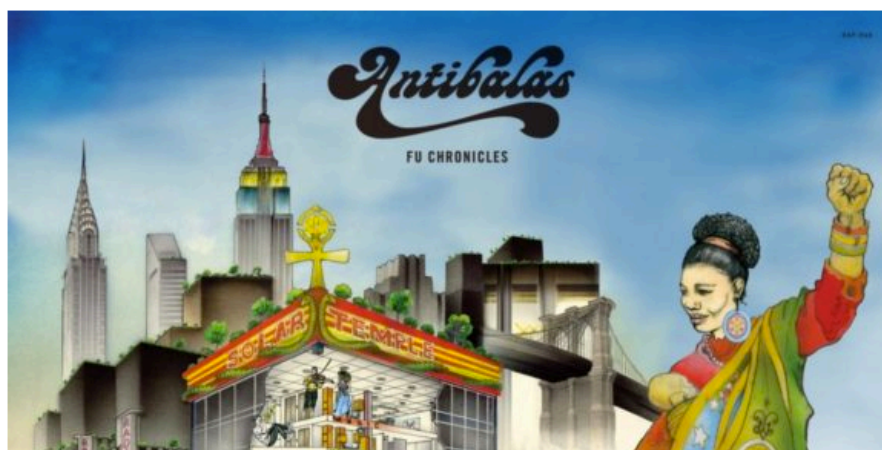


ANTIBALAS GIVES VIBRANT DISPLAY OF SPIRIT & SOUL ON 'FU CHRONICLES' (ALBUM REVIEW)

🕒 February 6, 2020 👤 by [Shawn Donohue](#) 📁 in [Album Reviews](#), [Reviews](#) [No Comments](#)



The Williamsburg, Brooklyn based Afrobeat band Antibalas are celebrating their twentieth year as a collective with the release of *Fu Chronicles*, proving they are still on top of their game and even improving as a unit. While the band is known for their exuberant live shows, this six song collection from Daptone Records is a vibrant display of what Antibalas does best; fusing the spirit and soul of Fela Kuti with modern funky sounds.

The tone is set right from the strong opener "Amenawon" which contains bright horn lines, back up harmonies and excellent percussion over its eight minute run time. Lead singer Duke Amayo leads the charge on "Lai Lai" as just a shaker and weaving guitar line start proceedings before huge horn and vibe breaks crash around a bouncing bass line.

Amayo moves more to the background after an African proverb starts "MTTT Pt12", which contains the most dynamite horn work on an album full of it. Baritone saxophonist and band leader Martin Perna blows the way forward adding rumbling low end, percussion and electro keyboards to the mix.

Oddly the album's first single "Fight Am Finish" is the least engaging track as the band spaces out its tight groove to a slower pace while urging to never give up the fight. Things slowly start to pick back up from the percussive foundation of "Koto" layering in strings, hypnotic horns and chants dealing with gentrification of their hometown.

The large group (Perna – Baritone saxophone, Amayo – Vocals, congas, percussion, Jordan McLean – Trumpet, flugelhorn, Marcos J. Garcia – Guitar, vocals, Eric Biondo – Trumpet, Marcus Farrar – Shekere, vocals, Reinaldo de Jesus – Congas, Timothy Allen – Guitar, Will Rast – Organ, electric pianos, synthesizers, Raymond James Mason – Trombone, Kevin Raczka – Drums, Raja Kassis – Guitar, Justin Kimmel – Guitar, Bass, Morgan Price – Tenor Saxophone, Jackie Coleman – Trumpet) close the *Fu Chronicles* with powerfully fluid excursion titled "Fist of Flowers", which is highlighted by a ripping trumpet solo.

While Antibalas has been at this for twenty years now, time has not dulled their senses, mission or talent. *Fu Chronicles* ranks with their best as Perna, Amayo and crew keep pumping out the jams, and fighting their funky, dance floor filling fight.