



BRASILIANITIES

— THE SOUL OF A NATION —

Império da Rainha - School of Brazilian Samba

Notting Hill Carnival 2026

Enredo created and Developed by Liani Devito,
Presidente of Império da Rainha

Costume Design & Production: **Leila Heinel**

Cultural Research & Development: **Danielle Gudgeon**

What does it mean to truly understand Brasil?

It is not enough to see the colours of Carnaval, hear the sound of samba, or recognise the famous images of football, beaches and celebration.

To understand Brasil, we must also understand its ancestry, memory, spirituality, resistance, regional identities, creativity and people.

BRASILIANITIES - The Soul of a Nation is a journey through the many cultural expressions that have shaped Brasil and continue to transform it today.

Brasil is not one single culture. It is a nation shaped by Indigenous roots, African ancestry, European influences, migration, faith, struggle, survival and cultural exchange. Across generations, these influences have created distinct traditions, rhythms, movements, celebrations and ways of life.

Through our parade, every costume, movement, rhythm and character becomes part of this story.

This is more than a celebration of Brasil. It celebrates where we come from, what our people have carried through generations, and how our culture continues to live, evolve, and inspire.

* CREATIVE AUTHORSHIP & ACKNOWLEDGEMENT *

The 2026 enredo — including its concept, parade narrative and artistic direction — was created and developed by **Liani Devito**. **Leila Heinel** leads the costume design and production, bringing the parade's visual concept to life. **Danielle Gudgeon** contributed cultural research and development, supporting the creation of this booklet and the cultural interpretation of our enredo, and helped develop and deliver our **BRASILIANITIES** cultural workshops throughout the season.

Our Mestres and Diretores de Bateria — **Brian Taylor**, **Alex Talbot**, **Emmanuel Opoku** and **Lizzie Leonard** — contributed to the musical development of our 2026 samba-enredo, working across its lyrics, musical arrangement and percussion to transform the enredo into the music that carries our story through the parade.

Carol Rio and **Gileade Alves** also contributed to the lyrics, while **Gustavo Oliveira** and **Guilherme Oliveira** contributed to the percussion arrangements, bringing their musical knowledge and creativity to the development of our samba-enredo.

Together, these creative contributions bring **BRASILIANITIES - The Soul of a Nation** from concept to costume, culture, rhythm and song.

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01 - PRAIA DO LEME

THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE POSTCARD

Our journey begins in Rio de Janeiro, at the iconic **Praia do Leme**.

For many people around the world, the beaches of Rio represent beauty, sunshine and celebration. But the beach is also a living cultural and economic space.

Our **Comissão de Frente** brings to life some of the workers and street vendors who make up everyday beach culture: sellers of iced mate, sweetcorn, prawns, caipirinhas, beers, burgers, and other familiar treats.

They represent something fundamental to the Brazilian identity: creativity, resilience, entrepreneurship and human connection.

Behind every postcard image of Brasil are ordinary people whose work, traditions and personalities give those places their soul.

BRASILIANITIES (Brasilidades) live not only in monuments and major celebrations. It lives in everyday life.

We are the rhythm of the streets,
the flavour of our people, the heart of our Brasil.

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02 - SANTOS & ORIXÁS -

FAITH, ANCESTRY AND RESISTANCE

To understand Brasil, we must understand the spiritual traditions that travelled through generations and survived profound historical change.

The history of Brazilian spirituality reflects encounters between Indigenous beliefs, Catholicism, and African-rooted religious traditions brought to Brasil through the forced displacement and enslavement of African peoples.

Afro-Brazilian traditions preserved knowledge, ritual, music, movement, community and connections to ancestry despite centuries of persecution and discrimination.

Religions such as Candomblé and Umbanda became important spaces for preserving and transforming this heritage.

The relationship between Catholic saints and Orixás also reflects the complex history of religious syncretism in Brasil.

Nossa Senhora Aparecida, the Patroness of Brasil, is particularly significant and, in some Afro-Brazilian traditions, is associated with Oxum, the Orixá connected with fresh waters, fertility, beauty and prosperity.

Our Santos & Orixás section therefore represents much more than religion. It represents ancestry, faith, survival, identity and cultural memory.

It honours those who protected traditions so that future generations could continue to recognise and celebrate their roots.

Our faith is our strength.
Our ancestry is our guide.
Our culture is our resistance.

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03 - MACULELÊ -

RHYTHM, MOVEMENT AND COLLECTIVE MEMORY

Our ancestral journey continues through **Maculelê**.

Maculelê is an Afro-Brazilian cultural expression traditionally performed collectively, combining rhythm, singing and powerful movements, often using sticks.

Its history is deeply connected to the resilience and creativity of African peoples in Brasil, especially in Bahia, where this tradition has been kept alive for generations.

More than a performance, Maculelê is a form of communication, storytelling and cultural preservation.

It represents courage, protection, community and the strength that comes from unity.

The rhythm of the sticks, the call-and-response of the songs, and the energy of the circle remind us that our history lives in our bodies, our voices, and our traditions.

Within our parade, Maculelê represents strength, community, rhythm, resistance and collective memory.

The body becomes a storyteller. Movement becomes a way of carrying history. And rhythm becomes a connection between past and present.

**Maculelê is the heartbeat of ancestry.
It keeps the memory of our people alive
through rhythm, movement and unity.**

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04 - PERNAMBUCO EM FESTA -

FREVO, MARACATU AND THE PRIDE OF THE NORTHEAST

Brasil is a vast country, and every region carries its own history, rhythms, flavours, celebrations and identities.

Our journey now travels to the Northeast.
Welcome to **Pernambuco**!

Frevo is one of the most energetic and iconic rhythms of Brasil. Born on the streets of Recife and Olinda, it is recognised for its fast tempo, vibrant brass bands and the famous colourful umbrellas that whirl through the air.

But **Frevo** is more than excitement and movement. It symbolises creativity, freedom, joy, and the spirit of the people of Pernambuco.

Maracatu is an Afro-Brazilian tradition marked by powerful percussion, royal processions, ancestry and community. With its majestic cortejos, crowned kings and queens, drums and strong African heritage, Maracatu carries centuries of history, resistance and cultural memory.

Together, these traditions express the strength, colour and cultural richness of **Pernambuco** and the Nordeste.



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05 - ARRAIAL DO BOI ENCANTADO - SÃO JOÃO AND BOI-BUMBÁ

The celebrations of São João are among the most beloved traditions in Brasil, especially across the Northeast.

In June, towns and cities come alive with music, dancing, colours, flavours and faith.

Bonfires, lanterns, colourful decorations and community gatherings fill the streets during the June festival season. The rhythms of forró, baião, xote and xaxado carry stories of love, countryside life, faith and the joy of being together.

São João is gratitude for the harvest, celebration of life and the warmth of community.

Our Arraial also celebrates the legendary **Boi-Bumbá**, one of Brasil's great popular folkloric traditions.

Across different regions, the story of the boi takes many forms, with its own characters, rhythms, costumes and meanings.

It represents imagination, renewal, folklore and the extraordinary richness of Brazilian popular culture.



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06 - LAMPIÃO & MARIA BONITA

THE MEMORY OF THE SERTÃO

Our Mestre-Sala and Porta-Bandeira evoke Lampião and Maria Bonita, two of the most recognisable figures associated with the history and popular imagination of the Brazilian **sertão**.

Their story belongs to the complex history of **cangaço** in the Northeast and has been retold through literature, music, cinema, visual art and popular culture.

In our artistic narrative, their imagery connects us to the **sertão**, resilience, and the Northeast's cultural identity.

The **sertão** is a land of contrasts – beauty and challenge, dryness and strength, hardship and hope.

Lampião and **Maria Bonita** represent the courage of those who lived, survived and became part of the legend of this land.

Their presence in our parade demonstrates how historical figures can move beyond history itself and become part of a nation's collective imagination.



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07 - PRESIDENTE DO BRASIL -

THE SYMBOLIC HEART OF THE NATION

The Presidente do Brasil figure in our parade represents Brasil as a nation - its history, identity, democracy and freedom.

The Brazilian flag carries part of that history. The green originally represented the House of Braganza, the royal family of Emperor Pedro I, while the yellow represented the House of Habsburg, the family of Empress Maria Leopoldina. However, over time they became popularly associated with Brasil itself: green with our forests and nature, yellow with our gold and natural wealth, and blue with our sky. The stars represent Brasil's states (26 states) and the Federal District (1).

Brasil declared its independence from Portugal in 1822, becoming the **Empire of Brasil**. In 1889, the monarchy ended, and Brasil became a **Republic**.

Our journey towards **democracy** was not straightforward. In 1964, Brasil entered a military dictatorship that lasted 21 years. In 1985, civilian government returned, and in 1988, a new Constitution established the democratic rights and freedoms of modern Brasil.

So this figure is not about representing one individual president or political party. It represents the **Brazilian people**, our history, our flag and our **right to democracy**.

1822 1822 - Independence

1889 - Republic

1964-1985 - Military Dictatorship

1985 - Return to civilian government

1988 - Democratic Constitution



AI-5
INSTITUCIONAL

1968: Endurecimento
da ditadura militar
no Brasil

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08 - NA BATIDA DO FUNK - BATERIA

Na Batida do Funk celebrates the energy and cultural power of **Funk Carioca**, a musical movement that emerged from the favelas and suburbs of Rio de Janeiro.

Created and shaped within these communities, funk developed its own distinctive beats, dances, language, fashion and identity. Despite facing decades of prejudice and criminalisation, it continued to grow and became one of the most influential expressions of contemporary Brazilian youth and peripheral culture.

Today, the sound of Funk Carioca has travelled far beyond Rio, influencing artists, dance floors and audiences around the world.

Our bateria brings this energy to the parade, celebrating **creativity, resistance, community** and the **cultural power of the periferia**.

*Da favela para o mundo -
é Na Batida do Funk.*



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09 - NA GINGA DA COPA - SELEÇÃO BRASILEIRA

Football is more than a sport in Brasil; it is **passion, identity** and **joy** that bring the nation together.

Football is deeply woven into Brazilian culture, from children playing in the streets and beaches to some of the greatest stages in world sport.

The Brazilian game became famous for its **ginga** — creativity, confidence, improvisation and a distinctive freedom of movement.

The colours **green, yellow, blue** and **white** have become recognised around the world, carrying generations of memories, victories, legendary players and national pride.

From the streets to the stadium, football represents **celebration, unity** and the unmistakable spirit of Brasil.

*In every ginga, there is freedom.
In every goal, there is Brasil.
In every game, there is pride.*



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10 - CARNAVAL DO BRASIL - CARNAVAL CARIOCA

Carnaval Carioca is Rio de Janeiro's world-famous Carnival — a spectacular expression of **colour**, **rhythm**, **tradition** and **celebration**.

At its heart are the **escolas de samba**, bringing together communities, musicians, dancers, composers, craftspeople and generations of cultural knowledge.

It is from this tradition that Império da Rainha draws its inspiration. As an escola de samba in London, we follow the cultural and artistic foundations of the Brazilian samba school, adapting them to our own community and our place within Notting Hill Carnival.

The samba school parade is essentially a **moving open-air musical**. Each school tells an **enredo** — a story or theme — through music, samba, costumes, choreography, characters and enormous allegorical floats, with thousands of people collectively bringing that story to life along the avenue.

Behind the spectacle of the **Sambódrome** are months of creativity, preparation and collective work. Every element has a purpose and forms part of the story being told.

Carnaval Carioca is a living expression of **creativity**, **discipline**, **community**, **identity** and **collective pride**.

*Carnaval is not only a spectacle.
It is history, belonging,
movement and the voice
of the people.*





11 - BLOCO DA RAINHA - STREET CARNAVAL IN BRASIL

Bloco da Rainha brings our parade to its joyful finale, celebrating the vibrant tradition of **Brazilian street Carnival**.

Across Brasil, **blocos de rua** bring Carnival directly into the **streets**, transforming neighbourhoods into spaces of music, dance, colour and collective celebration. Open and inclusive, they bring together people of different ages, backgrounds and communities through the shared joy of Carnival.

Unlike the structured spectacle of the samba school parade, the bloco belongs directly to the street — **spontaneous, playful** and **close to the people**, where the boundaries between performers and spectators can begin to disappear.

Bloco da Rainha carries this spirit into the streets of London, bringing our journey through **BRASILIANITIES** to its conclusion with community, movement and joy, while celebrating the **60th Anniversary of Notting Hill Carnival**.

*From the streets of Brasil
to the streets of London —
Carnival belongs to the people.*



12 - THE LEGACY LIVES ON

Our roots are ancient.

Our culture is alive.

Our future is ours.

A legacy is not given - it is built, protected and passed forward.

Founded in 2024, Império da Rainha is a young school built on years of experience, cultural knowledge and strong connections to Brazilian Carnaval. Members of our diretoria bring more than a decade of experience in samba and Carnaval across Brasil and Europe, with close ties to escolas de samba and Carnaval traditions in Brasil. From our very first parade, we have worked to honour our roots, celebrate Brazilian culture and build our own story here in London.

Our story is ongoing. Our future is bright.

Every parade is the result of many hands, minds and hearts. Under the leadership and artistic direction and Presidente, Liani Devito, Império da Rainha is brought to life by a dedicated diretoria, musicians, dancers, performers, creatives, volunteers and supporters, whose knowledge,

BRASILIANITIES • THE SOUL OF A NATION

THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE PARADE

Leadership, creativity, culture and music bringing our school to life.

Every parade is the result of many hands, minds and hearts.



LIANI DEVITO

Presidente & Artistic Director



LEILA HEINEL

Costume & Creative Design



DANIELLE GUDGEON

Cultural Director



BRIAN TAYLOR

Mestre de Bateria



ALEX TALBOT

Mestre de Bateria



EMMANUEL OPOKU

Diretor de Bateria



LIZZIE LEONARD

Diretora de Bateria

13 - OUR STORY, OUR FUTURE

THE FIRST PEOPLES OF BRASIL

Before Brasil was Brasil, Indigenous peoples and nations had lived across this land for thousands of years, with their own languages, cultures, knowledge systems, spiritualities and relationships with the land. Today, Indigenous peoples remain a living and diverse part of Brazilian society and culture.

Any journey through BRASILIANITIES must recognise that our story did not begin with Portuguese arrival or independence — it begins with the peoples who were already there.

The story of Brasil begins with its Indigenous peoples.

Brasil is a land of diversity, creativity and resilience. Through music, dance, sport and art, our people have written stories that cross borders and touch hearts. Our icons are living proof that with talent, courage and purpose, we can transform dreams into legacies.



★ WHY WE WRITE BRASIL WITH AN 'S' ★

In Português, Brasil with an 'S' honours our language, our history and our identity. It connects us to our roots, our people and the true spirit of our nation.

It is Brasil. It has always been. It will always be.

OUR SAMBA-ENREDO 2026

BRASILIANITIES is more than a theme/ enredo. It celebrates who we are. It is the stories of our people, our victories and our culture. It is a tribute to the past, a reflection of the present and a promise for the future.



IVONE LARA



PELÉ



AYRTON SENNA



OUR HISTORY

From the resistance of our ancestors to the joy of our people, we honour every chapter that built Brasil.



OUR ICONS

Their talents, courage and achievements inspire generations and show the world the power of BRASILIANITIES.



OUR CULTURE

From samba to forró, from frevo to funk, our rhythms and colours express the soul of our nation.



OUR ANCESTORS

We respect those who came before us. Their strength, wisdom and spirit guide us every day.



OUR FUTURE

We dream big. We work together. We keep our traditions alive while creating new paths for the next generations.

Culture is not only what we inherit; it is what we understand, preserve, transform and pass forward.

Viva Brasil! Viva Carnaval! Viva BRASILIANITIES!