Introduction

Technology, in modern times, plays a vital role in the field of music in many ways. As we all know, music is an age old abstract art, that is, the aesthetical expression of one’s emotions, imagination or, creativity through a pleasing arrangement of sound. Hence, sound recording and reproduction are deeply inter-connected with music and the field of music has been very much influenced and dramatically transformed since the sound recording techniques have evolved. Evolution of sound recording technology and scientific development in this field has resulted in rapid growth in the field of music.

Looking at the origin, development of the technical processes of sound recording, especially the music recording, it is obvious that the technology has changed the ways, methods and the procedures of music creation, conservation, distribution, listening and even the performance and presentation. Technological advancement has also transformed the typicality of music genres significantly.

The aforementioned evolutionary processes of technologies have affected the field of world music in diverse ways and some technologically mediated genres of music such as Hip-hop, House music, and currently Electro, Techno and Dub-step, Re-mix have emerged as a result of this evolution.

These revolutionary recording techniques have affected the Sri Lankan music industry in many ways. Thus, the culture and the industry of music in Sri Lanka have been subjected to many transformations in both positive and negative ways. Similarly, the attitudes towards technology and technology-based music are in a critical stage. As a result, some musicians also criticize the new technology even while implementing the same technology as their profession. Generally, the unawareness of the intricacies of
technology and current trends on music can be seen as the major reasons for such misconceptions.

The study of “Evolution of sound recording techniques and their impact on the growth of music in Sri Lanka” is an effort to research into the application of technology for music and its growth in Sri Lanka, with a scholarly approach. The study included the history and development of sound recording technology, changes and growth in the field of music recording, creation or production, presentation and the musical culture of Sri Lanka.

This research thesis consists of seven chapters and the conclusion. As the study relates to Sri Lanka, the first chapter seeks to give an introduction to the geographical facts, historically significant time-periods and cultural influences, with special reference to Sri Lankan music.

In the second chapter, the music of Sri Lanka has been discussed about. Music culture, various music genres, musical instruments, inter-cultural influences and their impacts on the local music have been extensively described within this chapter.

The third chapter is devoted to describe the basic salient technologies and the history of sound recording. Emphasis has been laid on the recording procedures since the invention of the early mechanical device, the Phonoautograph by Leon Scott in 1856-57, to the modern and latest computerized digital recording technology. It has been attempted to present the information on the basic principles and the historical development of various sound recording technologies.

Technological advancement in the field of sound recording is a very important and relevant part of this study. Invention and development of fundamental devices, procedures and applications have also given rise to new forms of applications and genres
of music. Thus, various types of technological advancement, like Mechanical, Magnetic and Digital recording, during the last several decades, have been discussed in the fourth chapter.

The fifth chapter emphasizes upon the history of music recording in Sri Lanka. Details regarding Mechanical recording, Magnetic recording, Celluloid tape based multi-track recording and Hard disk based Digital recording procedures as adopted in Sri Lanka have been given here in this chapter.

Sixth chapter is about the prevalence of music in Sri Lankan society today. Music is liked and enjoyed by almost all and at many public places soothing music is generally played for relaxation and entertainment. Popularity of music, listening practice and culture have been discussed in this chapter.

As the most important part of the research, the seventh chapter has been specifically devoted to critically elaborate on the impact of recording techniques on the growth, in terms of popularization and expansion, of music. Important points, such as (a) influence of initial sound recording techniques on music of Sri Lanka and development of musical traditions in Sri Lanka; (b) emergence of different music genres through technical development in Sri Lanka; (c) impact on music performance; (d) overdependence and misuses of technology have been critically discussed in this chapter. Different views of some artists, musicians, music producers, recording engineers and common people have also been included regarding the use of modern techniques in music recording and production.

Finally, all the main points of the entire thesis have been conclusively summarized in the conclusion.
Methodology

For this in-depth study, both the primary and secondary resources were used. Thus, the chronicles, newspaper articles, pictures, paintings, audio and video material, various reports, as well as, views of some musicians and relevant personalities through interview, email correspondences and online surveys were collected and used.