

# In the Life of MUSIC

**In the Life of Music** is a powerful intergenerational tale that explores love, war, and a family's relationship to: 'Champa Battambang,' made famous by Sinn Sisamouth (The King of Cambodian Music). Exploring three different decades, it depicts the lives of people whose world is inevitably transformed by the emergence of the Khmer Rouge Regime.

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## the FILMMAKERS

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Directors:  
**CAYLEE SO,  
VISAL SOK**

Writers:  
**DANE STYLER,  
CAYLEE SO**

Cinematography by:  
**DAVID D. RIVERA ROJAS**

Producer:  
**NEARDEY TRINH,  
CAYLEE SO,  
PRACH LY**

Film Editing by:  
**FRANK MARTINEZ**

Original Music by:  
**GAVIN KEESE**

Sound Design and  
Re-recording Mixing by:  
**YU-TING SU**

Executive Producer:  
**BAO HUYNH,  
ASMA JAFIR,  
KOLAP VANNY,  
SEREY VANNY,  
SOPHAL EAR,**

**CHANDA KIEP,  
SOTHEAROS KIEP  
LUIS MARTINEZ,  
BRIAN LEE**

VFX Supervisor:  
**SINA SAN**

Film Colorist:  
**SCOTT BRADBURY**

Associate Producer:  
**JOHNNY MAM**

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## the CAST

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Vandarith Phem  
**CHY**

Sreynan Chea  
**PHALLY**

Roza Las  
**MALIS**

Thouna Kanika  
**BOPHA**

Arn Chorn-Pond  
**MITH**

Ratanak Ben  
**BEN**

Ellen Wong  
**HOPE**

Sovuthy Ker  
**VANNY**

Cheat Sovannareach  
**NANG**

Bopha Som  
**MING BO**



*In the Life of Music* tells the story of how one song "Champa Battambang," made famous by Sinn Sisamouth (the King of Khmer Music), plays a role in the lives of three different generations. It is a powerful intergenerational tale that weaves its way through 3 different decades, depicting the lives of people whose world is inevitably transformed by the emergence of the Khmer Rouge Regime.

# *In the Life of* MUSIC SYNOPSIS

**1968:** In the small village of Kampong Cham, Cambodia, a group of musician ride into town to give a small rare impromptu fundraising concert, thus igniting profound excitement and wonder from all the townspeople. Bearing the burdens and responsibilities of traditions, two strangers: CHY, 17, and PHALLY, 16, seeks to overcome their obstacles, and find a way to attend the concert, a concert in which music and love will be forever intertwined.

**1976:** MITH, 40's, a once famous singer now living under the terror of the Khmer Rouge Regime, must keep his identity a secret in order to escape the execution of all former artists. Under the guise of night, surrounded by the scent of death, can music survive?

**2007:** Hope, 30's, journeys to Cambodia, the place of her birth and the place her mother used to call "home," where along the way, one's quest for identity will give voice to a generation who must reconcile the past with the present in order to shape the music of our future.





## Behind the Music: **Sinn Sisamouth**

*Sinn Sisamouth* was an influential and highly prolific Cambodian singer songwriter from the 1950s to the 1970s. He is widely considered the "King of Khmer music." Sinn Sisamouth, along with Ros Serey Sothea, Pan Ron, Mao Sareth, and other Khmer artists, was part of a thriving pop music scene in Phnom Penh that combined elements of Khmer traditional music with rhythm and blues and rock and roll. Sisamouth was well known for his crooning voice, often compared to the voice of Nat King Cole with the stage presence of Frank Sinatra and Elvis Presley. In 1965, Sisamouth's song "Champa Battambang" was the first content played on Khmer Republic Television. Sisamouth was a leader of many musical trends, like moving traditional Khmer music and romantic ballads to Latin jazz, cha cha cha, agogo, and eventually psychedelic rock. Unfortunately, like many singers and songwriters of his time, Sinn Sisamouth disappeared during the Khmer Rouge era; the date and the circumstance of his death has never been confirmed.

*In the Life of*

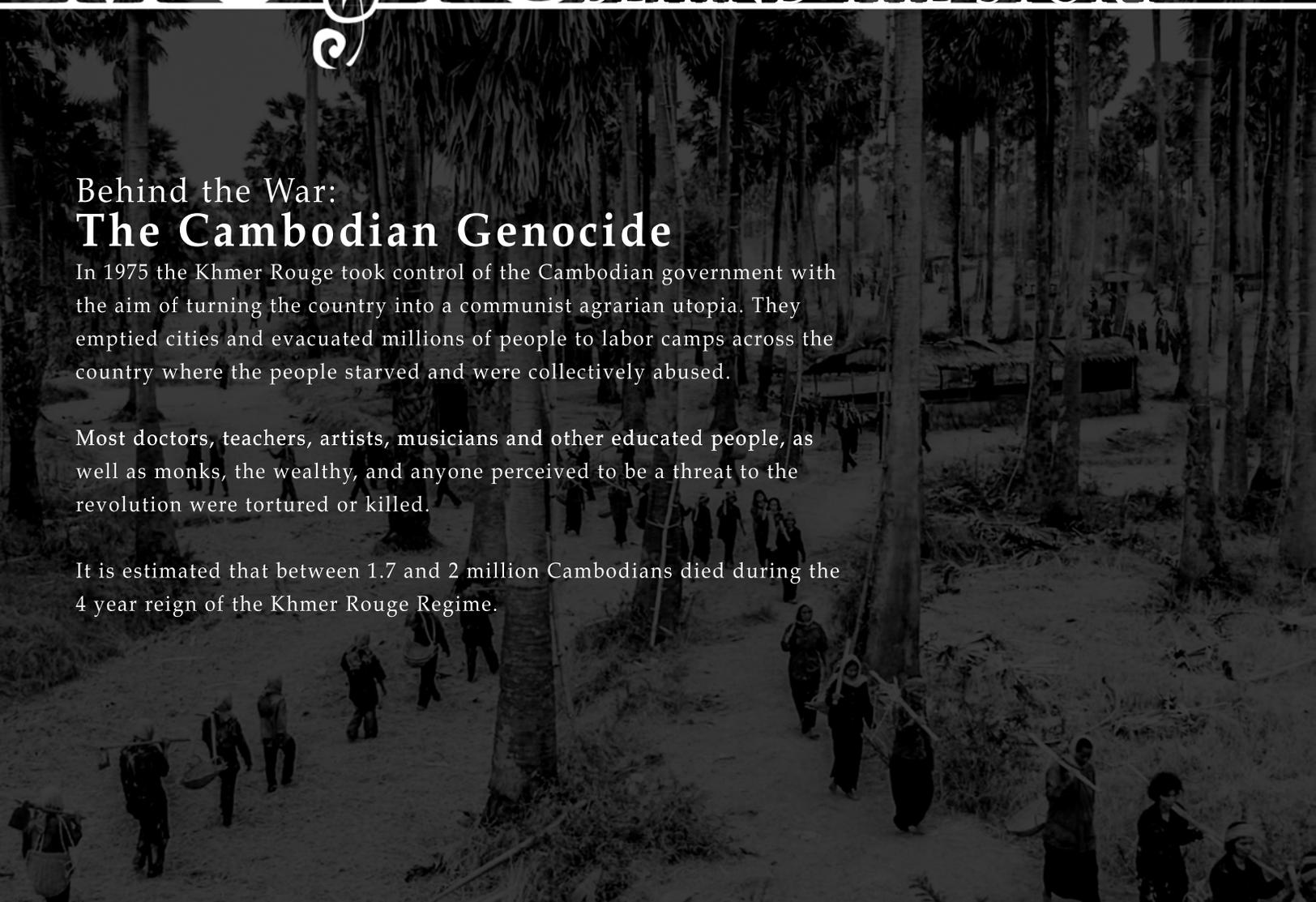
# MUSIC BEHIND THE STORY

## Behind the War: **The Cambodian Genocide**

In 1975 the Khmer Rouge took control of the Cambodian government with the aim of turning the country into a communist agrarian utopia. They emptied cities and evacuated millions of people to labor camps across the country where the people starved and were collectively abused.

Most doctors, teachers, artists, musicians and other educated people, as well as monks, the wealthy, and anyone perceived to be a threat to the revolution were tortured or killed.

It is estimated that between 1.7 and 2 million Cambodians died during the 4 year reign of the Khmer Rouge Regime.



## ARN CHORN-POND

Arn Chorn-Pond, founder of Cambodian Living Arts (CLA), is a Cambodian-American refugee and the subject of the critically acclaimed book, *NEVER FALL DOWN* (HarperCollins, 2012). Arn was featured in the Emmys / Television Academy-nominated documentary, *The Flute Player*. He is an internationally recognized human rights leader, speaker, and trainer. A former Director of Youth Programs for the Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association in Lowell, Massachusetts, Arn served as a special advisor on Cambodian affairs for Clear Path International in early 2001. Arn currently resides in Cambodia, where he continues to be chief advocate of Cambodian Living Arts supporting elder Cambodian musicians and artists to pass on their invaluable practices to the younger generation.

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# MUSIC ACTOR HIGHLIGHT

## ELLEN WONG

Ellen Wong was born in Toronto, Canada to Chinese Cambodian parents. Despite an early love of acting, she was persuaded to follow a more traditional path and studied Radio and Television Arts at Ryerson University. She went on to work behind the scenes on local film and television sets until her first trip to Cambodia changed her life. While there, she was greatly affected by the children she met - their free spirits, drive and creativity inspired her to follow her own dreams. She is known for her roles as Knives Chau in the 2010 film *Scott Pilgrim vs. the World*, Jill "Mouse" Chen in The CW's series *The Carrie Diaries*, Kim in *The Void - Movie*, Misaki in *Dark Matter*, and Jenny Chey in the Netflix series *GLOW*.



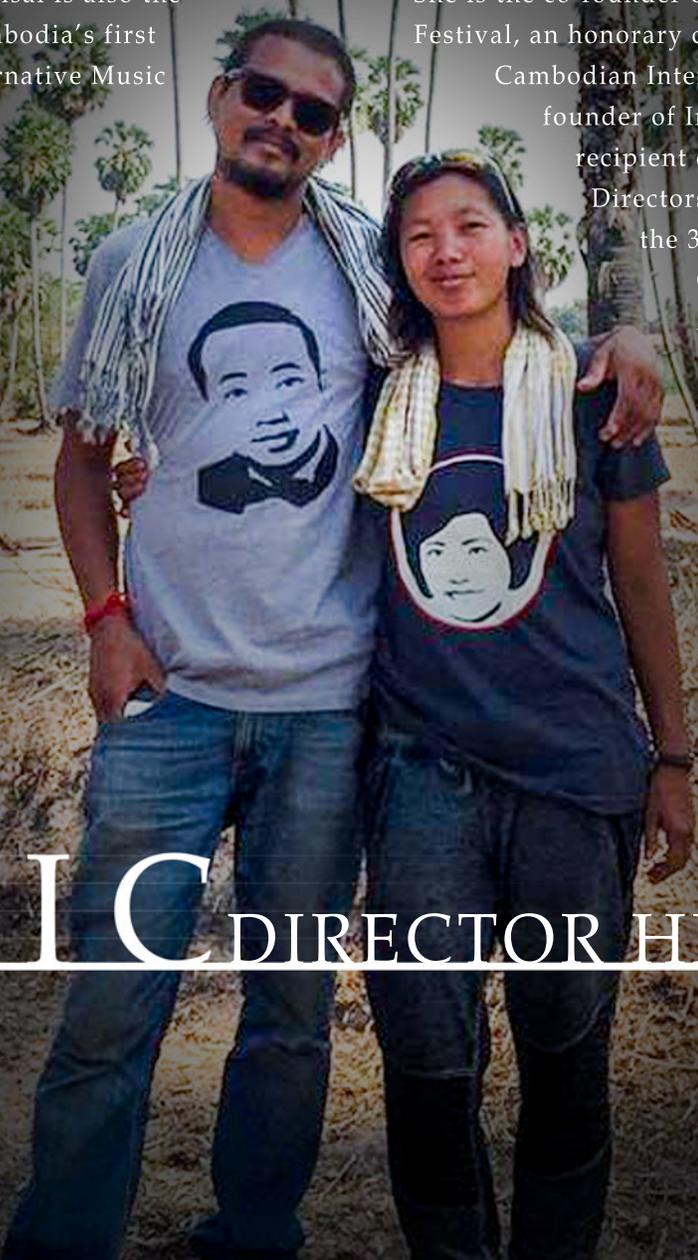
## SOK VISAL

Sok Visal is a Cambodian-French filmmaker and music Producer who is always passionate about the rich history and the promising future of Cambodia. He co-directed his first feature film in 2013, the road trip comedy KROAB PICH which was screened at a few festivals around the world. And then he directed Cambodia's first LGBT comedy POPPY GOES TO HOLLYWOOD which was selected by Busan IFF 2017. His latest co-directorial feature "In the Life of Music", a US-Cambodian co-production, will premiere at the beginning of 2018. Visal was the director of CHAKTOMUK SHORT FILM FESTIVAL 2015 and is the Motion Picture Ambassador for Cambodia for the LUANG PRABANG FILM FESTIVAL. Visal is also the founder of KlapYaHandz, Cambodia's first Cambodian Hip Hop and Alternative Music label.

## CAYLEE SO

Caylee So was born in a refugee camp in Thailand on September 17th 1981, just after her parent's escape from the reign of Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge regime in Cambodia. When she was just three years old, her family immigrated to the United States. She grew up in Northern Virginia where she spent most of her youth.

In 2011, Caylee was awarded the Zonta's Women in Film grant for Most Promising Young Filmmaker. In 2012 Caylee received her MFA in Film Production at Dodge College of Film and Media Arts, having won the Best Picture and Best Director at her school's Cecil Awards that year. She is also the winner of the Director's Guild of America's 18th annual Best Female Student Director award. She is the co-founder of the Cambodia Town Film Festival, an honorary committee member of the Cambodian International Film Festival, the founder of Innovision Pictures, a recipient of the Linda Mabelot's New Directors/New Visions Award and the 32nd annual Los Angeles County "Women of the Year" Award.



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**MUSIC** DIRECTOR HIGHLIGHT