

## The Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies

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The Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies (IPNGS) was established under the Cultural Development Act, passed by the Papua New Guinea House of Assembly on 14 October 1974. Papua New Guinea had become self-governing from Australia almost a year earlier, but independence was still about another year in the future. Today IPNGS is a national cultural institution under the National Cultural Commission Act. It moved to its present location towards the end of 1976. The distinctive welded sculptures on the outside walls and gates depict the Oroko story of Aru Aru and his journey to the moon, as told by Sir Albert Maori Kiki.

Although laws, governments, ministries, and even the location of the Institute have changed over the past four decades, the main focus has remained constant: the documentation, archiving, and promotion of Papua New Guinea cultures.

Overseen by the Director, IPNGS is divided into departments for its present three main functions: Music (5 staff), Ethnology (3), Literature (1). There are also two staff in administration, and five casual workers. Emphases have changed over the years. For example, IPNGS's prolific Film Department moved to Goroka in 1999, where it was re-established as part of the National Film Institute, another national cultural institution. Additionally, the role of the Music Department has been considerably expanded to accommodate the activities of a dance ethnologist.

Research staff members undertake research in villages and towns, or at festivals. Such research might be on specific topics, such as clan origin stories or the variety of dances performed at a particular festival, or more general survey work, such as documenting musical traditions in a particular village. While the primary focus is on traditional expressions, attention is also given to more recently developed expressions of culture, such as those performed in church or as part of widespread popular forms.

The Ethnology Department is responsible for documenting the many myths, legends, and other oral traditions found in the country. Publications have been produced in English as well as local languages, both to promote the maintenance of this important body of knowledge and to encourage vernacular

literacy.

For many years, the Literature section was responsible for promoting creative writing, especially through the running of the annual National Literature Competition. Many submissions were made for categories such as novels, short stories, poetry, radio plays, essays, etc. The results appeared in our journals such as *Gigibori*, *Bikmaus*, and *Sope*, or as separate publications. We hope to revive the National Literature Competition in the near future.

Intangible cultural heritage has long been collected in Papua New Guinea; but only recently, following the nation's ratification of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2008, has that term been used. In particular, the IPNGS Music Department has strived to develop its music archive to reflect all music-related research that has been done in the country. Although the collection can always be expanded, to a large extent this goal has been achieved.

The Music Archive presently contains about 12,000 hours of recordings on reels of tape, cassettes, discs, films, videos, CDs, and DVDs, with over 10,000 photos and 4,000 books, articles, and theses. These materials are a mixture of things collected by IPNGS staff, other researchers, commercially produced items, and historical recordings of PNG music from other archives around the world, such as those in Germany, Austria, France, Finland, Great Britain, Hungary, Australia, and the United States. These efforts in repatriation have been particularly successful. The IPNGS collection contains recordings from the present back to 1898, when the first recordings in PNG were made.

As with the other sections of the IPNGS, the Music Department has issued numerous publications. Presently, there is a series of cassette and disc recordings, a monograph series (*Apwitihi*), and a journal (*Kulele*). Our publications are widely used in the school system and have been well received overseas.

In total, IPNGS has produced about 250 publications, printed, audio, and films/videos. It has also played an important role in making materials published in languages such as German, Japanese, and local languages accessible through translations in to English or Tok Pisin.

In addition to its own activities, staff members collaborate with other institutions, such as with the National Cultural Commission in cultural mapping or the Phonogrammarchiv (Vienna) in their publication of early recordings of PNG music. Furthermore, staff members are increasingly involved in relevant international activities, such as representing PNG in the International Council for Traditional Music since 1980 and becoming increasingly involved in the governance of that organization, and participating in the World Dance Alliance and the International Association for Sound and Audiovisual Archives.

Although IPNGS has been collecting, documenting, archiving, and promoting the cultures of PNG for over four decades, the cultural diversity of the country ensures that this job has only just begun.

Photo captions:

The metal sculpture on the walls of the Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies represent Aru Aru's journey to the moon.

Sign identifying the IPNGS to the public.

Dr. Seong-Yong Park, Assistant Director-General of ICHCAP, about to inspect the archival collections at IPNGS in September 2015.

Music Archivist Gedisa Jacob in front of the air-conditioned and humidity-controlled shipping container that houses many master copies of music recordings.

Ethnomusicologist Edward Gende recording dances at the 2014 Madang Show.

Music technician Balthazar Moriguba received training in New Zealand on the digitisation of analogue audio recordings. He uses this knowledge in his ongoing work with our existing recordings.

The Papua New Guinea Music Collection, consisting of 11 cassettes of over 300 examples of PNG music, was compiled by Don Niles and Michael Webb in 1987. It was distributed by the Department of Education to all secondary- and tertiary-level schools in the country.

Dance ethnologist Naomi Faik-Simet undertaking a cultural-mapping pilot research project in Hoskins, West New Britain, 2011.

Balthazar Moriguba videotaping at the 2014 Kenu and Kundu Festival in Alotau, Milne Bay Province.