



Youssou N'Dour: I Bring What I Love

Director: Elizabeth Chai Vasarhelyi, USA, 2008, 102 minutes

Arguably the most famous African musician of all time, once described by Rolling Stone magazine as 'a singer with a voice so extraordinary the history of Africa seems locked inside it,' Youssou N'Dour bridges two worlds; he is both an international pop star and a West African griot (traditional musical storyteller). Over the past thirty years N'Dour has collaborated with superstars like Bono, Neneh Cherry, and Peter Gabriel, while touring and performing incessantly before millions of passionate fans. An advocate for human rights, the Grammy-winning tenor has become an inspiration for millions.

A devout Sufi Muslim, in 2004 N'Dour released 'Egypt', a deeply personal and religiously expressive album. Through this music, he aimed to promote a more tolerant face of Islam. It was a bold move at a time when so much dialogue in the West about Islam centred on Islamofascism and religious intolerance. At home in Senegal, N'Dour faced a totally different problem. He was criticized for performing and releasing his album during Ramadan and, almost instantly, conservative Senegalese rejected the album. It was denounced as blasphemous; he simply wasn't religious enough. Merchants quickly returned their copies and N'Dour became a centre of controversy. Director Chai Vasarhelyi and her crew follow N'Dour over the course of two years, filming events and concerts in Africa, Europe, the Middle East, and America. She tells the story of how an unflappable N'Dour faces these challenges and eventually wins over audiences both at home and abroad.

Youssou N'Dour: I Bring What I Love opens the door to a life that began humbly, out of traditions and the human desire to share one's joy of music, and rose to become one of Time Magazine's 100 Most Influential People in the World. N'Dour's unwavering warmth and astonishing talent in concert will be a wonderful surprise for first-time listeners and a great treat for his many fans.

*Winner, Special Jury Prize, Middle East International Film Festival
Winner, Audience Award, São Paulo International Film Festival*

DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY

In 2003, at just 20 years of age, Elizabeth Chai Vasarhelyi won an award at the Tribeca Film festival for *A Normal Life*, along with Hugo Berkley. After this sensational debut, she worked as assistant director to Mike Nichols on *Closer*. In 2007, she began to work on *Youssou N'Dour: I Bring What I Love*, which had its world premiere in 2008 at IDFA.

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