

## **CD Reviews MABULU**



**MABULU "Karimbo"  
International Reviews  
2000 - 2001**

### **MOJO**

A joyous celebration of terrific guitar playing and some attention-grabbing rapping...

### **BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE**

Funkier bass and steelier guitar, Mabulu turns out to be less subtle and more adventurous.

### **AMG EXPERT REVIEW, ALEX HENDERSON**

This excellent CD is highly recommended to anyone who is seeking something fresh and challenging from African pop.

### **REVOLUTIONSUK.COM**

Mabulu have triumphed in the face of adversity braving difficult journeys and power cuts. Despite the serious subject matter, the music is joyous, exuberant and often breathtaking. This will hopefully encourage further international releases from Mozambique.

### **TAPLAS, OUT 2000, DAVE HASLAM**

Far from being a mix-and-match affair - which you could be forgiven for expecting - Karimbo is a coherent and hugely enjoyable album, which should go some way to raising the profile of Mozambican music.

### **TOP MAGAZINE, SEPTEMBER 2000**

The music, played on electric instruments, recalls the freshness Nigerian juju once had: it dances out of the speakers and slips inside your head. A spirit of joy pervades every track.

### **WANDERLUST OCTOBER 2000**

The assembly of artists who came together for this eclectic and innovative recording had to contend with the heavy rains and consequent floods that ravaged the country earlier this year. The effect was to heighten the sense of unity and the spirit of overcoming adversity amongst musicians who have already lived through Mozambique's recent history of civil war and economic hardship. They created an uplifting and refreshing album that carries a message of hope to a people desperately in need of it.

### **THE SCOTSMAN, 25<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2000**

Producer Roland Hohberg marshalled some of the country's finest musicians and came up with a triumph, matching anything to come out of Africa recently. The result is a clever mix of old and new.

### **TIME OUT LONDON, OCTOBER 2000**

The aggregation combine the brilliantly jagged, discordance of marrabenta with the emerging sound of Mozambican rap as evinced by their new album Karimbo".

### **THE WIRE SOUNDCHECK, CLIVE BELL**

Recording continued under harsh conditions and a song about the floods was written. In spite of everything, joy radiates from every track.

### **GRAMOPHONE EDITORIAL, MARTIN SINNECK, SEPTEMBER 2000**

Both the musicianship and the singing on 'Karimbo' are excellent.

### **SPLENDED E-ZINE REVIEW, JENN SIKES**

*Karimbo's* creation may be more important for the musicians, and from a wider scope for Mozambique, than its widespread distribution will ever be. This music is too good, though, to be ignored, and I hope it isn't. You might not understand the lyrics, but some music doesn't really have to be comprehended so much as felt. It would be hard to imagine someone not enjoying this disc, for even lyric-driven fans will find something to love in *Karimbo*.

### **SONGLINES MAGAZINE, LARA ALLEN**

Fulfilling a dual educative-entertainment role, Mabulu address such issues as AIDS, drugs and child prostitution. They also present a strong message about the need for inter-generational tolerance and understanding. The group consists of musicians of different ages and social groups, with very different life experiences and values. The resulting adventurous merger of styles has been well received by audiences, both in Mozambique and during Mabulu's recent European tour.

### **NEW YORK TIMES, JON PARELES**

Mabulu is a multigenerational consortium that includes both smooth older crooners and young rappers influenced by Jamaican dance hall as well as hip-hop. Mozambique's own marrabenta rhythm has elements of South Africa's three-chord lilt and Zimbabwe's briskly plucked six-beat latticeworks. As Mabulu plays it, the music is a poised, sunlit web of counterpoint.

### **RHYTHM, JUNE 2001, CHRIS KING**

Now here's a fusion record to embrace. This is not some Planet Soup supergroup thrown together for a hasty session. In a fair world, this record would bust the charts like Paul Simon's *Graceland*. In this flawed world, let's at least hope that all fans of African guitar pop - and a few urban rap fans - enter into this fascinating powerhouse.

### **ROOTS, RICHARD HASLOP**

- the old meets the new in a highly attractive melding of marrabenta with rap on about the first Mozambiquean album I've ever actually paid attention to - if that says something about me, it says as much about that, and probably this, country's recording industry

### **GLOBALVILLAGE**

Recorded during the cyclones and floods that devastated Mozambique in the spring of 2000, this is a rare international outing for the country's music, mixing the urban marrabenta style with some reggae, rap, and ragga to make a melodic, joyful mix, a true intergenerational sound with a very contemporary feel.

### **RHYTHM, MARIE ELSIE ST. LEGER**

Beset by war and rains, Mozambique moves to a new beat. It's no accident that the collective completed its project or that the group - and its producer, Roland Hohberg - garnered critical praise and popular success at home and abroad. Mabulu creates a music brimming with the vitality of a resilient people. During a three-month tour to Europe, Mabulu displayed a fierce musicianship and a rhythmic pliability that proved irresistible.

## SONICNET

Elsewhere in Africa, Zimbabwe's Oliver Mtukudzi and Mozambique's Mabulu purvey a generously mellow afropop that belies the rocky political landscape of Zimbabwe and Mozambique, respectively. Mabulu's *Karimbo* was created under even more adverse conditions during the floods that ravaged Mozambique earlier this year. Yet its chattering cymbals and chiming guitars trip with almost subversive lightness.

## AFROPOP, BANNING EYRE

Few Mozambiquan acts have gained international attention, but now that the war is over, independent producers are at work to change that. Mabulu, a cross-generational group cranks out sweet local pop with a heavy dose of rumba, and now has an international release, *Karimbo*.

## DAVE HUCKER, TECHNOBEAT

Well, I must confess that apart from a few instances East African music has never really got my juices going. But there is some weird and interesting-sounding music in this release. I like the way it jumps from raggamuffin and merges into marrabenta and then back again.

## DR. RHYTHM, OCTOBER 2000

*Karimbo* by Mabulu is a showcase of the best active artists in Mozambique who have come together in a group comprised of sixty-year-old street musicians and young pups. I don't like rap in any language: it is monotonous and sounds menacing, declaimed with distaste and anger, but here it's not intrusive. There's plenty of harmonious singing and a lilting groove to most of the songs which, nevertheless, are about poverty and pain. As a mixture of traditional and contemporary sound, the album is perfect.

## POP MATTERS

*Karimbo* is an energetic introduction both to Mozambique's urban marrabenta styles and to its emerging hip-hop scene. It is inspirational as well, given the conditions out of which it was created. Its honeyed, upbeat sensibilities testify to Mabulu's abilities to reflect upon, intervene in, and ultimately transcend the harsh problems that continue to beset Mozambique.

## ANDY MORGAN

Whilst the winds were raging and the deluge was in full force, a group of local musicians huddled together in the studio of the German producer Roland Hohberg in the Mozambican capital Maputo to record a groundbreaking new album. The album has received almost unanimous approval from the critics. Mozambique is a country dearly in need of dialogue and Mabulu are living proof that it's good to talk but it's even better to dance!



**Mabulu**  
**"Soul Marrabenta"**  
**International Reviews**  
**2001 - 2002**

## THE TIMES

'Floods and famine may have made Mozambique one of the world's poorest countries, but the area has always been rich in musical culture. Mabulu is a mozambican

group that unites the grand old men who once forged the local dance rhythm known as marrabenta and the nation's current hip-hop lions. If you loved the Bhundu Boys you will appreciate Mabulu's sun-baked, hypnotic guitar patterns, while the rapping of Chiquito adds an exciting contemporary edge.'

## FROOTS

'Immensely likeable and individual sound - open, live, dynamic, combining swoony sax and vocal melodies with meaty, jumpy dance rhythms - showing that this wonder group from Mozambique's first album was no fluke. Developments since last year's visit to London include a new extended line-up with veteran lead singer Lisboa Matavel's former great rival for the 'king of Marrabenta' title, 73 year-old Dilon Djindji, putting old differences aside and signing up. Even before his arrival, the range of vocals at Mabulu's disposal was as rich as could be imagined - young, old, male, female, from old-style marrabenta to nipper Chiquito's hip-hop, an extraordinary repertoire of vocal effects possible.'

## EVENING GAZETTE

'one of Africa's latest musical phenomena. The band have been steadily gaining a big reputation right around the globe after the release of their debut album "Karimbo" and latest offering "Soul Marrabenta" shows how they have matured.

## AMAZON. CO. UK

'lovely...artfully recorded...you feel as though you're surrounded by the musical action.'

## HULL DAILY MAIL

'The latest exciting musical talent to come out of Africa.... Soul Marrabenta distils the vibrancy and dynamism of Mabulu's live performances and takes it to new heights with consistently breathtaking tracks.'

## STRAIGHT NO CHASER

'trademark soulful singing, socially conscious rap and sparky guitar stylings... a more organic feel... with different elements mixing in naturally'

## BOSTON TARGET

'a very special sound, reflecting a modern outlook based on a strong sense of African tradition'

## WANDERLUST, PAUL MORRISON

'What holds this marvellous album together as it dances from style to style is a common sense of purpose, namely a celebration of life in Mozambique, one of the world's most troubled countries...Mozambique is a nation finding its voice, and the sound the world should hear is Mabulu.'

## EVENING COURIER

'Mabulu combine the country's traditional sounds with their own progressive development to large a harmonious mix which has won followers worldwide'

## CNN INSIDE AFRICA

'a passionate expression of Mozambique's past and future'

## MUSIC NET PORTUGAL

É notável como por vezes músicos com cerca de 50 anos de diferença conseguem um notável entrosamento. Mabulu

na língua nativa shangana significa mesmo diálogo. Um nome que reflecte a profícua comunicação existente entre dois antigos senhores da *marrabenta* (a tradicional forma rítmica de Moçambique), Lisboa Matavel e Dilon Djindji, e uma nova geração de músicos, com especial relevo para o *rapper* Chiquito. De um lado, encontra-se a experiência e o *swing* de dois protagonistas das noites escaldantes de Lourenço Marques nos anos 60, do outro lado a força das palavras do rosto do grupo *rap* Mad Level influenciado pela cultura da MTV. Mas a fórmula inovadora dos Mabulu vai além da união perfeita entre o *rap* e a *marrabenta*. A fusão é perfeita, criando um universo onde as fronteiras sonoras sul africanas, congolosas, moçambicanas e do zimbabué deixam de fazer sentido. Em termos líricos, "Soul Marrabenta" é fatídico como a história recente desta antiga colónia dominada pelas cheias, pela SIDA que vitima 1,4 milhões de moçambicanos, e pela morte recente, vítima de malária, de um dos mais jovens membros da banda, Nené, de 20 anos. Mas também é um disco carregado de esperança reflectida em "Rosita", a criança que nasceu numa árvore, antes de ela e de a mãe terem sido recolhidas por um helicóptero, durante as cheias de Fevereiro de 2000.

#### PHILADELPHIA WEEKLY

'Soul Marrabenta starts out with vocals by newcomer Nené, whose voice would recall Joan Armatrading if Armatrading were really interesting. Along with this 20-year-old are the two legends of marrabenta music who were rivals for the "King of Marrabenta" title for years but have now come together to work on this project, an expression of hope that AIDS will stop ravaging their country. Mabulu travels to rural areas of Mozambique to sing lyrics like, "Don't leave your friend alone/ When he is positive"--which, let's face it, sounds rather boring. That's why it's so surprising to hear *Soul Marrabenta*--it's such a mix of styles and instruments and vocal expression that it can't help but be danceable even on a track like "Rosita," which is about people who perished in a flood. Musically, there's the expected instruments here--African drums, guitar, mandolin--but there's also a lot of rapping, which sounds rather contemporary. The best example of this is "Elisa Mabai," written in the '60s by marrabenta king Dilon Djindji about an old girlfriend. Now the 73-year-old sings it with young Mozambique rapper Chiquito, and the collaboration is quite remarkable. All in all, this is one of the most celebratory and exciting albums of the year.'

#### THIS IS - UK

'Featuring musicians from modern day hip hop rappers to traditional marrabenta stars in their seventies gives this album a truly unique outlook and sound that has the ability to educate as well as entertain at home in Mozambique and around the rest of world.'

#### BS MUSIC

'From flood-ravaged Mozambique comes this uplifting amalgam of classic roots marrabenta (Mozambique's urban, electric dance music) and youthful rap culture. Solidarity in the face of disaster is the message here, and the music conveys it well: old school vocals float over percolating percussion and rippling guitars, spiced by rap and funk from the younger band members. Soul and spirit, along with a deep sense of cultural pride, lift this well above the level of most so-called fusion: this is real music made by and for real people.'

#### AFROPOP

'This multi-generational, multi-ethnic Mozambiquan band was recently nominated for the Newcomer award in BBC Radio 3's World Music Awards. Not bad for a country emerging from decades of civil war, and then two devastating floods, a country that has produced only a handful of band recordings during the entire history of Afropop music. Mabulu's conversation between generations is especially satisfying. Seventy-something Lisboa Matavel and Dilon Djindji are veterans of the country's colonial-era *marrabenta* sound, but they mix it up here with young voices like that of Nené and Chonyl--who provide gorgeous melodies reminiscent of the young Miriam Makeba--and Chiquito, who raps in Portuguese. When all these elements come together, as on Dilon Djindji's feature "Ulombe/Honey," it's magic. On "N'Binheto/Misfortune," António Lodingue Matusse sings a poignant tale of two brothers who help each other leave their country only to be separated by mistrust in their new home. Chiquito's rapping voice comes in to dramatize the rift. Elsewhere, topical themes abound, such as AIDS, the effects of war on children, and the story of a baby born in a tree during the 1999 floods. The music avoids sentimentality, though, remaining hopeful, intelligent, and rich with its complex sources throughout. Mabulu shows significant growth since the release of their debut CD last year. With luck, they're charting the road for a coming boom in Mozambiquan music.'