Chapter Two

Music of Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka has been influenced by several eastern and western cultural traditions due to a number of reasons. Most prominently, being an island which has been a key economic centre since the ancient times has highly stimulated that process. As a result of having been colonized by the Portuguese, then the Dutch and lastly the British, for a period of nearly five hundred years, the cultural diversity of Sri Lanka can be identified especially with regard to the language, religion, customs, food habits and arts. However, it should also be mentioned here that there were characteristic traditional customs, food patterns and art forms in Sri Lankan villages long before the above mentioned cultural contacts and colonization. Music is also a significant cultural phenomenon that has been shaped in the course of this process. Music has also equally and significantly changed as other cultural traditions.

2.1 Music in Ancient Time

Even though the signs of written history of Sri Lanka can be traced back to more than 25 centuries, no conclusive record of ancient musical tradition(s) of Sri Lanka could be found. Due to the lack of reliable evidence, it is extremely difficult to define the characteristics of ancient music in the country. The musical tradition of ancient Sri Lanka can only be understood through the chronicles, folklore, archeological information, traditions of art and other literary works.

The earliest reference to music, found in *Mahawamsa*, is related to the classical legend of Princes *Vijaya* and *Pandukabhaya*. It is mentioned in *Mahawamsa* that there was a
musical festival that took place on the same day of the arrival of Vijaya at the Sirasawatthupura - the village of the Yakka (Yaksha) clan.

Furthermore, in the time of King Pandukabhaya, music and dancing were said to be associated with the customs of worshiping two Yakkha (demons) named Chittaraja and Kalawela with the aim of obtaining their support for the well-being of native people of Sri Lanka. Thus, it becomes clear that the music in Sri Lanka was to worship demon gods. Even today, the Sri Lankan aboriginal inhabitants, called Veddas worship demon gods with music and dance. It must also be stressed that the contemporary Vedda musical traditions has dramatically made impacts on other musical traditions both at the local and international levels.

Although Buddhism was introduced to Sri Lanka in the middle of the 3rd Century, it did not encourage arts like music and dance, since these stimulate peoples’ secular minds. Buddhism is not only a religion, aimed at enlightenment (Nibbana or Nirvana), but also a philosophical doctrine for proper guidance to society. Consequently, following Lord Buddha’s discipline, monks and other laymen did not encourage “forbidden” arts like music and dances. This significantly had major impacts on Sri Lankan music, effecting the development of a pleasing musical tradition.

On the contrary, musical cultures in the world have grown even in religious contexts. However, in ancient times, Sri Lanka had a tradition of worshiping gods and demon deities through performing art forms like music and dances. In course of time, some of such rituals were adopted by certain Buddhist temples. Accordingly, music, drama and dance received patronage from the Buddhist temples. That significantly helped in the development of performing arts in Sri Lanka. However, the “Mahayana” tradition of Buddhism dramatically sustained these arts though Theravada (Hinayana) tradition of Buddhism did not do so.
According to literary materials, music was used in religious rituals and practices performed in Buddhist temples in ancient Anuradhapura period\(^3\). In addition, the impact of Mahayana Buddhism can be witnessed in the same era. Some scholars argue that the Pirith chanting in Sri Lanka was directly influenced by the tradition of Mahayana Buddhism. Pirith or Pariththa is a Pali term which means “Prevention”. Historical evidence suggests that a Pirith chanting ceremony was conducted by king Upatissa (368 A.D. to 410 A.D.) as a solution for a famine\(^4\). Even today, Pirith chanting is practiced in Sri Lankan Buddhist homes on various occasions like, blessing for birth days, house warming ceremonies etc.

Buddhist recitations also provide important signs of ancient music. Samantapasadika (commentary to the discipline of Buddhism or Vinaya Pitakaya) mentions that there were three forms of Buddhist chanting in the past namely, Suttas, Jatakas and Gatas. Each of these forms has a different style\(^5\). Among these three categories, Pirith belongs to Suttas, similar to Sanskrit Shloka chanting.

Chanting of verses or gatas is performed in common recitative styles, intact with the metrical pattern. According to its metrical formation, gata has been written in “gi” metre which was generally used to write poetical verses in ancient literature. “Gi” metre has four lined stanza\(^6\). Each line is asymmetrical without a rhyme. One of the earliest information related to this fact can be identified in an inscription found in Kosgama Kanda which dates back to the first or the second century B.C.

Literary texts of the medieval period also provide evidence regarding music. Siyabas lakara (written in 10\(^{th}\) century); Elu sandes lakuna (A.D. 1270- 1293), Muwadevdawata, Sasadavata and Kavsilumina describe the principles and rules regarding metres used in writing poems\(^7\).
Fundamental theoretical concepts of Indian music such as: *grama*, *murchna*, *jathi*…etc. are mentioned in *Kavsilumina* which is considered to have been written by *Parakramabahu II* of the king of *Dambadeniya* (1236-1270)⁸.

Given below is an example, taken from them prevailing poetic writings: *Kavsilumina* (Song no 601) as evidence.

> “sama madara tara oli
devisi handa tegamra
sarasath unu panas tan
musu ekvisi wajabana”⁹

The concepts mentioned in this poem are cited in *Dharmappradipika* (Song no 362) of *Gurulugomi* as well. Example:

> “Sathta sara tayo gama
muchchna ekavisati
Thana nikuna Paghghasa
ichchate sawaramandalo”¹⁰

The author of *Saddramalankaraya* provides names of seven notes (Names of these seven notes have given in wrong order as: *Rishabhaya, Dhaiwathaya, Sadjaya, Gandharaya, Madyamaya, Panchamaya, and Nishadaya*)¹¹. And also gives their positions on the scales of twenty two *Srutis* mentioned in *Darmapradipika* as 3-2-4-4-3-2-4 (“…Sruthi tun denya deniya sataradenaya sataradenaya tun deniya deniya sataradenayayi dvavimsati sruthibehdayo ipsitayoyi…”¹² are tallied with the first given in “Bharat Nataya Sastra”, i.e., 3-2-4-4-3-2-4 according to *Sadjagrama* as follows:

> “Tisro dve ca catasrasca catasratisara eva ca
dve caivadya catasrasca sadjagrama ghavedvihii”¹³
It is interesting to note here that Rev. Welivita Sorata has said that there had a different music system or a tradition than to Indian music at that time\textsuperscript{14}.

However, As far as some misconceptions and misinterpretations are concerned it is difficult to say that there had a properly cultivated music system in Sri Lanka at that time, mentioned in such manner in such literary works. If there had existed a music system in such a manner, the tradition and the culture of music in Sri Lanka would have been in a far more developed manner nowadays. On the other hand, if there had such a developed music tradition as mentioned, the portions of melody (acoustics) must have also been equally developed.

However, the reason behind this resemblance is not clear. It is possibly due to the influence of Indian music tradition imbibed by the local musicians and common masses of them following Sanskrit texts for guidance.

\subsection{2.2 South Indian Influence on Sri Lankan Music}

It has already been pointed out in the previous chapters that the political, religious and cultural relationship with Southern India has not only influenced Sri Lankan music but the entire cultural sphere also. According to historical evidence, this influence has existed from the Polonnaruwa period (12 century) to the Kandy period (19\textsuperscript{th} century), the last kingdom of Sri Lanka. The Kandy period was the time when a large number of South Indian Tamils immigrated to Sri Lanka, not only for trade, but also for political reasons. Such a significant trend made a strong impact on Sri Lankan culture in general. For example, the musical patterns and forms related to Hindu Worships (especially, the worshiping such as for the Sthothra-paeans, Shlokas-stanzas, Yadini-prayers which are offered to god Vishnu) have impacted on the traditional practices of Buddhist rituals.
In the *Kotte* period (1415 A.D. to 1514 A.D.) which is generally considered to be the prime period of *Sinhalese* poetry, famous *chandas* of music were used to write *Sandesha* (message) poems. “*Elu sandas lacuna*” describes more than 20 varieties of metres. Among them, most famous metre, used in that period, when the text was written, was “*Samudragosha*”. It has 18 *matras* and the pause (*yathi*) - falling on the tenth and the subsequent eighth *matra*\(^{15}\).

Literary recourses that belong to *Kandy* period also provide precious references to the theoretical aspects of the music prevalent at that period. However, due to lack of a notation system, the original melodies and rhythms cannot be ascertained though many texts are found. Music received ample royal patronage during this period. There were five institutions that provided royal support for music and dance as follows:

1. *Kavikaara maduwa* (Institution appointed for music)
2. *Natun Ilangama* (Institution for dance)
3. *Wahala ilangama* (Institution for drama and other traditional arts)
4. *Sinhakkaransaya* (Institution consist with local percussions and wind instruments- the group of musicians had to play their rapture for eight times for a day.)
5. *Tambaru purappettukaransaya* (institution for march music)\(^{16}\)

*Kavikaara maduwa* was the most important institutions among them. It is also known that an expert musician, called *Ganitalankara*, from the South Indian *Nayakkara* clan was appointed as the chief musician of this institution. Musicians of this institute were known as *bards* who composed and performed *Prashasti* (Panegyrics) in order to please kings. In turn, they were offered lands and titles of honor such as *Kavindra, Kavishwara* by kings\(^{17}\). This historical practice (*Prashasti*) is performed in the ‘Temple of Tooth Relic, Kandy’ even now.
Nevertheless, court musical tradition of that time was strongly influenced by the musical tradition of South India. Several social and cultural affinities between Sri Lanka and South India amplified such impacts. For example, royal weddings and religious customs. The marriage between the Kandian king Narendrasingha (1707A.D.-1739 A.D.) and a princess of the South Indian Nayakkara clan proves this fact. Her servants and a group of artists (musicians and dancers) came along with her from South India. Affairs such as this has made to Sri Lanka strong impact on several forms of music such as panegyrics, Sindu and Vannam.

2.3 Folk Music of Sri Lanka

The typical Sri Lankan music is traditional. The term ‘folk music’ (music of the ordinary people) is used to refer to that tradition. All typical folk melodies and lyrics that belong to these genres are related to the daily activities of the village people. These include lullabies, play songs (generally known as Keli Gee, like Olinda keliya, Mewara keliya, Saturan Thereema). Workers’ songs, religious songs, ceremonial songs and many other are also included in this category. These songs are predominantly preserved in and transferred from one generation to another through oral tradition. They are locally known as Sivpada or Sipada (quatrain) since they consist of four lines. The songs related to cart drivers (gal gee or gal kavi), watch hut songs (pel-gee or kavi), honey gatherers’ songs (bambara gee), plumbago- miners’ songs (patal gee) etc. are still sung in the same form. Even though they are similar to each other in structure, their patterns of melody, sometimes vary, depending on the profession involved. For example, boat songs are different from honey- gatherers’ song. However, melodies of watch hut songs and cart drivers’ songs are somewhat similar in the style of singing, but are often interchanged.

The main purpose of these songs is communication. Singers are not visible to each other, with regard to the songs related to such professions as mining and watch hut, as these songs are sung at nights. Such songs are generally sung in order to express their feelings.
using free rhythms. While singing, they normally pause in the second and the fourth lines or sometimes, in all four lines. But the singer interpolates a prose comment within each line if it is *tika sipada*.

A common characteristic of *Sinhala* folk songs rests on the first beat that is known as “*avagraha*”. In comparison to other countries, melody structures of these songs are narrow and all *Sipad*-s can be classified under the following three forms according to their melodies of four lines:

1. *Ek pa tanu pedi* - one lined melody. All four lines are sung in the same tune.
2. *Depa tanu pedi* - two lined melodies. The tunes of 1st and 2nd lines are repeated respectively for 3rd and 4th lines.
3. *Sivpa tanu pedi* - four lined melodies- each line has a different tune.

In addition to the traditional *Sinhala* musical culture, there exists a chanting pattern of prose, which is commonly used in religious context but in threshing floors. In threshing floors, this kind of prose chanting is known as *Kamath halla* or *Adahera pema* which means ‘addressing ploughing or threshing buffaloes. Where the religious contexts are concerned, these are connected to folk rituals and ceremonies of gods, goddesses such as entreaty or supplications (*Kannlauwa* or *yatika*), invocations (*yadini*), inviting gods (*devaradhana*), prose passage (*Curnica*) and the Buddhist ceremony called inviting to preach (*banaradhana*) and *Pirith* (*dorakada asna*). Even though all of these styles have their own identities with regard to the contexts in which they are used, they are monotonous in music-related terms.

On the other hand, the Sri Lankan tradition of music has a variety of ceremonial songs that are also transferred orally. Some songs have been written on palm-leaves and preserved by the chief masters of each generation as their legacy. These songs also originated under the background of traditional dancing and can be classified as *Kohomba Kankariya* (ritual for offerings to god *Kohomba*), *Bali* (ritual for offerings to planetary gods) and *tovil* (ritual for devils). Among these rituals, *Kohoba Kankariya* is considered
the main ritualistic dance form that belongs to the hill-country dance tradition, whereas Tovil belongs to the tradition followed in the plains. Bali is a ritualistic dance form performed all over the country with regard to the offerings for planetary gods. All these rituals include singing, drumming and some dance movements. Songs are closely related with the art of drumming. An appropriate drum is used as the main instrument in every ritual. Nevertheless, the manner of singing, drumbeats and playing styles vary for gods and devils according to the traditional hierarchy.

In addition to these rituals, some traditional and ritualistic games are performed, especially during the Sinhala-Tamil New Year season in April with the purpose of honoring goddesses Pattini who is considered the only goddesses related to fertility (a number of poetics were written in the kandiyan period for the goddesses Pattini. Some of them are Pattini halla, Sathpattini upata, Sathpattini kathawa...etc.) Such games as “ang keliya” (pulling horns), pol keliya (coconut game), gammaduwa (not a game but an offering for goddesses pattini) include singing and dancing movements supported by the Udekki or Udekkiiya, a hand drum like an hour glass in shape, and Getaberaya in hill-regions and Yak beraya in the plains.

As a ritualistic tradition, some sort of chanting is performed in various auspicious occasions in Sri Lanka as blessings for weddings. The custom of singing verses in plaintive melodies learnt from the literary work called Vessantara Jataya Kavya (known as Mala potha - book of the death among the rural people) is present in funerals in the rural areas of the country even today.

### 2.4 Music in Folk Dramas of Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka is a treasure house for folk music and many folk dramas. Among them, there are age-old ritualistic folk dramas that belong to the three main dancing traditions in the country. These are Sokari, Kolam, Kavi Nadagam and Sindu Nadagam. The traditional
Sri Lankan folk plays are based on ideological and sub-religious grounds whereas *Nadagama* is a result of the south Indian influence on Sri Lankan culture.

2.4.1 *Sokari*

*Sokari* is a type of folk drama that is customary to the hill-country and *Wanniya* in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka. The basic means of telling the story is miming. As other ritualistic theatres in Sri Lanka, all roles of this tradition are played by male people, some of them wearing masks. The story of this drama somewhat varies in different parts of the country. However, the functional use of this performance is symbolizing fertility and performing it as a cult of the goddess *Patthini*\(^{24}\). This ritualistic drama is performed as a symbol of fertility.

The main percussion instrument used in *Sokari* is the *Gata beraya* that is the main instrument of the Kandian dance tradition whereas *Udekkiya* is used in *Wanniya* to perform *Sokari*\(^{25}\). While performing *Sokari* in “Deduru oya vally” five *Udekkis* are used\(^{26}\). In early times *Horanewa* was used as an accompanied instrument. This is usually performed in *Kamata* - the circular threshing floor where grain is gathered and stocked up during the harvesting season.

It is monotonous in musical aspect and the whole story is sung. All verses are set to two or three melodies which are sung by chorus according to the 3/4 (*Medum tani tita*) time from the beginning to the end. Currently, the influences of some groups of musicians have changed the melodies of popular songs transmitted by radio or cassettes.
2.4.2 Kolam

*Kolam* is also included in the category of folk dramas in Sri Lanka. This tradition belongs to the low country dancing culture and has spread widely along the Southern coastal places such as Ambalangoda, Mirissa and Bentara. Wearing masks is the main feature of this tradition. Masks are carved decoratively using light woods such as *Ruk-attana* and *Kadinan*. The percussion instrument used is *Yak-beraya*, which is also known as the low country drum. *Hornawa* that belongs to the category of wind is used for interludes. The medium of presenting stories is songs and dialogues that are usually being *impromptu*. The performance usually lasts about a week.

Where the performing style and musical elements are concerned, it is clearly identifiable that *kolam* has a close relationship to *yak thovil* - the demon ceremonies such as *Daha ata sanniya* (eighteen disease demons ritual)\(^{27}\).

*Kolam* can be seen at least in three categories. In the first, if a specific central plot is absent, a number of characters such as *Ana bera* (drum announcer), *Arachhi* (village head man), *Heva rala* (police man)… are dramatized with or without songs. The bad qualities of their administration system and personal behavior are highly criticized. In the second, famous dances that belong to the low country tradition are performed. Finally, the advisable birth stories or *Jataka stories* that deal with the previous lives of the Load Buddha are considered\(^ {28}\).

The verses of *kolam* can be divided into two forms: (1) short verses and; (2) long verses. Short verses are also known as *pote -kavi*, which are sung by masters of ceremonies or the *pote-guru* in order to invite each character into the performing place. Characters sing long verses during the performance. Melodies of the both kinds of verses are narrow in musical range. Although the rhythms are asymmetrical, the rhythmic patterns and drum beats vary from character to character.
2.4.3 Nadagam

Nadagama (Nadagama) is a Tamil word, which means drama. The Sanskrit word for nadagama is nataka) or a nataka is another folk tradition. There are two basic types of nadagam in Sri Lanka as follows:

1. Sindu Nagagam
2. Kavi Nadagam

Sindu Nadagama was originally shaped by the influence of one of the South Indian street dramas known as Terikkuthtu. Nattukuthtu, which is performed in Jaffna, Batticalo and rural villages of Sri Lanka, also belongs to the same genre. This is a highly popularized tradition especially in the western and southern coastal sea belts.

It is believed that these traditions were introduced to Sri Lanka in the early 19th century form south India. A comparison of the other folk plays of Sri Lanka would clearly reveal the fact that Nadagama has a quite developed genre. Professor Sarachchndra, who was a scholar in the same discipline, has also agreed with this argument in his Treatise “Sinhala Gemi Natakaya” (The Folk Drama of Ceylon)29.

Propagating Christianity and educating commons were the main purposes of writing and staging Nadagama in the early periods. In order to do achieve that goal, certain stories were taken from the Bible. Ahelepola Nadagama (this story deals with Ahalepola, the last king the of the Kandian kingdom who was later captured by the British in 1815) is believed to be the first Sinhala Nadagama. It was written and produced by Pillippu Singho who was a blacksmith by profession30. However, according to the Bishop Edmund Pires, Rajatunkattva (three Kings) of M. Gabrial Fernando of Chilaw was the first nadagama31. However, in the course of time, birth stories of the Lord Buddha (Jataka Katha) began to be performed in the form of nadagama from the early 20th century.
In *Sindu Nadagamas* the stories are completely told in song forms with the use of a certain amount of dance. They are best described as folk operas. According to its style of performances and characteristics, *Nadagama* is similar to Chinese Peking opera. Two drums named *Maddalaya* or the Tamil drum (one of the two drums played the main rhythm while the other one was played the ornamental beats for the first one), *Horanewa* and cymbals are used for such occasions. However, flute, violin and harmonium (locally known as *Serpina*) were introduced to this tradition recently.

There are two types of musical compositions associated with this genre: (1) chanted verses without a measured time. All dialogues are sung in free rhythms in this type; (2) other one is measured verses or rhythmic verses known as *Sindu* or *Chindu*, and the opening section in medium tempo followed by the *Uruttuwa* which is ornamentation or elaboration that is usually sung doubling the original speed. However, both of these forms of verses are composed according to the Tamil metres. It has its own rhythms played with *Maddalaya* as well.

The *Kavi Nadagama* is fairly distinct from *Sindu Nadagama*, and represents the fusion of musical elements of *Kola m* and *Sindu Nadagam*. In this genre, all stories are taken from the Buddhist literature, especially from *Jataka Katha* or Buddhist birth stories. Among them, *Sanda-kiduru* and *Maname katawa* are some of the mostly popular stories present in country. This genre is performed throughout Sri Lanka without having a traditional dissention. The main instrument used depends on the kind of tradition to which the performance belongs. In general, folk melodies are influenced for Kavi *Nadagama*.

### 2.5 Musical Instruments of Sri Lanka

Even though the Theravada tradition of Buddhism does not encourage sensual arts like music—especially melody; drumming plays an important role in social as well as religious activities since the very earlier periods. In addition to compared melodies, Sri Lanka had developed a rich tradition of a drum culture. Some literary texts written in the *Pali*
language (especially, *Dabadeni Asna*, *Thupawansa*, and *Saddarmarathnawaliya* that belongs to the late medieval period) suggest some earlier uses of musical instruments during the medieval period. Names of some instruments are interchangeable. A close comparison of some of such names makes it very clear that these instruments may have shared the characteristics of some South Indian musical instruments which were used in Hindu temples. Some of them are *Maddala*, *Mridanga*, *Nagsvaram*, *Vena*, *Tappu*, *Kaitalam*…etc. Some of them were used in the temples of gods, especially in *Kerala* in South India. Thus it can be suggested that these instruments must have been introduced to Sri Lanka during the *Polonnaruwa* period (12th century) where very strong South Indian impacts affected Sri Lanka both positively and negatively.

_Vansatthappakasini_, the commentary to *Mahawamsa* which is considered to have been written about in the seventh century A.D., provides the oldest classification of musical instruments used in Sri Lanka as follows.

“*pattha panchangika turiya nama atatan, vitatan, atatavitatan, susiran, ganathi panchavido, tatha atatan nama camma cationaddhesu bheri mudingasu ekatala turiyan, vitatan nama ubhayatalan, atatavitatan nama tantibaddhapanavadi, sushiran nama vansadi, ghanan nama sammadi imehi vajjamanehi pancangikaturiyehi samatra gato hutva nikkhantoti addhippayo*”.

Generally, it is known as *Panchaturya*, which means ‘fivefold’ based on their major characteristics: **Atata** - drums that have only one face (*Rabana*, *Bummediya*); **Vitata** - drums that have two faces (*Gata beraya*, *Daula*, *Yak beraya*); **Atatavitata** - stringed drums; **Ghana** - metallic instruments (*Talampota*); and **Sushira** - wind-based instruments (*Horanewa* and *Conch*). Predominant among these were drums (*bera* or *bheri*). The third category of **atata-vitata** or **vitatatata** has been defined in a number unclear of ways in various texts. Some texts define the term **atata-vitata** as instruments whose strings are stretched across the face and tightened on pegs, namely the **veena**. Different types of **veena** such as:
Brahma veena, Nakula veena, Hastikanta veena, Daddara veena...etc. have been mentioned in Saddarmalamkaraya\(^3\). Some scholars argue that these instruments (atata-vitata) belonged to the drum category while some others believe that these instruments belonged to the ‘Stringed’ instruments’ category. Former interpretation is based on the view that “Udekki drum” had two ‘jaggery palm’ strings stretched on one face of the Udekkiiya and it caused vibrations on striking the other face. However, the second view does not seem to be a correct interpretation to place it under stringed instruments’ category.

But, on the other hand, Veena, an instrument having strings stretched across the face and tightened on pegs may be regarded as ‘Ravanhattham’, or any other folk variety of such kind of stringed instruments, according to its physical characteristics. However, there are no evidence to suggest that these instruments were used in that period. Further, some instruments are related to the pre-Buddhist legends such as the early birth stories of the Load Buddha. By referring to the mural paintings of Mulkirigala temple, which belongs to post-Kandian period (late 19th century), one can have an idea regarding the shape and playing position of such instruments by observing them in the illustrations given below:

![Figure 1: Veena Player](Picture taken at Mulkirigala Temple)
It can be assumed that these were closely related to the stringed instruments used in India. According to Prof. Suneera Kasliwal—“such instruments had also been used in different regions of India with close relation to the folk musical traditions under various names such as: Regdi (in Madhya Pradesh), Chikari (in Uttar Pradesh), Pena (in Manipur), Yogi Kendra (in Orissa), Lha (in Manipur), Ravanhattha (Gujarat)“.

Thus, one can assume that these veena instruments mentioned in various Sri Lankan literary texts were “Ravanhattham or any other folk variety of its kind (In the early Indian Sanskrit texts, these instruments have been referred as ‘veenas’)“.

Even though playing Veena has been criticized by the Buddhist writers since it is considered a lust-provoking instrument, still there are many literary evidences to suggest that Veena might have been performed in court music in ancient times. Recently, the above classification has been defined in a new way, focusing on their playing pattern(s). That is, “atata-instruments that were played with hand; vitata-instruments that were played with hand-held wooden sticks or Kadippuwa; atatavitata -instruments that were played with hand as well as hand–held wooden sticks or Kadippuwa; ghana- metallic instruments and; sushira- wind-based instruments”.

Examples:

1. Drums belonging to Atata category:

   Rabana
   Gata-beraya
   Udekkya
   Yak- beraya the
2. Drums belonging to *Vitata* category:

![Tammatama](image)

*Tammattama*

3. Drums belong to *atata-vitata* category

![Daula](image)

*Daula*

4. Instrument belonging to *Ghana* category:

![Talam-pota](image)

*Talam-pota*
5. Instruments belonging to Sushira category:

![Conch or the Hak-gediya](image1)
![Horanewa or the Sri Lankan Oboe](image2)

Figure 2: Fivefold music instruments

However, this classification also leads to misleading interpretations of the playing positions of instruments, especially in the atata category. For it only employs the palm and fingers of the artiest to vibrate drum faces rather than the whole hand.

There are few drums that are used in the contemporary tradition of Sri Lankan music in various contexts: (1). Gata beraya (2). Daula (3). Yak beraya (4). Tammattama (5). Udekkkiya (6). Rabana and (7). Maddalaya. First three of these instruments are closely related to ritualistic dancing traditions in Sri Lanka. Among them, Gata beraya is the main instrument in the Kandiyan - the hill country with dancing tradition. Yak-beraya belongs to the low country tradition whereas Daula belongs to the Sabaragamuwa tradition of music. Although the sound and syllables of each drum (including the terminology and customs) varies from one tradition to another, certain similarities can be seen in relation to forms of rhythms. Each and every dancing tradition has its own auspicious or a ceremonial drum beat which is traditionally known as Magul-bera pade performed in each tradition using its characteristic drums. Daula, the major instrument of the Sabaragamuwa musical tradition is used along with Tammattama and Horanewa not only to play hevisi or the greeting of drums both in Buddhist and god temples but also to play funeral drums throughout the country without having a traditional obstruction.
Both *Horanewa* and *Shankaya* (Conch) are categorized under the class of *Sushira* or wind-based instruments. *Shankaya* has a special respect and dignity among these instruments. The conch players in god temples (*Devale*) have been conferred a title admiration called *Sakpancha-dura* by the king. Likewise, conch blowers of the Temple of Tooth Relic were traditionally known as *Hakgedi-Muhandiram* and were appointed from the *govigama* caste. Since the earliest times the *Sinhala* society has been divided into a complicated caste system. All musicians were assigned a somewhat lower caste. People of *Govigama* belong to the so-called higher caste in the traditional *Sinhala* social hierarchy.

These instruments have been played in various ceremonies since the earliest times; religious festivals are foremost among them. Furthermore, these instruments are performed in present day rituals carried out in the Temple of Tooth Relic in Kandy. These rituals and festivals can be classified as follows:

Daily rituals devoted to the Tooth Relic- there are three major daily ritualistic services dedicated to the Kandy Tooth Relic: *aluyan duraya* (morning service), *maddhana duraya* (mid-day service) and *handa duraya* (evening service). There are special drum beats in each session. The tempo of each performance varies. The drum beat played at evenings is similarly, played in mornings. But the only significant difference is the fact that the evening beat is slower in tempo. However, the drum beats used in the Temple of Tooth Relic are not played in any other temple in Sri Lanka due to the superiority assigned to the Temple of Tooth Relic in the Sri Lankan Buddhist cultural context.

In addition, some performances are conducted weekly, monthly and annually. These performances have their own significant features because of the uniqueness of the music played at each occasion.

Instruments related to the Portuguese and British musical traditions were introduced to the country by European colonizers from the 16th century onwards. Sri Lanka was made a colony of European imperialism for the first time by the Portuguese followed by the Dutch and British nations. Some of old music instruments are depicted in temple frescoes in various
temples that belonged to the post-Kandyan period. The most fascinating feature of these frescos is the inclusion of these instruments to represent the previous life of the Lord Buddha. The western instruments are depicted together with the indigenous ones.

The painting known as Mahadana Situputhwata or the story of the ‘millionaire’s son’ at Kataluwa temple in down South depicts a European lady playing a Portuguese instrument called Rebeque. This has come to be known among the Sinhalese as Ravikinne. Originally, Rebeque was the Portuguese name used for this instrument with a gourd-shaped resonator. According to Sri Lankan musicians, it was a stringed instrument, played with an arch shaped bow. The painting illustrates a group of artists playing instruments like accordion, trumpet and side drum. It may have been misinterpreted as ‘accordion’ by C. de. S. Kulatillake, in his book “Ethnomusicology and Ethno-musicological Aspect of Sri Lanka”42. But, as far as the shape of the instrument and the playing style is concerned, the instrument is “Concertina”, even though there is a close similarity to accordion. For example:-

![Mahadana Situputhwata](image)

**Figure 3: Mahadana Situputhwata**
(Nandana Chutiwongs *et al*, Mahadana Situputhwata, page 94)
In the mid-19th century, the *Elphinstan* drama company of Bombay, the Hindustani drama company and the *Parci* Victoria theatre company introduced the Persian musical tradition of Western India. Instruments like *Harmonium*, which is commonly known in Sri Lanka as *Serapina* and other North Indian instruments *Tabla*, *Dhol* and violin, became popular among Sri Lankan musicians. Moreover, Indian instruments like *Sitar*, *Esraj* and flute were popularized under the influence of Tagorian opera troupe\(^{43}\).

### 2.6 North Indian Influence on Sri Lankan Music

#### 2.6.1 Music of *Nurti* drama

The most striking factor that influenced Sri Lankan music by that of North India was associated with what is generally known as *Nurti* music. It was around the mid-19th century, that the *Elphinstone* Drama Company of Bombay, the Hindustani drama company and the *Parci* Victoria theater company came here and staged the Hindustani adaptations of Shakespeare’s most popular stage plays\(^{44}\). In 1877, C. Don Bastine who was a social worker produced a *Nadagama* called *Rolina* inscribing Hindustani melodies rather than confining to the traditional *Nadagam* music. Immediately after their departure, Bastine composed the Sinhala versions of Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* in the same manner. It was this new genre of drama that came to be known as *Nurti\(^{45}\).*

As a result, of the dramatic elements used in the so-called ‘modern drama’ genre, the popularity of *Nadagama* began to wane. Bastian and his followers learnt some features of the North Indian originals and these influenced famous North Indian singing styles known as *Dadra*, *Ghazal* and *Qawwali* to enrich their dramas. Same instruments were used as well\(^{46}\).
John de Silva obtained assistance of Pandit Wishwanath Laugee, who was a Brahmin musician at Kathiawar in India to compose original melodies for the play called Siri Sangabo which was staged in 1903\textsuperscript{47}.

As John de Silva believed, being a part of culture of the North Indian people, Hindustani music was an Aryan legacy about which the Sinhala people shared an equal claim\textsuperscript{48}. In the same year, he established a drama society named ‘Ariya Subhoda Natya Sabha’. In collaboration with Laujee, Silva has kept staging a number of several plays until he returned to India in 1907. Some of those plays are Sri Vikrama Rajasingha, Ramayanaya, Uttara Rama Charitaya, Sakuntala and Rathawali. Thereafter, he managed to attain the assistance of other Indian musicians including Amir Ali, Khan jee Jata shanker and Abdul Asiz. Unlike other play writers, Silva had a born talent of using dramatic music according to the appropriate location in the drama\textsuperscript{49}.

A stagnant trend among the latter writers during the first decade of the 20th century was the practice of imitating the original melodies. Accordingly, Charles Dias Amaratunga (1876 - 1944) made the initiative attempt to reform the art of narti music with the support of W. Satasiwam who was a lawyer and a talented musician not only in North Indian but also in South Indian musical traditions. He rewrote some plays produced by John de Silva and re-casted selected plays of “Shakespere” in a manner similar to the traditional style of Sinhala music drama. Pandukabhaya, the first play produced by him marked first symbol of opening Tower Hall in 1911. All of his plays were staged at the same place, the Tower Hall. As John de Silva did, Charles Dias also obtained the assistance of Indian musicians such as Sadalal, Amtalal, Maganlal, Baldeva, Sultan Baks, Abdul Satar and Maganlal and the native musicians like K.D. George Jayarathe, H.W. Rupasinha etc. It becomes clear by considering the music of Nurti that most of the songs are based on North Indian ragas and light rhythms such as Dadara, Jhaptal, Lawani and Keherwa. Even though this tradition declined with the development of the film industry, the songs that belong to this genre are being practiced even today\textsuperscript{50}. 
2.6.2 Gramophone Records

The Gramophone was introduced to Sri Lanka in the first decade of the 20th Century. This newly introduced machine was commonly known as the ‘talking machine’ or kata-pettiya among the people of Sri Lanka. Some repudiated companies such as Apothecaries Ltd., Millers Ltd, Walkers Sons Ltd., and H. Don Carolis Sons imported several versions of gramophones to Sri Lanka.

As there were no Sri Lankan songs at that time, the gramophone music was entirely based on Indian musical tradition(s). The melodies of gramophone songs were acquired from Hindi songs as well as the North Indian singing styles such as Bhajan, Ghazal, Qawwali, Thumri and Sinhala lyrics were composed depending those on melodies and styles. But the words of these songs consisted of new themes. Even the melodies were not directly imitated. There are plenty of available proofs that many songs had been composed according to North Indian Classical ragas. Some of them are listed as follows;

1. Adu kale selavima nisa by H.W. Rupasingha- based on Thlakkamod raga
2. Sri rahula himige name by H.W. Rupasingha- based on Suddha Malhar raga
3. Punsanda paya neela guwanhi by Rukmani Devi- based on Alahiya Bilawal raga.

The gramophone era in ‘Sinhala music’ began in 1906 with recording of Nurti songs. Since there were no professional singers at that time, theatre artists were used for recording these songs. In the course of time, a generation of professional singers and musicians began to advance in the field of Sri Lankan music. For example, Rukmani Devi, Latheef Bhai and A.R.M. Ibrahm. Some of them were of Indian origin.

As a result, of copying aforementioned melodies and structural patterns of introduction, interludes, Sthayi, Antara arose with regard to those genres and are being employed in Sri Lankan compositions even today. Nevertheless, the gramophone musical tradition was unable to make a significant impact on the development of Sinhala music.
2.6.3 Radio and its Contribution

Music broadcast by Radio Ceylon in its earliest ages also pertained to Indian tradition. Although Radio Ceylon was officially established in 1924, there were no popular artists and popular recordings attached to the station. As a result, private gramophone recordings were hired in order to broadcast musical programs. Even though there were musical programs from 1927 to 1940s, almost all of them were dominated and monopolized by oriental music. Some air space was also given to Sri Lankan indigenous and other traditions of music in radio broadcastings. However, it is clear that from 1924 to 1950, Indian music played an important and a leading role in Sri Lankan music broadcastings. Moreover, the ideological attempts at rejecting western music and western culture resulted in making the Indian culture and musical tradition crucial factors in Radio Ceylon at this time.

Consequently, some producers and music directors were not willing to give permission to use the harmonium (locally call as Serpina) for their recordings and orchestration on the grounds that it was a western instrument. Those musicians who did not use harmonium for their recordings were paid a special allowance while the others were paid less than the former group. Similarly, in 1940s Radio Ceylon did not grant permission to bring Western instruments such as harmonium, trumpets, trombone etc. inside the gate also.

In the same year, using harmonium for music performances was banned by All India Radio station stressing the fact that the playing techniques associated with it were harmful for the ragadari musical tradition. Although, without having a feasible decision on behalf of the musicological point of view as the All India Radio Station did, Radio Ceylon also banned the instruments that belonged to the western tradition of music as a signal of supporting the nationalistic movement. It has been maintaining its status as one of the prominent government agencies in Sri Lanka since 1950s.
Furthermore, those people who went to India in order to study Hindustani music also returned to the country after completing their music degrees and courses. Talented musicians among them were selected in order to establish the official orchestra in 1952. This event was guided by the eminent musician Edwin Samaradiwakara using Indian Instruments. Others were M.A. Piyadasa-Violin, Sadananda Pattiarachchi -Dilruba, J. Podiappuhami -Tabla, A.J.Karim -Clarinet, Ayarin de Silva -Tampura, D.D. Deni - Eastern flute.  

This trend also resulted in cultivating Indian favour of music further in Radio Ceylon. On the contrary, Edwin Samaradiwakara and W.D.Amaradewa were able to cultivate another form of folk music style in radio broadcasting programs. Not only musicians but eminent poets and lyricists of that era like Sri Chandraratna Manwasingha, Mahagama Sekera, Madavala S. Rathnayake and Wimal Abhayasundara also supported this mission in many ways. As a result of this collaboration, Radio Ceylon was able to produce its first Sinhala opera Manorahi in 1955. It was written by Sri Chandrarathna Manwasingha and two eminent musicians, Edwin Samaradiwakara and Dunstan de Silava contributed to the composition of music. This practice was followed by others in the same era. Likewise, Radio Ceylon provided an optimistic opportunity to the musicians to compose original melodies chosen in their music genres. Most of them relied on North Indian ragas and talas while others used the traditional Sri Lankan folk music. They used Sri Lankan percussion instruments like gatabera, udekkiya and rabana for their orchestrations as well. Some talented musicians successfully combined western and eastern music elements and styles to produce brilliant compositions. This contributed to popularize their compositions among the intimates.

Radio Ceylon came to be known as ‘Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation’ in 1970. In 1972, Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC) established a music based research unit which was headed by C. de S. Kulathillake. He cultivated a research culture in the SLBC and produced programs that were thoroughly based on collections of field researches.
2.6.4 Film Music

Early Sri Lankan films were another genre that was largely affected by the North Indian musical tradition. The first film production was *Kadawunu Poronduwa* (Broken Promise) in 1947. Film artists in the following decades adapted Hindi melodies that were mainly based on Indian music. Some of them are as follows:

1. *Sandyawe sriya ramya lesa pena* in *Kadawunu Poronduwa* – this was an imitation of the song *Paradeshi baala maa badal aaya* in *Tathan*, a Hindi film.
2. *Budune* in ‘Saradiel’ – an imitation of the song *Bhagwan* in the film *Baiju Baura*.
3. *Mewila penewi rupe* in *Kadawunu poronduwa* was an imitation of the song *Mera karar leja* in the Hindi film *Aasiyana*.

Not only the above mentioned songs but also a large numbers of other Hindi tunes were directly copied and imitated from famous Indian films. The popularity and sweetness of Hindi tunes were two major reasons that influenced that trend. Some melodies were copied into two films by writing separate lyrics as follows:

‘*Adara pana suda*’ song in ‘*Mathabedaya*’ film and ‘*Koibatado me sata*’ in ‘*Suragani*’ film were based on the Hindi song ‘*Jayein to jayein kahaan*’ in the Hindi film ‘*Taxi Driver*’.

Mohammed Ghaus, an Indian composer, was the first musician to have composed original *Sinhala* film songs, without copying Hindi melodies. Later, he became a Sri Lankan citizen. In the film *Ashoka mala*, he composed original melodies that were influenced by North Indian *ragadari* music and also associated with some western counterpoints and harmonics.

Rather than imitating exact music styles of Indian films, later musicians tended to use music for films in a much advanced manner. They also have attempted to depict musical
ideologies through film music. Such talented musicians as Mr.W.D. Amaradewa and Mr. Premasiri Kemadasa led their contemporary younger generations of musicians to conduct experiments in music and some of them adapted western and other sorts of music genres to films. Consequently, the Sinhala cinema was able to acquire an independent status rather than totally depending on the Hindi film music as it traditionally did.

2.6.5 The Influence of Rabindra Sangeet

The North Indian musical tradition has made considerable impact on several spheres in Sri Lankan musical culture. During the cold revolution against British Colonialism, the vast majority of Sri Lankan scholars and patriots focused on western phenomenon with negative attitudes. Furthermore, the country did not have a successfully developed tradition of music at that time (even today) and this might be a cause that led Sri Lankan early musicians to adopt North Indian systems of music. As a result, they were appreciating eastern artifacts. Henceforth, western music was rejected by some scholars and nationalist leaders and the Indian musical culture was admired with greater interest. In this context, the arrival of great poet and world-renowned scholar Rabindranath Tagore in 1934 extremely motivated and influenced the musicians Sri Lankan academics and musicians in particular.

The main purpose of his visit to Sri Lanka was attempting to lay the foundation for the first music and dancing school in Sri Lanka, which is widely known as Sri Pali. With efforts, a dancing troupe came here and staged danced dramas. One of the most famous dramas of them was Shap Mochana. The music styles used these dramas enormously inspired Sri Lankan music fans and ultimately some of them went to India, especially to Shanthiniketan in Calcutta, with the aim of studying Indian Classical music as well as Rabindra Sangeet. After a few months, Lionel Edirisingha and Sunil Santha left to Lucknow in India in order to study North Indian classical music. This resulted in the emergence of two music schools or “gurukuls” in Sri Lanka. People who were educated
at Lucknow were trained to think that their education on music was superior to those who studied in Shanthiniketan. This is a common attitude present even in today in the Sri Lankan music sphere.

After completing the Visharad degree, Lionel Edirisingha and others returned to Sri Lanka. In 1954 Lionel Edirisingha was appointed as the “Music Education Director” in the Ministry of Education and he began to introduce North Indian music to National school curriculum. This enhanced the spread of North Indian music throughout the country. Lionel Edirisingha also established a music society called Gandharava Sabha together with Illangasingha Ralahami and the two designed syllabus according to the Visharad course in the Institute of Bhatkhande Sangeet Vidyapeeth to hold examinations in Sri Lanka. They divided these examinations into three categories: Prathama, Madhyama and Final and issued certificates to those who successfully passed the exams. Thereafter those people were appointed as teachers in national schools. It was highly successful at that time and the Indian music was successfully established all over the country.

On the other hand, those who attended Shantiniketan tried to cultivate a musical tradition similar to Rabindra Sangeet in the local context. Among them, Ananda Samarakoon who was the writer and the composer of Sri Lankan National Anthem was very keen in trying to develop national musical idiom by observing the folk musical tradition(s) in the country. As far as the followers of this tradition is concerned Suriyashanker Molligoda, W.D. Makuloluwa, Layanal Algama, C. De S. Kulathillele were prominent figures in Sri Lanka at that time. This objective was further carried out by Sunil Santa who returned from his studies in India in 1946 to launch a campaign for a national musical culture that includes the fusion of traditional folk idiom with a moderate version of Western and Indian music techniques. During this project, he was largely influenced by the well-known scholar of the Sinhala language and literature, Kumaratunga Munidasa (also known as Munidasa Kumaratunga), who encouraged a tradition of national music based on traditional prosody in 1940’s. Ultimately, W.D. Makuloluwa was able to undertake that goal by codifying the traditional “tit” system of local dance and drumming in his
book entitled “Hela Gee Maga”. This book includes an expounded pattern of rhythms which are similar to the North Indian tala-s system as well as Sinhala folk songs that were classified accordingly.

In addition, he introduced folk music to the elementary forms of counterpoint and harmony, including the parallel singing of melodies at the fourth and fifth interval as seen in western music. Most of the principles described in this text are similar to Indian theories of music. Thus, this work can be considered as an adaptation of the elements of Indian music in Sri Lankan music. However, a suggestion of S.N. Ratnajanker’s different approach to Sri Lankan folk songs was adopted by Mr. W.D. Amaradewa who is undoubtedly considered to be the greatest Sri Lankan musician. Elements of some folk melodies are similar to Indian raga-s, and since these melodies are generally confined to the lower part of the scale, it may be possible to treat the folk melody as the sthayi and develop it by giving an antara section. Accordingly, some programs were broadcast under the title of Jana gayana, but due to its limitations, it was abandoned very soon.

2.7 Western Influence on Sri Lankan Music

As it has already been mentioned, the tradition of Western music has also made significant impacts on Sri Lankan music in a number of ways. One striking reason behind this was colonialism. Even though there is a lack of evidence to depict this influence before the colonial period, many western countries such as Greece, Rome, Persia and Arab had maintained cultural as well as economic contacts with Sri Lanka. These types of foreign affairs may have also caused to influence of Western music elements in Sri Lanka. It is referred that “Singing boys” were imported to western India from Greece in ancient times.
2.7.1 Portuguese Missionary Services in Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka was colonized by the Portuguese in 1505 and they were followed by the Dutch in 1656. Finally, the British came took areas in 1796. The mostly present evidence for this was the Christian missionaries. Portuguese introduced Roman Catholicism, the Dutch Protestantism and British a number of other branches such as the Church of England, Assembly of God, Methodist Church and Baptist Church into Sri Lanka.\(^74\)

Christianity has a very close relation with music, which is practiced during Church worshiping and other activities such as feasts, funerals, dramas and vespers.\(^75\) In earlier times when these religious institutions were introduced to Sri Lanka, translated versions of Sinhala and Tamil lyrics that were composed according to the original melodies were used in Sri Lanka. Nevertheless, they were borrowed from Western church services. Father Jacome Gonzalvz (1676-1742), one of the well-known priests who came to Sri Lanka from Goa in India, introduced Sinhala and Tamil Christian literature to the local laments. Moreover, he also composed new melodies wrote lyrics accordingly. The “Desana navaye Pasan pota” (The book of psalm with nine preaches) was a great work by father Jacome Gonzalvz.

Further, it is during this time that the forms of Christian devotional music, including “Carols and Psalms”, were introduced to the island. These practices were highly influential in contributing to the spread of the Roman Catholic ideology throughout the country. Later on, these melodies also influenced the folk dramas such as Nadagama.

2.7.2 Popular Music of Portuguese in Sri Lanka

Not only the religious but also the popular traditions of Portuguese music were disseminated throughout the maritime areas of Sri Lanka. Baila and Kaffirinna are considered to be the popular genres of music of the Portuguese who occupied Sri Lanka.
Baila songs are related to dances whereas Kaffirinna and Chikothi are particularly related to music. During the rule of Portuguese and the Dutch, the Kaffirs from Mozambique were brought to Sri Lanka for the purposes of slavery, warfare and labor (eg:- weaving and shoe mending). They were known as michanics. It is believed that the term Kaffirinna came into existence since then. However, some scholars believe that both Baila and Kaffirinna are the same. Instruments such as Violin, Viola, Mandolin, Guitar and Rabana were used in accompaniments for these music genres. Even though it is believed that Kaffrighna and Chikothi originated from these people. Spanish, Arabic and Portuguese influences of music can equally be seen in these genres.

2.7.3 Dutch and British Missionary Services in Sri Lanka

Religious musical tradition that belongs to the Dutch did not make a significant impact on Sri Lanka, as that of Portuguese did. Even though the Dutch had not paid enough attention to the programs aimed at propagating Protestantism as their religion, they sought to capture the monopoly in the spicy market. The result of this was that they were unable to maintain their trace of music in Sri Lanka like the British.

The relationship between British religious services and musical tradition is more visible than the aforementioned missionary services. From the beginnings the British used Latin hymns as Portuguese did before them. The intervention of Rev. Edmund Peiris (1897-1988) who was a brilliant Sinhala scholar at that time was a critical factor that enhanced the development of a Sinhala Christian literature for the local Christian laments. After the Rev. Edmund Peiris, this project was carried out by Rev. Marcelline Jayakodi, Rev. Lakdas de Mel and the musician Sunil Santa (the musical style adopted by Sunil Santa was followed by other Sinhala Christian musicians to compose Christian songs). Rev. Lakdasa de Mel introduced worshiping according to the traditional local way to Sinhalese and composed Sinhala hymns using typical Sinhalese melodies and instruments like daula, talampota, rabana...etc. Western music concepts such as harmony, counterpoint,
choral singing and instruments such as piano, guitars were could be seen their compositions.

It was during this time that the other popular forms of music in Christian missionary like “Christmas Carols” were also sung during this period. Especially, the music activities that took place during the Christmas season encouraged the Sinhalese Buddhist people to compose the songs called *Wesak Bhakthi Gee* which are sung in May. The purpose of such songs was to commemorate the prince Siddhartha’s birth, enlightenment and the passing away of the lord Buddha.

### 2.7.4 Secular Music of the British in Sri Lanka

After acquiring the political authority of the country, military services were established by the British with the aim of “proper governance” (according to their own agendas). Every military force as well as the Department of Police established their own musical band, contributing to the development of Western music in the country. For example, (1) Rifle regiment band; (2) 59 and 73 regiment bands; (3) Police band; and (4) regiment band of Kaffir. Among those bands, the oldest one was the police band. Playing compositions of eminent Western musicians was the common practice at that time. This practice was a key factor that had made crucial contributions to the establishment of western and Eastern cultures of music bands in Sri Lankan schools. It should also be mentioned here that setting up this sort of music bands gradually become a “status making” factor in the high schools at that time.

Similarly, Symphony Orchestras were established by the British. The three people known as “Wagn Brothers” collectively established the first Sri Lankan “Symphony Orchestra of Ceylon” (SOC) in 1930s. But, in 1971, the name was changed to “Symphony Orchestra of Colombo”. It became “Symphony Orchestra of Sri Lanka” (SOSL) in 1991. In addition, an orchestra was established especially for students in 1950s and was renamed...
“The Junior Orchestra” in 1960. These two orchestras were maintained by properly qualified western musicians. Apart from these two orchestras, Rohan Joseph de Saram who was a world renowned western musician at that time has established one of its kinds with the name “Lanka Philharmonic Orchestra”\textsuperscript{83}. Even though during its existence it was on a high stand profile of Western music, it is not functioning at present.

Among these orchestras, the functioning structure of the “Youth orchestra” is valuable for the scholars due to some important reasons; players of this orchestra were selected from school students who showed a higher level of capacity to play musical instruments so that they would be able to join the Symphony Orchestra of Sri Lanka. This exposure provided opportunities to develop their skills and to learn and increase their experience of performing together with prominent artists.

The Western musical elements and melodies also influenced musical styles for example, Nurthi music, Gramophone music, and the music of the Broadcasting Corporation and films. The Radio Ceylon (Piano recitals, Violin Recitals, Special lunch-hour music, Music for Dancing, Recorded Programs, B.B.C Musical Program, Church organ recitals, Cinema Organ recitals were broadcast by Radio Ceylon in 1930s)\textsuperscript{84} and (SLBC), Sri Lanka Rupawahini Corporation (SLRC) attempted to introduce western music programs to Sri Lankan School students and music fans who were interested in such fields. Those programs were greatly appreciated and were able to catch the impression of the so called music community.

Furthermore, that interest was a cornerstone in cultivating a Western-based musical culture in Sri Lanka. However, the Sihhala channel did not pay a satisfactory attention to broadcast that kind of programs because of the common ideologies directed at condemning Western music and Western culture. Nevertheless, this practice began to wane with the approval given by the Director General of Radio Ceylon.
2.7.5 The Group Song Era

In 1960’s, western pop musical traditions known as “Rock and Roll”, “country & western” and “Spanish music” appeared to be making greater impact on Sri Lankan music through the mediums of EP (Extended play) and LP (Long play) records. Records of “Elvis Presley’s Bill Haley and his Comets” and other pop groups such as “The Bee Gees”, “The Shadows”, “Beatles” and “Rolling Stones” and the instrument Spanish guitar was highly popular among the younger generation of Sri Lankan at that time. This 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. For example, La Cilonians, Los Flemingos, Moonstones and Dharmarathna Brothers (Clarence Wijewardena, Anesly Malewana, Milroy Darmarathne… etc., were some of the famous group song artists in this period).

Even though they imitated English and Spanish songs in their initial stages, after some time they were able to put the foundation for a “Sinhala group song era” in Sri Lankan music arena. Spanish and Latin American instruments such as Spanish guitar, Guiro, Maracas, Castanets, Congo and Bongo drums were used with this regard. The western music element which is especially known as “Close Harmony” (Close harmony: Chords in close position, i.e., with all the four notes within an octave or a twelfth) was also used. Some people attempted to term that genre as “Calypso music” which originated in Trinidad islands. Since then using these types of instruments and western techniques are being used like harmony.

But the style of calypso has not made crucial impact on Sri Lankan music even today. Since such groups mainly used the technique(s) of harmony, they were commonly known as “Harmony groups”. The famous music group Shadows which was led by Cliff Richards introduced the practice of using three guitars (Bass guitar, Rhythm guitar and
Lead guitar first ever to music) However, with electronic instruments the group song era began to wane. Music groups were excited in Sri Lankan in 1970-1980 instead of group music.

2.7.6 Western Music Education in Sri Lanka

Introducing western music to Sri Lankan education was highly significant in the expansion of western music in Sri Lanka. As a result, of the educational reformations which took place in 1972, western music was introduced as a subject to the Sri Lankan educational curriculum. Indeed it was an unprecedented opportunity for Sri Lankan students to learn western music in an organized and proper manner. However, western music had already begun to be taught in Parrish schools of Portuguese in an informal way. Music was taught as a compulsory subject in the Seminary schools that were established by the Dutch to teach Protestantism and by the British to teach Christianity.

Private institutions such as “Trinity College of Music” and “Royal College of Music, London” had introduced their examinations to the country respectively in 1882 and in 1898. The “Institute for Examination in English Music and Speech (IEMS)” and “London Academy of Music and dramatic Art” (LAMDA) had appointed their local representatives respectively in 1990 and in 1994. A local institute called “Music Speech and Speaking” was established in the country in 1997.

Introducing music courses and examinations was an influential factor in spreading a western musical culture amongst middle class people in the country in the same period. However, the enthusiasm of teaching music in government education sector was at a lower level when it is compared to the private institutions. The major reason behind this was the nationalist movement(s). The scholars and ideologists who had been supporting nationalist movement(s) were better suited to North Indian music rather than to teach Western Music in Sri Lankan national schools. Prof. Ediriweera Sarachcandra vastly
pointed out that it was not suitable to establish fine Arts departments in the Sri Lankan Universities. For, if such departments were established, it would soon lead to include western drama and western music in the curriculum, people like him thought.

However, by the time of I.M.R.A. Iriyagolla (1965-1970) who was the minister of cultural affairs, paved the way to establish western music education and western musical cultures in the government schools. During his time, he appointed a number of teachers to teach western music and donated instruments such as Base drums, Rattle drums, Melodica, Piano-accordion and Trombone in order to setup western bands in schools.

In 1992, the Ministry of Education took some successful measures that these were suggested by Mrs. Maya Abeywickrama who was the Director of western music education at that time to develop western music education in the country. Following are some of such measures:

1. Establishing the National Youth Orchestra in 1992
2. Re-organizing western music competitions
3. Establishing the western music resource Centre
4. Training programs for teachers
5. Set up special classes on weekends

In comparison with the other countries like China and Japan, the cultures of western music and education not only in Sri Lankan universities but also in schools are not at a well-developed stage.
2.7.7 Copying Western Tunes

Initially, copying western tunes and writing lyrics according to them was a common practice. It was quite similar to copying Indian tunes which will be discussed in the chapter entitled “North Indian Influences on Sri Lankan music”. Western tunes were imitated in four ways as follows:

1. Copying the full western melodies
2. Copying parts of the western music
3. Melodies that reflected western style
4. Melodies that were composed according to western style

Some musicians have attempted to change the “verse, chorus” structure of western songs into chorus, verse (sthayi, antara in inverted form) structure that belongs to North Indian music by copying melodies to compose Sinhala songs. For example, ‘Lazy Mary’ of ‘Lou Monte’ was copied in Sinhala as ‘Ha malpipenne’ which is sung by Christopher Paul in the aforementioned format. Some of them have rarely sung western songs using elements of the North Indian ragadaari music. Similarly ‘Ba ba black sheep’ was sung by Tudor Kandanarachchi by adding ragadaari elements.

Some of the melodies that were copied from North Indian films in order to compose Sinhala songs also represented western melodies. Examples:

- Oh my darling Clementine (English song)
- *Ae dil hai mushkil jeena yahaan* (Hindi song of the film *Taxi driver*)
- *Senasilla nelavilla mage hade* (Sinhala song of the film *Suraya*)
2.7.8 Extended Music Compositions

As a result, of the western music education, and appreciation of some musical compositions presented in the country by eminent guest artists of western countries, skilled musicians who have followed both western and eastern musical traditions have done very interesting experiments to compose and present major works. These compositions were known by; Cantatas, Concertos, Sonatas, Symphonies, Opera, Overture and Oratorio as in western sense.

Composers like Sarath Fernando, Lalanathe de Silva, Premalal Danwatta, Harsha Makalande, Rohan de Livera, Husan Mohomad and Wasantha Kumara Fenando have experienced the edification of Western music. On the contrary, W.D. Amaradewa, W.B.Makuloluwa and Anil Mihiripanna experimented both on Sri Lankan indigenous and on North Indian musical traditions. In the meantime, the celebrated musician Premasiri Kemadasa who was had neither studied any musical tradition nor belonged to any school of music also composed such creative works. Without having the traditional obstruction, all of those musicians used western elements for their compositions, depending on their knowledge.

Among these composers, Sarath Fernando (Compositions by Sarath Fernando are: Fantasia on a folk melody (1973), concertino for clarinet and orchestra (1980) who can correctly be identified to be the earliest of such composers and Lalanath de Silava’s (Compositions by Lalanath de Silva: Overture (1975), Serenade (1975), The Good news oratorio (1977), March, no; 2 Heralding the Bride (1977), Sigiri Symphony (1978), Jubilee overture (1983), Symphony No.4 (1988), Tone poem Choir & Orchestra (1991), Three Sri Lankan dances (1994) and Sitar concerto (1999)) have strictly followed western forms that are related to each style.

All other composers like Harsha Makalande, Rohan de Livera, Husan Mohomad and Wasantha Kumara Fenando who have studied western music have made thorough
attempts to associate forms of western music in combination with the Sri Lankan folk melodies. Thus it is quite difficult to analyze such compositions due to the fact that they were not conserved properly. However, the following compositions by Mr. Peramasiri kemadasa are closely related to the structure of the “Program Symphonies” or “Tone poems” of the western musical system;

(1). Sinhala Awrudda or Sinhala New Year (1966)
(2). Maha Muhuda or the Sea (1967)
(3). Niyagaya ha wessa or the Drought and the Rain (1975)
(4). Mage Kalaye Mavni or the Mother of my time (1978)

Although many writers have mentioned the fact that the above mentioned compositions by Premasiri Kemadasa were symphonies, it becomes clear that they lack the formal characteristics which would justify this description when compared to western symphonies[^101]. In western music, Symphony is said to be an extended composition for orchestra. Normally, it has three or four movements. Usually, the first movement of a symphony is fairly fast and weighty in content and feeling. The vast majority of first movements are in sonata form. The second movement is slower than the previous ones. The last movement is much faster. This often precedes third movements such as minuet or scherzo. The final movement is simple in character. Where Kemadasa’s compositions are compared to western symphonies, it can clearly be seen that the original structure of western symphony has not been followed by him. He has attempted to tell a story or express an idea using music in his compositions. Examples:

1. Sinhala Awrudda composition is based on the New Year festival. He attempts to depict significant stages from the beginning to the end of the New Year ceremony.
2. “Mother of my time” (Mage kalaye mavni) is based on the memory of his mother.
3. The sea (*Maha mahuda*) is a musical narrative of sea.

Similarly, in all of these compositions, he uses standard western orchestral instruments as well as oriental instruments such as the *Tabla*, the *Sitar* and Sri Lankan drums. Sometimes, some instruments are played in non-traditional ways in order to make sound effects. In the composition of *Sinhala Awruddha*, musical instruments are used to imitate sounds such as birds, fire crackers etc. These kinds of non-traditional means are not utilized in western Symphonies.

However, western music includes a kind of orchestral composition which is free in character when compared to symphonies. This is called ‘symphonic poem’ or ‘tone poem’. It belongs to what is generally known as ‘program music’ or ‘program symphony’. In other words, it narrates a story or depicts an extended idea. For example: *Vltava* tone poem is a musical composition by Frederick Smetana (1824-1884) and describes the Vltava River in Bohemia.

In addition to the above mentioned instrumental works were composed some musical dramas, such as; (1). *Doramadala* (1995); (2). *Sonduru Warnadasi* (2002); and (3) *Agni* (2010). They are also known as Opera in the western sense of the term. Similarly, some compositions that belong to Christianity (eg. “Cantatas”) have been adopted by him, conforming to the Buddhist religious context. He has named them as ‘Buddhist cantata’. *Piriniwan Mangalyaya* (1991), *i.e.* the composition of the Lord Buddha’s funeral, is the only one of that kind.

Although musicians like W.D. Amaratunga, W.B.Makuloluwa and Anil Mihiripanna who have studied traditional Sri Lankan music and North Indian Music have never attempted to call their compositions that way, their works were known as creative work in themselves.
2.8 Musical cultures of other Nations

Apart from the above mentioned Sinhalese musical tradition, a number of different genres exist in the country. There are also specific patterns of musical performances related to various immigrants to Sri Lankan such as the Indian Tamils (Tamils were brought to Sri Lanka by British as laborers for plantations works), the Muslims and certain other groups like the “Kaffirs” (people of Mozambique). The latter groups were brought to Sri Lanka during the Portuguese colonial rule especially as slaves. The majority of Tamils and the Muslims are currently settled down in the Eastern and the Northern provinces and has been expanded to the central and southern areas. Basically, the Tamils and the Muslims commonly use the Tamil language as a common medium of communication.

The Tamil people in Sri Lanka share an inherited form of folk music, folk drama traditions (vadimodi, ten-modi, Nattukkuttu, Thanmodi) as well as specific religious musical practices. The South Indian or ‘Carnatic’ music has been their typical musical preference.

Most of the Sri Lankan descendants of Muslim traders generally do not pay much attention to music due to their attachment to trading activities. However, they pay much attention to their religious music (this may also be regarded as preferring music as a compliment). It also becomes very clear that depending on their close affinities with the Tamils, the Muslims in Sri Lanka have now transformed their traditional musical preferences. This list includes lullabies and net hauling songs …etc.\textsuperscript{103}.

But, it is interesting to note that the intercultural living styles of Sri Lankan people have made an arena for both Tamil and Muslims in Sri Lanka to become familiar with and practice the Sinhala local music (sometimes North Indian and Western Music genres also), especially by means of national Music education (Sinhala People do not pay attention to study their music, even though both Tamils and Muslims practice typical
Sinhala music traditions). Similarly, music of Tamils also has made significant impact on modern Sri Lankan plays like Nadagam since a long time.

The Sri Lankan population includes a special community called "Kaffirs" whose roots can be traced to Mozambique. Basically they currently live in Manner and Chilaw (at Silambidadiya) districts in Sri Lanka. The specific musical tradition inherited by them has been described by Sri Lankan music critics as Kaffirinna and Chikothi. The melodic structures of their songs are restricted (only 15-18 melodies) and each song is improvised from slow tempo to fast tempo with dancing movements. Their common instruments are coconut shells, Dholak, Shakers (rattlers) etc.

However, as a consequence of introduction of such mediums as Cassettes, Compact disks, Mobile phones and the Internet (Youtube etc.), other global traditions of music are influencing Sri Lankan music. Due to lack of proper musical culture in the country, these kinds of musical genres are being used by some eminent musicians in light music.

1 Mahavamsa, 57-58.

2 Mahavamsa, 68-76; Kulatillake, Origin of Sri Lankan Music, 23-34.


4 Ibid, 76; Weerakkody. “Sri Lankan: Musical Heritage”, 1000

5 Weerakkody, Sri Lankan: Musical Heritage, 1000.

6 Kulatillake, Ethnomusicology and Ethnomusicological Aspect of Sri Lanka, 53-54.

7 Ariyapala, Society in Medieval Ceylon, 258-269.

8 Kavsilumina (1945), 149; M.B. Ariyapala, Society in Medieval Ceylon, 258.

9 Kavsilumina (1945), 149.

10 Dharmapradipika, 270.

11 Saddramalankaraya (1954), 713
12 Darmapradipika, 270

13 Natyasattra, Ancient Scales of Indian Music, 43.

14 Kavsilumina (1946), 232.


17 Ibid., 36.

18 Kulathillake: Ethnomusicology and Ethnomusicological Aspect of Sri Lanka, 63-64; Suryasena, Music of Sri Lanka, 95-96.

19 Suryasena, Music of Sri Lanka, 01-06.

20 Makuloluwa, Sinhala Folk song tradition, 47.


22 Ibid., 1002.

23 Ibid., 1002-1003.

24 Goonatilleka, Sokari of Sri Lanka, 01.

25 Sarachchandra, Sinhala Folk Play, page 130.

26 Karunathilake, Sokari play of Deduru oya, 05.

27 Sarachchandra, Sinhala Folk Play, 106.

28 Makuloluwa, Dances of Sri Lanka, 8-9; Sarachchandra, Sinhala Folk Play, 102.

29 Sarachchandra, Sinhala Folk Play, 137.

30 Ibid.


32 Aravinda, Sinhala Nadagam Tradition, 11.

33 Ibid., 17-18.

34 Ariyapala, Society in Medieval Ceylon, 259-260.

35 Rajagopalan, Temple Musical Instruments of Kerala.

36 Vansathappakasini, Chapter 29, sloka no-20.
37 Ariyapala, *Society in Mediaeval Ceylon*, 259.

38 Saddarmalakaraya (1914), 305.


40 Goswami, “Significance of India Folk Instruments in the Folk music of India; An overview. 82-83.


46 Ibid., Xiii-xiv.

47 Rathnayaka, *The History of Proctor John de Silva Dramatic literature (1857-1922)*, 45-83


50 Ibid.


52 Ibid., 211-214.


57 Ibid., 297-298.


60 Ibid., 291-293.
61 Ibid., 114-125.
62 Ibid., 306-308.
64 Ibid.
68 Ibid., 12-25.
72 Ibid., 293-295.
76 Jackson, “Bela Infanta” of Sri Lankan: Balled Fragments in Portuguese Creole Communities, 17.
78 Sunil Ariyarathne, *Carol, Pasan, Kantharu*, 96.
81 Kariyawasam, *Development of Sinhala Drama*, 240.
83 Ibid.,
84 Gunawardhana, *This is Colombo Calling*, 63-73.

88 Sirisena, *Prelude; Education in Sri Lanka (6 century B.C to date)*, xl.

89 Ibid., xlv


91 Ibid., 85-86.


97 Ibid., 89.


99 Ibid., 99.

100 Ibid., 99-100.


102 Ibid., 144-171.
