



Looking Back

Tom Williamson, 166 Burris St., Hamilton, Ont. L8M 2J8

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.

MUSICAL MEMORIES Part 3 : Samba Time

Brasilian rhythmic music, such as the samba and the marcha, is always associated with carnival time – CARNAVAL, as it is spelled in Portuguese. Traditionally this is usually some time in late February or early March, and the time may vary from one town to another in Brasil.

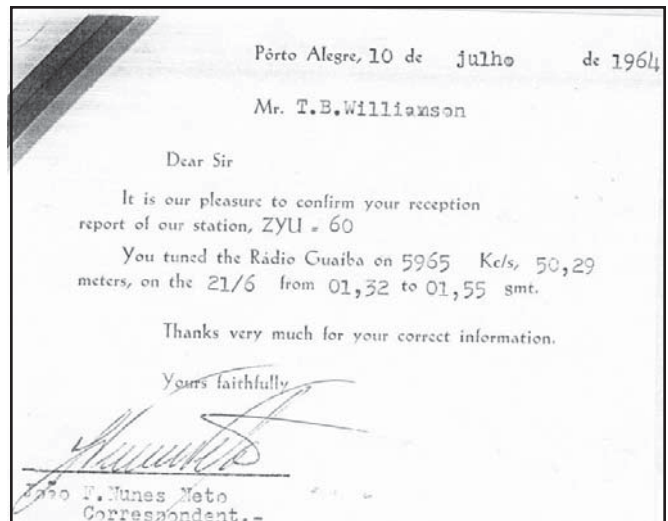
Now, of course, a carnival celebration may take place in many a country. Sometimes they are quite small events, but the big one is the Rio de Janeiro event, with hardly lesser activities in other sites such as Brasilia (the capital) and Sao Paulo.

I must confess that I have not (yet!) made it to the Brasilian carnival scene, but by all accounts and newspaper reports, it is a huge event each year. You may already know that there are special carnival “schools”, where elaborate training occurs way ahead of the event. Here they teach the dancing and singing and learn how to stage a parade with floats. It is a huge celebration with prizes and publicity, which can create fame overnight, changing the life of a poor girl. Yes, they are ones who wear the exotic and fabulous costumes, but the men who lead parades and become star singers also have their part of the limelight.

There is a special “sambodromo” where parades are held and the visiting tourist may sometimes take a place in events if they arrange it well ahead of time. Not surprisingly, the carnival week is known for some violence and pickpockets. Beware! Parties go on for many hours.

Well, if w can't get there physically, we can sometimes have an armchair sent by radio. You have to keep your ear open for the beginning of the event, since the date varies from year to year. I suggest Radio Nacional da Amazonia on 11780 and 6180 kHz is a

good starting point. Even if you don't understand the language, you will soon identify the musical style and get the feeling of the parade excitement. Also some of the smaller stations can provide a significant experience, if they have a good signal in the night hours here. I still have a tape of nearly an hour's reception of Radio Tupi in the early sixties, with continuous carnival music on the 25 meter band.



Maybe I'm getting a bit old for this hectic stiff, but good luck to you, dear reader.

