



**Critical Acclaim For
'BEATS OF THE ANTONOV'**

By hajooj kuka

“Filmed with evident courage, even rashness. . . . [Kuka’s] camera thrashes about as he dives into foxholes, and shudders as bombs detonate nearby. . . . The film . . . delivers a hopeful message . . . its main vehicle for this is music as an expression of unity and resilience. Particularly mesmerizing is . . . ‘girls’ music.”

—Mike Hale, *The New York Times*

“A true standout. . . . Eloquent. . . . Even without considering the difficult conditions Kuka worked under during much of his time in the camps, his lensing, shifting from smooth, handsomely composed shots to agitated images as he ducks for cover, captures the dignity, intelligence and joy of his subjects.”

—Jay Weissberg, *Variety*

“Unlike other documentaries depicting the wars that Sudan is waging against the many ethnicities and tribes that form its makeup, *Beats of the Antonov* focuses on a fight for identity and culture. . . . with a palpable sense of determination, kuka shows that a powerful way to fight a war when access to food and weapons is scarce is to fight by singing and dancing.”

—Basia Cummings, *The Guardian*

“Kuka has made a gripping work that presses deeply into issues of race, ethnicity and how people try to sustain their cultures, even under the most terrible circumstances.”

—Anastasia Tsioulcas, *NPR Music*

“In this film, we have a real celebration of music and culture.”

—Leonard Lopate, host, “*The Leonard Lopate Show*,” *WNYC*

“Succeeds where other documentaries and narrative films about war and suffering on the African continent often fail, in that it finds a new, genuinely interesting perspective. . . . Kuka has crafted a deeply personal but also deeply enlightening record . . . the music here really is a kind of universal language, brilliantly and beautifully conveying a kind of national identity as diverse as it is distinct.”

—Zeba Blay, *Indiewire*

“A beautiful portrait of a region with a deeply fractured identity.”

—Krishanu Ray, *The Stranger*

“*Beats of the Antonov* explores how music, singing, and dancing can shape a common identity in the midst of adversity and intolerance.”

—*Christian Science Monitor*

“This is such a different take on war zones. I found myself fascinated by it, encouraged by it as well. . . . What was special about the project is that it demonstrated that everyday life is marked not just by trauma and violence but also by the everyday rituals of singing and dancing.”

—**Marc Lamont Hill, “Huffington Post Live”**

“*Beats of the Antonov* explores how music binds a community together, offering hope and a common identity for refugees engaged in a fierce battle to protect cultural traditions and heritage from those trying to obliterate them.”

—**Dave Walker, *The Times-Picayune***

“Thanks to remarkable access, the film reveals how challenge and conflict can bring the best out of people.”

—**Tambay A. Obsenson, *Shadow and Act***

“Kuka paints a beautiful picture of music, war and identity in the Blue Nile and Nuba regions, and the film is unlike anything I have ever seen. *Beats of the Antonov* and its infectious music stayed with me for days.”

—**Dylan Valley, *Africa Is a Country***

“Equal parts war documentary and visual ethnomusicology project. . . . a nuanced portrayal of cultural identity, the trauma of civil war, and what it means to be Sudanese today.”

—**OkayAfrica**

“A vivid picture of culture and identity in times of war. . . .while war dictates the rhythm of their lives, the resilience of the community—and their music making—shines through.”

—**Andrew Kaggwa, *The Daily Vox***

“A phenomenal meditation of identity in Sudan, a film that masterfully engages with the documentary form in a way that avoids characterizing the circumstances of its subjects as idyllic or hopeless. It’s an incredibly nuanced, respectful and power piece.”

—**Jeremy Elphick, *4:3***

“The most uplifting film at the Durban International Film Festival . . . a celebration of the human spirit and of the Sudanese people.”

—**4rfv.com International Broadcast News**