

Social Issues Set the Tone of Carnival's Closing Night in Rio

Presenting strong samba enredos on social exclusion and Afro-Brazilian women, samba schools Beija-Flor and Salgueiro stand out on Monday's parade and are expected to hold onto first place.

By **Contributing Reporter** - February 13, 2018

By Beatriz Miranda, Contributing Reporter

RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL – Rio de Janeiro came alive last night as Brazil welcomed millions of people from around the world for the annual Rio Carnival. On Monday, February 12th, the last six samba schools from Grupo Especial enchanted the audience on Sapucaí.



Salgueiro parade on Sapucaí, Rio Carnival 2018 Grupo Especial, photo by Raphael David/Riotur.

Authentic samba enredos and vibrant performances marked Grupo Especial's closing night, which shed light on gender diversity, corruption, refugees, among other themes.

Fourth school to have entered the Sambódromo, [Salgueiro](#)'s parade was considered one of the favorites from last Monday, February 12th. Known for frequently bringing Africa and Afro-Brazilian themed samba enredos to the Avenida, Salgueiro impressed the spectators with a tribute to Brazil's black women.

Salgueiro's parade aimed to rescue the importance of the African heritage in the identity of the Brazilian women. Portraying figures like Isis, the Ancient Egypt's goddess, former slaver Chica da Silva and the Afro-Brazilian matriarchs, Salgueiro was the winner of Jornal O Globo's "Estandarte de Ouro" (Golden Ensign) in the category "best samba school".

Closing Grupo Especial's parade, [Beija-Flor](#) set the Sambódromo on fire with a daring samba enredo denouncing Brazil's racism and religious intolerance, through a parallel with the British horror

Among the highlights of Beija-Flor’s parade are a “carro alegórico” representing the corruption in the National Congress and a shout out against LGBTphobia, with the participation of Brazilian drag artist Pablo Vittar.

The end of the parade was marked by an unprecedented event in the Sapucaí, when crowds occupied the Sambódromo’s catwalk to sing and dance with the rhythm of Beija-Flor’s samba enredo, confirming the success of the school’s performance.

Additionally, [União da Ilha](#) samba school, the third to parade last Monday, February 12th, did not pass the Avenida unnoticed. The school from Ilha do Governador amazed the audience with a vibrant, colorful parade on the Brazilian culinary. União’s opening “carro alegórico”, which exhaled the scents of cocoa and coffee on the Sapucaí, was one of the favorite moments from Monday’s show.

The results of Grupo Especial’s 2018 championship will be announced tomorrow, February 14th, on “Ash Wednesday”.

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