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Diamond Schottky diodes operating at 473 K

Richard MONFLIER¹, Karine ISOIRD¹, Alain CAZARRE¹, Josiane TASSELLI¹, Alexandra SERVEL², Jocelyn ACHARD³, David EON⁴, Maria José VALDIVIA BIRNBAUM¹

¹ LAAS-CNRS, Université de Toulouse, CNRS, UPS, Toulouse, France

² IBS, ZI Peynier-Rousset, Rue Gaston Imbert prolongée, F-13790 Peynier, France

³ CNRS, LSPM, Université Paris 13, Bâtiment L1 ou L2, 99 avenue Jean-Baptiste Clément, F-93430 Villetaneuse, France

⁴ CNRS, Institut Néel, 25 rue des Martyrs BP166, F-38042 Grenoble cedex9, France

Richard MONFLIER was born at Toulouse (France) in 1991. He received an M.Sc degree in Embedded Electronic Systems and Telecommunications from University Paul Sabatier in Toulouse in 2015. He has integrated ISGE team (Integration of Systems for Energy Management) within LAAS-CNRS lab for his last internship. His activities focused on characterization and simulation of diamond Schottky diodes. Now, he is Ph.D student in MPN team (Materials and Processes for Nanoelectronics) always at LAAS-CNRS, he studied the defects generated by annealing laser on silicon.

monflie@laas.fr / +33561336388

Karine ISOIRD was born at Sète (France) in 1973. Her PH.D. degree received in 2001, focused on the characterisation of high temperature and high voltage SiC power device. Since 2003, she is assistant professor at University Paul Sabatier of Toulouse and she has integrated ISGE team (Integration of Systems for Energy Management) within LAAS lab. Her activities research focus on the simulation, design and electrical characterisations of high voltage and high temperature power devices both in silicon, or wide band gap material. Indeed in recent years, she has been involved in several projects for the design and realisation of devices dedicated to high voltage and high temperature applications, such as Thyristor, GaN HEMT or diamond Schottky diodes. She is co-authors of 27 publications in scientific journals and 20 in international conferences. Member expert to OMNT (Observatory for Micro and Nano Technology), on the topic Wide band gap Materials.

kisoird@laas.fr / +33561336495

Alain CAZARRE, Professor and director of a Doctoral School in electrical engineering, obtained the PhD degrees in 1984 on “Study and realization of GaAlAs / GaAs heterojunction phototransistors for integrated light amplifier” at University Paul Sabatier in Toulouse and LAAS Lab and the «accreditation to supervise research” (HDR in French) in 1997.

His research was focused on the power RF HBTs, related to physical and thermic modelization and characterization of GaInP/GaAs power devices in the 0.9-10 GHz band. He also worked on the characterization of commercial Silicon MOS and Bipolar integrated circuits after ultra-thinning. Since 2008, his research has focused on MOS SiO₂ on GaN (Journal of Applied Physics, Vol.109, N°7, April 2011), and now on emergent Diamond devices, Shottky diodes and MOS devices.

cazarre@laas.fr / +33561336435

Josiane TASSELLI received her PhD degrees in electrical engineering in 1986 from the University Paul Sabatier in Toulouse, France. At LAAS-CNRS since 1988, her research concerned the fabrication of GaAlAs/GaAs and GaInP/GaAs heterojunction bipolar transistors for power applications, the design and fabrication of microfluidic devices for chemical

engineering applications and the study of new 3D integration techniques. Since 2012, her research work focuses on the development of silicon high-voltage power devices such Deep Trench SJMOSFETs for energy management.

tasselli@laas.fr / +33561336945

Alexandra SERVEL works as a production engineer for IBS, a semiconductor company based in Peynier, France where she manages customers and R&D projects at the foundry division. Prior to that, she has been in charge of studies on oxide deposition by plasma enhanced chemical vapor deposition (PECVD) for two years.

Alexandra holds a professional master's degree in Materials and Technology from the university of Aix-Marseille, with a specialization in thin and divided materials.

alexandra.pernisi@ion-beam-services.fr / +33442538953

Jocelyn ACHARD, born in 1968 at Clermont Ferrand, received his PhD in 1997 in materials and electronic devices at the Blaise Pascal University. From 1998 to 2006, he works as an associate professor in electronics at the University of Paris 13 before obtaining a position of Full Professor in the same university. During this period, he managed several scientific research academic and industrial programs (both national and European). His research activities are related to the CVD diamond growth assisted by microwave plasma and he is more particularly involved in the growth of thick single crystals of high purity for electronic applications and their characterizations. These last 5 years, a boron doping process for the growth of thick heavily diamond films has been developed under his supervision through a FUI project aiming to fabricate vertical power electronic devices. In parallel, he was the head leader of his teaching department for 3 years and he has been involved in the supervision of several PhD theses since 2000. He has been author or co-author of 70 papers and 3 patents.

jocelyn.achard@lspm.cnrs.fr / +33149403414

David EON, 40 ans, Associate Professor, Université Grenoble Alpes

He obtained his PhD at the "Institut des Matériaux" at Nantes working on the interaction mechanisms occurring during plasma etching of materials for micro-electronics. These competences allowed him to continue this work during a post-doc in the "Laboratoire des Technologies de la Microélectronique" (LTM-Grenoble) where it performed small-size patterns. Then, in the "Laboratoire de physique des interfaces et des couches minces" (LPICM-Palaiseau), he dealt with the solar energy by carrying out double heterojunction silicon cells by plasma deposition. He entered at university Grenoble Alpes in 2007 as associate professor and performed his research at the Institut Néel. He develops plasma processes for diamond growth in order to improve power devices performances such as Schottky diode and transistor. His skills concern materials (thin layers, plasmas and the in situ diagnostics associated) but also electronic and discrete component characterization.

david.eon@neel.cnrs.fr / +33476881079

Maria José VALDIVIA BIRNBAUM was born in La Paz (Bolivia) in 1992. She is currently finishing her Master's degree in Electronics for Embedded Systems at Paul Sabatier University in Toulouse. During her internship within the LAAS laboratory, she integrated the ISGE team (Integration of Systems for Energy Management), and worked under the guidance of Karine ISOIRD on the study and conception of diamond MOS structures for power electronics.

mj.valdiviab@gmail.com

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Diamond Schottky diodes operating at 473 K

In this paper, we present current-voltage characteristics of vertical and pseudo-vertical Diamond Schottky diodes operating up to 473 K. The functionality rate is greater than 75 % for each samples. For vertical diodes, current density at 473 K reaches 488 A/cm², while it is greater than 1000 A/cm² for pseudo-vertical diodes. Under reverse bias, the leakage current is less than 10⁻⁷ A/cm² at 50 V for all functional diodes. However, the high barrier height and high non-ideality factor observed are probably caused by high charges at the Diamond/Schottky contact interface. This article emphasizes the high reproducibility of the characteristics and the functionality rate at 473 K.

Keywords: Diamond, Diode, Schottky, High Temperature, Simulation, Characterization.

1. Introduction

Power electronics, specifically energy management, occupy a prominent place in systems. Dedicated electronic devices, mainly on Silicon (Si), reach their limits of development, both in terms of high temperatures and envisaged breakdown voltage. In this context, new wide band gap materials such as Silicon Carbide (SiC), Gallium Nitride (GaN) and Diamond emerge. Diamond offers indispensable potentialities in terms of thermal conductivity (20 W.cm⁻¹.K⁻¹) and breakdown electric field (10 MV.cm⁻¹) for the future power circuits. Today, technological steps for exploiting this potential are still poorly mastered, one of the major difficulties being the doping of Diamond material. Indeed, boron (p-type dopant) and phosphorus (n-type dopant) have high activation energies of 0.37 eV and 0.57 eV respectively limiting the number of free carriers at room temperature.

Doping process is performed during the layers growth [1] because ionic implantation is not still mastered despite recurring work in the literature [2]. The control of etching steps, the realization of low resistive ohmics contacts and a Schottky contact

stable at high temperature with a good adhesion are also still under investigation. Another difficulty inherent to vertical components is to obtain thick layers of several hundred microns depth with high level doping [3].

Most of published works, such as R. Kumaresan's ones [4, 5], focus on Diamond Schottky diodes studies demonstrating notable performances, but the temperature increase causes a collapse of threshold voltage and a decrease of barrier height. Over recent years, many studies were conducted to improve high temperature performance [6-9], with encouraging results.

As a continuity of our research work [10, 11], this paper focuses on vertical and pseudo-vertical p-type diamond Schottky diodes operating at high temperature (473 K) with a rate of functionality greater than 75 %. We will detail the technological parameters of the fabricated samples and present the resulting current-voltage characteristics and a simulation-measurements comparison for each type of diode.

2. Samples presentation

The presented results concern three types of samples: the first one includes 64 vertical diodes of 100 μm diameter, the second includes 24 pseudo-vertical square diodes of different size and the third 64 pseudo-vertical diodes of 100 μm diameter.

Figure 1 shows a schematic view of the different samples. P⁻ layers were performed by Institut Néel and P⁺ layers by LSPM laboratory: note the p-type diamond layers are boron-doped. Boron has high activation energy of 0.37 eV limiting the number of free carriers at room temperature [3]. The technological process of diamond Schottky diodes is performed in LAAS cleanroom. Ohmic contacts are made of Ti/Pt/Au of 50/50/500 nm thickness respectively, annealed at 723 K during 30 min and Schottky contacts of Ni/Au of 50/450 nm. No junction terminations were realized for several diode batches.

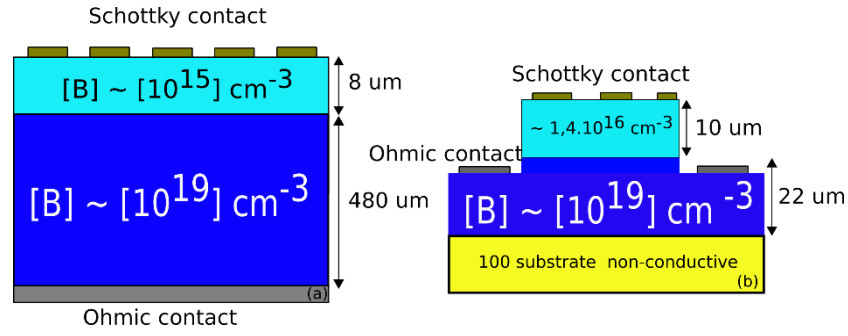


Figure 1: Schematic cross-section of samples, (a) vertical, (b) pseudo-vertical

For vertical sample, the P⁻ layer of 8 μm thick is doped between $1.10^{15} \text{ cm}^{-3}$ and $5.10^{15} \text{ cm}^{-3}$. P⁺ layer with a thickness of 480 μm is doped between $1.10^{19} \text{ cm}^{-3}$ and $5.10^{19} \text{ cm}^{-3}$.

The doping of the 10 μm P⁻ layer of pseudo-vertical samples is determined by C(V) measurement (Figure 9) as $1.4.10^{16} \text{ cm}^{-3}$. The P⁺ layer of 22 μm thick is doped between $1.10^{19} \text{ cm}^{-3}$ and $5.10^{19} \text{ cm}^{-3}$.

3. Current-voltage characteristics with temperature

3.1. Vertical diodes

3.1.1. *I(V)* measurements

Electrical measurements were made under probes with an Agilent 4142: they demonstrate that 48 diodes on 64 are functional at 473 K. Figure 2 shows typical *I(V)* characteristics for a vertical diode under forward bias. A current density of 92 A/cm² under 10 V and a series resistance of 934 Ω are obtained at room temperature. At 473K, a current density of 488 A/cm² and a series resistance of 193 Ω are measured, consecutively to the activation of Boron atoms by temperature. The parameters extraction from the forward current-voltage graph gives a barrier height of 1.38 eV and a non-ideality factor *n* of 1.77. Under reverse bias, as reported on Figure 3, a leakage current

density of only 10^{-7} A/cm² up to 50 V is obtained, thus allowing us to predict a high breakdown voltage.

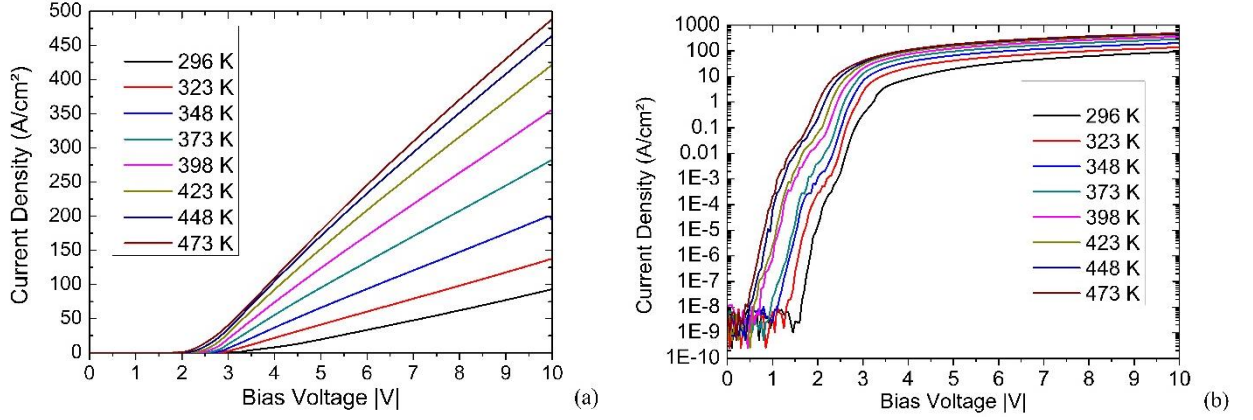


Figure 2: Linear (a) and semi-logarithmic (b) I(V) characteristics of a vertical diode under forward bias versus temperature.

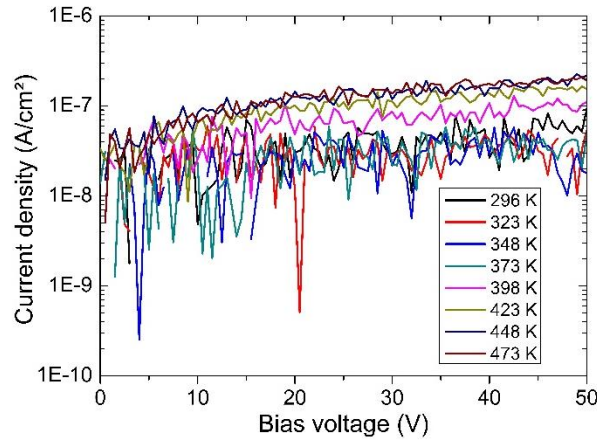


Figure 3: Semi-logarithmic I(V) characteristics of a vertical diode under reverse bias versus temperature.

3.1.2. Simulated I(V) characteristics

Physical simulations presented in this work were performed with SENTAURUS TCAD [12]. Models and parameters used are derived from previous works of F. Thion [11]. The measured barrier height (1.38 eV) is introduced in model parameters. To converge towards the experimental resistance value, various doping levels are chosen (Figure 4). For simulation 1, P⁻ and P⁺ layers doping are 10^{15} cm⁻³ and 10^{19} cm⁻³ respectively, for simulation 2 they are of $3 \cdot 10^{15}$ cm⁻³ and $6 \cdot 10^{19}$ cm⁻³ respectively.

Simulation 2 leads to a serial resistance of 860 ohms, matching to the measured one and allowing to conclude that the current limitation is not only due to the contact resistance but mostly to the layers resistances. The strong non-ideality factor (n) observed and the dispersed values of the threshold voltage may be attributed to the high charges density at the Schottky interface. To date, physical models and physical parameters available in SENTAURUS TCAD to describe Schottky contact on p-type diamond do not allow to take into account the influence of the traps located at the interface metal/semiconductor.

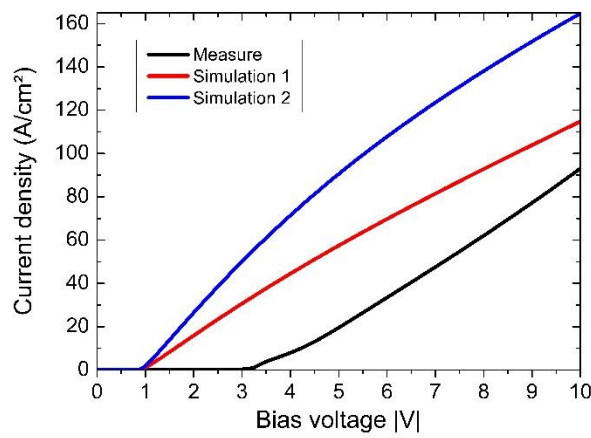


Figure 4: Simulation-measurement comparison at 296 K: Simulation 1 with a doping are 10^{15} cm^{-3} and 10^{19} cm^{-3} for P^- and P^+ layers respectively; Simulation 2 with a doping are $3.10^{15} \text{ cm}^{-3}$ and $6.10^{19} \text{ cm}^{-3}$ for P^- and P^+ layers respectively.

Simulation of the ideal Schottky diode behavior with temperature for a P^- doping of $3.10^{15} \text{ cm}^{-3}$ and P^+ doping of $6.10^{19} \text{ cm}^{-3}$ is illustrated in Figure 5. There is a crossing of the characteristics, related to the temperature increase, allowing dopant activation and current density increase. At the same time, there is a decrease of the electronic mobility from 423 K, thus limiting the current increase.

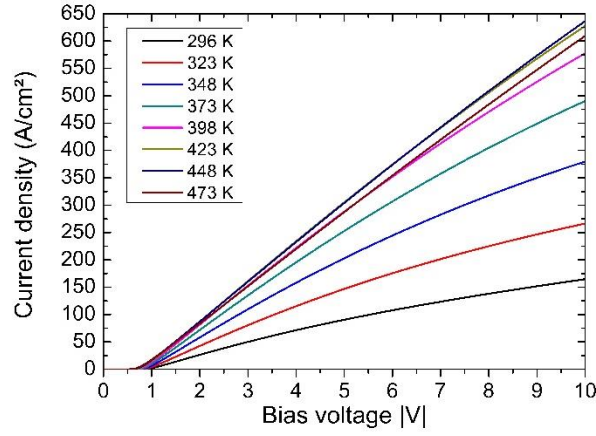


Figure 5: Simulated $I(V)$ characteristics for an ideal diode versus temperature.

Simulations at 473 K are shown in Figure 6. The measured $I(V)$ characteristics and those obtained from simulation 2 are parallel and a shift of the threshold voltage is observed, confirming the current limitation by the serial resistance.

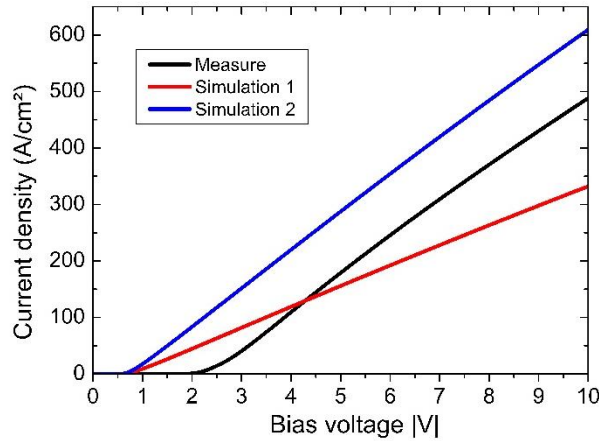


Figure 6: Confrontation simulation-measurement at 473 K

Under reverse bias with ionization parameters of Rashid et al [13], the breakdown voltage of 2D simulated Schottky diode reaches 1600 V. The low leakage current measured and the concordance of measured / simulated curves confirm encouraging prospects of high breakdown voltages.

3.2. Pseudo-vertical diodes

3.2.1. $I(V)$ measurements

Measurements were performed under the same conditions than for the vertical diode: 97% of the 64 diodes are functional at 473 K. Figure 7 shows $I(V)$ characteristics as a function of temperature for a typical diode. A low current density of 45 A/cm² is measured at room temperature under 10 V, far from the expected value. By increasing the temperature, 200 A/cm² at 348 K and 1000 A/cm² at 473 K under 10 V are obtained.

The Schottky barrier height deduced from these measurements is brought up at 2.09 eV and the non-ideality factor n of 1.24 is low relatively to the values obtained typically. This could be attributed to a dominant thermionic emission mechanism. In the reverse regime, leakage current is lower than 10⁻⁷ A/cm² under 50 V, which is satisfactory.

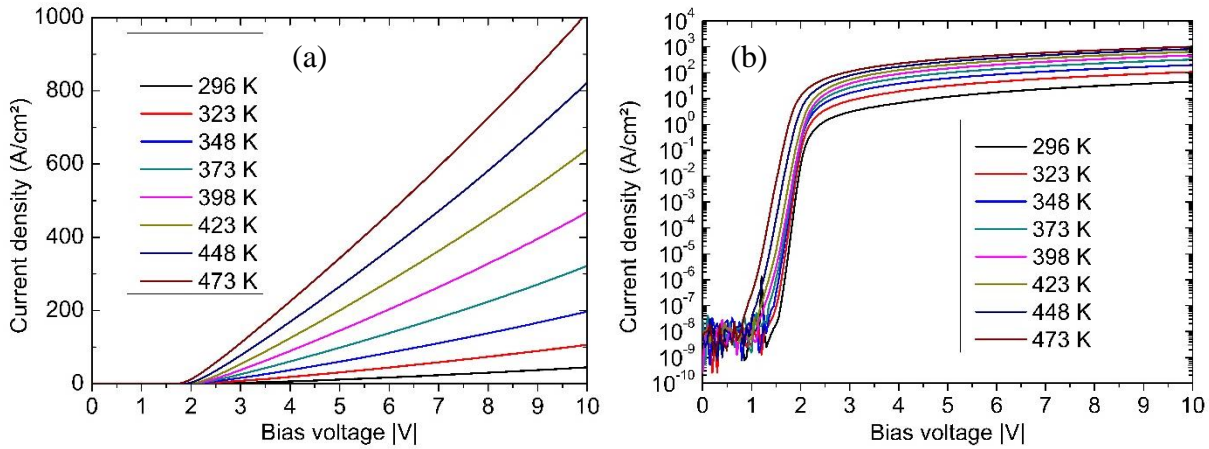


Figure 7: Linear (a) and semi-logarithmic (b) characteristics of a pseudo-vertical diode under forward bias versus temperature

Concerning the pseudo-vertical sample with square diodes, all the 24 tested diodes are functional at 473 K. Figure 8 shows typical characteristics of 300 μ m x 300 μ m pseudo-vertical Schottky diode versus temperature. At room temperature, the current density is 17 A/cm² with a resistance of 310 Ω : only 48 A/cm² is achieved at 473 K while much higher values were expected. This limitation is probably due to an insufficient doping of the P⁺ layer leading to a high contact resistance value but also due to the high

contact area. The values of the measured current densities at 296 K and 473 K are reported on Table 1 for different diodes sizes. The barrier height is 1.71 eV and the non-ideality factor is high, close to 2.

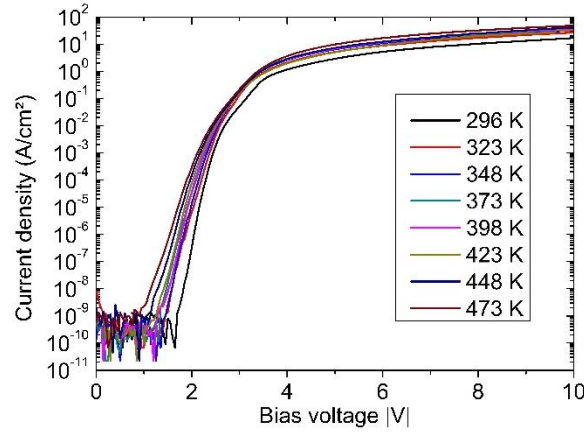


Figure 8: $I(V)$ characteristics of a $300 \times 300 \mu\text{m}$ square pseudo-vertical diode under forward bias versus temperature

Table 1: Summary of current density values for square pseudo-vertical diodes at room temperature and at 473 K

Size (μm) \square	J_s at T=296 K (A/cm ²)	J_s at T=473 K (A/cm ²)
100	50	196
150	25	134
200	20	100
300	17	48
400	15	34
500	8	27
1000	3	6

3.2.2. $C(V)$ measurements

$C(V)$ measurements were made at room temperature with an Agilent 4294A under dynamic small signal of 100 mV and a 5 MHz frequency. Electrical characterizations

under reverse bias allow to determine the doping concentration of the P⁻ layer, here unintentionally doped [10, 14]. Figure 9 represents a C(V) measurement for a 100 μm diameter pseudo-vertical diode. For low voltages, we can note a nonlinear behavior for the $1/C^2$ curve, probably induced by charges at the diamond-metal interface. The depleted zone extension is 0.7 μm under a -10 V bias and 1.5 μm for -40 V. The extracted doping level of the P⁻ layer is $1.4 \times 10^{16} \text{ cm}^{-3}$. This value when integrated into the model allows to approach the real parameters of a Schottky diode.

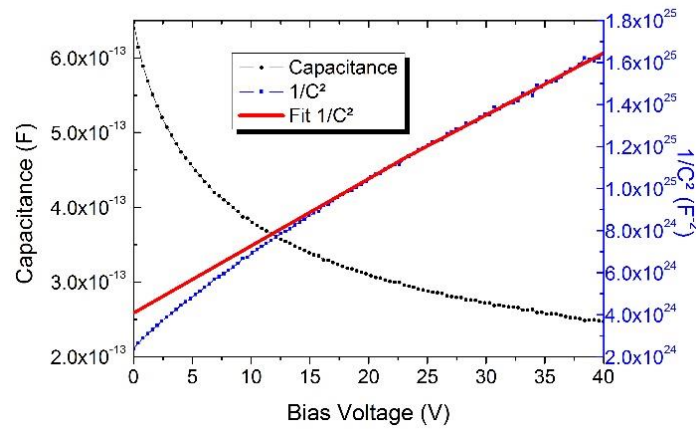


Figure 9: C(V) measurement and $1/C^2$ calculation for a 100 μm diameter pseudo-vertical diode at room temperature and under reverse bias

3.2.3. Breakdown Voltage measurements

Breakdown voltage (BV) measurements were made under vacuum at room temperature. Figure 10 shows a I(V) characteristic for a pseudo-vertical diode under reverse bias. A breakdown voltage of 190 V is obtained, far from the expected value. After this test, despite the breakdown voltage is reached, the diode is not destroyed.

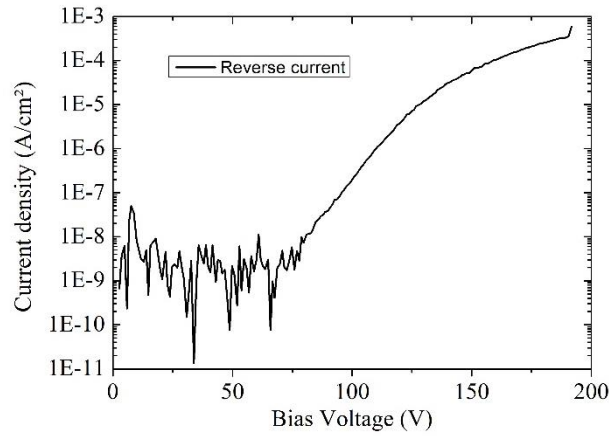


Figure 10: BV measurement for a 100 μm diameter pseudo-vertical at room temperature and under reverse bias

3.2.4. I(V) simulations

Simulations of a 100 μm diameter pseudo-vertical diode with the previous measured barrier height of 1.71 eV and layers doping of $1.4 \cdot 10^{16} \text{ cm}^{-3}$ (P^-) and 10^{19} cm^{-3} (P^+) are plotted on Figure 11.

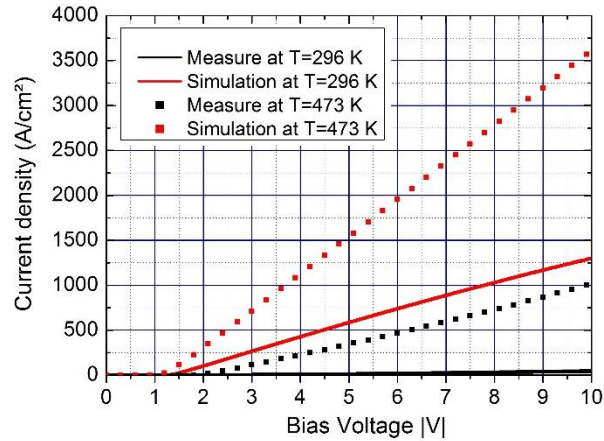


Figure 11: Simulation-measurement confrontation at 296 K and 473 K

For both temperature conditions, a significant difference between current density measurements and simulations is observed. At room temperature, a current density limited to 45 A/cm² is achieved instead of the expected value of 1300 A/cm².

In reverse bias, the breakdown voltage of 2D simulated Schottky diode reaches 510 V, which is far from the measured value (Figure 10).

4. Discussion

The current of a vertical sample will be limited by the P⁻ layer resistance (Figure 4). In our case, it corresponds to 40 % of the total diode resistance, the remaining 60 % including the P⁺ layer and electrical contact resistances, and the part due to the traps. To reduce this influence and maintain a high breakdown voltage, it is necessary to optimize the growth of the P⁺ layer by increasing the doping level and also by optimizing the thickness. Indeed, unlike silicon, the diamond has a high mechanical strength and a solution is to reduce the layer thickness for decreasing the serial resistance. In addition, it is necessary to optimize the ohmic contact process in order to reduce the electrical contact resistivity on diamond P⁺ layer doped around 10^{19} cm^{-3} .

A low forward current density is measured for pseudo-vertical samples (Figure 11): it can be explained by the quality of the interface between the Schottky contact metal and diamond. A new surface treatment before metallization and an annealing to improve the metal adhesion should provide a stable interface.

High functionality rate at high temperature is obtained for all samples, even for square diodes of great size. Specifically for vertical sample, studies show vertical defects in diamond explaining the lowest percentage of functionality with 75 % which is encouraging [15, 16]. The different parameters measured are honorable and reproducible, evidence that the quality of diamond films is clearly improved. However, in order to control all the outstanding potentialities of the diamond, we must optimize technological steps in order to improve the performance of our diodes. Figure 12 shows a comparison of current densities for Schottky diodes fabricated on different materials for analyzing the possible evolution of diamond [17 - 20]. Despite less mature technological advances, the results obtained for diamond are competitive [21].

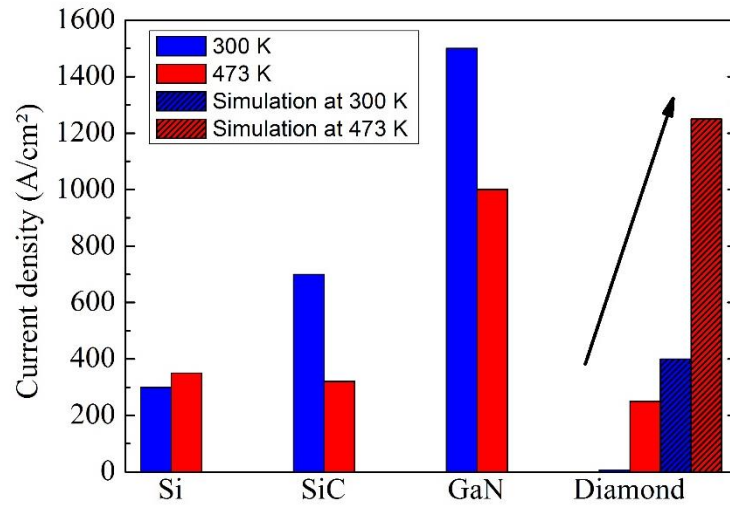


Figure 12: Comparison of current density under 4 V for pseudo-vertical schottky diodes

5. Conclusion

The results presented in this paper demonstrate a high functionality rate for the three studied samples, vertical and pseudo-vertical, with respectively 75 %, 97 % and 100 % of functional diodes at 473 K and a leakage current of the order of pA under 50 V reverse voltage.

Current density, relatively low at room temperature (between 20 and 100 A/cm²), reached the target of 200 A/cm² at 348 K for both vertical and pseudo-vertical diodes of 100 μ m diameter. Let us note that the honorable value of 1000 A/cm² is exceeded at 473 K.

The three samples have a high non-ideality factor, the origin probably being charges located at the diamond-metal interface. The pseudo-vertical samples have a too low current density which may be caused by the contact resistance. Vertical sample has a high threshold voltage attributed to an insufficient doping of the P⁺ layer.

The performance of these samples relies on the reproducibility of their electrical characteristics at room and high temperatures, while enabling to obtain satisfactory current density parameters.

6. Acknowledgements

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Figure 1: Schematic cross-section of samples, (a) vertical, (b) pseudo-vertical

Figure 2: Linear (a) and semi-logarithmic (b) I(V) characteristics of a vertical diode under forward bias versus temperature.

Figure 3: Semi-logarithmic I(V) characteristics of a vertical diode under reverse bias versus temperature.

Figure 4: Simulation-measurement comparison at 296 K: Simulation 1 with a doping are 10^{15} cm^{-3} and 10^{19} cm^{-3} for P⁻ and P⁺ layers respectively; Simulation 2 with a doping are $3.10^{15} \text{ cm}^{-3}$ and $6.10^{19} \text{ cm}^{-3}$ for P⁻ and P⁺ layers respectively.

Figure 5: Simulated I(V) characteristics for an ideal diode versus temperature.

Figure 6: Confrontation simulation-measurement at 473 K

Figure 7: Linear (a) and semi-logarithmic (b) characteristics of a pseudo-vertical diode under forward bias versus temperature

Figure 8: I(V) characteristics of a 300 x 300 μm square pseudo-vertical diode under forward bias versus temperature

Figure 9: C(V) measurement and $1/C^2$ calculation for a 100 μm diameter pseudo-vertical diode at room temperature and under reverse bias

Figure 10: BV measurement for a 100 μm diameter pseudo-vertical at room temperature and under reverse bias

Figure 11: Simulation-measurement confrontation at 296 K and 473 K

Figure 12: Comparison of current density under 4 V for pseudo-vertical schottky diodes