first Sri Lankan gramophone artist⁷. Professor Sunil Ariyaratne has also accepted that and cited her name in his book “The Gramophone Era in Sinhala Music”⁸. On the contrary Rangamalage Perera’s name is also said to be the first gramophone artist in Sri Lanka by Mr. Kulasekara Maddumage who was one of a gramophone record collectors and the conservators in Sri Lanka⁹. However, according to

the data that has been mentioned in the discography of the book *Gramophone Company's First Indian Recordings*, it is possible to consider N.Silva as the first Sri Lankan singer for gramophone recordings¹⁰.

However, some gramophone discs which contained *Sinhala* and *Tamil* music were brought to Sri Lanka in 1906. It is reported that these songs had been recorded and distributed by T.E. Bevan Company in Calcutta¹¹. Similarly, the well-known dramatist and script writer *L.D.A. Rathnayake*¹² has pointed out that there was a company called "P.O.R. and Sons" which was established to record contemporary music in 1908. According to him, contemporary or timely popular music genres such as "*Nurthi*, *Nadagam*, folk songs, Buddhist preaching and five precepts..." were recorded by them. But, due to lack of relevant and credible sources, it is not possible to prove that idea. However, early discs that were found in Sri Lanka belong to the brand name of "International Talking Machine Company (ODEAN)".

According to the evidences that come from the earlier times, all songs were said to be recorded on wax as the medium by using disc cutting machines. The singer and all instrumentalists had performed songs which were selected to record before a large horn that was fixed and used as a microphone. The following quotation helps one to understand the way in which this practice became the first wax recording tradition in India.

"...A thick wax master record was placed on the turntable rotating at 78 rpm. A huge recording horn was fitted on the wall behind her and close to her face, and she was asked to sing loudly into the horn. At the narrow end of the long horn a diaphragm fitted with a needle was connected to the recording machinery, with a needle placed on rotating disc for cutting the grooves. *Gaisberg* requested her to sing for three minutes and announce her name at the end of the recording. At the end of the trial recording she announced - "My name is *Gauhar Jan*"..."¹³

Earlier recordings in Sri Lanka also might have taken place in a similar manner.

All these recordings that were held in early periods in Sri Lanka belonged to the process of mechanical or analog format. Due to the loudness of performers' voice, the stylus of the recording machine was damaged on some occasions. The reason behind that was that at that time, there were no any well-trained artists for singing. All recordings were sung by theatre artists but they did not know how to control voice while singing. Consequently, while they performed loudly, they were advised to move back from the recording horn or the mouth of cone.

In this period, there were no properly planned music studios in India or in Sri Lanka (Ceylon). Two large rooms of a hotel in Calcutta were set up as temporary studios to record earlier songs by Gramophone Company in 1902¹⁴. Similarly, under the guidance of the recording technicians who belonged to the *Dum Dum* factory of Calcutta, temporary studios suitable for recordings were arranged and their walls were covered with gunny in order to avoid external disturbances as a sound proof room. Similarly, some public theatre halls and other small rooms were used as recording studios. The public theatre halls, especially the "*Tower Hall*" at Maradana, were employed for the above mentioned recording process by the German engineers¹⁵. A room of *Anderson Lane* in *Havelock Town* in Colombo was equipped as a recording studio under the guidance of *Dum Dum* factory. On some occasions, rooms were hired only for the purpose of recording¹⁶.

There was a trend of recording and releasing famous *Sinhala* film songs from 78 rpm discs in earlier times (Initially, sound tracks of film songs were directly recorded on 35 millimeter film negatives. However, to release these songs to the mass market, they were rerecorded on 1/4" inch magnetic tapes to cut 78 rpm discs)¹⁷. At that time, there were no ateliers and sound recording studios especially reserved for film recordings also. Thus, Sri Lankan film producers had to go to South India for producing films and music

recording. Even though some ateliers were built in 1951 in Sri Lanka, those ateliers did not have amenities for sound recording. Names of those early Sri Lankan ateliers as follows:

- (1). *S.M.Nayagam's*-Sounds Studio of *Kandana* (1951),
- (2). *Sirisena wimalaweera's Nawajewana studio* of *Kiribathgoda* (1952),
- (3). Ceylon studio or Lanka *chitragaraya* (1957),
- (4). *R.T. Chitragaraya* (1960)¹⁸.

Armatures were trained under the Indian recording technicians in some studios¹⁹.

Hence, the *Neptune* and *Wahini* studios in Madras (now Chennai) were selected by film producers and musicians to record songs and background music in the first decade. Some ateliers such as *Citadel*, Film Centre in Madras and the *Modern Chitragaraya* (ateliers) were also selected for recording. Sound technicians worked hard on recording and improving creativity of each production. However, some songs of *Sinhala* films were recorded at the personal recording studios that were situated in Sri Lanka with at least minimum sound facilities. The "*Silverfone*" studio may be considered to be one of such studios at that time²⁰.

Music of the earliest Sinhala films were also composed and directed by well-known South Indian musicians such as Narayana Ayyar, C.N. Pandurangan, S.S. Weda, S. Dakshinamurthi, T.R. Papa, etc. It is reported that due to lack of proper sound recording technologies and sound equipments, they had to face critical problems while recording these film songs. However, they managed to perform with their maximum effort with the assistance of musicians even in that period²¹.

Some of the early Sri Lankan film recording studios did not have sound proof facilities. On some occasions, special techniques were used to overcome external disturbances and

feedback problems. A fine example for this may be the song recording of the film named *Pitisara Kella* (Village girl) in 1953 at the *Nawageewana Chitragaraya*. All songs were recorded at a temporally build shelter inside the *Nawageewana Chitragaraya*. This shelter was covered with coconut leaves and was converted to a studio by hanging clay pots around four corners to avoid feedbacks. However, these strategies were not suitable to avoid external disturbances caused by vehicle sounds and the voices of bullock-carts and their songs. Sometimes, noise of rain disturbed recordings. As a result, songs were recorded during nights to overcome these problems²².

The Sri Lankan government's 1956 policy (by Sri Lankan Freedom Party) which intended to ban the use of Indian film and the practice of going to South India for film and music recording encouraged the development of Sri Lankan studios and recordings to some extent. However, even today, the majority of people of Sri Lanka appreciate those creations without worrying about their technical issues.

5.2 Magnetic Sound Recording in Gramophone Era

Introducing magnetic recording technology marked a new era in recording industry as well as recording technology. Medium of tape recording was also employed in gramophone recording in early days. It was reported that in 1948, especially for the recordings of Cargill's Company, 1/4" inch magnetic tape (Spool tapes) and an "EMI-BTR 2" type tape recorders had been used for the first time in Sri Lanka for the purpose of making a master tape recording. Subsequently 78 rpm discs were cut by using the aforesaid master tape²³. Examples:-



Early Record players



Electronic disc cutting machine



EMI-BTR 2 Player



Model: REVOX : A77
Tracks: 01 track (mono)
Time period: 1979/80-1994
Effects: Not available



Model: REVOX: PR 99
Tracks: 02 track (Stereo)
Time period: 1984/85-2009
Effects: Not available



Model: STUDER
Tracks: 01 track (Mono)
Time period: 1984/85-1994
Effects: Not available



Model: OTARI MX 5050
Tracks: 02 track (Stereo)
Time period: 1992-2012
Effects: Not available

Figure 9: Early Record Players
(Courtesy: SLBC archives)

These types of tape recorders, portable as well as fixed, were also utilized in Ceylon Broadcasting Cooperation at that time and it was considered as a turning point in the field of Sri Lankan music recording industry. In the course of time, some personal recording studios were established not only for film music recordings but also to record other music genres. Among them, the “International Recording Studio of Felix Ranaweera, Kalyani Studio²⁴ (Forerunners of this studio were M.S. Perera, E.A.P. Edirisingha and Mervin Rodrigo. This was undertaken by the Government Film Cooperation under the name of Sarasavi Chitragaraya in 1971) has played a special role in recording film songs and other genres of light music. A mixer with six channels and two microphones capable of using this machine were made by him to record in this studio. The initial song recording at the International Recording Studio was the song “*Dushmantha Aho kimado...*” that belonged to a commercial disc and was sung by the well-known songstress *Rukmani Devi*²⁵.

From 1953 onwards, studios of “Radio Ceylon” were adopted with one or two microphones especially for recording Colombia and His Masters Voice discs (78 rpm). One was for the singer and the other one for the orchestra with the technical support of the group of leading Sri Lankan sound engineers namely Mervin Rodrigo, Albert Dias and H.D.Dharmasena²⁶.

The gramophone era of the Sri Lankan musical tradition began to wane in 1970s. The final bunches of 78 rpm records belonged to the film “*Kinkini Pada*” and were issued in 1969 under *Colombia* label name and the song discs of the film “*Geetha*” were released under the label *HMV* in 1970. The final song of non-filmy song of gramophone had been released in 1969. The disc number of this last song was EXVEE 1019 which belonged to the non-filmy song “*Raigamayanani - gampalayanani*” sung by *Freddy Silva and Jayatissa hettiarachchi*. It marked the end of Sinhala gramophone era²⁷.

There was an improper practice of using gramophone discs to decorate house walls applying colors as well as a decorative motif in the period of 1960s. It dramatically influenced the decline of such valuable cultural elements from the society. Example:-



Figure 10: Colored disc used as a wall hanging

(Picture taken at Mr. Kulasekara Maddumage's disc collection)

Recording sessions during that period were highly complex. A serious practice and several takes were required in order to come up with a satisfactory recording. It also needed a considerable time. Both singing and music performance were recorded simultaneously on the relevant recording medium. Due to a single mistake on the part of the vocalist or any member of the orchestra, the recording session had to be re-started. Further, sometimes the recordings were disturbed by natural obstacles such as rain and unavoidable sounds like vehicles and the noises of the air crafts during the World War II.

Example:

The recording session of the gramophone song “*Durapenena thani tala –Anuradhapura diha*” of the eminent gramophone artistes Mrs. Viviyana Boralassa had to be postponed several times due to the rain²⁸.

Consequently, it took a long time for the artist to record the song in a satisfactory manner. It used to take much longer time if anyone of the musicians made a mistake as they all had to perform again for a flawless recording. Whereas, with the modern technology, today any sound track, dedicated to a particular instrument or artist, could be erased, dubbed again or modified by adding various sound effects as desired or required. Any kind of editing in a song or music recording is possible even after the recording is over.

5.2.1 Microgroove Disc Recording

An electronically operated device known as “Turn Table or the Record Player” arrived to the local market soon after the end of the gramophone era. Electronically generated high fidelity LP and EP discs of Rock and Roll music stars such as “Elvis Presley, Bill Haley and his Comets” and other popular groups known as “Beatles and the Rolling Stones” were extensively popularized among the younger generation of the English speaking middle class at this time. Consequently, by imitating those groups and their music genres with some western music concepts, a popular trend began to emerge in Sri Lanka in 1960s. This was known as the “Group song era” in Sinhala music. This trend contributed to the formation of local pop groups. In 1960, the first Sri Lankan pop group was established with a Spanish name “*Los Caballeros*”. It was led by Nevil Fernando. As a consequence of imitating *Los Caballeros*, many pop groups were established in the country²⁹. Recording medium which was highly popular at that time were newly introduced microgrooves discs such as LPs and EPs. These mediums were used to release their own albums. This resulted in establishing a microgrooves recording technology in Sri Lanka.

All these songs except the initial discs that were released under the “Philips label” were recorded by the leading recording technician Mervin Rodrigo while he was working in the *Sarasavi* studio in Kelaniya. He used a reel to reel “Ferro graph recorder” and a mixer

that was produced by himself for tape recording purposes (Initially, these were recorded into quarter inch (1/4") tapes)³⁰.

These tapes were also edited by using the splicing technology which has already been described in the first part of this chapter. However, it is clear that only one or two types of musical effects such as “echo” were applied by Sri Lankan recording technicians in comparison with the expanding global recording fields at that time. However, at the same period, some western recording technicians had experimented applying some effects such as tape echo, reverberation, loops and delaying effects that had become popular in tape compositions. After that, master recording tapes were sent to India and Singapore for the process of pressing. The recording technology employed at that time was “monophonic or mono”. But the very first LP and EP pressing plant was established in Sri Lanka by Shan Wickramasinghe³¹.

At that time, local sound studios did not have proper sound systems and musical instruments for recording. They owned only the recording equipments. Thus, musicians had to bring musical instruments and other sound accessories especially for sound amplification³².

Recording on “Microgrooves discs” such as EP (extended play – 45 rpm) and LP (long play- 33 1/3 rpm) were started in 1960s. The Luvice Brown Company has issued the first Sri Lankan EP record under the Philips label in 1959 while the first LP disc was released to Sri Lankan mass market in 1971 by Jerald Wickramasuriya under the name of “*Suriya Show*” including 12 songs (CHB-1)³³.

5.2.2 Recordings of Ceylon Broadcasting Corporation

Radio broadcasting in Sri Lanka was officially established in 1924. In this era, gramophone played a vital role as the sole medium of music broadcasting in Radio Ceylon (later known as Ceylon Broadcasting Corporation). The very first disc cutting machine was brought to Radio Ceylon in 1937. In its initial stages all live recordings were recorded to discs at the same time of their broadcasting. It is interesting that people like Mr. Jayasekara and Mudlier Abesekara had moved around the country to record some folk songs and folk law with the disc cutting machine by fixing it inside a vehicle that belonged to the department at the time³⁴.

However, after commencing its own recordings, and as a result, of the popularity of broadcasting among audience, the gramophone and 78 rpm discs began to wane.

After a few decades all songs were recorded on 1/4” inched spool tapes. In the initial stages, only one carbon microphone was used for that purpose. The process of singing on that microphone was commonly known as “to sing in to the *Bee house* or *Mee wadaya sindu keema*” as the shape of this microphone looked like as a “Bee hive”(Figure 11). All the instrumentalists along with the singer curved around the microphone while they performed.



Figure 11: Microphone used for group recording

(Courtesy: SLBC archives)

Songs that were recorded on spool tapes were transferred into 78 rpm discs as a means of preservation. They varied in sizes from 16 inches (1940-1950), to 12 inches (1960-1980). There were electronic disc cutting machines in the radio station for that purpose. Due to lack of manufacturing materials of high quality, the quality of the discs were not satisfactory. Further, as they did not have a proper preservation methods, after playing three or four times the surface layer of discs were damaged. If artists wanted to broadcast a newly created song, they had to record the song on a 78 rpm disc and then hand it over to the departmental Sensor Board before broadcasting³⁵. After 1980s, the following mediums were used to record and playback songs:

1. Cartridge – specially for commercial spots (1980)
2. MD, DAT and Compact Discs (1990)
3. Computer recording (after 1998)



Figure 12: Media of recording

(Courtesy: SLBC Archives)

However, during 1960s, the 1/4", 3 1/4" and 7 1/2" inched mono spool tapes were used as the medium of recording. All these recordings were performed using the Mono technology at that time. After introducing FM channels in 1990, all programs were changed into stereophonic formats³⁶. The Ceylon Broadcasting Corporation played a great role in the Sri Lankan music field by using these minimum recording equipment at that time.

Recording technicians who worked at the SLBC during that period not only produced recordings by all means but they also tried to overcome technological limitations. They had attempted to create some unique experiments to the field of Sri Lankan light music as well. Two of these engineers were late Mr. U. Ariyawimal, and Gunadasa Kapuge who was a popular singer as well as a music composer. However, there were four channels in a recording machine at that time, they attempted to couple another with them simultaneously and recorded songs with large orchestras minimizing technical limitations. They were able to generate the special effect called *Chip monk* effectively and skillfully and inserted to the Sinhala song "*Punchi Hamu*" sung by eminent singer Victor Rathnayake³⁷. That was the very first Sri Lankan song, which used the so called sound effect in 1960s. A few years later, such forms of manually generated sound effects were applied by personally owned studios.

However, the personal recording studios contained advanced recording facilities than the equipment that were used in governmental Broadcasting Corporation. Stereo recording facility was employed by some personal recording studios from the beginning of 1970s (Figure 13).

But two tracks stereo recording technology had existed when four track Stereo multi-track recording was started in 1974. The four track 1/4" inch stereo recording equipment were initially introduced to Sri Lanka by John Fernando of the Luvice Brown Company. Initial stereo recordings were done by the recording technician Mervin Rodrigo at the

Sarasavi studio, while Augie Ranaweera started four track recording in his personal recording studio during 1976-77.



Figure 13: Early Recording Session

(Nandana Gunathilaka, Recording a film song, page 41)

5.2.3 Multi-track Recording in Cassette Era

As a consequence of the free economic policy introduced in 1977, the socio-cultural background of Sri Lanka was subjected to a rapid transformation. A large number of unskilled women, as well as men, found jobs as housemaids, drivers as well as office workers in the Gulf countries. Most of them brought cassette record players on their return. In the same way, large number of brand new and reconditioned vehicles, such as cars and passenger vehicles were imported from Japan³⁸. Most of these vehicles came fitted with two-in-one cassette players with radio (also called Radio-cum-Cassette player).

Even though not even a single *Sinhala* cassette existed at that time, the concept of “record bars” was present in order to record selected songs from 78 rpm gramophone discs and

EP, LP record depending on customers' choices . This practice was introduced in Sri Lanka by Vijaya Ramanayake. In the course of time, the tradition of transferring songs from gramophone records to audio cassettes was widespread throughout the country³⁹.

Inspired by *Chali Chan*, the EP, LP cover manufacturer in Singapore, Vijaya Ramanayake introduced *Cassette* in Sri Lankan market in 1977. The very first cassette launched by him, under the *Taranga* label, was “Anytime Anywhere” by the renowned and popular Sri Lankan singer - Milton Mallawarachchi. It was a big success and well accepted by the music fans, marking a huge sale as a popular cassette of that time. Seeming a lucrative field, it inspired not only the musicians and cassette producers, but also the recordists or the technicians to earn more. Keeping it in mind, studio owners had to modernize their studios and upgrade their recording equipment with latest available technology. As a result, 1/2” inch eight track recording was initiated in 1980s. The recording equipment was originally used in Sri Lanka *Shabdagaraya* (Sri Lanka Atelier) in the same year. But during 1980s “high speed” cassette recording machines were brought to the *Singlanka* Corporation to duplicate cassettes locally and 25 cassettes of 25 leading artists were released for the first time in Sri Lanka. Before that master records were sent to Singapore for the duplication process. The quality of recording improved after 1988, since the high quality recording machines and the technology that were followed by our recording technicians to produce cassettes after 1988. Implementing 1”inch, sixteen track (16 track) machines at the *Sawsiripaya* sound studio and 2 inch, twenty four (24 track) at *Augie* Studio in 1990 and 1991 also marked another episode in the Sri Lankan recording history⁴⁰.

Accordingly, there was a trend of some popular artists whose songs were recorded on gramophone discs and the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation released new song albums, including earlier recorded songs with new music arrangements, using the then available new technology. This practice changed the structure of the song,

instrumentation, musical elements like harmony, counterpoint *etc.*, rhythm patterns, quality of singers' voice, the feel and lyrical context of the songs as well.

5.3 Digital Sound Recording

Digital recording can be classified in two forms such as;

- (1). Tapes
- (II). Hard discs

5.3.1 Digital Recording on Tapes

Digital recording on celluloid tape was introduced in Sri Lanka in 1993. The very first recording equipment was used by *Janakala* studio, where early digital recordings were done. Primarily '1/4 inch - Hi-8' tape was used for the digital recordings and later '1/2' inch tape came in use in 1994. '*Halazy*' was the brand name of the machine used for recording. Although the machine had eight tracks, there was a facility to join two or three machines simultaneously to increase more tracks.

The well-known singer Karunarathna Diulgane's song "*Nethata Ulelak*" is the first ever Sri Lankan (Sinhala) song that was recorded by the digital recording technology⁴¹ whereas, the CD album of "Inspirations" of Chandimal Fernando is reported as the first digital music album in Sri Lanka⁴².

5.3.2 Recording on Hard Disks

Hard disk based 24 multi-track recording was started in Sri Lanka in the year 2000. According to this method, musical or other recorded data was stored in a hard disc

instead of recording on tapes (Figure 14) . These machines also had the capability of joining two or three machines simultaneously in order to increase tracks. The final product of music released to the mass market or the audience by the medium of Compact disc or the CD. Comparatively, hard disk medium was popular among music recording engineers than the tape based digital recording in Sri Lanka.



Figure 14: Modern Multi-track recording session

(Courtesy: ERX Studio, Colombo)

5.3.3 Computer Based Music Recording

Computer based music composing as well as the technology of recording was introduced to Sri Lanka by leading musician Dulip Gabadamudalige as far back as 1986. From the beginning, computer based MIDI technology was used to synthesize new tones, new rhythm patterns and to compose and produce his own productions. In addition, Sri Lankan students were trained by him and it resulted in spreading this technology throughout the country. After several years, this trend was highly popularized among the

musically enriched younger generation and they started professional studios as well as home recording studios in several places in the country⁴³.

Nowadays, the vast majority of musicians who are capable of playing keyboards and handling computer soft-ware (Digital Audio Workstations) that are especially developed for composing and sound recording such as *Cakewalk* (for MIDI recording), *Nuendor*, and *Adobe Audition*, are used to produce music albums depending on their choices. On the other hand, even if a person poses the knowledge of handling the aforementioned software with a lesser knowledge of music, he/she could easily produce compositions. The reason is that the computer provides with rhythms, sounds of instruments (called field pre-recorded samples) and other built-in-sound effects such as echo, reverbs *etc.* as tools for creations. However, people who have creativity and background knowledge on music, utilized computer based composing and recording technology while combining acoustic instrumentations with proper resemblance to the cultural heritage of the country. However, it must be mentioned here that the creativity and the artistic quality of many untalented people always results in low, poor and monotonous compositions with regard to their quality.

However, the computer based recording technology has transformed the recording culture of Sri Lanka in a dramatic manner. As a result, of the above mentioned highly developed technology, musicians are able to produce their creations very easily in comparison to the past practices. It saves the cost of production and the time of artists compared to the large scale studio based recording sessions. Consequently, some large scale studios have also been equipped with the newly introduced technology of recording. On the other hand, well established and highly reputed recording studios have already begun to be closed down due to the lack of updated modern recording equipment and facilities and the lack of a proper market in the same field.

Similarly, by the mid-nineties some government radio channels and all other private radio channels have been using hard disk based digital multi-track recording technology both in pre-productions (live) and post productions. It is evident that the private channels today employ the latest technological equipment whereas the government owned Broadcasting Corporation lags behind in this area⁴⁴.

The form of multi-track and digital recording technology (digital audio recording technology) resulted in enormous changes in the field of musical culture of Sri Lanka. These types of vast changes significantly affected not only musicians, music compositions, audience and the outdoor live performances, but it also the socio-cultural pattern of the music industry in Sri Lanka.

¹ Ariyaratne, *The Gramophone era in Sri Lanka*, 19-26.

² Ibid., 19.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Kinner, *Gramophone companies first Indian recordings*, 21-25.

⁵ Ibid., 122.

⁶ Ibid., 174.

⁷ Rathnayaka, *The History of Proctor John de Silva Dramatic Literature (1857-1922)*, 131.

⁸ Ariyaratne, *The Gramophone era in Sri Lanka*, 29.

⁹ Kulasekara Maddumage, *Personal interview*, October 11, 2011

¹⁰ Kinner, *Gramophone companies first Indian recordings*, 174.

¹¹ Ariyaratne, *The Gramophone era in Sri Lanka*, 20.

¹² Rathnayaka, *The History of Proctor John de Silva Dramatic Literature (1857-1922)*, 127-128.

¹³ Chandvankar, *My name is Gauhar Jan; First dancing girl, Calcutta*.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ariyaratne, *The Gramophone era in Sri Lanka*, 48.

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- ¹⁶ Ibid., 48.
- ¹⁷ Mervin Bens, *Personal interview*, January 06, 2010.
- ¹⁸ Ariyaratne, *Lyrics of the Sinhala Cinema (1947-1956)*, 23-27.
- ¹⁹ Mervin Bens, *Personal interview*, January 06, 2010.
- ²⁰ Ariyaratne, *Lyrics of the Sinhala Cinema (1947-1956)*. 23-27.
- ²¹ Ibid.
- ²² Ibid.
- ²³ Ariyaratne, *The Gramophone era in Sri Lanka*, 49-50.
- ²⁴ Denis Rodrigo, *Personal Interview*, September 28,2011.
- ²⁵ Augie Ranaweera, *Personal interview*, September 28,2011.
- ²⁶ Ariyaratne, *The Gramophone era in Sri Lanka*, 50.
- ²⁷ Kulasekara Maddumage, *Personal interview*, September 03, 2011.
- ²⁸ Viviyana Boralassa, *Telephone interview*, September 12,2011.
- ²⁹ Ariyaratne, *Pop Music of Sri Lanka*, 49-52.
- ³⁰ Denis Rodrigo, *Personal interview*, September 28, 2011.
- ³¹ Denis Rodrigo, *Personal interview*, September 28, 2011.
- ³² Milroy Darmarathne, *Personal interview*, September on 29, 2011.
- ³³ Ariyaratne, *Pop Music of Sri Lanka*, 52-53.
- ³⁴ Perera, *Gradual Development of Sri Lankan Radio*, 42.
- ³⁵ Denis Rodrigo, *Personal interview*, September 28,2011.
- ³⁶ Mudith Siriwardana, *Personal interview*, May 14, 2012
- ³⁷ Kudaligama, *Remembrance of Six decades*, 99.
- ³⁸ Karunanayake, *Broadcasting In Sri Lanka Potential and Performance*, 308
- ³⁹ Vijaya Ramanayake, *Personal interview*, October 03,2011
- ⁴⁰ Perera, *Telephone interview*, April 07, 2010.

⁴¹ Daynanda Perera, *Telephone interview*, April 07, 2010

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⁴³ Gabadamudalige, *Personal interview*, January 27, 2013.

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