Mabuygiw Awgadhaw Nawul:
Traditional and Contemporary Music and Dance
of Mabuiag Island, Torres Strait

Mabuiag Island is one of three inhabited islands in the west-central group of the Torres Strait. Urpikigupo eyedhraz is its sacred name and it had a reputation as a home of fierce warriors before the advent of Christianity in the early 1870s. The main languages spoken are the Mabuiag (old spelling) / Mabuyag (new spelling) dialect of Kala Lagaw Ya, along with Torres Strait Creole and English. Its approximate population in 2006 was 250 people and maritime industries are an important component of the local economy as it is set amidst a rich marine environment, especially hunting for dugong, crayfish and turtle. It has always had a reputation as a strong cultural island and its heritage has been well documented over the past century beginning with the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition of 1898. Today it is well respected as a community where traditional language, music and dance are very important and where artists continue to create exciting new songs and dances while honouring the past through the singing of language hymns. The music and dance documented here are examples of the strength of Ailan Kastom (Island Custom) in the Mabuiag Island community.

This recording and filming project is an initiative of the Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA), an Australian Government Statutory Authority established in 1994. Its mandate is to improve the lifestyle and wellbeing of the Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal peoples living in the Torres Strait region. It strives to achieve this by: "gaining recognition of our rights, customs and identity as Indigenous peoples; achieving a better quality of life for all people living in the Torres Strait region; developing a sustainable economic base; achieving better health and community services; ensuring protection of our environment; and asserting our native title over the lands and waters of the Torres Strait region." Cultural activities such as music and dance play a pivotal role in ensuring traditional cultural practices are maintained and celebrated with pride and the TSRA actively supports arts activities and artists. For more information see its website at www.tsra.gov.au. Partners with the TSRA on this project are local communities, Arts Queensland, the National Library of Australia and CQUniversity Australia.

NOTE: Information in these liner notes was provided by and vetted by the community.