

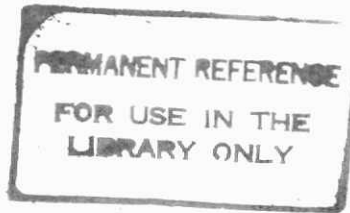
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**The Influence of Western Music on Sri Lankan Music during the  
20<sup>th</sup> Century**

HD/Mphil/02/03/003

2002/2003



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## **The Influence of Western Music on Sri Lankan Music during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

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HD/Mphil/02/03/003

### **Abstract**

While indigenous folk music of Sri Lanka has contributed immensely to the development of a musical tradition in the island. Frequent cultural exchange with foreign nations has also added variety to this tradition. The Northern and southern Indian musical traditions as well as various Western traditions of music has influenced Sri Lankan music. Although literary sources record the presence of Persian Christian devotees In Sri Lanka as early as 6<sup>th</sup> Century, the impact of their musical traditions upon the local population is uncertain. It is possible that the music of Muslims and Pre Islamic Arabs who migrated to this country in the middle ages have influenced the local tradition.

Above influences resulted in significant changes in Sri Lankan music after the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Research on the transformation that has been conducted so far has focused mostly on theoretical factors. Such researches do not evaluate comprehensively the characteristics of musical traditions and their differences .Also the few scholarly works on the subject by Professor *Sunil Ariyaratna* and *C.de.S Kulathilake*. Overlook the way in which Western

music was adapted to our culture. These works do not evaluate the local and foreign traditions in a framework.

The main objectives of my research were to avoid such drawbacks, to compare Western elements in our music to evaluate their transformation in Sri Lankan culture, and to study them from Historical, musicological and Sociological perspectives.

The research methodology of the study includes a survey of relevant literature and the interviewing of musicians and producers who follow traditional Western music.

This research is important for several reasons. A study of this nature has so far not been conducted. Therefore, this research will be beneficial to the field of music in particular to those who study the Sinhala culture and history of Sinhala music in general