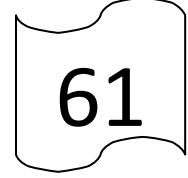


## Music Recording - Historical Perspective



Madhavi C. Mohan & Dr A V Sajini

Department of Music

Avinashilingam Institute For Home Science And Higher Education For Women,  
Coimbatore

### Abstract

Music recording has come a long way from its humble beginnings. Today, music production has become more accessible and user-friendly, allowing individuals to record, mix, and master their compositions from the comfort of their homes. The advancements in technology have overcome the technical challenges that once existed in the music recording industry, making complex compositions a common occurrence. This article will take a look at the historical perspective of music recording, exploring how technology has played a major role in shaping the industry into what it is today. From the limitations that sound engineers once faced to the utility-friendly techniques available now, it will delve into the evolution of music recording over the years.

### Keyword

Recording, Music production, Voice, Instruments, Microphones, Digital recording, Era

### Introduction

The invention of Phonograph made a great kick start in the technology of music recording. The acoustic trends help in transforming the voice to a tremendous development. There used to be only oral expressions. The music guru normally would transfer their skill to their disciples to learn and excel. Until then there was no proper media to record as it was happening then and there. The advancement of technology brought in remarkable change in recording trends. It had various eras from time to time evolving in techniques.

### Study Area

This study widely focuses on the history and the evolving trend in advancement of recording techniques used in various time period like phonogram, acoustic, electric, magnetic and digital era. Further more it discusses more about how gradually the advancement happened to time.

### Methods/Methodology

The following topics are discussed in the article:

- Phonograph
- Acoustic era
- Electric era
- Magnetic era
- Digital Era
- Gramophone
- Audio cassette
- Tape recorder
- Music Production
- Microphone
- All India Radio
- Vividh bharathi
- Digital recording
- Television and Movie



## Phonautograph

The history of Phonautograph in the 19th century was basically invented for studying sound vibrations. This invention was much before Thomas Alva Edison's phonograph in 1877. The difficulty they felt was that sound system signals were unable to be put into the air and finally the Phonograph was invented.

## Acoustic Era

The large conical cone was used to collect the air pressure of the sound waves of human voices and musical instruments. Later there were challenges in recording with gramophone or phonograph due to the variation and sound absorption on specific instruments which resulted in poor performance. Then came the demand of new technology that can really amplify the exact sound production with the right frequency. So came an end to the acoustic era and was succeeded by the electrical era.

## Electric Era

The Electric Era was in fact a big revolution in the area of sound recording. This minimizes the effort of musicians by not requiring them to be around crowded cones anymore for recording the voices as well as the instruments. The microphone could observe the very fine voices. Microphones enhance the voices and it helps to make the sound more realistic than it used to be. Hence the musicians wear more comfortable using microphones.

## Magnetic Era

Magnetic Era is a period where a much improved medium which enabled the quality of the sound to a superior level came into existence. Recording of video signals was also the remarkable accomplishment of this era. The method was greatly useful for preserving sound pictures in the form of electrical signals through the selective magnetization of portions of magnetic material; the biggest advantage was it could store enormous amounts of memory in small spaces.

## Digital Era

The digital era is completely driven by technology. A progressive step taken to transform predigital and post digital era. The music industry is completely transformed to advancement. The internet has greatly impacted on the music industry in this era of digital distribution. Currently music production is done in various studios sprawling across the globe. Everything is conducted primarily through online chat forums and recording happens later. There are numerous choices available for making the recording very simple and easy to access. Innovators in the industry are looking forward to shaping the Trends and continuing enhancing the techniques in recording.

## Gramophone

An analogue storage medium of record Storage for music is gramophone. Which is very significant in sound recording. The sound is recorded in a disc in a spiral motion in very fine grooves which goes round and round from the edge of the disc to the centre part of the disc. This recording traces read by a fine needle which touches the disc. Both sides of the disc can record different recordings. Various materials were used for manufacturing these disc.

## Audio cassette

Audio cassette is a light weight plastic container that holds the Magnetic tape for voice and music recording. A tape cassette is designed in such a way that it can be inserted in a recorder. The tape in a cassette begins in a feed read at one side and it moves along a guides through the record playback mechanism after which it passes on the take up reel on the opposite side. Audio cassetts initially focused on the domestic purposes that the users can record voices or music as and when required.

## Tape recorder

Tape recorder is a device used for sound recording and reproduction that records and plays back sounds usually using a magnetic tape for storage. It usually records of fluctuating signal by moving the tape across a tape head that polarises the magnetic domains in the tape in proportion to the audio



signal. The tape recording devices includes reel to reel tape deck and the cassette deck where normally the cassette is used for storage. Magnetic tape was considered as a biggest revolution in the musical industry. It enable the quality as well as help in editing rearrangeing their recording at ease. Later the advancement in technology paved way to the addition tracks to be recorded in synchronization with previously recorded material. The result was an improved signal to noise plus with an extended frequency response.

## Music Production

Music production is a collective effort to demonstrate and produce music in a particular sequence followed by several different notes or tones played at the same time. It is a process of song writing and composition to recording and sound designed to mixing and mastering. The digital tools used are specially to be mentioned. Music production also involves creativity on the notes to deliver the best music outcome. Music production has various setups where equipment is used like computers and DAW(Digital Audio Workstation). Many producers use DAW, few others use hardwares. It is user friendly and it makes the work of the producer much easier .The sound design resources are put together for all production styles.

## Microphone

Microphone is a device that can manipulate the sound in a real time recording. When compared to the earlier performing styles of the musicians and the instrumentalist there was no mean to amplify the music. They were heard with limitations. After microphone came into usage the biggest transformation occurred in the way the music was received. Microphone not alone enhanced the voice it is also used largely in public address system, live and recorded audio engineering sound recording megaphones and television broadcasting.

## All India Radio

All India Radio is a famous forum to serve , to inform, to educate and entertain the public with a Moto focusing the common man's pleasure and happiness. All India Radio is one of the world's largest multilingual broadcasting system sprawling wide across the nation. It facilitated the music musicians and instrumentalist to perform either live or recorded program where the artist felt the reach was more. It was more advantages on the artist as the popularity and fame was acquired more easily than it used to be.

## Vividh Bharathi

Vividh Bharati service of All India Radio is the largest entertainment network of the nation. Ever since it's inception it has been contributing premium popular melodies entertainment to the listeners. In the early times it focused more on wide spread music like devotional patriotic and film music. Primary there was no recording happening at Vividh Bharati. Music like carnatic and hindustani were recorded at other stations and send to Vividh Bharati.

## Digital Recording

The requirement of more usage of storage memory ended up in the technique of digital recording. The digital recording can be done faster with a great precision. The sound quality in recording gave tremendous result. It was more instantaneous. It can be heard thousands of times without distortion. All it needs is a recorded to use attentively because the recording procedure depends on the type quality and input device of the source material. Digital recording is more accurate than the analogue recording moreover digital recording is preferred by many due to the accessibility.

## Television and Movie

Television is preferred to be the most entertaining platform by all age groups as an all time favourite medium. Not alone visual programs it focuses more on audios too. There are volumes of music recording stored in television station especially in Doordarshan. Musicians and instrumentalist walk into the television recording theatres to perform. It is recorded with high quality microphones and



other equipments then stored in the library. These documents are used at various occasions as a references too.

Musicians contributes a lot in recording advancement, sound mixing along with visual effects are more demanding nowadays. Apart from studio recording spot dubbing can also be widely seen nowadays. Movies always show cases new recording techniques to attract the audiences. Playback singing has evolve to leaves and bones in recording trends. The Dubbing process and track recording is admirable in the kind of quality it results in due to the advancement of recording techniques.

## Conclusion/ Findings

The evolvement progress what it have seen from the Gurukula time, the techniques were absolutely impossible. Nevertheless they maintained written copies of the music notes. The evolution of music recording techniques has undergone significant changes over the past century. Starting with the Phonograph in the 19th century to the current digital era, the advancements in technology have transformed the way music is recorded and produced. From the acoustic era to the magnetic and digital era, each era brought its own unique advancements to the industry. The introduction of microphones, magnetic tapes, audio cassettes, and digital recording have enabled musicians and sound engineers to capture and produce high-quality sound recordings. Today, music production is more convenient and accessible with the help of digital tools and online platforms. This article highlights the various eras of music recording and the advancements made in each era that has contributed to the development of the music industry.

## Reference

- Music Production For Beginners 2020 Edition: How to Produce Music, The Easy to Read Guide for Music Producers by Tommy Swindale.
- Electronic Music and Sound Design - Theory and Practice with Max and Msp - Volume 2 by Alessandro Cipriani
- Allan, David. "On Popular Music in Advertising." Popular Musicology Online. Web. 13 Oct. 2009.
- Author - Jyothi Sehgal, Music in Industry and education
- Author -Tommy Swindale, , The Easy to Read Guide for Music Producers

