

RESEARCH ARTICLE

## “LM for Happy Listening”: The Political Entanglements of Lourenço Marques Radio on the Fringe of Modernity in Mozambique

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### Abstract

This article explores the impact of LM Radio—Rádio Clube de Moçambique’s B-Station, broadcasting in English and Afrikaans—in colonial southern Mozambique. Drawing on 441 issues of Rádio Moçambique magazine (1935–1973) and interviews with announcers, directors, and musicians, it reconstructs the station’s history and production practices and examines its reception among Mozambican musicians through the lenses of modernity and cosmopolitanism. Often regarded as apolitical, LM Radio’s trajectory reveals a complex engagement with the Portuguese colonial project and urban youth culture. The article also considers how these dynamics inform postcolonial memory, highlighting media’s role in shaping colonial modernity in southern Africa.

**Keywords:** colonialism/postcolonialism; LM radio; Mozambique; popular music; radio

### Sounding out modernity

*I was there close to five years. I’ll never forget the day I have arrived. I painted up—like I suppose most kids do—this dream picture of this marvellous island called Lourenço Marques. I always thought of it as an island where all this star radio folks were broadcasting from. (...) You know, once you left Komatipoort, the border between South Africa and Lourenço Marques, you were suddenly catapulted into Europe. Everything about Lourenço Marques was different: the lifestyle, the currency, the food, the people, everything was different, so you can imagine this kid*

*touching down in Lourenço Marques and driving off for the first time to the place he dreamt about—the Radio Clube.*<sup>1</sup>

*John Berks, radio announcer (in the radio documentary The LM Radio Story)*

LM Radio, also known as Lourenço Marques Radio, was the so-called “B-Station” of *Rádio Clube de Moçambique* (RCM), the first commercial radio company in Africa, broadcasting from Lourenço Marques (now Maputo), the capital of the then-Portuguese colony of Mozambique. This enterprise was inspired by the success of other European independent radio stations, notably those led by the International Broadcasting Company (IBC), as was the case with Radio Normandy, which aired to the UK from abroad as a way to circumvent BBC’s monopoly. While broadcasting from the Portuguese colony of Mozambique, LM Radio was initially created to serve a similar purpose in South Africa by fundamentally bypassing the country’s ban on commercial radio advertising. Featuring announcements in English and Afrikaans while blending rock, pop, and various other genres with variety shows, it provided a refreshing alternative to South African Broadcasting Company stations. Indeed, radio accessed the imagination of countless listeners, drawing them into a both familiar and fantastical world. John Berks, a South African listener who, as a kid dreamed of becoming an announcer at Lourenço Marques’ radio station, recalls that he finally secured the job in 1964 after three previous unsuccessful auditions. His vision of Lourenço Marques, shaped through the station’s vibrant and youthful soundscape, painted a picture of the city as a place of joy, energy, and modernity.

RCM was founded in 1932 in Lourenço Marques as a private initiative. Initially created to meet the growing demand for radio entertainment and information in the region, the station quickly gained popularity both domestically and internationally. After a period of economic contraction caused by World War II, RCM experienced substantial growth, fuelled by technological advancements and, most notably, a major overhaul of its programming. This transformation culminated in the establishment of an autonomous channel aimed at English-speaking audiences in neighbouring countries, which later became known as Lourenço Marques Radio (LM Radio). During the 50s, 60s, and early 70s, RCM would become one of Africa’s most influential and prominent commercial radio entities, broadcasting over 60,000 h annually in 14 different languages, while hosting three orchestras in 1974 (Figure 1).

The history of *Rádio Clube de Moçambique* (RCM) has been extensively explored in the works of Barbosa (2000), Power (2000), Loforte (2007), Ribeiro (2014), Valdigem (2021, 2024), and Freitas (2021a, 2021b). Yet, given RCM’s rich and complex 40-year trajectory, marked by multifaceted activities, certain dimensions still warrant more nuanced and detailed analysis. This co-authored article emerges at the intersection of our respective ethnomusicological research

<sup>1</sup> For more information, consult the radio documentary *The LM Story* (Part 4B), narrated by Chris Turner at the LM Radio Museum and Sound Archive. Website: <http://www.lmradio.org/Sounds.htm> (accessed on 5 May 2024).



**Figure 1.** (a) the approximate location and inauguration date of the transmitters on the map of Mozambique; (b) all RCM stations in 1974, with a particular focus on the five broadcasts from the Lourenço Marques/Matola Transmission Centre (marked in green), including LM Radio.

projects: one focused on the performance of popular music in late colonial Lourenço Marques (Mendes 2021; Mendes and Freitas 2024), and the other on the auditory construction of Mozambique through radio broadcasting (Freitas 2021a, 2024). Both projects adopt qualitative methodologies aimed at producing what has been described as an “ethnography of the past” (Bohlman 2008; McCollum and Herbert 2014).

(b)

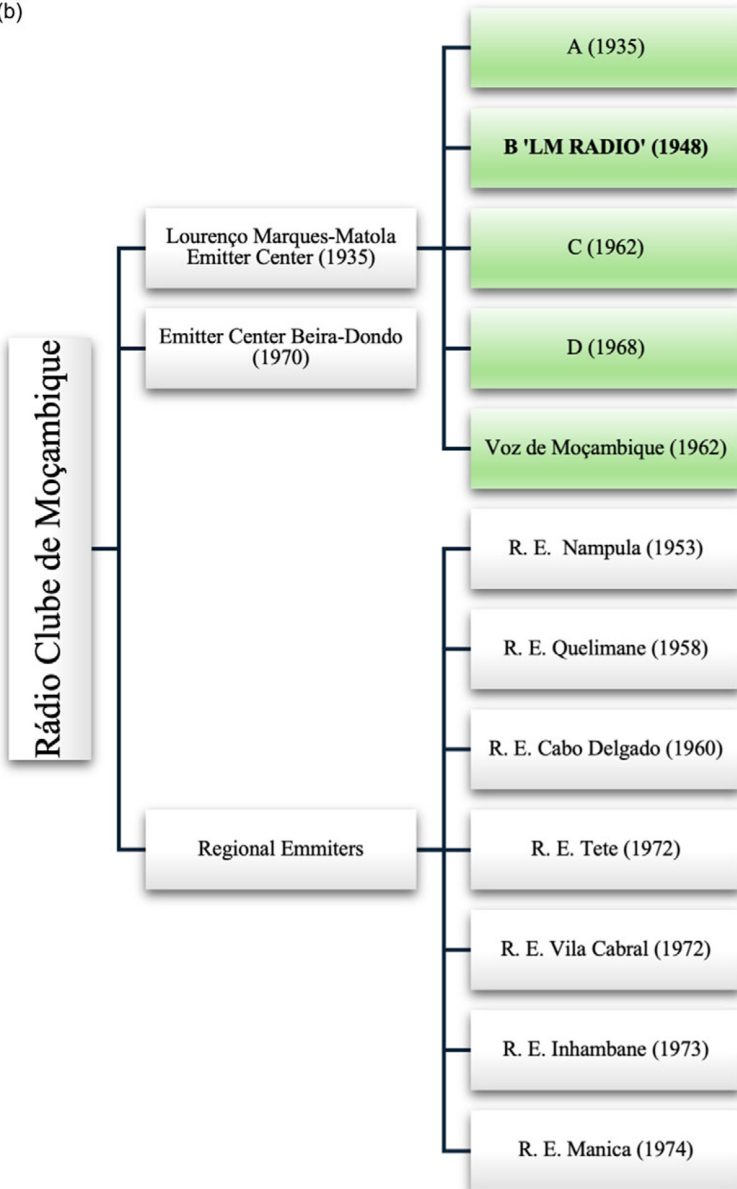


Figure 1. Continued.

Building on this prior work, and drawing on a range of sources—including the 441 issues of *Rádio Moçambique* magazine published in Lourenço Marques between May 1935 and December 1973, interviews with radio announcers, station directors, and musicians, as well as audio files from the Rádio Moçambique sound

archives in Maputo—this article focuses specifically on the influence of LM Radio in southern Mozambique. We begin by situating LM Radio within the broader RCM ecosystem, supported by firsthand accounts from those who participated in or witnessed its operations.

We then turn to the station's impact in shaping the popular music scenes of Lourenço Marques, emphasizing the perspectives of musicians, to understand, among others, how LM Radio influenced musical activity in the city. Our interlocutors include both white musicians from the colonial city centre, and Black musicians mostly hailing from the suburban neighbourhoods, allowing us to explore the social dynamics surrounding LM Radio's influence across a diverse urban context. We also incorporate accounts from two mixed-race musicians from Alto-Maé, a transitional zone between the suburbs and the city centre that was home to a significant Hindu-Gujarati community, as well as mixed-race and working-class white residents.

As will become evident, LM Radio's history is not only complex but also marked by its ambiguous status within colonial and postcolonial narratives. We argue that the station resonated particularly with youth audiences by offering an alternative to Portuguese-led programming, while fostering experiences of modernity through transnational and cosmopolitan broadcasting practices. These included the dissemination of musical repertoires widely perceived by our interlocutors as being apolitical, even as the station itself was subjected to political upheaval on at least three separate occasions. Accordingly, this article pursues two main objectives: first, to offer a comprehensive history of LM Radio with particular attention to its production values and institutional role within RCM; and second, to examine its impact among Mozambican musicians, with a focus on the intersecting themes of modernity and cosmopolitanism.

Relying on Anthony Giddens' conceptualization of modernity, which identifies the shift of "social relations and individual experience from local worlds and their recombination across a variety of time-spaces," Veit Erlmann highlights the transformative role of music, stating that it "is not only affected by these processes but is also one of the most prominent means of bracketing new time-space relationships. Unlike any other aspect of mass culture, music organizes social interaction in ways that are no longer determined by the primacy of locally situated practice and collectively maintained memory" (Erlmann 1999:6). Building on Erlmann's argument, two significant features contributed to the decline of the primacy of conceptions of "locally situated practices," which are particularly relevant to this discussion: radio broadcasting and the global phonographic industry. Additionally, the concept of "cosmopolitanism" as developed by Thomas Turino provides further insight, referring to "objects, ideas, and cultural positions that are widely diffused throughout the world and yet are specific only to certain portions of the populations within given countries. My usage is based on a common meaning of the word, "of the world": to be cosmopolitan, given ideas and features must be widely diffused among particular social groups in dispersed locales" (Turino 2000:7). He further argues that cultural formations are composed of multiple sites and their contributions, with some sites—such as England, various European countries, and the United States

—exerting a greater influence, often shaped through processes like colonialism and neocolonial economic controls (Turino 2000:8).

With a particular interest in the subject of this article, Marissa Moorman highlighted that radio, as a modern technology, has the ability to transcend physical distances through electromagnetic sound waves (2019:26). In other words, radio facilitates the sharing of experiences across different spatial realms. While Moorman argued that “radio projected modernity and the civilizing presence of the colonial state” (*ibid.*), which indeed was a fundamental part of RCM’s general history, this article examines a particular case in which this “modernity,” as technologically mediated by its B-station “LM Radio,” extended well beyond—and at times even contradicted—the cultural policies endorsed by the colonial state.

### Toward a sonorous history of LM Radio

Although the *Estado Novo* regime (1933–1974) recognized the potential of radio as a powerful instrument for promoting its nationalist teleology (Silva 2010), initially it made no substantial investment in establishing radio coverage in the so-called “overseas territories” (Ribeiro 2014). Meanwhile, a range of private broadcasting initiatives also began to emerge across Portuguese territory. While mainland Portugal already counted 239 transmitters, the colonial territories still lagged behind, with fewer than 50 in operation (Silva 2010). Among these was the CR7AA transmitter, which would eventually evolve into one of the most successful broadcasting ventures in sub-Saharan Africa: the *Rádio Clube de Moçambique* (RCM). Although it notably originated as a private initiative, it was later transformed into a key vehicle of ideological propaganda in service of the *Estado Novo* (Freitas 2021b).

While the history of LM Radio is commonly traced to 1948, when the directors of RCM decided to autonomize the Portuguese and English broadcasts, a closer examination reveals a much earlier influence. In fact, the origins of English-language programming at RCM can indeed be traced back to the station’s inauguration in 1932, when it saw an opportunity to attract attention from neighbouring English-speaking colonies. However, this content often faced resistance from many Portuguese colonizers, who preferred the station to broadcast exclusively in their native language, leading some listeners to initially boycott the station. The installation of a new 250-volt transmitter in late 1935 expanded the station’s transmission range, allowing for a focused investment in broadcasts specifically targeting the Union of South Africa. In the months that followed, the station received an outpouring of positive feedback from South African locations such as Port Elizabeth, Sterkstroom, Durban, Johannesburg, and Cape Town, all praising the exceptional quality of the broadcasts’ signal (Figure 2).<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> “A nossa emissora.” *Rádio Moçambique: Revista Mensal de Vulgarização*, no. 7, December 1935, p. 4.



**Figure 2.** *Radio Moçambique's* March 1937 cover includes newspaper clippings detailing the success of the station abroad in 1937.<sup>3</sup>

The development of English-language programming was further encouraged by G. J. McHarry, an advertiser from Durban, South Africa. Eager to hear jazz on the radio, McHarry had his requests repeatedly denied by the South African Broadcasting Corporation, which held a monopoly in the Union of South Africa.

<sup>3</sup> *Rádio Moçambique: Revista Mensal de Vulgarização*, no. 22, March 1937.

In response, he travelled north to Lourenço Marques, where he played a key role in producing English programming at *Rádio Clube de Moçambique*, catering specifically to the South African audience. As a result, the station's popularity soared, and many people in the Union of South Africa purchased radio receivers specifically to listen to this station.<sup>4</sup>

Hedwiges Sequeira became the first English-speaking announcer at RCM,<sup>5</sup> gaining immense popularity in the neighbouring country, along with other early announcers such as the Swiss W. Gerig (whose English accent was so good that it earned him the position)<sup>6</sup> and the South African actor/artist Arthur Swemmer (who had previously worked at SABC).<sup>7</sup> By October 1936, it was reported that 80 per cent of the South African audience preferred RCM to SABC programs,<sup>8</sup> confirming the unprecedented success of this initiative. Swiftly, as South African tourists arrived in Lourenço Marques, they frequently visited the radio station just to meet Miss Hedwiges Sequeira (Figure 3). In her words, “the curiosity was immense. During the tourist seasons, the studio was always full of people from South Africa, and the first question they asked was to find out who the lady announcer was (...). I sometimes felt like a curious animal on display in a cage! They would come in groups to the studio, silent, their eyes fixed on me to see how I spoke, lingering until they were invited to leave.”<sup>9,10</sup>

Besides generating high revenue through English-language advertising, the RCM administration saw this as an opportunity to promote the colony abroad, attract more tourists, and disseminate Portuguese music and culture. However, this initial success was overshadowed by the complex economic challenges brought about by World War II, leading to significant operational changes. By January 1943, RCM even announced the possibility of suspending broadcasts due to a shortage of funds and essential materials. Furthermore, the monthly radio magazine—which had been in print since May 1935—temporarily ceased publication from August 1944 to January 1945 due, among other reasons, to the lack of paper.

To address the financial crisis, a restructuring process took place in 1947–1948, which resulted in the separation and expansion of the Portuguese and English production sections. This led to the creation of two distinct broadcasts on RCM: *Emissão A*, featuring programming in Portuguese catered for the white population; and *Emissão B*, with programming in English and Afrikaans aimed at

<sup>4</sup> For more information, consult the radio documentary *The LM Story* (Part 1A), narrated by Chris Turner at the LM Radio Museum and Sound Archive. Website: <http://www.lmradio.org/Sounds.htm> (accessed on 5 May 2024).

<sup>5</sup> “O nosso concurso de locutoras.” *Rádio Moçambique: Revista Mensal de Vulgarização*, no. 11, April 1936, p. 5.

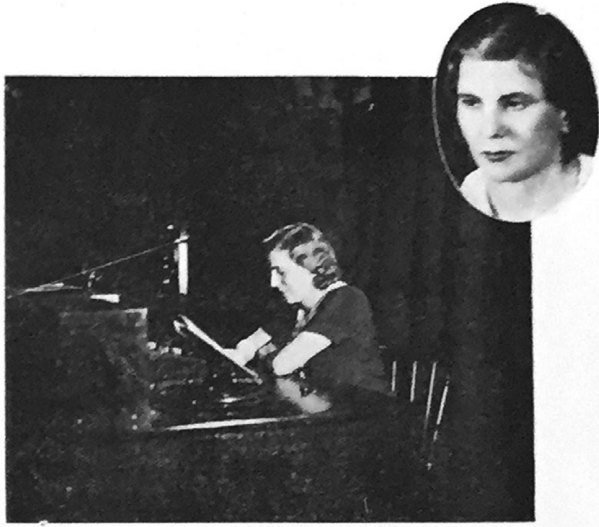
<sup>6</sup> “Os nossos locutores.” *Rádio Moçambique: Revista Mensal de Vulgarização*, no. 81, April 1942, p. 1.

<sup>7</sup> “Arthur Swemmer: o nosso locutor de inglês.” *Rádio Moçambique: Revista Mensal de Vulgarização*, no. 108, August 1994 until January 1945, pp. 8–9.

<sup>8</sup> “Moçambique e a radiofonia.” *Rádio Moçambique: Revista Mensal de Vulgarização*, no. 17, October 1936, p.1.

<sup>9</sup> This and other cited documentation were translated to English by the authors.

<sup>10</sup> “Miss Hedwiges Sequeira, a primeira locutora de inglês, do Rádio Club, rememora factos.” *Rádio Moçambique: Revista Mensal de Vulgarização*, no. 43, December 1938, p. 10.



**Figure 3.** Miss Edwiges Sequeira, the first English RCM announcer.<sup>11</sup>

neighbouring countries, particularly the Union of South Africa.<sup>12</sup> The restructuring was shaped by the influence of two key figures who joined G. J. McHarry in overseeing the so-called B-station: Colonel Richard L. Meyer, former General Manager of the International Broadcasting Company (IBC) of London before World War II, and John Davenport. Together, they established the company Davenport and Meyer, which managed the B-Station until its closure in 1975.

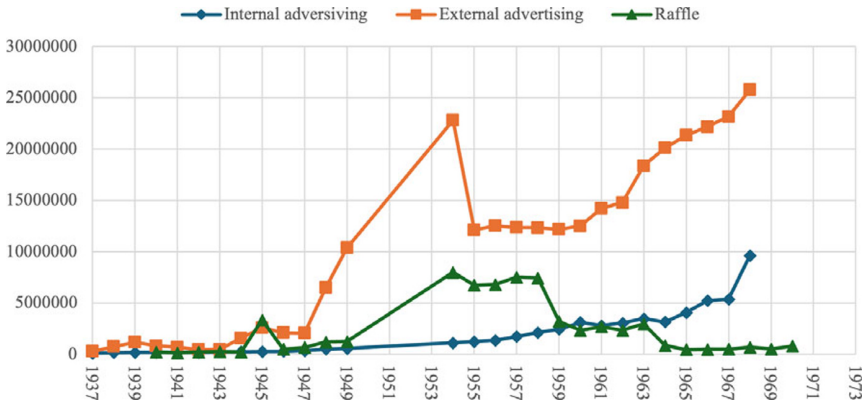
In the process, they swiftly appointed David Davies as chief announcer and station director, bringing with him extensive experience from his previous roles as chief announcer at Radio Luxembourg and Radio Normandy, both part of the IBC, serving LM Radio until his retirement in 1969. Davies became widely recognized as the voice of the broadcast—affectionately known by its listeners as “Mr. LM Radio.”<sup>13</sup> The documentary “The LM Radio Story,” narrated by its former announcer Chris Turner, views LM Radio as a natural extension of the IBC’s European work and its commercial broadcasting legacy, particularly due to the station’s directors and principal announcer, David Davies, having ties to the IBC. Turner also notes that LM Radio was Africa’s first commercial station, predating the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) by nearly 15 years.

<sup>11</sup> “Good Evening, ladies and gentlemen.” *Rádio Moçambique: Revista Mensal de Vulgarização*, no. 18, December 1936, p. 19.

<sup>12</sup> “For happy listening: a secção inglesa do Rádio Clube de Moçambique.” *Rádio Moçambique: Revista Mensal de Vulgarização*, no. 156, July 1949, pp. 8–9.

<sup>13</sup> For a brief biographical note on David Davies, announcer at LM Radio, see the webpage “LM Radio—People—David Davies” at the LM Radio Museum and Sound Archive. Website: <http://www.lmradio.org/People02.htm> (accessed on 5 May 2024).

How did these changes affect RCM's income? Beginning in 1947, advertising revenue from abroad increased significantly, becoming, alongside the raffle, one of RCM's primary sources of income (Figure 4):

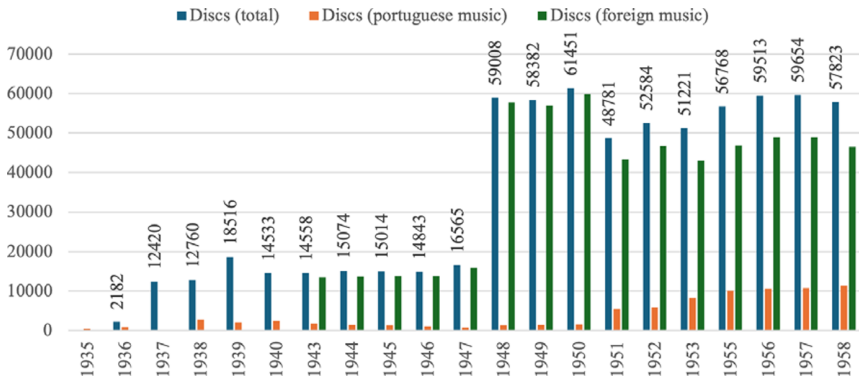


**Figure 4.** External, internal, and raffle advertising revenues. For more information, see [Appendix A](#). Source: RM 1935–1973; Barbosa 2000.

The financial significance of LM Radio to RCM was further emphasized by several of our interviewees involved in radio broadcasting. One was João Sousa, an announcer who began working at RCM in the 1960s and had a strong relationship with LM Radio announcers during his time presenting a morning show. He recalls, “because of the friendship we had with the LM Radio announcers, we would arrive in the morning and ask for the latest releases (...). We were always up to date.” Regarding the financial impact LM Radio had on RCM, Sousa stated that “the money RCM made from it was impressive. Impressive! Rands were falling every time an advert was broadcast. I dare say that LM Radio was the golden goose of RCM.” (João Sousa, interview, 10 September 2019).

It was also during this period that the RCM's discography collection saw a substantial growth, expanding from 4,588 records in 1939 to 61,506 by 1961, including 14,388 duplicates. In a June 1961 article published in *Rádio Moçambique* magazine, the management stated that “considering that many records feature more than two musical works or are recorded on both sides, it is not an exaggeration to say that *Rádio Clube* holds over 250,000 musical productions.” They further noted that 26,588 of these records were 78 RPM, while 10-inch microgroove records were the least represented, totalling 1,593.<sup>14</sup> The majority of the collection consisted of foreign music, with its number increasing intensely after the separation of Portuguese and English broadcasts between 1947 and 1948, indicating that RCM's discography was indeed largely built from the LM Radio's broadcasts (Figure 5).

<sup>14</sup> “Duzentas e cinquenta mil obras musicais.” *Rádio Moçambique: Revista Mensal de Vulgarização*, no. 299, June 1961, p. 20.



**Figure 5.** Growth of RCM's Phonographic Collection from 1935 to 1958. For more information, see [Appendix B](#).

Source: RM 1935–1973; Barbosa 2000.

As the 1950s approached, LM Radio began recruiting announcers from across the English-speaking world, particularly from South Africa, England, Canada, and Australia. Notably, aside from temporary exceptions like Valerie Meyer,<sup>15</sup> Evelyn Martin became the most significant—and at times the sole—woman announcer in the station's history. She first joined LM Radio in 1950 as a compiler, later becoming the chief announcer for Afrikaans-language programs.<sup>16</sup> During this period, the station offered a diverse range of programs, including radio dramas and live theatre broadcasts from South African cities. However, aside from some exceptions, nearly all of these programs transitioned to the newly established Springbok Radio in 1950, the first commercial South African station within the SABC framework, likely in response to LM Radio's overwhelming success. Despite concerns about this emerging competition, LM Radio's broadcasts remained the most popular in the neighbouring country for several months thereafter.<sup>17</sup>

Indeed, in November 1950, *Rádio Moçambique* magazine reported that an average of 263,000 people tuned in to LM Radio each night in the Union of South Africa and Rhodesia.<sup>18</sup> By April 1955, these numbers were updated: "Every forty seconds, every hour, every day, someone in South Africa writes a letter to the *Rádio Clube de Moçambique* about topics of interest to the broadcasts of this institution; half of the 659,399 white South African families have someone who writes to our broadcasting station at least once a year."<sup>19</sup>

<sup>15</sup> "Quem vem na capa?..." *Rádio Moçambique: Revista Mensal de Vulgarização*, no. 181, August 1951, p. 2.

<sup>16</sup> "Gente da casa: Entrevista com a locutora Evelyn Martin." *Rádio Moçambique: Revista Mensal de Vulgarização*, no. 404, October 1951, pp. 30–31.

<sup>17</sup> "A nossa emissora na África do Sul." *Rádio Moçambique: Revista Mensal de Vulgarização*, no. 167, June 1950, p. 1.

<sup>18</sup> "Em cada noite ouvem o Rádio Clube de Moçambique na União da África do Sul e Rodésia, 263000 pessoas, em média." *Rádio Moçambique: Revista Mensal de Vulgarização*, no. 172, November 1950, p. 2.

<sup>19</sup> "Sobre popularidade além-fronteiras do RCM." *Rádio Moçambique: Revista Mensal de Vulgarização*, no. 225, April 1955, p. 1.

In December 1951, a new study conducted by J. Walter Thompson Company South Africa Limited confirmed that commercial radio broadcasting was by far the most popular type of programming in South Africa, although the leading station was now Springbok Radio with 33.2% of the audience, followed by LM Radio with 24.3%.<sup>20,21</sup> In the subsequent years, even with the increasing success of Springbok Radio, LM Radio's popularity remained particularly high until its closure in 1975.

Given this context, what made LM Radio so special in the first place? Three key factors stand out as major contributors to its success. First and foremost, the high quality of the announcers, who, as Evelyn Martin notes in the following quote, became true stars in South Africa (Figure 6):

We used to do personal appearances (on variety shows), and that started right away. If you can see these programs we did in Durban, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, we used to go out and do all these personal appearances and the most important one that we started, I think in 1954, was an Easter show... and then also we used to do personal appearances in variety shows on the ships that used to dock (...) we had a talent parade, we were looking for talents, you know, for singers, (...) we had a show for them at night and we had questions for the contestants, and if they won they get prizes. (...) It was really lots of fun! Everybody was alive at that time, you know. (...) In these public appearances, we were signing autographs and people were so SO mad for us. They climb over walls and things to get to us. And it was one time in the ten days, because the show used to last for about ten days, and we signed over 200000 autographs. Not only me—so did Davies and Vickers; we were the three that used to go there (...).<sup>22</sup>

A second factor contributing to this success was the relevance of its music programs, as Chris Turner explains: “Lourenço Marques Radio transmitted the latest pop music, unlike the SABC, and so attracted many South African listeners.”<sup>23</sup> Indeed, the programming adhered to a strictly commercial approach, as time slots could be sold to companies, and announcers had to blend advertising with music. The playlist primarily featured American and British tunes immediately after they were released (unlike in South Africa, where there was much tighter control over the music broadcast). One of the most important

<sup>20</sup> “Uma opinião imparcial sobre a força publicitária da Rádio de Lourenço Marques.” *Rádio Moçambique: Revista Mensal de Vulgarização*, no. 185, December 1951, pp. 2–3.

<sup>21</sup> Another study made by “Operational Research Bureau” confirmed that about 25% of the population from South Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) listened daily to LM Radio. For more information see: “A Rodésia do Sul, vasto auditório do Rádio Clube de Moçambique.” *Rádio Moçambique: Revista Mensal de Vulgarização*, no. 204, July 1953, p. 1.

<sup>22</sup> For more information, consult the radio documentary *The LM Story* (Part 3A), narrated by Chris Turner at the LM Radio Museum and Sound Archive. Website: <http://www.lmradio.org/Sounds.htm> (accessed on 5 May 2024).

<sup>23</sup> For more information, consult the radio documentary *The LM Story* (Part 1B), narrated by Chris Turner at the LM Radio Museum and Sound Archive. Website: <http://www.lmradio.org/Sounds.htm> (accessed on 5 May 2024).



**Figure 6.** LM Radio stars Evelyn Martin (seated on the car), Rob Vickers (second from the right), and David Davies (first from the right) during a Variety Show broadcast live from a theatre in Durban, South Africa.

and frequently mentioned programs by our interlocutors is the “LM Hit Parade” hosted by David Davies, which started in 1948, continued until 1975. The presenter was also responsible for bringing renowned artists of the time to South Africa and for getting exclusive news via South Africa’s recording company, Teal Records, with which he maintained close ties. Sometimes announcers travelled to Europe and the U.S. to interview musicians such as The Beatles or Elvis Presley (António Alves da Fonseca, interview, 11 October 2016; 14 October 2016; 18 October 2016; 10 April 2017). In the case of David Davies, he travelled to many radio stations around the globe to be acquainted with the latest trends and apply them to LM Radio’s programming.<sup>24</sup>

At last, the success of LM Radio can also be attributed to a third factor: its “remarkably cheap advertising service” compared to its South African counterparts. Indeed, announcements were limited in word count and occupied large portions of the daily broadcast time, interspersed with extensive music segments that catered to the tastes of surveyed listeners. This information was

<sup>24</sup> “Ouvindo David Davies.” *Rádio Moçambique: Revista Mensal de Vulgarização*, no. 381, November 1968, pp. 13, 48.

expanded in an article published in *Rádio Moçambique* magazine in September 1957:

LM Radio is the only commercial station in the surveyed area that offers this type of advertising both on weekdays and Sundays. This regularity and continuity in its broadcasts are highly valued by listeners, program sponsors, and advertisers. One standout feature of the station's service is its low advertising cost, calculated on a cost-per-thousand-listeners basis. With its large audience across various broadcasting hours—programming runs from 5:30 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. without interruption—the price per unit of time is lower than that of other stations. On Sundays, the station sees particularly high listener numbers, primarily consisting of individuals aged 16 to 34, an age group with significant purchasing power, though not necessarily the wealthiest (...).<sup>25</sup>

Starting in March 1964, LM Radio began broadcasting 24 h a day, maximizing its annual airtime to 8,760 h (8,784 in leap years).<sup>26</sup> Presented by *Rádio Clube* as a program “intended for listeners beyond the borders,” RCM also promoted it as “a valuable propaganda element attracting many visitors,”<sup>27</sup> viewing the English section as “of great interest to Portugal because through its programs it enlightens an audience distant from us,”<sup>28</sup> amid increasing international pressures related to the liberation wars. However, LM Radio was generally regarded as the least politicized broadcast of RCM. This was largely due to its primarily commercial focus and funding from companies based in South Africa, which were relatively indifferent to the Portuguese colonial situation.

By the end of the 1960s, LM Radio entered its final phase. Its main announcer, David Davies, retired in 1969, followed by the departure of many of his colleagues. In 1972, it was announced that the SABC would take over the station's management, with the change taking effect in 1973. That year, many of the announcers and staff were transferred to Johannesburg, where most programs would be recorded in reel-to-reel tapes and then sent by train to Lourenço Marques for broadcasting.<sup>29</sup> As the following table confirms, the programming in those latter years—between 1968 and 1972—continued to focus primarily on broadcasting Anglophone songs, jazz, and big band music, collectively labelled as

<sup>25</sup> “O que dizem as estatísticas sobre o valor comercial de Rádio-Moçambique.” *Rádio Moçambique: Revista Mensal de Vulgarização*, no. 254, September 1957, pp. 1–2.

<sup>26</sup> “Vinte e quatro horas «no ar».” *Rádio Moçambique: Revista Mensal de Vulgarização*, no. 332, March 1964, p. 9.

<sup>27</sup> “Relatório da Direcção. Exercício de 1968. II.” *Rádio Moçambique: Revista Mensal de Vulgarização*, no. 388, June 1969, pp. 1, 36.

<sup>28</sup> For more information, see the documentary *Rádio Clube de Moçambique* by José Elyseu, with narration by António Gomes Ferreira and direction by José Elyseu, dated 17 December 1964, in RTP Archives. Website: <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/radio-clube-de-mocambique/#sthash.pphe9Xwa.zREXgonS.dpbs> (accessed on 5 May 2024).

<sup>29</sup> For more information, consult the radio documentary *The LM Story* (Part 6B), narrated by Chris Turner at the LM Radio Museum and Sound Archive. Website: <http://www.lmradio.org/Sounds.htm> (accessed on 5 May 2024).

**Table 1.** Distribution of annual programming hours for Emissão B between 1968 and 1972

	1968 <sup>30</sup>	1969 <sup>31</sup>	1970 <sup>32</sup>	1971 <sup>33</sup>	1972 <sup>34</sup>	
	m:s	m:s	m:s	m:s	m:s	%
Songs	3162:63	3163:34	3304:10	3274:08	3229:14	36,77
Folklore	160:50	167:46	120:23	113:15	112:33	1,28
Choral music	166:59	203:22	128:34	125:19	119:52	1,37
Instrumental music	281:51	281:21	135:58	173:19	170:12	1,94
Light music (Música ligeira)	2704:42	2660:03	2657:22	2661:56	2678:15	30,49
Symphonic music	18:30	–	4:20	–	–	–
Others	1143:27	1129:05	1206:25	1208:30	1175:15	13,37
Sports programs	26:10	26:05	25:05	121:05	26:05	0,29
Promotional program	3:40	5:20	–	–	–	–
Publicity	1115:08	1106:55	1176:42	1082:28	1272:34	14,49

“light music” (Table 1). This musical landscape remained unchanged until the station’s closure in October 1975.

### LM radio’s impact on Lourenço Marques’ musical scenes

Although LM Radio primarily targeted white South African audiences, it also garnered significant attention from young listeners in Lourenço Marques, hailing from diverse social and cultural backgrounds. This is supported not only by the previously cited excerpts from *Rádio Moçambique* magazine but also by Catarina Valdígem’s study on the listening practices of the Goan diaspora in Mozambique. Valdígem shows how young Goan listeners often used LM Radio as a tool to renegotiate their colonial identities in ways that diverged from those of their parents. As she writes: “The youngsters with considerable purchasing power would often own a small transistor radio; in those cases, their radio

<sup>30</sup> “Relatório da Direcção. Exercício de 1968. II.” *Rádio Moçambique: Revista Mensal de Vulgarização*, no. 388, June 1969, pp. 1–36.

<sup>31</sup> “Relatório da Direcção. Exercício de 1969. II.” *Rádio Moçambique: Revista Mensal de Vulgarização*, no. 400, June 1970, pp. 1–54.

<sup>32</sup> “Relatório da Direcção. Exercício de 1970. II.” *Rádio Moçambique: Revista Mensal de Vulgarização*, no. 411, May 1971, pp. 1–36.

<sup>33</sup> “Relatório da Direcção. Exercício de 1971. III.” *Rádio Moçambique: Revista Mensal de Vulgarização*, no. 424, June 1972, pp. 1–29.

<sup>34</sup> “Relatório da Direcção. Exercício de 1972. Serviços de Produção.” *Rádio Moçambique: Revista Mensal de Vulgarização*, no. 435, May 1973, p.1.

choices would be different from those of their parents, as they would rather listen to music programmes on the B station/programme instead of tuning in to the RCM programme A or even the Emissora Nacional or the BBC” (Valdigen 2024:68).

This account was further confirmed by our interlocutors, namely in the testimony of Luís Loforte, a Black man born and raised in colonial Mozambique, graduated in Electrical Engineering, who, after independence, joined the technical staff of Rádio Moçambique. In his words:

For the youth of the 60s and 70s, LM Radio was an almost unique source of international musical culture, offering a glimpse of integration and self-expression in a highly stratified colonial society. Materially poor and with limited means to buy records, let alone record players, we relied on memorizing lyrics, learning melodies, and familiarizing ourselves with the performers and musical genres of the time, all of which required extensive listening to LM Radio. When the batteries weakened, we used power poles and metal clotheslines as antenna extensions to boost the signal, and sometimes, we even exposed the batteries to the sun, convinced it would recharge them. I am not ashamed to admit that LM Radio was a unifying force for my family in Lourenço Marques, Moamba, and Sábiè during my adolescence, and in Porto Amélia, Montepuês, and Mecífi during my youth. It was also a comforting escape from the anxiety we all felt when called to join the army, especially during times of war. Even while on guard duty, I kept listening to that station. We memorized lyrics and the names of the performers, and those memories—untouched by time, hardship, or shifting musical trends—remain with us to this day.

(Loforte 2007:108–109)

Loforte’s account highlights the significance of LM Radio in the daily lives of young people, particularly for Black individuals living in poorer conditions who had limited access to the latest international music releases. One aspect that many of our interviewees emphasized was how quickly new releases arrived at LM Radio, giving Lourenço Marques a privileged position in the global popular music market. João de Sousa, an RCM announcer, remarked that “if something was released in the United States today, it would be here in a week, via Johannesburg.” New music was thus reaching Mozambique, the colony, faster than it would reach Portugal, the metropolis.<sup>35</sup> João Sousa further explains why this was the case:

**João Sousa:** South Africa was indeed an impressive source of music at that time. It’s important to note that LM Radio had a major program, the Hit

<sup>35</sup> A noteworthy point that sheds light on Mozambique’s ahead-of-its-time position in comparison to Portugal within the global popular music market is the fact that the only Portuguese Beatles fan club officially recognized by The Official Beatles Fan Club was based in Lourenço Marques (cf. <http://www.ondapop.pt/nordm7.html>).

Parade, which showcased the latest worldwide hits. These songs would appear here via South Africa just days after their release because record companies in the US and Britain would distribute the records and immediately target markets they knew would sell. They sent them to South Africa, and from there, they were sent to Mozambique, knowing that LM Radio was a great platform for promoting this music. It was a whole distribution chain that ended here.

**Author:** So, that means music arrived here earlier than in Portugal?

**João Sousa:** Yes, Anglo-Saxon music arrived much earlier here because of South Africa.

(João Sousa, interview, Maputo, 10 September 2019)

For a younger generation of music enthusiasts, LM Radio became the ultimate reference: “We didn’t even sleep to listen to Evelyn Martin,” recalls Aurélio Le Bon (interview, 14 October 2018), a singer from Alto-Maé neighborhood who performed in bands like *Opus 79* and *Atlas*, who later became a prominent cultural promoter after Mozambique’s independence. The success of LM Radio also began to play a crucial role in shaping the performances of musicians in the city. Lourenço Marques had, indeed, a vibrant music scene, with a strong presence of popular music groups, hosting numerous venues—nightclubs, restaurants, and hotels—offering live music activities catered to the city’s vibrant tourism industries. The port and railway station served as entry points for people from around the world, particularly from South Africa, while tourism became a crucial component of the local economy, with musicians playing a central role in this process (Mendes and Freitas 2024). For instance, drummer Carlos Alberto Silva, who left Portugal still during his childhood to settle with his family in Mozambique, where he ended up playing in popular Lourenço Marques groups like *Night Stars*, *Corsários*, *AEC-68*, and *Impacto*, shares that “it was easy to fill sports arenas with 5,000 or 7,000 people, which was the maximum capacity. We played at the *Sporting Clube Lourenço Marques* arena, and it was packed with 5,000 or 7,000 people.” Reflecting on his time with *Os Corsários*, a band formed in Lourenço Marques by white musicians in the mid-1960s, Carlos Alberto describes the extensive promotion of their shows: “There were flyers, radio advertisements, posters, even propeller planes flying over the city. People going about their daily lives would see all of this. It was crazy! (...) And just like The Beatles and other bands, we’d give autographs. There were even organized excursions with high school students” (Carlos Alberto Silva, interview, Almada, 18 April 2018).

Since Mozambique was largely overlooked and excluded from the tour schedules of the best-selling international acts of the time, local musicians often became the music stars in the territory’s larger cities. In many cases, they emulated the musical styles they heard on RCM, particularly in LM Radio, while aiming to recreate the image of international artists through their repertoires, clothing, and performance styles. During one of our meetings with Carlos Alberto



**Figure 7.** Os Corsários, with Carlos Alberto Silva on the drums.  
Source: ondapop.pt.

Silva, he pointed to a photograph of *Os Corsários* and noted the jackets they wore, which closely resembled those worn by The Beatles (Figure 7).

With the growing number of bands in the city during the 1960s, staying up to date with the latest global music hits became imperative for their success in local venues. Radio, particularly the Hit Parade program, was a crucial—if not the primary—source defining these bands’ repertoire. Aurélio Le Bon highlights the bands’ dedication to incorporating the newest releases into their sets, stating that “a song would be released in the United States, and 1 week later, it was already known here. Days later, we were already playing it with our own arrangement.” (Interview, 14 October 2018). João Maurílio, who played electric keyboards in bands from the city center such as *AEC-68* and *Impacto*, also underscored Hit Parade’s importance: “Bands were hired to play recent music, songs that were on the hit parades. In our rehearsals, we always had to put together a tune that was in the Hit Parade.” (Interview, 01 March 2018). According to the musicians we interviewed, this sense of urgency was fuelled by competition between bands, as notably recalled by Artur Garrido Jr., a member of *Beatnicks*, another active Lourenço Marques’ band during the late 1960s and early 1970s:

We had healthy competition here, with a strong drive for quality. When a new Beatles song was released in England, we had LM Radio, which played it here 24 to 48 hours later, thanks to their network that delivered records

quickly. For example, if LM Radio played the song on a Monday, the bands scheduled to perform that weekend would already have it. The music was played by ear. It was broadcast on the radio, and each person would record it using their own device. Then we'd bring it to rehearsal. The recording devices, whether battery-operated or from different brands, often had varying speeds, which meant the music would often sound in a different key. Later, we'd discuss what key the song was in, only to realize that it was actually influenced by the speed of the recording device. So, there was always this sense of competition....

(Artur Garrido Jr., interview, 13 August 2018)

Eurico Cebolo, a musician who performed at various venues in Lourenço Marques, particularly in the city's so-called "Red Light District" (Mendes and Freitas 2024), shares a similar experience. He acknowledges that staying up to date with the latest hits was crucial, and that LM Radio was the most common source of new music. Although he did not recall the station's name, he remembers it as "an English Channel from RCM connected to South Africa." Once again, his statement confirms the recorders' indispensable function in this process: "I would leave the recorder on all night long to capture the hits from South Africa. I got the music first-hand and selected what I thought was best. Jaimito (one of the musicians playing with Cebolo) chose the songs because I didn't have much time, since I was also teaching. We were always playing the most modern stuff" (Eurico Cebolo, interview, 04 October 2018).

LM Radio was also important for a change in the bands' repertoires. In the early 1960s, the setlist of these groups was predominantly composed of popular songs from Italian and French musicians, such as Remo Germani, Johnny Hallyday, Françoise Hardy, and Sylvie Vartan, and also Brazilian singers such as Roberto Carlos (to name a few examples). Approximately in the mid-1960s, with the advent of the so-called beatlemania and the growing popularity of musicians from the UK and the USA, many of these bands turned their attention to anglophone repertoire. That was particularly relevant in a context where Lourenço Marques music venues were frequently attended by South African tourists. Musician Carlos Alberto Silva, who had the experience of playing in many bands from the city, remembers this transformation: "The great turn was with the group *Impacto* and a few other bands. We didn't sing anything in Portuguese. It was all taken from South Africa and LM Radio." (Interview, 18 April 2018). In 2014, the Portuguese blog *Músicas dos Anos 60* ("Music from the 60's") put together a set of songs recorded from the performances of *Impacto* in *Girassol* hotel during 1969 and 1970 (Table 2).

Despite Carlos Alberto's statement that *Impacto* did not perform any songs in Portuguese, they still included the tune "Uma velha foi à feira," which had remained from his former band, *Os Inflexos*. However, in a set of 18 songs, it was the only one not performed in English, with LM Radio playing a pivotal role in this shift. For musicians who became increasingly interested in playing Anglo-

**Table 2.** Impacto's playlist at Hotel Girassol during 1969 and 1970<sup>36</sup>

Song title	Original artist
"Knock On Wood"	Eddie Floyd
"Uma Velha Foi à Feira"	Os Inflexos
"Sitting On The Dock Of The Bay"	Otis Redding
"Sunshine of Your Love"	Cream
"I've Got Dreams To Remember"	Otis Redding
"Don't Fight It"	Wilson Pickett
"Man Of The World"	Fleetwood Mac
"Whole Lotta Love"	Led Zeppelin
"Love me Tender"	Elvis Presley
"Summertime"	George Gershwin
"You Can Cry If You Want"	The Troggs
"Silence Is Golden"	The Square Set
"That's What I Want"	The Square Set
"I Started The Joke"	The Bee Gees
"The House Of Rising Sun"	Traditional/The Animals
"Tell It Like It Is"	Aaron Neville
"Something"	The Beatles
"A Place In The Sun"	Stevie Wonder

Saxon repertoires, it was, indeed, the key medium through which they could refocus their musical style:

**Author:** Was LM Radio important for the repertoire chosen by the bands?

**Carlos Alberto Silva:** Absolutely! (The Portuguese broadcast of) RCM was playing mostly French and Italian music. It was essentially a mirror of what happened in Portugal. LM Radio and the proximity to South Africa was decisive to the diffusion of anglophone music among Mozambicans.

(Carlos Alberto Silva, Interview, 18 April 2018)

Silva's perspective is supported by João Sousa's memories. During his time as announcer at the A-station of RCM, Sousa recalls playing music sent by Portuguese publishing companies. He specifically gave the example of the Portuguese company *Valentim de Carvalho*: "it must have had connections with publishing

<sup>36</sup> For more information see: <https://musicasdosanos60.blogspot.com/2014/07/impacto-best-of-impacto-1969.html> (accessed on 11 March 2025).

companies from Spain, France, Belgium... It was through *Valentim de Carvalho* that those things arrived here. I had a radio show where I presented, firsthand, things that had been released in Portugal 3 or 4 days before" (Interview, 10 September 2019). While the A-station primarily worked with Portuguese companies, promoting music from Portugal and other countries like those mentioned by João de Sousa, LM Radio was directly connected to publishing companies from the UK and the USA, tapping into the South African market.

### **Listening beyond colonial boundaries: the impact of LM Radio on young Black musicians from the suburbs of Lourenço Marques**

Returning to Luís Loforte's account that opened the previous section, it is important to further contextualize LM Radio within the framework of a colonial city. From the early 20th century, Lourenço Marques developed under an ideology of segregation, whose forms of social domination had its legal expression in the Colonial Act published in 1930 (Zamparoni 2012:26). The geography of the city evolved around a colonial centre defined by concrete buildings, constructed to meet the needs and aspirations of white settlers. The access to some leisure spaces, such as beaches and gardens, was denied to Black people (Zamparoni 1998:330–332), and access to public services such as transportation had severe limitations for non-white individuals (ibid, 288–290). Until the early 1960s, laws such as the Indigenous Statute effectively kept Black people out of this colonial centre—the so-called "city of cement"—except when they were working for white people. Surrounding this "city of cement," there was a vast area of suburban neighbourhoods, known as the "cane city," primarily inhabited by black people, most of whom lived in precarious conditions.

These divisions were also reflected in access to and participation in musical performances. In the suburbs, music was typically performed in local clubs, where genres influenced by African traditions and styles predominated.<sup>37</sup> In contrast, performances of Western popular music repertoires were primarily held in venues located in the so-called "city of cement," where both musicians and event organizers had the material resources—such as musical instruments and amplification equipment—necessary to support such performances. During the 1960s, some Black musicians began to gain access to the city center's music scenes, often through social connections formed in student contexts and by renting instruments (Sopa 2013:107–109). Those changes in the music scene of Lourenço Marques are recalled by Domingos "Fu" Manjate, a Black musician from the suburban neighbourhood of *Mafalala*:

In Mozambique, there were two distinct movements: the city of cement and the suburbs. I'm from the suburbs, so I made my way into the cement part. Times were changing, both politically and in terms of integration. From the 1950s until the war started in 1964, things evolved. There were areas that were once impenetrable but eventually became accessible. It was the bands from downtown that played for the people in the city centre—the white

<sup>37</sup> For further insights about music in the outskirts of Lourenço Marques see António Sopa 2013.

groups played for white people, and Black musicians played for Black people. But after a certain period, things began to change. There was more integration and interaction. It was really the 1960s.

(Domingos “Fu” Manjate, interview, 02 May 2018)

Indeed, since the early 1960s, the social and political landscape of late colonialism has started to impact Lourenço Marques’ daily life. In an attempt to legitimize its presence in Africa, the state invested more in urban development, expanded the education system, and promoted the establishment of new settlers (Castelo et al. 2012:23). In an effort to present a “unique colonial experience” and respond to external criticism—while denying the segregational legacy of its colonial policies—the Portuguese government abolished the Indigenus Statute in 1961 (Domingos 2013:60). As the barriers between the “cane” and the “cement” cities began to open, the dominant narratives still represented Lourenço Marques as a white city (Penvenne 2012). But that did not stop young Black musicians from aspiring to play in the venues of the “city of cement” (Mendes 2021). Radio, unaffected by the physical boundaries of the city, became a crucial part of social life in suburban areas. As one musician recalls, “I lived in the suburbs. My father owned a canteen, and during lunch breaks, the man next door, a Black nurse, had a radio receiver. That device was shared with everyone. I listened to music from there all the time” (Inácio Manuel Eugénio, interview, 04 October 2018).<sup>38</sup>

This access to radio allowed young Black musicians to stay in touch with the latest hits, particularly those featured on LM Radio’s Hit Parade. One of the most iconic bands to emerge from the suburbs was *Os Monstros*, a group formed by young Black musicians from the neighbourhoods of *Mafalala* and *Bairro Indígena*. David Abílio, who worked as a promoter for the band, recalls: “We listened, took notes from the lyrics, and learned the stories of each band.” (David Abílio, Joaquim Máximo, Aurélio Le Bon and Leonardo Manhique, interview, 16 August 2018). *Os Monstros* gained popularity by covering songs by African American artists like Wilson Pickett, Otis Redding, and Percy Sledge. They played in student events and festivals held in sports arenas, quickly gaining recognition for their ability to succeed in the “city of cement,” a place largely reserved for white musicians (Mendes 2021).

What made *Os Monstros* stand out was not just their music, but also the image they cultivated, adopting the style and persona of African American musicians, using this as a means of empowerment. As David Abílio explains: “We looked to American music because it was tied to our youth and our underground way of conveying the message. The war in Vietnam, the hippies—for us those were symbols of revolution. While resembling them, we became a revolution here in Mozambique. But we did so with great awareness” (David Abílio, Joaquim Máximo, Aurélio Le Bon and Leonardo Manhique, interview, 16 August 2018).<sup>39</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Inácio is a white man born in Portugal who went to Mozambique in his early childhood. Since his father was the owner of a canteen in the suburbs, he became familiar with that part of the city.

<sup>39</sup> The significance of LM Radio among the youth of Indian communities in Lourenço Marques is also thoroughly examined by Catarina Valdagem (2021).

Joel Libombo, a Black drummer from the suburban neighborhood of Chaman-culo, who later became an important politician and member of FRELIMO government, also managed to play the repertoires broadcast by LM Radio in venues of the “city of cement.” He started with a group formed in the suburbs that ended up playing for students in the city center through a connection with a friend studying in *Liceu Salazar*, the main high school of Lourenço Marques. He also stressed the importance of getting in touch with the repertoires of African-American musicians, connecting them to a wider view of Black peoples’ positions in colonial Africa: “We started with music, through the advent of soul music, to gather much information.” According to him, soul music made part of a broader consciousness about subjective Black experiences in the world which was combined with pan-africanist literature and performative genres from the new independent countries in Africa: “we had information, there was already a consciousness about Africa” (Joel Libombo, interview, 22 August 2018).

LM Radio thus became a shared reference for youth across Mozambique. Its importance even transcended social and racial divides, since its broadcasting was followed either by the youth from wealthier neighborhoods of the “city of cement,” such as Polana or Sommerschild, by the Black youth living in the suburbs, and also by other groups, such as, for example, the hindu-gujarati descendents, as demonstrated by Valdigem (2024). This idea confirms Luís Loforte’s earlier statement, namely that “for the youth of the 60s and 70s, LM Radio was an almost unique source of international musical culture, offering a glimpse of integration and self-expression in a highly stratified colonial society” (Loforte 2007:108–109). For the Black youth, as expressed by Loforte, Joel Libombo, and David Abílio, LM Radio was a way of connecting with modern Black subjectivities from the northern hemisphere, expressed in new music styles and by the aesthetic features popularized by African American musicians. Besides, it also created a common cultural background based on international popular music for the youth of colonial Mozambique, especially those living in the main urban centers, capable of providing a means for social interactions and music performances that transcended other dimensions such as race and class.

### The rise, the fall, and the resurrection of a radio station

On 25 April 1974, a military coup led by the Portuguese military, disillusioned by the country’s political turmoil and ongoing liberation wars, overthrew the government, sparking a series of events that ultimately led to the independence of Portuguese African colonies. Later, in June 1974, negotiations began in Lusaka (Zambia) between the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO) and the Portuguese government. The Liberation Front made it clear that a ceasefire would only occur once a date for independence was set. For the Portuguese delegates, continuing the war was no longer a viable option, as it would undermine the principles of the April Revolution. The agreements were signed on 7 September 1974, paving the way for the complete transfer of power to FRELIMO, without elections and following a brief 9-month transitional government.

During that transitional period, from 20 September 1974 to 24 June 1975, FRELIMO began integrating trusted personnel into RCM, now under the leadership of Armando Panguene, with the aim of preparing what would be called “the radio revolution” (Freitas 2022). This process was primarily characterized by the incorporation of the values of the liberation movement into the broadcasts. According to António Alves da Fonseca, these individuals “knew little or nothing about radio. They were, however, very interested in its political and propaganda aspects, such as how we should act, what music we should play, etc.” (António Alves da Fonseca, interview, 11 October 2016; 14 October 2016; 18 October 2016; 10 April 2017).

Given that LM Radio transmitted in English and Afrikaans, primarily targeting South Africa with content that FRELIMO considered “alienating,” there was some urgency to resolve the issue. Perhaps pressured by the political climate of the time, the unflattering references emerging in the press or implied in speeches at rallies, and the growing tension between South Africa and Mozambique, the new director of the then renamed Rádio Moçambique, Rafael Maguni, decided to shut down LM Radio. He justified his decision by citing the need to redirect the equipment to educational programs, giving a 14-day notice for the transition to happen.<sup>40</sup> Thus, 39 years after its first broadcast, LM Radio closed on 13 October 1975. On the same frequency, Radio 5 was created, with a similar programming style, but this time broadcasting from Johannesburg (Figure 8):

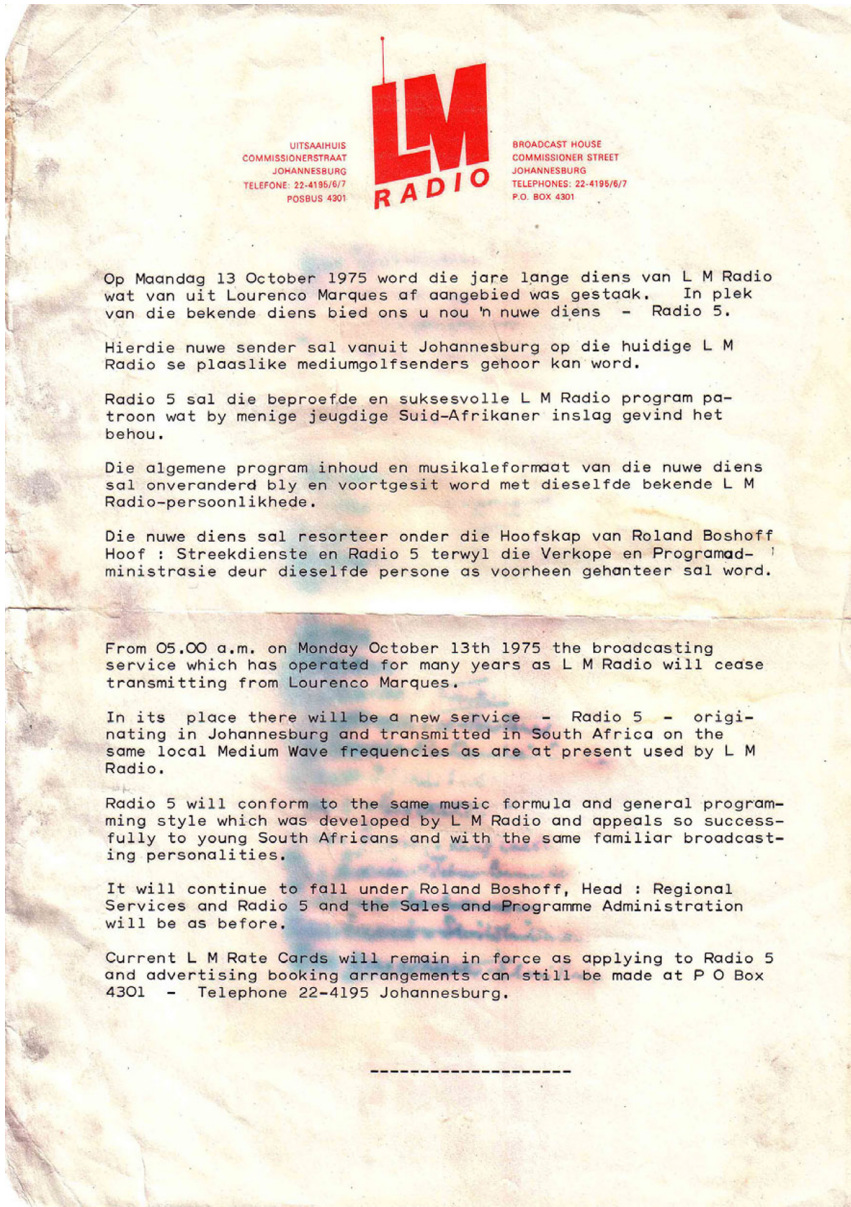
The documentation produced in the Macomia Conference, that aimed to define the media policy for the newly independent country, presents a very harsh view of the content and music transmitted by Rádio Clube in general, and LM Radio in particular, noting that “the colonial regime used the radio to disseminate a certain type of music as a vehicle for cultural alienation and submission to foreign values. The Conference found that this situation persists in our Radio today, which necessitates initiating a process of cultural revolution.”<sup>41</sup> In light of these ideas, LM Radio’s focus on Anglophone repertoire, featuring groups and artists such as The Beatles, Frank Sinatra, Elvis Presley, etc., was not in line with the values of the newly formed country, as it was being conceptualized by FRELIMO.<sup>42</sup>

For António Alves da Fonseca, the decision to shut down LM Radio was a mistake, since, as mentioned earlier, the station was the primary source of revenue for RCM during the colonial period. He recalled that that money would have been crucial to offset the significant financial imbalances of the Radio. In his words: “*Rádio Clube* survived on LM Radio. For a 30-s spot on *Emissão A*, RCM would receive, let’s say, 80 *escudos*. A spot on LM Radio on medium and short waves would cost around 400 *escudos*. Then there were hourly contracts, where the hours were announced with corporate sponsorship. It was an endless contract,

<sup>40</sup> For more information, consult the radio documentary *The LM Story* (Part 1A), narrated by Chris Turner at the LM Radio Museum and Sound Archive. Website: <http://www.lmradio.org/Sounds.htm> (accessed on 5 May 2018).

<sup>41</sup> “Conferência Nacional do Departamento de Informação e Propaganda.” *Tempo*, no. 271, 14 December 1975, pp. 56–63.

<sup>42</sup> *Idem*.



**Figure 8.** Official announcement document, in Afrikaans and English, confirming the closure of LM Radio and the establishment of Radio 5. Website: [https://lmradio.co.mz/history/other\\_stuff02.htm](https://lmradio.co.mz/history/other_stuff02.htm) (accessed on 11 March 2025).

and in 1 year they paid a fortune because it was an hourly announcement.” When we asked if the new Radio management was aware of the money they were losing with this decision, Fonseca’s response was unequivocal:

No. The radio operated according to FRELIMO’s principles, and they had little understanding of investments or concern for financial matters. Politics are politics, and it was simple: there was apartheid in South Africa, and we did not comply with it... much less could we be broadcasting there now. Of course, if they had a better understanding of how radio worked, they might have found a way to navigate the situation. LM Radio, for instance, had no political agenda; quite the opposite—it was focused solely on music and advertisements (...). But since it was broadcasted to South Africa, it was immediately shut down, a decision that reflected the values of the time.

(António Alves da Fonseca, interview, 11 October 2016; 14 October 2016; 18 October 2016; 10 April 2017)

As observed throughout this article, LM Radio’s presence was remarkable among its listeners in both South Africa and Mozambique. Its impact is reflected not only in the outlined statistics but also in the testimonies of our interlocutors, many of whom were musicians or former employees of RCM. Today, nostalgic references to LM Radio can be easily found on social media platforms such as Facebook groups, blogs, and websites.

This significance became even more apparent when LM Radio was revived in 2010 through South African entrepreneurs, although the revival came with its own set of challenges. In fact, the process began in 2005, when the station’s former announcer, Chris Turner, began reaching out Mozambican entrepreneurs to establish potential partnerships. After a pilot broadcast in December 2009, Turner and his partners sought to obtain a license to broadcast from the Rádio Moçambique headquarters in Maputo. That’s when the problems began. The proposal, which included changing the name from Lourenço Marques Radio to Lifetime Music Radio (thus preserving the LM acronym and brand), was rejected by the leaders of the state-run radio station due to concerns over possible misinterpretations. Luís Loforte, one of the technicians responsible for the project’s revival assured us that “it wasn’t the government that made the decision to reject it; rather, it was a decision made within the radio station itself. They practiced self-censorship.” Chris Turner then asked Luís Loforte to establish a company, which, in turn, pressed the government to obtain the permit to broadcast (Luís Loforte, interview, 30 March 2017).

At last, the revived LM Radio can now be heard in Maputo and Matola on the radio frequency 87.8, across the country via the DSTV cable television system, and globally through the Internet.<sup>43</sup> Using jingles and the colonial-era music repertoire adapted to the new name, Lifetime Music Radio, it is currently one of the most listened-to stations in the south of the country. Many of its listeners, especially the younger ones, are completely unaware of the double meaning behind the acronym, while some of the older generation listen with nostalgia,

<sup>43</sup> For more information: <https://lmradio.co.mz/> (accessed at 11 March 2025).

and others outright reject it. In any case, the history of LM Radio—whether as Lourenço Marques Radio or Lifetime Music Radio—is particularly fascinating because it is a station that was rejected three times: first by apartheid during the 1940's, then by the first management of Rádio Moçambique in 1975, and once again rejected in the 21st century” (Luís Loforte, interview, 30 March 2017).

Regardless of the meaning attributed to the acronym LM, the reality is that in the northern hemisphere, the new LM Radio is listened to by former Portuguese colonists who returned from Mozambique with a blend of affection and nostalgia. It serves as both a complex act of remembrance and a re-signification of a particular auditory experience for younger generations, thus aligning with what Raymond Williams refers to as “structures of feeling,” which shape cultural patterns and forms that reflect the spirit of a specific time, or at very least how that spirit is culturally imagined across generations, encompassing both collective (structure) and individual (feeling) experiences (Williams 2015). Certainly, the reception of the revived LM Radio calls for further in-depth research, with the findings anticipated to be presented in a future article. For now, it is important to highlight that the ongoing use of LM Radio—whether through its contemporary broadcasts or the nostalgic recollections of its listeners as a significant part of their past—plays a key role in the construction of narratives about a colonial past within a postcolonial present.

### A “Politically Aseptic” station? Some closing observations

LM Radio offers a compelling case study of the intricate interplay between music, media, and politics—particularly because its political influence was often perceived as vague or even innocuous. However, once we move beyond reductive understandings of what constitutes the “politicized,” it becomes clear that LM Radio exerted a significant, albeit subtle, form of political influence—one that aligns closely with what Joseph Nye (2004) defines as *soft power*. This type of influence, rooted in attraction rather than coercion, draws its strength from the global circulation of lifestyles, imagery, and social identities associated with cultures expanding beyond national borders, namely through the dynamics of globalized mass culture. One key example is the strategic relationship between Mozambique and South Africa, which was of particular interest to Portuguese authorities during the late colonial period, as Portugal came under increasing international pressure for its continued refusal to relinquish sovereignty over its African territories. In a Cold War—divided world, Anglophone popular music—frequently considered apolitical or culturally neutral—acquired deeper meaning, symbolizing a clear cultural alignment with the commercial and capitalist West.

However, as this article also demonstrates, that alignment was not unique to the post-World War II era but should be understood within the broader historical context of South Africa’s longstanding influence—dating back to the late 19th century—on the economy of the Portuguese colony of Mozambique, particularly in the city of Lourenço Marques (Domingos 2013:63). Indeed, from the moment *Rádio Clube de Moçambique* was established, programs in English and Afrikaans were introduced as a way to capitalize on South Africa’s initial prohibition on advertising in radio broadcasts. These early experiences eventually gave rise to

LM Radio within RCM in 1948, with programming primarily targeted at South African audiences, a strategy that proved highly effective. From RCM's perspective, LM Radio became a vital source of revenue and marked a deliberate shift toward using radio as a platform for commercial advertising. Additionally, LM Radio also served as a means to promote South African tourism in Lourenço Marques, another crucial component of the city's economy, namely through the propaganda crusade employed by Portugal to legitimize its colonial power in the face of the growing political challenges of late colonialism (Cleveland and Marino 2021). This convergence of interests—between the Portuguese colonial agenda, which sought to project a modern and cosmopolitan image, and the commercial ambitions of South African entrepreneurs—illustrates how entertainment media were deeply embedded within broader political and economic frameworks.

This relationship does, indeed, implicitly illustrates the sometimes conflicting and dialectical connection between two empires—the Portuguese colonial empire and the so-called “irresistible empire” of modern popular culture, shaped by the global circulation of industrialized culture, particularly from the Anglophone world—as brilliantly articulated by Victoria de Grazia (2005) and further expanded to the Mozambican case by Nuno Domingos (2021). Moreover, the history of this station invites a throughout re-examination of the “colonial situation” in Mozambique (Balandier 2014; Pimenta 2010), challenging binary conceptions of “center” and “periphery” in relation to influence and ideological impositions in certain institutions. In doing so, it opens up a space to rethink the relationship between Portugal and its former colonies, even to the point of overshadowing the economic and cultural significance of the Portuguese metropolis within the sonorous construction of everyday life of its colony (Freitas 2021b).

For musicians, LM Radio emerged as a medium for staying connected to the latest trends in Western popular music. It often provided access to more current, modern, and cosmopolitan sounds than were available even in the Portuguese metropolis, positioning itself as a crucial cultural bridge. For Black musicians in particular, LM Radio was especially significant: it offered a vital link to the work, styles, and aesthetics of African American artists, whose influence resonated far beyond the constraints imposed by the colonial regime. This connection enabled Black musicians to engage with broader diasporic cultural movements and to craft cosmopolitan Black identities that transcended the narrow frameworks of identity politics sanctioned by the Portuguese authorities. Through LM Radio, these artists found inspiration and a platform to negotiate and express complex subjectivities that challenged colonial narratives, fostering a sense of belonging to a global cultural community rather than one limited by colonial borders and racial hierarchies.

However, once independence was achieved, these values were contested by FRELIMO, which viewed the station—and the prevalent song aesthetics, lyrics, as well as associated clothing styles and haircuts—as alienating and submissive to foreign musical influences. Such content was seen as undermining the values the liberation front sought to promote through its cultural project of the “New Mozambican Man,” deliberately rooted in rural traditions (Freitas, 2024). These values, explicitly articulated during the Macomia Conference on

media policy for post-colonial Mozambique, were further reinforced by the imperative to distance the newly founded country from the South African apartheid regime.

Indeed, although LM Radio was perceived after independence as a sonorous vehicle of colonialism and imperialism—closely associated with popular music styles believed to corrupt the youth and distract them from revolutionary ideals—today the station remains a potent site of nostalgia and an ongoing point of debate about colonial legacies. While often described as apolitical, LM Radio's history powerfully illustrates the complex relationship between music, radio broadcasting, and the evolving, multifaceted politics of (perceived) neutrality.

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## Interviews

- António Alves da Fonseca, interview, Maputo, 11 October 2016; 14 October 2016; 18 October 2016; 10 April 2017.
- Artur Garrido Jr., interview, Maputo, 13 August 2018.
- Aurélio Le Bon, interview, Maputo, 14 October 2018.
- Carlos Alberto Silva, interview, Almada, 18 April 2018.
- David Abílio, Joaquim Máximo, Aurélio Le Bon and Leonardo Manhique, interview, Matola, 16 August 2018.
- Domingos "Fu" Manjate, interview, Figueira da Foz, 02 May 2018.
- Eurico Cebolo, interview, Oporto, 04 October 2018.
- Inácio Manuel Eugénio, interview, Oporto, 04 October 2018.
- João Maurfílio, interview, Lisbon, 01March 2018.
- João Sousa, interview, Maputo, 10 September 2019.
- Luís Loforte, interview, Maputo, 30 March 2017.

**Appendix A: External, internal, and raffle advertising revenues**

Year	Internal advertising	External advertising	Raffle
1937	109019,5	289870	
1938	164637	753500	
1939	185842,5	1168090	
1940	193544	822125	234527,57
1941	181083	687248,89	151927,05
1942	179420,4	459681,74	237650,83
1943	240904,6	475106,8	265465,76
1944	246283	1572275,85	222853,16
1945	274733	2578631,42	3353344,45
1946	296074	2098037,8	505082,5
1947	356406	2056229,1	670050,88
1948	493029	6491346,6	1198151,9
1949	563528,5	10368430,35	1248584,9
1954	1116000	22810000	7991000
1955	1241358,11	12111712,4	6740333
1956	1372718,78	12520953,2	6812457,85
1957	1717000	12357000	7514000
1958	2120000	12334000	7434000
1959	2436000	12177000	3208000
1960	3122839,99	12506994,9	2326432,7
1961	2808534,12	14239058,5	2703454,08
1962	3054729,39	14778013,6	2324982,6
1963	3468949,63	18365245	2961493,13
1964	3152829,6	20109579,6	864862,05
1965	4075487,5	21341095	450548,5
1966	5225541,75	22159969,7	484283,7
1967	5373664,1	23174767,64	494622,6
1968	9611031,1	25763594,6	701724,6
1969			513535,2
1970			794683,1

Source: RM 1935–1973; Barbosa 2000.

## Appendix B: The growth of RCM's phonographic collection from 1935 to 1958.

Year	Discs (total)	Discs (Portuguese music)	Discs (foreign music)
1935		335	
1936	2182	802	
1937	12420		
1938	12760	2679	
1939	18516	2021	
1940	14533	2414	
1943	14558	1722	13436
1944	15074	1335	13671
1945	15014	1244	13744
1946	14843	1072	13758
1947	16565	744	15812
1948	59008	1325	57672
1949	58382	1422	56895
1950	61451	1544	59853
1951	48781	5475	43306
1952	52584	5856	46728
1953	51221	8239	42982
1955	56768	9981	46787
1956	59513	10561	48952
1957	59654	10672	48982
1958	57823	11349	46474

Source: RM 1935–1973; Barbosa 2000.

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