

THE LM HIT PARADE

Video killed the radio star, and TV killed the cinema.

Sunday nights in Southern Africa were special. Irrespective of how we spent the day (in my case, often in the Matopos with friends at one of the many dams or Rhodes's grave), we'd have to find a radio by 8pm to listen to the LM Hit Parade. Often, we crowded into my cousin Yvonne's boyfriend's car to listen, so that the older folk didn't have to tolerate it blaring on the lounge radio.

Most times, you could hear the words to the songs, a quaint notion today. Who'd ever forget the Purple People Eater and Yellow Polka Dot Bikini? The artists included Elvis, Pat Boone, Jim Reeves, Ricky Nelson, Jimmy Rogers, Cliff Richard, The Shadows, and many South African stars such as The Dream Merchants, Mickie Most, and Billy Forest.

I loved the way the programme ended, with David Davies listing every province and region in Southern Africa, ending with his famous goodnight line. I've often tried without luck to find a recording of those memorable words.

The nearest I've found is: 'Whether you live in the Transvaal, the Orange Free State, Natal, the Cape Province, South West Africa, Bechuanaland, Basutoland, Swaziland, Rhodesia—Northern and Southern—Zululand, Namaqualand, Griqualand, the Transkei, the Ciskei, or wherever else you may be listening, this is David Davies saying goodnight to you all.' I've added those last five regions, but their order may not be correct, and I will have missed others. Someone somewhere must have a more accurate listing of David Davies's goodnight message.

In Rhodesia, we kept listening to the LM Hit Parade until TV arrived in 1960. David Davies retired in early 1969. Without detracting from his successors, I can't imagine the LM Hit Parade being the same after that.

Lourenço Marques Radio sounded so romantic, but in 1972, it lost some of that romance when The South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) took control of it.

FRELIMO closed the station in 1975, following Mozambique's independence and nationalisation of the media. In the end, it probably made little difference, because in 1976, TV arrived in South Africa.

Those were the days! LM Radio was the voice of my youth and of my generation in Southern Africa.

Since 2010, people once again could listen to LM Radio broadcast from Maputo. And while it tries to follow the style of the original LM Radio, the LM now stands for Lifetime Music, not Lourenço Marques.