

**Method For Producing A Monocrystalline Layer Of An LNO Material And
Substrate For Epitaxial Growth Of A Monocrystalline Layer Of An LNO
Material**

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FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a process for producing a monocrystalline layer of lithium niobate (LNO) material and a substrate for the epitaxial growth of such a monocrystalline layer of LNO material.

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PRIOR ART

Certain materials are not currently available as a monocrystalline substrate in the form of a large-diameter wafer. Moreover, certain materials may be available in large diameter but not with certain characteristics or specifications in terms of quality, in particular with regard to the density of defects or the required electrical or optical properties.

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SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Embodiments of the present invention aim to overcome these limitations of the prior art by providing a process for producing a monocrystalline layer of LNO material and a substrate for the epitaxial growth of such a monocrystalline layer of LNO material. In this way it is possible to address the problem of size of the monocrystalline substrates of LNO material currently available.

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An aspect of the invention provides a process for producing a monocrystalline layer of lithium niobate (LNO) material, the process comprising a transfer of a monocrystalline seed layer of yttria stabilized zirconia (YSZ) material to a carrier substrate of silicon material, and followed by an epitaxial growth of the monocrystalline layer of LNO material on the monocrystalline seed layer of YSZ material, wherein the carrier substrate of silicon material comprises a detachable interface configured to withstand mechanical and/or thermal stresses during the epitaxial growth and to be detached by means of a laser debonding technique and/or chemical attack and/or by means of mechanical stress after the epitaxial growth.

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In advantageous embodiments, the monocrystalline seed layer has a thickness of less than 10 μm , preferably less than 2 μm , and more preferably less than 0.2 μm .

In advantageous embodiments, the transfer of the monocrystalline seed layer of YSZ material to the carrier substrate of silicon material comprises a step of joining a monocrystalline substrate of YSZ material to the carrier substrate followed by a step of thinning of said monocrystalline substrate of YSZ material.

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In advantageous embodiments, the thinning step comprises the formation of a weakened zone delimiting a portion of the monocrystalline substrate of YSZ material intended to be transferred to the carrier substrate of silicon material.

- 10 In advantageous embodiments, the formation of the weakened zone is obtained by implanting atomic and/or ionic species.

- In advantageous embodiments, the thinning step comprises detaching at the weakened zone so as to transfer said portion of the monocrystalline substrate of
15 YSZ material to the carrier substrate of silicon material, in particular the detaching comprises the application of thermal and/or mechanical stress.

In advantageous embodiments, the joining step is a molecular adhesion step.

- 20 In advantageous embodiments, the monocrystalline seed layer of YSZ material is in the form of a plurality of tiles each transferred to the carrier substrate of silicon material.

- Another aspect of the invention provides a substrate for epitaxial growth of a
25 monocrystalline layer of LNO material, characterized in that it comprises a monocrystalline seed layer of YSZ material on a carrier substrate of silicon material, wherein the carrier substrate of silicon material includes a detachable interface configured to be detached by means of a laser debonding technique and/or chemical attack and/or by means of mechanical stress.

In advantageous embodiments, the monocrystalline seed layer of YSZ material is in the form of a plurality of tiles.

- There is also disclosed a process for producing a monocrystalline layer of $\text{Li}_x\text{K}_y\text{Na}_z\text{Ti}_l\text{Nb}_m\text{O}_3$ material having a lattice parameter close to that of the LNO material comprising the transfer of a monocrystalline seed layer of YSZ material to a carrier substrate of silicon material followed by epitaxial growth of the monocrystalline layer of $\text{Li}_x\text{K}_y\text{Na}_z\text{Ti}_l\text{Nb}_m\text{O}_3$ material.
- There is also disclosed a process for producing a monocrystalline layer of $\text{Li}_x\text{K}_y\text{Na}_z\text{Ti}_l\text{Nb}_m\text{O}_3$ material having a lattice parameter close to that of the LNO material comprising the transfer of a monocrystalline seed layer of SrTiO_3 or CeO_2 or MgO or Al_2O_3 material to a carrier substrate of silicon, sapphire, Ni or Cu material, followed by epitaxial growth of the monocrystalline layer of $\text{Li}_x\text{K}_y\text{Na}_z\text{Ti}_l\text{Nb}_m\text{O}_3$ material.

DESCRIPTION OF THE FIGURES

Other features and advantages of the invention will be better understood from reading the following detailed description with reference to the appended drawings, in which:

- figure 1 illustrates a process for producing a monocrystalline layer of LNO material according to one embodiment of the invention and a substrate for the epitaxial growth of such a monocrystalline layer of LNO material according to this embodiment of the invention;
- figure 2 illustrates a process for producing a monocrystalline layer of LNO material according to another embodiment of the invention and a substrate

for the epitaxial growth of such a monocrystalline layer of LNO material according to this other embodiment of the invention;

- 5 • figure 3 illustrates a process for producing a monocrystalline layer of LNO material according to yet another embodiment of the invention and a substrate for the epitaxial growth of such a monocrystalline layer of LNO material according to this other embodiment of the invention;
- 10 • figure 4 illustrates a process for producing a monocrystalline layer of LNO material according to yet another embodiment of the invention and a substrate for the epitaxial growth of such a monocrystalline layer of LNO material according to this other embodiment of the invention;
- 15 • figure 5 illustrates a process for producing a monocrystalline layer of LNO material according to yet another embodiment of the invention and a substrate for the epitaxial growth of such a monocrystalline layer of LNO material according to this other embodiment of the invention.

20 To improve the readability of the figures, the various layers are not necessarily shown to scale.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF EMBODIMENTS OF THE INVENTION

25 Figure 1 illustrates a carrier substrate 100 of silicon material to which a monocrystalline seed layer 200 of YSZ material is transferred. Other materials for the monocrystalline seed layer 200 may be envisaged such as SrTiO_3 , CeO_2 , MgO or Al_2O_3 , these having a lattice parameter close to that of the LNO material. The carrier substrate 100 of silicon material may also be replaced with a carrier

30 substrate 100 of sapphire, Ni or Cu material. The use of silicon has the advantage of opening up the field of application of layers of LNO material not only for 300 mm-type large-scale equipment, but also making it compatible with the

microelectronics industry, for which the requirements in terms of acceptance on the production line for exotic material other than silicon, especially LNO, are high. The step of joining 1' the monocrystalline seed layer 200 of YSZ material to the carrier substrate 100 of silicon material is preferably carried out by way of a molecular adhesion step. This molecular adhesion step comprises a bonding step, preferably at ambient temperature, and is followed by an anneal for consolidating the bonding interface which is usually carried out at high temperatures of up to 900°C or even 1100°C for a duration of a few minutes to a few hours. Regarding a carrier substrate of sapphire material, the step of joining 1' the monocrystalline seed layer to the carrier substrate is also preferably carried out by way of a molecular adhesion step using typical conditions of the same order of magnitude as mentioned above. Regarding a carrier substrate of Ni or Cu material, the step of joining 1' the monocrystalline seed layer to the carrier substrate is replaced by a step of depositing the Ni or Cu material on the monocrystalline seed layer, for example via deposition by electrodeposition (ECD) or electroforming (electroplating). This technique usually includes the use of a tie layer and stripping and is known per se and will not be described in more detail here.

Figure 1 schematically shows the step of joining 1' a monocrystalline substrate 20 of YSZ material to the carrier substrate 100 of silicon material. It follows a step of thinning 2' the monocrystalline substrate 20 of YSZ material after having been joined to the carrier substrate 100 of silicon material. Figure 1 schematically shows the thinning step 2', which may be implemented for example by means of chemical and/or mechanical etching (polishing, grinding, milling, etc.). Thus, the monocrystalline seed layer 200 of YSZ material may be obtained which will serve as the monocrystalline seed for a step of epitaxially growing 3' the monocrystalline layer 300 of LNO material on the substrate for epitaxial growth of a monocrystalline layer of LNO material 10 shown schematically in figure 1. Those skilled in the art would be capable of adjusting the parameters used for epitaxially growing a monocrystalline layer of LNO material usually used in homoepitaxy or heteroepitaxy on a bulk monocrystalline substrate in order to

optimize the step of epitaxially growing 3' the monocrystalline layer 300 of LNO material on the substrate for epitaxial growth of a monocrystalline layer of LNO material 10 of the present invention. Epitaxy of the LNO material therefore takes place by way of MOCVD at typical temperatures of between 650 and 850°C using
5 precursors known to those skilled in the art. Incidentally, the present invention is not limited to epitaxy of the LNO material but extends to certain composites of trigonal crystal structure of $\text{Li}_x\text{K}_y\text{Na}_z\text{TiNb}_m\text{O}_3$ type having a lattice parameter close to that of the LNO material.

10 It should be noted that the thermal expansion coefficient of the carrier substrate 100 dominates the thermal behavior of the substrate for epitaxial growth of a monocrystalline layer of LNO material 10 during the step of epitaxially growing 3' the monocrystalline layer 300 of LNO material. This is due to the low thickness, preferably less than 1 μm , of the monocrystalline seed layer 200 of YSZ material
15 relative to the total thickness of the substrate for epitaxial growth of a monocrystalline layer of LNO material 10, which is of the order of several tens to hundreds of μm . Incidentally, the YSZ material is chosen so as to provide a monocrystalline seed layer having a lattice parameter that is as close as possible to the lattice parameter chosen for the monocrystalline layer 300 of LNO material,
20 preferably the lattice parameter in the relaxed state in order to allow epitaxial growth resulting in as few defects as possible in the monocrystalline layer 300 of LNO material. Incidentally, the material of the carrier substrate 100 advantageously has a thermal expansion coefficient which is particularly close to the thermal expansion coefficient of the LNO material for the same reasons of
25 decreasing defects in the monocrystalline layer 300 obtained by epitaxy. Preferably, a carrier substrate 100 of sapphire material would therefore be used for the present invention.

Figure 2 schematically shows one embodiment of the process for producing a
30 monocrystalline layer of LNO material which differs from the embodiment described in conjunction with figure 1 in that the monocrystalline substrate 20' of YSZ material undergoes a step of implanting 0" atomic and/or ionic species in

order to form a weakened zone delimiting a portion 200' of the monocrystalline substrate 20' of YSZ material intended to be transferred to the carrier substrate 100' of silicon material, and in that the thinning step 2" comprises detaching at this weakened zone so as to transfer said portion 200' of the monocrystalline

5 substrate 20' of YSZ material to the carrier substrate 100' of silicon material, in particular this detaching comprises the application of a thermal and/or mechanical stress. The advantage of this embodiment is thus to be able to recover the remaining part 201 of the starting monocrystalline substrate 20' of YSZ material, which may thus be used again to undergo the same process again and thus

10 decrease costs. The substrate for epitaxial growth of a monocrystalline layer of LNO material 10' thus illustrated in figure 2 is used for the step of growing 3" the monocrystalline layer 300' of LNO material as already described in the process described in conjunction with figure 1. In general, the implantation step 0" takes place using hydrogen ions. One advantageous alternative well known to those

15 skilled in the art consists in replacing all or some of the hydrogen ions with helium ions. A hydrogen implantation dose will typically be between $6 \times 10^{16} \text{ cm}^{-2}$ and $1 \times 10^{17} \text{ cm}^{-2}$. The implantation energy will typically be between 50 to 170 keV. Thus, the detaching typically takes place at temperatures of between 300 and 600°C. Thicknesses of the monocrystalline seed layer of the order of 200 nm to

20 1.5 μm are thus obtained. Immediately after the detaching operation, additional technological steps are advantageously added with the aim of either strengthening the bonding interface or of restoring a good level of roughness, or of correcting any defects which may have been generated in the implantation step or else to prepare the surface of the seed layer for the resumption of epitaxy.

25 These steps are for example polishing, (wet or dry) chemical etching, annealing, chemical cleaning. They may be used alone or in a combination which those skilled in the art will be capable of adjusting.

Figure 3 differs from the embodiments described in conjunction with figure 1 and

30 figure 2 in that the substrate for epitaxial growth of a monocrystalline layer of LNO material (10, 10') comprises a detachable interface 40' that is configured to be detached. In the case of a carrier substrate 100 of silicon material, it may be a

rough surface, for example of silicon material, joined with the monocrystalline seed layer during the joining step. Else, a rough interface may be present within the carrier substrate 100 of silicon material, the latter for example obtained by joining two silicon wafers. Another embodiment would be to introduce, at the face
5 to be joined with the monocrystalline seed layer, a porous silicon layer that is liable to split during the application of a mechanical and/or thermal stress, for example by inserting a blade at the edge of the wafer known to those skilled in the art or by applying an anneal. Obviously, this interface is chosen so as to withstand the other mechanical and/or thermal stresses experienced during the
10 process of the present invention (e.g. detaching, epitaxial growth, etc.). In the case of a carrier substrate of sapphire material, it may be a stack of silicon oxide, silicon nitride and silicon oxide (what is called an ONO-type structure) produced on the face of the sapphire to be joined with the monocrystalline seed layer. Such a stack is liable to undergo detachment at the silicon nitride layer when applying
15 a laser that passes through the sapphire carrier substrate (detaching or debonding of the "laser lift-off" type). Those skilled in the art will be capable of identifying other processes for producing this detachable interface. These various detaching configurations thus make it possible either to transfer the epitaxial layer to a final carrier which is not compatible with the growth parameters or to prepare
20 a thick film of LNO material of freestanding type.

Figure 4 schematically shows one embodiment of the process for producing a monocrystalline layer of LNO material which differs from the embodiments described in conjunction with figure 1, figure 2 and figure 3 in that the
25 monocrystalline seed layer 2000' of YSZ material is in the form of a plurality of tiles (2001', 2002', 2003') each transferred to the carrier substrate 100" of silicon material. The various tiles may take any shape (square, hexagonal, strips, etc.) and have different sizes varying from a few mm² to several cm². The spacing between the chips may also vary significantly depending on whether what is
30 sought is a maximum density of coverage (in this case a spacing of less than 0.2 mm will preferably be chosen) or conversely a maximum spread of the tiles within the substrate (in this case the spacing may be several millimeters and even

centimeters). For each tile, a person skilled in the art would be capable of applying their desired transfer and they are not limited to a particular process. Thus, it is possible to envisage applying the technical teachings described in conjunction with the process illustrated schematically in figure 1 or the technical teachings described in conjunction with the process illustrated schematically in figure 2, or even a combination of the two. Thus, it is possible to join 1" monocrystalline substrates (2001, 2002, 2003) of YSZ material which have a size smaller than the size of the carrier substrate 100" in order to create by thinning 2" on this latter the monocrystalline seed layers (2001', 2002', 2003') for the epitaxial growth 3" of a monocrystalline layer (3001, 3002, 3003) of LNO material on each tile of the substrate for epitaxial growth of a monocrystalline layer of LNO material 10".

The various embodiments described in conjunction with figures 1 to 4 thus open up the possibility of co-integration of components made in the monocrystalline layer of LNO material with components made in the carrier substrate of silicon material. This latter may simply be a silicon substrate, but it may also be an SOI-type substrate comprising a silicon oxide layer separating a silicon substrate from a thin silicon layer. In the case of the embodiments described in conjunction with figures 1 to 4, access to the carrier substrate may be achieved simply by way of lithography and etching known to those skilled in the art. In the case of the embodiment described in conjunction with figure 4, it is also possible just to choose the locations of the tiles and their spacing.

Figure 5 schematically shows one embodiment which differs from the embodiment described in conjunction with figure 4 in that the carrier substrate 100" and subsequently the substrate for epitaxial growth of a monocrystalline layer of LNO material 10" comprises a detachable interface 40 that is configured to be detached, for example by means of a laser debonding (laser lift-off) technique and/or chemical attack and/or by means of mechanical stress. This would allow part of the carrier substrate 100" to be removed as already mentioned in conjunction with figure 3. One example would be the use of a carrier substrate 100 of SOI type comprising a silicon oxide layer separating a silicon substrate

from a thin silicon layer. This oxide layer could be used as a detachable interface
40 by selective etching this oxide layer, for example by immersion in a
hydrofluoric (HF) acid bath. This option of detaching a buried layer by means of
chemical etch is particularly advantageous when it is in combination with treating
5 a plurality of small substrates. Specifically, the range of under-etches is generally
limited to a few centimeters or even a few millimeters if it is desired to retain
industrially reasonable treatment conditions and times. Treating a plurality of
small substrates allows the initiation of several chemical etching fronts by virtue
of possible access to the buried layer between each tile, rather than just at the
10 extreme edges of the substrates, which may be up to 300 mm in diameter. In the
case of an SOI-type carrier substrate, it is thus possible to partially remove the
thin layer of silicon between the tiles in order to allow the initiation of several
etching fronts.

15 Since the thin layer of silicon has a predetermined thickness (which may vary
between 5 nm to 600 nm, or even thicker depending on the intended application),
it could thus be used to form microelectronic components and thus allow the co-
integration of components based on LNO materials in a single substrate.

20 Thus, after having formed the monocrystalline layer (3001, 3002, 3003) by
epitaxy, it is also possible to conceive joining this structure to a final substrate
and detaching, at the detachable interface 40, a part of the carrier substrate 100".
The final substrate may thus provide additional functionalities which are for
example incompatible with parameters of the growth carried out previously (for
25 example final substrate of flexible plastic type or final substrate comprising metal
lines). Additionally and in general, the detachable interface is not necessarily
located inside the carrier substrate but may also be located at the interface with
the seed layer of YSZ material joined to this carrier substrate (for example a stack
of a layer of silicon nitride between two layers of silicon oxide allows laser
30 debonding, particularly suitable for a carrier substrate of sapphire type) as already
described in conjunction with figure 3.

CLAIMS

1. A process for producing a monocrystalline layer of lithium niobate (LNO) material, the process comprising:
 - 5 a transfer of a monocrystalline seed layer of yttria stabilized zirconia (YSZ) material to a carrier substrate of silicon material; and
 followed by an epitaxial growth of the monocrystalline layer of LNO material on the monocrystalline seed layer of YSZ material,
 wherein the carrier substrate of silicon material comprises a detachable
10 interface configured to withstand mechanical and/or thermal stresses during the epitaxial growth and to be detached by means of a laser debonding technique and/or chemical attack and/or by means of mechanical stress after the epitaxial growth.
- 15 2. The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the monocrystalline seed layer of YSZ material has a thickness of less than 10 μm , preferably less than 2 μm , and more preferably less than 0.2 μm .
- 20 3. The process as claimed in claim 1 or 2, wherein the transfer of the monocrystalline seed layer of YSZ material to the carrier substrate of silicon material comprises a step of joining a monocrystalline substrate of YSZ material to the carrier substrate followed by a step of thinning said monocrystalline substrate of YSZ material.
- 25 4. The process as claimed in claim 3, wherein the thinning step comprises the formation of a weakened zone delimiting a portion of the monocrystalline substrate of YSZ material intended to be transferred to the carrier substrate of silicon material.
- 30 5. The process as claimed in claim 4, wherein the formation of the weakened zone is obtained by implanting atomic and/or ionic species.

6. The process as claimed in claim 4 or 5, wherein the thinning step comprises detaching at the weakened zone so as to transfer said portion of the monocrystalline substrate of YSZ material to the carrier substrate of silicon material, in particular the detaching comprises the application of a thermal and/or mechanical stress.
7. The process as claimed in any one of claims 3 to 6, wherein the joining step is a molecular adhesion step.
8. The process as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the monocrystalline seed layer of YSZ material is in the form of a plurality of tiles each transferred to the carrier substrate of silicon material.