



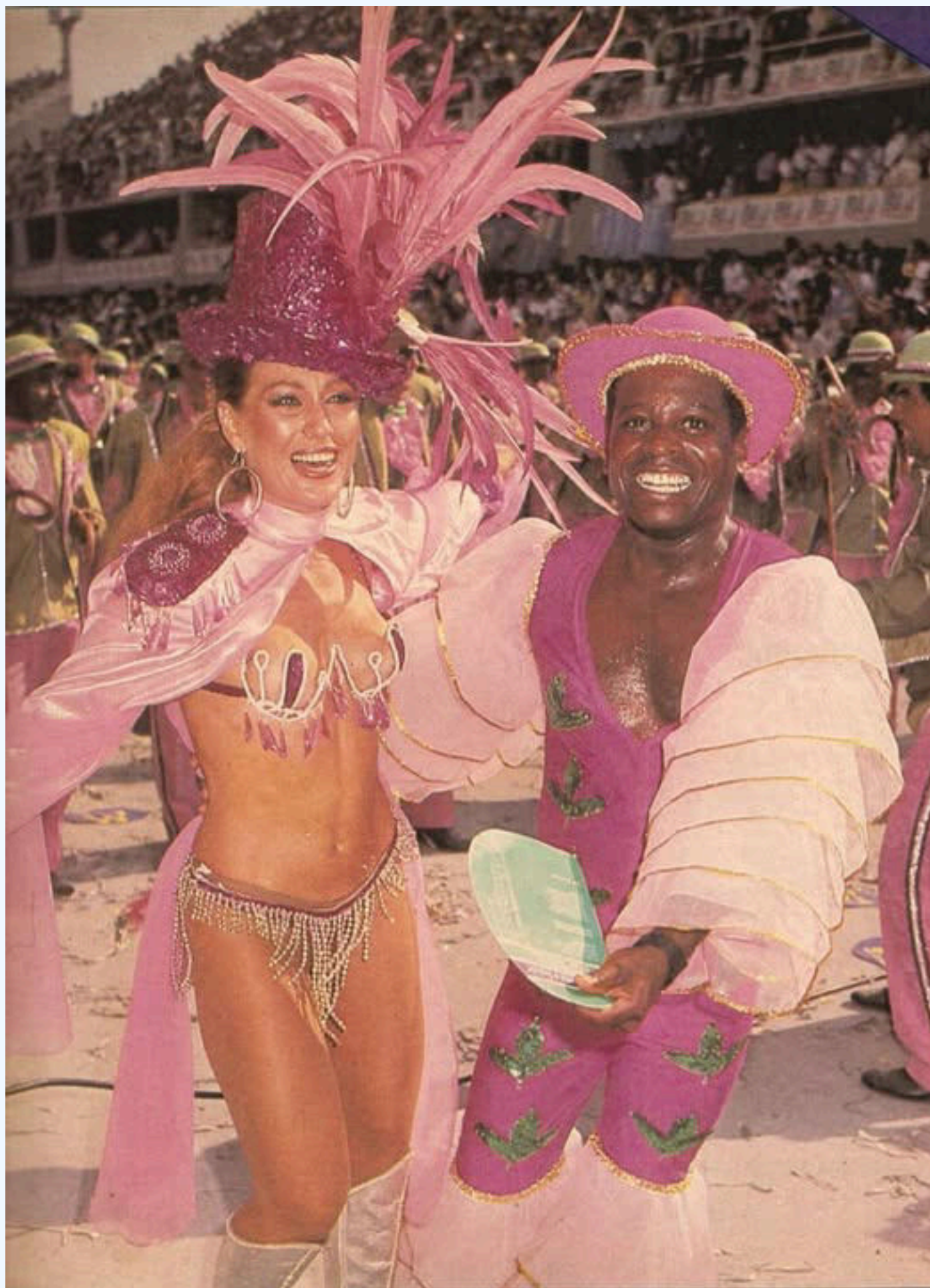
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The dancing body

Learn more The **dancing** body

When the percussion section plays, the body enters the rhythm. Samba footwork is a sophisticated expression of Carnival, connected to ancestry, bodily memory, musicality and aesthetic invention. Its roots pass through terreiros, samba circles, Carnival ranchos and the backyards of Little Africa, especially around the Praça Onze, Saúde, Gamboa and Cidade Nova. In this environment, figures such as Tia Ciata, a religious and cultural leader in Little Africa, helped preserve African traditions and make room for samba to develop as an urban expression in the early twentieth century.





In the early days of samba schools, samba dancers brought elements of Rio's streetwise style, capoeira, maxixe and popular Afro-Brazilian dances into their dancing. Gargalhada, Índio da Mangueira, Vitamina and Machado helped shape a male aesthetic marked by elegance, bodily improvisation and command of the parade avenue. Among women, Paula do Salgueiro, Maria Lata D'Água, Nega Pelé and Soninha Bumbum became benchmarks for technique, speed, elegance and improvisation in the 1960s and 1970s.

Pinah, known as the "Black Cinderella of Beija-Flor," became one of the greatest samba dancers in Carnival history. In 1978, by dancing samba in front of then-Prince Charles during an official visit to Brazil, she brought the power of the Black samba dancer beyond the parade avenue. Later, Nilce Fran, associated with Portela and Aldione Senna, who worked with Mangueira and Vila Isabel, helped preserve,

teach and spread traditional samba.

In today's generations, Bianca Monteiro of Portela; Lorena Raissa of Beija-Flor; Gaby Mendes of Mocidade; Evelyn Bastos, Luara Bombom, Maryanne Hipólito, Mayara Lima, Bellinha Delfim, Lara Perácio and Zeyla Victória show that samba footwork continues to renew itself without losing its memory: it is technique, identity, expression, ancestry and invention with every new parade.



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