



LATIN AMERICAN DXING

Introduction

This topic of listening to Latin America has probably occupied more space in short-wave listener and DX bulletins over the years than any other topic. The following advice has therefore been written from a different viewpoint, the broadcaster's angle, and is primarily designed for Radio Netherlands' listeners who have gained some experience on the major international broadcasting bands (i.e. the 49 and 31 metre bands) and wish to look a little further. Addresses are given at the end of this pamphlet advising on where to look further for background reading. Further suggestions and comments from listeners are always welcome.

DIFFERENCES

Though some texts lead the beginning short-wave listener straight into the topic of listening to Latin America, the results can often be less than rewarding. Most short-wave listeners start their listening on the international SW broadcast bands and pick up stations such as Radio Canada International, Radio Australia, Radio Sweden International, Voice of America, British Broadcasting Corporation, and we hope, Radio Netherlands. All these, and many more, are international broadcasters. They make programmes in foreign languages other than their mother tongue, and the whole output is made with the overseas target area in mind. Most welcome reception reports, and many SWLs start to correspond with stations by first sending in a reception report. Over the years the emphasis on the reception report has changed (not necessarily diminished) and we have tried to define what many international broadcasters are looking for now in the pamphlet WRITING USEFUL RECEPTION REPORTS. This is available free of charge and even if you have been DXing or SWling for some time, there may be some useful hints in the publication.

For the majority of short-wave listeners the international broadcasting stations are enough. But, if you have a little patience, and quite a lot of time, it is possible to find another category of station on the bands, i.e. the SW domestic broadcaster.

DOMESTIC BROADCASTERS

Stations lying between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn are assigned three different "tropical" short-wave bands by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) in Geneva. These are the 120 metre band which lies between 2300-2498 kHz, the 90 metre band between 3200-3400 kHz, and the 60 metre band between 4750-5060 kHz (the frequency of 5000 kHz is not included since this is allocated to other users, including time signal stations). It is this latter frequency range that is probably the best to explore first to the newcomer.

Though there are some countries outside the tropics which use the tropical band of 60 metres (e.g. USSR) most of the signals you will hear are from tropical broadcasters using this frequency range for domestic broadcasting. This applies to stations in Latin America, though the reason for using the short-wave seems to be changing now in many of these countries. Because thunder-storms are very frequent in the tropics, medium wave reception can be very difficult when signal strength is low. Thus many stations started broadcasting their programmes on the 60 metre band to overcome this problem slightly (interference is usually less severe) and a wider audience can be covered with the same transmitter. This reason now seems to be changing as more and more stations, particularly in the larger cities, use medium wave with stronger transmitters and even FM (VHF) in some areas. Short-wave outlets have therefore been discontinued by some major stations, or merely retained as an extra outlet. For others the main reason for keeping the outlet open is to keep in touch with listeners as they move further afield during parts of the year because of their work. In rural areas, especially mountainous regions, 60 metre band broadcasting has retained its importance.

RECEPTION

We do not intend to cover in very great detail the art and practice of listening to the tropical bands. To gain experience tune this part of the dial as often as possible and also follow the loggings in most of the better DX-clubs. The World Radio and Television Handbook is also an excellent reference source, both in suggesting when and on what frequency you should look, and also helping to identify DX catches. However, since other regions outside the tropics use this frequency range for utility broadcasting, a first impression may be misleading. Many beginners are disappointed to find the band full of morse and telex signals on a particular evening. However, checking the same frequency range 24 hours later may reveal a number of strong broadcasting signals from Latin America. Further references are given at the end of this text and, of course, there is regular news on what has been heard from this region in our MEDIA NETWORK programme.

GETTING IN TOUCH

Many listeners make the fundamental mistake of confusing the stations they hear on the international bands and those in Latin America. The latter are not generally interested in receiving correspondence from abroad, and if they receive many dozens of requests for QSL cards the reports are usually simply thrown away. The SINPO code (see WRITING USEFUL RECEPTION REPORTS) means nothing to most Latin American broadcasters nor are reports in any other language apart from the country's mother tongue of any value. International Reply Coupons are often not recognised for what they are whilst in some parts they may be invalid altogether. These factors mean that there is not much point sending a standard reception report form that may be used to large international broadcasters to these 60 metre band stations. The approach then should really be in the form of a personal letter. Outright demands for a QSL card are seldom acknowledged and stations that receive many of these type of letters often stop QSLing altogether. Spanish reports can be used to the majority of stations though Portuguese must be used to write to Brazilians. Simply asking for 'verificação' (Portuguese) or 'verificación' (Spanish) often brings a very vague reply which does not list the details contained in your report. To help you we have compiled a sample translation. This should not be regarded as the last word in Latin American reception report writing because, obviously, if you speak either of the two languages you will be able to inject your own personality into the letter. However for those who do not have sufficient command of the grammar the letter below is the next best thing.

Dear Sir,

1. I am very interested in following events and the general way of life in Latin America.
2. You may understand that radio and TV stations in this part of the world do not concentrate on news items from (Latin America or name of country) very often and only a limited range of records featuring folk music from your country can be obtained here.
3. For this reason I listen to the tropical bands on my short-wave receiver, to follow developments directly and to enjoy the unique style of music.
4. I was recently fortunate to tune in to Radio and although I realise that your programmes are not intended for an international audience, I hope nevertheless that you may be interested in knowing that your programmes can be heard many thousands of kilometres away.
5. To give you an example I have made a note of the details of a recent broadcast.
6. On (date) at(name of country local time) I tuned into a programme from Radio broadcast on kHz, in the 60/90/120 metre tropical SW band

7. At(time) you played a commercial for
 8. I noticed a news broadcast at
 9. You announced the name of the station at with the following words "....."
 10. I recognised a piece of music with the title of played at
 11. Your station closed down with the national anthem at
 12. Your station signed on at local time.
 13. There was a break in transmission between and
 14. The signal quality was very good/good/fair and I was able to enjoy what was said in the programme. I also found the music you played to be enjoyable.
 15. The signal quality as received here in (Hilversum) was naturally rather weak, but nevertheless I was able to follow some of what you said.
 16. There was slight/heavy interference from Radio Station broadcasting from on the frequency of kHz.
 17. My receiver is a made in Japan/Germany/U.S.A. by the company. It has a superhet design using transistors.
 18. The antenna is a (long wire) dipole/medium wave loop) and is metres long, and metres above the ground.
 19. Because your signal varies in strength during different times of the year, it is not always possible to tune into your programmes. However, when conditions are good, I hope to find the time to listen again, mainly because you provide me with a unique source of music and information.
 20. I should be very grateful if you could confirm in writing that I received Radiojudging from the details I have enclosed.
 21. I would also appreciate a station pennant if you have one please, and more details about the programmes you broadcast.
- I am enclosing a few mint stamps from your country which I hope will help towards your postage costs.
- I am enclosing \$...... which I hope will help towards your postage costs.
22. I am also enclosing a few postcards/stamps from this part of the world which may be of interest, to give you an idea of the countryside around here
 23. (Name of your town) lies about kms north/south/east/west of (name of major city or capital).
 24. Thank you in advance for your help and I look forward to hearing from you soon.
 25. Yours sincerely,

J. M.

FOLLOW UP

- a) Repeat sentences 1-4 then.....
- b) On the(date of dispatch of reception report) I sent you details of how well you are received at this location. However, since it is now some while since I

sent the report I presume my letter has been lost in the post. Therefore I enclose the details of reception on that day.

c) select further numbers as appropriate.

THANK YOU

Dear Sir,

Just a short note to say thank you for your letter (and pennant) which arrived safely a few days ago. I was delighted to receive confirmation of reception from your station and I hope that your signal will remain audible in this part of the world so I can follow events in your country.

Thanking you for your interest,

Best wishes,

SPANISH VERSION

Estimados Señores:

1. Ante todo quisiera saludarles e indicarles que soy una persona muy interesada por todos aquellos eventos y por los costumbres de vida en general en América Latina.
2. Como comprenderán Ustedes, en esta parte del mundo las estaciones de radio y televisión no dedican tanta atención a las noticias sobre (Lat. Am. or name of country) y además solamente podemos obtener discos de música folclórica de su país por medio de su emisora.
3. Por ese motivo mediante mi receptor de onda corta escucho las bandas tropicales para seguir los diversos desarrollos en directo y para divertirme con el estilo de música, que es único.
4. Recientemente tuve la suerte de sintonizar a la Radio, pero como soy consciente que sus programas no son destinados a una audiencia internacional, espero que de todas formas Ustedes se interesen en saber que sus programas son escuchados a muchas millas de kilómetros de distancia de su país.
5. Seguidamente les indico algunos detalles de la reciente transmisión escuchada.
6. El día (date), a las (local time) horas, sintonicé su programación de Radio en los kHz en los 60/90/120 metros de la banda tropical de la onda corta.
7. A las (time) horas, Ustedes ofrecían un anuncio comercial para
8. Escuché una emisión de noticias a las (time) horas.
9. Ustedes anunciaron el nombre de la emisora a las (time) horas con las siguientes palabras "....."
10. Recuerdo además un trozo de música titulada ".....", tocado a las (time) horas.
11. Su emisora cerró conel himno nacional a las (time).
12. Su emisora comenzó la emisión a las (local time) hora local.
13. Noté una interrupción entre las (time) hasta las (time) horas.

14. La calidad de señal fue excelente/buena/regular. Estuve muy atento a su estupenda programación y también de la música tocada por Ustedes.
15. La calidad de señal recibida aquí en (Hilversum) fue naturalmente bastante débil, pero no obstante pude comprender algo de lo que Ustedes dijeron.
16. Había una interferencia suave/muy fuerte de la emisora Radio, que transmitía desde las horas en la frecuencia de los kHz.
17. Mi receptor es de fabricación japonesa/alemana/estadounidense. Tiene un circuito de acuerdo con el "principio superheterodino" y tiene (nr.) transistores.
18. La antena es una (long wire) dipolo/antena "loop" de onda media y tiene una longitud de metros y a una altura de metros.
19. Debido a que su señal varía de intensidad durante las diferentes estaciones del año, no siempre me es posible sintonizar sus programas. Sin embargo, cuando las condiciones sean propicias, espero tener tiempo para volverles a escuchar nuevamente ya que me intereso por las informaciones y por la música de su país, que difícilmente podemos encontrar aquí.
20. Les agradecería enormemente si Ustedes me contestarán en una carta en la cual se escribiera que yo he captado a Radio por medio de los detalles que les he incluido.
21. También les quedaría muy agradecido me remitieran un banderín de la emisora o algún recuerdo y detalles sobre los programas que Ustedes transmiten.

Les incuyo una moneda/estampilla de su país para que les sirva de ayuda en el envío postal.

Les incluyo \$..... que espero les ayude para el envío postal.
22. También les incluyo algunos postales/estampillas de esta parte del mundo, para darles una idea del lugar de donde les escribo.
23. (Name of your town) está ubicada aproximadamente a unos kilómetros al norte/sur/este/oeste de (name of major city or capital).
24. Agradeciéndoles de antemano su ayuda y esperando prontamente con gran interés su contestación.
25. Me despidió muy atentamente,

FOLLOW UP

- a) Repeat sentences 1-4 then
- b) El día (date) les envié a Ustedes detalles de cómo son recepcionados sus programas en esta localidad. Ya ha pasado algún tiempo y aún no he recibido contestación alguna, por lo que imagino que la carta se habrá extraviado. Por eso les envío nuevamente los detalles de recepción de ese día.
- c) select further numbers as appropriate.

MUCHAS GRACIAS = THANK YOU

Estimados Señores:

Por la presente me es muy grato saludarles y comunicarles que he recibido en buena forma hace unos días su atenta carta (y el banderín) que tan gentilmente me remitieron. Estoy muy contento de recibir por su parte la confirmación de recepción de su emisora y espero que su señal continúe siendo audible para así poder seguir los acontecimientos

en su país.

Agradeciéndoles nuevamente la atención dispensada, reciban los más cordiales saludos,

Muy atentamente,

PORTUGUESE VERSION

Prezados senhores:

1. Interesse-me bastante pelo que ocorre e pelos costumes e a vida em geral na América Latina.
2. Como os senhores podem compreender, as estações de rádio e televisão nesta parte do mundo não dedicam muita atenção às notícias da (Lat. America or name of country). Além disso são poucos os discos de música folclórica do seu país que podemos obter aqui.
3. Por isso sintonizo as bandas tropicais no meu aparelho de ondas curtas para acompanhar directamente a evolução dos acontecimentos e para ouvir um estilo de música que aprecio.
4. Recentemente tive a sorte de sintonizar a Rádio e muito embora eu compreenda que os seus programas não são dirigidos a um público internacional, creio, no entanto, que os senhores certamente terão interesse em saber que as suas transmissões podem ser ouvidas a milhares de quilômetros de distância.
5. Para lhes dar um exemplo, eu anotei os detalhes de uma transmissão recente.
6. No dia (date) às (local time) (name of country or location) eu sintonizei um programa da Rádio transmitido em kHz, na faixa de 60/90/120 metros da banda tropical em Ondas Curtas.
7. As (time) os senhores rodaram um anúncio comercial para
8. Escutei um noticiário às
9. O nome da estação foi anunciado às (time) com as seguintes palavras "....."
10. Reconheci um trecho de uma música com o título tocada às (time).
11. Sua transmissão foi cerrada com o hino nacional às (time).
12. Sua estação iniciou a transmissão às (local time) hora local.
13. Houve uma interrupção na transmissão entre e (time).
14. A qualidade do sinal era muito boa/boa/razoável e gostei da programação. Gostei também da música tocada, bastante agradável aliás.
15. A qualidade do sinal recebido aqui em (Hilversum) era naturalmente fraca, mesmo assim consegui acompanhar algo do programa.
16. Havia uma interferência fraca/forte da Rádio transmitindo de frequência de kHz.
17. Meu receptor é um de fabricação japonesa/alema/americana, marca Possui um circuito de acordo com o "princípio heteródino" e tem (nº) de transistores.
18. A antena é uma (long wire) dipolo/antena "loop" de onda média e tem metros de extensão e uma altura de metros.

19. Como o sinal da sua transmissão varia de intensidade durante diversos períodos do ano, nem sempre é possível sintonizá-los. Mas quando as condições são favoráveis eu procuro escutá-los, principalmente porque a sua emissora oferece excelente música e boas informações.
20. Ficarei bastante grato se puderem confirmar por escrito que sintonizei a Rádio.... de acordo com os detalhes em anexo.
21. Gostaria de receber também uma flâmula, se houver, e maiores detalhes sobre a sua programação.

Estou anexando alguns selos novos do seu país como contribuição para as despesas postais.

Estou anexando \$..... para ajudar a cobrir as despesas com o porte.
22. Estou incluindo também alguns postais/selos desta parte do mundo que poderão lhes interessar e para lhes dar uma idéia do panorama por aqui.....
23. (Name of your town) fica localizada a uns kms ao norte/sul/leste/oeste de (name of major city or capital).
24. Antecipadamente grato pela sua ajuda e aguardo sua resposta para breve.
25. Atenciosamente,

FOLLOW UP

- a) Repeat sentences 1-4 then....
- b) No dia (date of dispatch of reception report) enviei-lhes os detalhes sobre a qualidade de recepção nesta parte do mundo. Como já faz algum tempo e não obtive resposta, acredito que a minha carta deve ter-se extraviada. Por isso incluo os detalhes da recepção naquele dia.
- c) select further numbers as appropriate.

AGRADECIMENTO = THANK YOU

Prezados senhores:

Desejo agradecer a sua carta (e flâmula) que recebi há alguns dias. Fiquei satisfeito ao receber a confirmação do meu relatório da sua estação. Faço votos que o sinal da sua emissora continue audível nesta parte do mundo para que eu possa continuar apanhando os acontecimentos em seu país.

Obrigado pelo seu interesse,

Atenciosamente,

CONCLUSIONS

A good Spanish-English and/or Portuguese-English dictionary is always an asset, but be careful about translating from English into either of those languages. Better to take an elementary course in the language if you are really interested in finding out more about the culture of Latin America. There are some excellent reference books on the subject. Past issues of "How to Listen to the World", formerly published by World Radio and TV Handbook (and now out of print) had a whole series of interesting articles on the subject of Latin American DXing. Further suggestions are given in our "Booklist" which is kept up-to-date and a copy is available free of charge for the asking.

FURTHER REFERENCES

The following references are worth a separate mention:

1. "World Radio and TV Handbook". Edited by Jens Frost. Annual publication appearing in Jan/Feb of each year. Complete list of broadcasting stations compiled country by country. Contains addresses, schedules, maps and band-scans, and the information on Latin America is probably the most comprehensive there is. Can be ordered through bookshops by quoting one of these two numbers. ISBN 0 902285 06 8 or USBN 0 8230 5907
Price is £9.50 in the UK, \$16.50 in the USA. The 1982 edition is expected Jan/Feb '82. The 1981 edition is sold out. More information on local outlets from WRTH, Søliljevej 44, DK-2650 Hvidovre, Denmark.
2. "The South American Handbook". Not a DX or SWL publication but an excellent reference source for anyone listening on shortwave. Annual publication enabling you to gain an insight into the part of the world you are listening to - recommended for both the SW and active DXer. Compiled with the aid of numerous correspondents in the field, as opposed to a one-man roving reporter. ISBN 0 900751 171. Many UK bookshops stock it. In case of difficulty contact publishers - Trade and Travel Publications, The Mendip Press, Parsonage Lane, Bath BA1 1EN, England. They will despatch the book by surface mail anywhere in the world for £11.50 (this is also the UK bookshop price). Overseas outlets: Rand McNally and Co., P.O. Box 7600, Chicago, Ill 60680 USA., Thomas Allen & Sons Limited, 250 Steel Case Rd East, Markham, Ontario, Canada LR3 2S3, Tony Wheeler, Lonely Planet Publications Ltd., Box 88 South Yarra, VIC 3141, Australia, David Bateman Ltd., Box 65062, Mairangi Bay, Auckland 10, New Zealand.
3. Join a DX club, many of which carry a regular section on Latin American DXing. The WRTH (see above) carries a current list of DX clubs, as does the European DX Council and the Association of North American Radio Clubs. See booklist for further details.

Revised edition compiled December 1981 by Jonathan Marks. Any feedback, in the form of suggestions for further reading or items you think could be included to make the LA Guide more complete are always welcome. Please write to:

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