



Looking Back

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Looking Back is a nostalgic reflection on the shortwave scene of yesteryears, written from the personal experience of the author, who has been DXing the shortwave bands for over seven decades.

The Tango Trio

The period 1935 to the mid-40s has been described as the “Golden Era of the Tango” amongst aficionados of this type of music (and that group includes yours truly).

Never mind the precise year, for me it was the fall and winter of 1941 which brought to the radio daily a fantastic period of tango music in the 31 meter band. This was practically every night, thanks to the shortwave transmitters of Radios El Mundo, Belgrano and Splendid, all from their Buenos Aires locations.

The dial literally throbbed to the pulsating rhythm of the Bandoneon from the Orquesta Tipicas, directed by such stars as Roberto Firpo, Francisco Canaro and Anibal Trilo. About the only contrast was the Brazilian Radio Nacional station, which in those days had a regular evening transmission in English, with some samba and Carnival music at times.

Although this was wartime in England, with nightly bombs from the Luftwaffe, it was still legal to listen to foreign radio stations if one had a receiver. Mine was a homebuilt kit, operated by batteries. Nothing could be more characteristic of the heart and soul of Argentine than the tango and milonge, both of which are dance rhythms of national origin.

The tango with its rather staccato sound, originated in the 1880s as a dance style with musical roots from African slaves, Spanish and Indian melodies, and the milonga. These early years were a time of considerable immigration into Argentina and the tango became a sort of symbol of thematic destiny and unrequited love (sometimes enacted in “low life” scenarios!).



The tango has had its ups and downs in popularity. In the 1920s it became a very popular rhythm in Paris and at a later time it became established in Berlin. Argentine orchestras resided in these two cities, notably Bianco Bachicha (Paris) and Francisco Canaro (Berlin).

Yours truly enjoyed this music immensely from the shortwave stations just mentioned, which were part of a “Cadena” (network) with LR1 (El Mundo), LR3 (Belgrano) and LR4 (Splendid) as the leader stations on medium wave, with affiliates in outlying cities. Sadly, today they no longer operate on shortwave, but some of the original networks persist on medium wave (but not the Splendid network).

The associated SW stations had 3 letter + 1 numeral callsigns. For example, LRY1 and LRY2 Belgrano network and LRS1 and LRS2 for Splendid. There were oddities such as LRU and LRX for Radio El Mundo.



LR4 BUENOS AIRES 918 Kc.	URUGUAY 1237 Tel. 42-7002	LR4 SPLINDID	BUENOS AIRES REPUBLICA ARGENTINA	LT2 ROCSARIO 1230 Kc.
LW3 TUCUMAN 1190 Kc.		Y SU RED ARGENTINA DE EMISORAS		LU8 SAN CARLOS DE BARILOCHE 360 Kc.
LV4 SAN RAFAEL (Mdo.) 690 Kc.	SEÑOR T.B. WILLAMSON (Inglaterra)			LT6 GOYA 1200 Kc.
LV15 VILLA HERCULES (San Luis) 640 Kc.	CONFIRMAMOS Y AGRADECEMOS INFORMACION DE RECEPCION, EN 5985 Kc/s Banda 49m			LT11 CONCEPCION DEL URUGUAY 1200 Kc.
LU5 MENDOZA 1130 Kc.	LRS 29 metros 1118 Kc.	LRS1 31 metros 9740 Kc.	LRS2 42 metros 5985 Kc.	LT16 PRESIDENCIA ROQUE S. PERA 1270 Kc.

I had the great pleasure of a visit to Buenos Aires about 40 years ago and took the opportunity to visit the “cafetin” (restaurant) where Anibal Troilo played. He was the great maestro of the bandoneon (an instrument rather like an accordion, but much longer when extended to full length, and squarer in cross section). It was an unforgettable musical experience

and I learned then that the music was played more for listening than dancing. Also there were many types of vocal melodies (romantic, comedy, political, etc.) each with a particular singer specialising in the type.

Today, authentic tango music is only likely to be heard occasionally over Radio Nacional or the External Service of R.A.E. Reception of either is problematic and irregular, with frequencies such as 6060, 11710 and sometimes 15345 being possibilities.

Good listening!



1º en AUDIENCIA
1º en POTENCIA
1º en CAUDAL PUBLICITARIO

ONDA MEDIA: Frecuencia : 950 Kcs.
Potencia : 100 Kw.

Horas de Transmisión: 9⁰⁰ - 4¹⁵ GMT

ONDAS CORTAS: LRY1 - 6.090 Kcs. 49 m.
LRY2 - 11.780 Kcs. 25 m.

RADIO BELGRANO
SUS ONDAS CORTAS Y SU CADENA DE EMISORAS DEL INTERIOR DEL PAIS

CERRITO 941 — Teléfonos: 42-9661 al 69
BUENOS AIRES — REPUBLICA ARGENTINA