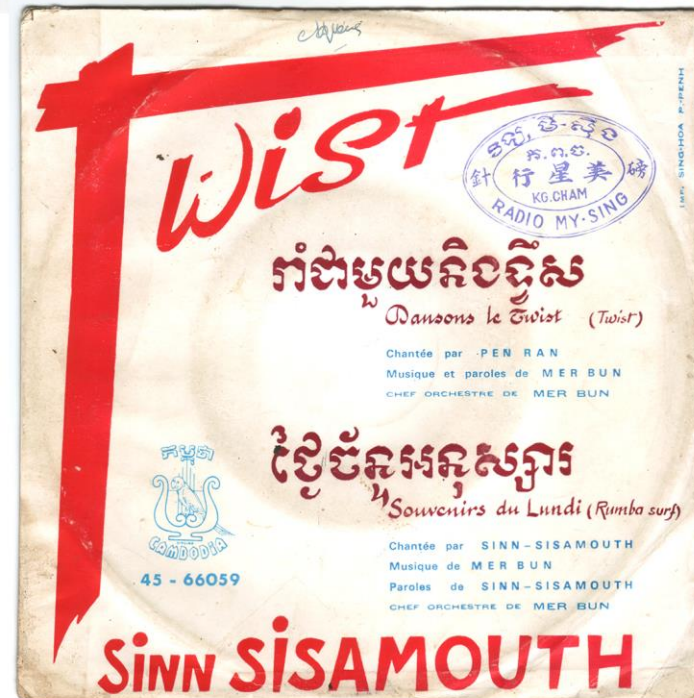


# Cambodia's Golden Voices Legacies

LinDa Saphan

College of Mount Saint Vincent, New York

January 28, 2022



# 1950s - Crafting New Sound

Traditional *mohori* ensembles had nine instruments but with Western imports new instruments were added, creating a new sound.

*Phleng Manil* (brass band since 1873)

Western musical influences in Cambodia arrived in three waves:

1-Early French influence of folk music

2-French Yé-Yé

3-Anglo-American music.

Each of these waves was linked to the political regime of the time: the chanson was popular during the French Protectorate; Yé-Yé was adopted by urban youth seeking new forms of expression in the years following Cambodia's independence; and Anglo-American music was associated with the U.S. Army presence in Vietnam.

From *Bot Borann* to *Plaeng Samay* or *Samay Domneup*



Chhuon Malay's "The Story of My Love" inspiration from Swan Lake



Mao Sareth's Sayonara



# 1950s - Big Bands

- Ministry of Information, Military Band, National Radio, National Bank, Navy Band...
- SKD, Sonexim, Magasin D'Etat, La Lune, Scherazade...



*au DANCING*

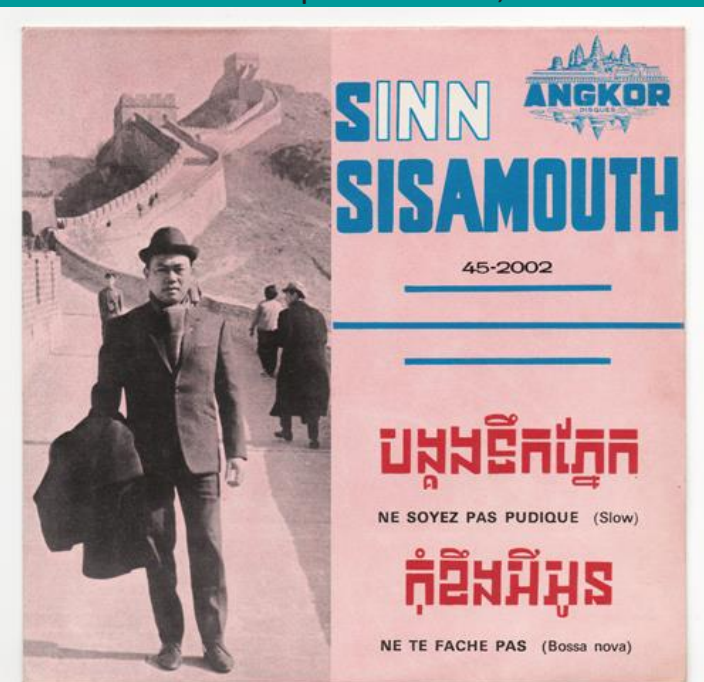
## SCHEHERAZADE !

Salle entièrement climatisée dans un cadre unique.

Un orchestre de choix  
et des chanteuses de classe.



Chum Kem: Kampuchea Twist, 1962



# 1960 – From Crooner to Rocker

The Bourgeois Urban Youth

Songwriters and composers

Has Salon

Kung Van Choeun

Malapi

Meas Samon

Mer Bun

Om Dora

Ouk Sinareth

Pov Sipor

Samneang Rithy

Sinn Sisamouth

Voy Ho

...



Kong Chantha & Kong Somoeun's Please be Kind



雨の中の二人 by Yukio Hashi 1966



# THEVARY MY LOVE

Performed by Sinn Sisamouth and Ros Serey Sothea. An obvious experimentation with the “spaghetti western” music of Ernest Gold *Exodus* theme song combined with Ennio Morricone’s Western movie soundtrack

*Surrounded by nature, gazing at the sky  
A flock of birds fly above us  
Just like Thevary my love and I  
Interacting with each other*

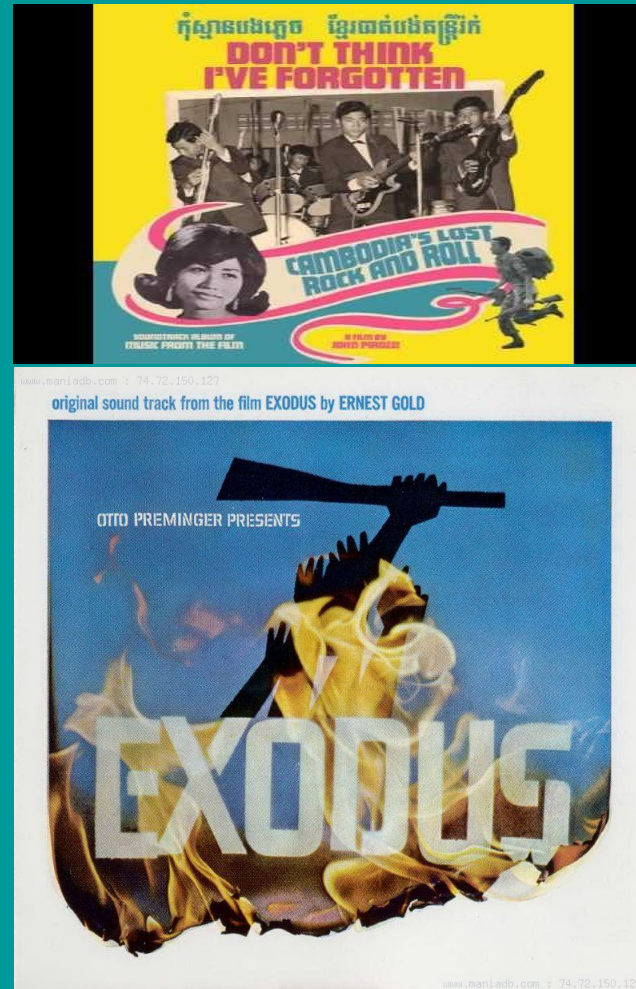
*The beauty of nature is peaceful and gentle  
Despite it's astonishing grip, it's powerless against your love  
Thevary you are more beautiful than any flower  
In this world, you're my only one*

*Every time I see you you're more beautiful  
Your sweet words make me forget the world*

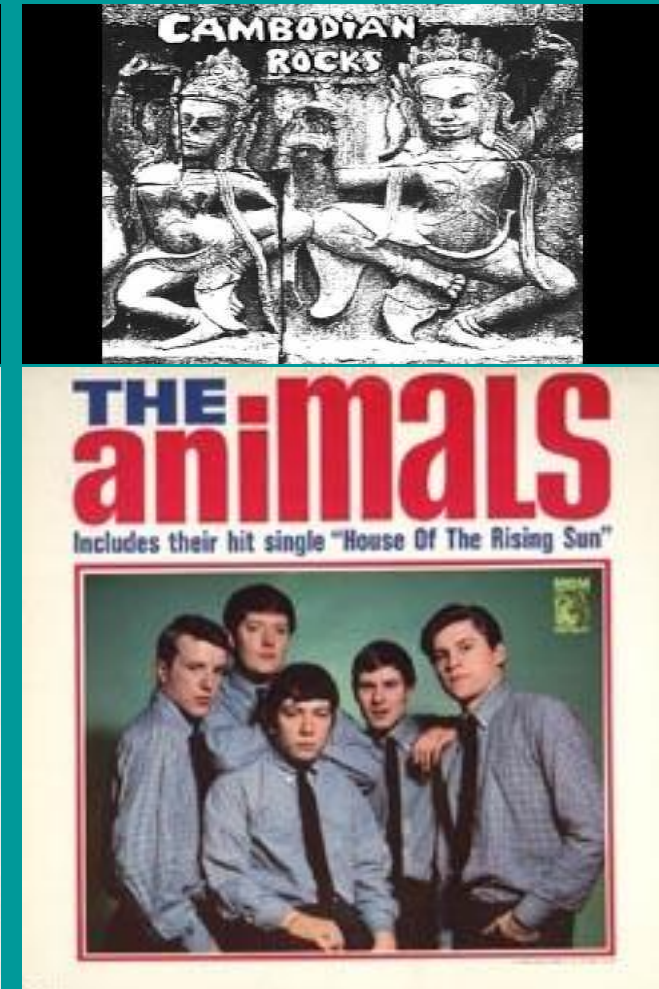
*If your love was far away, like a distant star  
I would perish*

*We pray for our wishes to come true  
From here on and through all eternity  
May we be bonded in every lifetime  
The rising sun will attest to our love*

Sinn Sisamouth’s “Thevary My Love” inspiration from Gold and Morricone.  
Sinn Sisamouth’s “I’m Still waiting” inspiration from *House of the Rising Sun*.



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# 1970s THE ROCK BANDS

**Baksei-** Cliff Richards, The Shadows, The Ventures,

**Bayon** - Kinks and Johnny Hallydays, Elvis Prestley

**Apsara** - The Beatles, Rolling Stones, Beach Boys

**Drakkar** - Santana

Garuda - Multiples

Amara - Multiples

Sakira, ...





# ENDURING LEGACY

**Performed by Ros Serey Sothea**

**Written by Voy Ho**

I'm sixteen

I'm sixteen (Please love me, please love me)

I'm sixteen (Please love me, please love me)

There are no worries! Ha ha ha ha!

Life is like flowers, giving off sweet fragrance.

La la la la la la la!

I'm sixteen (Please love me, please love me)

I'm sixteen (Please love me, please love me)

There are no worries! Ha ha ha ha!

What is love? Is it bitter, sour, or sweet?

La la la la la la la!

In a playful answer to Sothea's "I'm 16," Pen Ran recorded "I'm 31."

Oh, there were hundreds of proposals | And hundreds of times, I refused

Unfortunately how I regret | This year, I'm 31

There is no more proposal | Enraged mother, enraged father for no one is proposing

Who to be angry at? | I am not angry at anyone

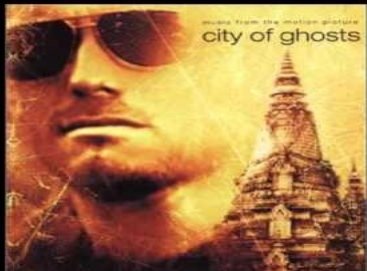
I am not angry at couples

I regret when I was 16, there were many proposals but I was not ready to have a husband | I had to fight my parents till tears were shed.

Now I am still a maiden | Now I am ready for a husband

But this year I'm 31 and I endure sorrow and grief as I watch young lovers

Do I have to look at the men in their 60s? | I rather die.



# ENDURING LEGACY

## Champa Battambang

“Champa Battambang” 1962 by Sinn Sisamouth

Oh Battambang, heart of my heart  
I said goodbye to you, a goodbye full of regret  
Since I’ve been away, my heart is riddled with regret and sadness.  
Oh Battambang, my fated one whom I’ve forever longed for  
If we are to be destined for one another  
I wish you would remember our past.  
It has been a long time, do you remember?  
You still are the breath of my life  
It has always been you that I want.  
Oh Battambang, how I long for you  
When will I ever get to see your face again?  
My heart withers away day by day  
I want Champa Battambang...



Muk's cover version



*In the Life of Music* (2018), film  
By Caylee So and Sok Visal



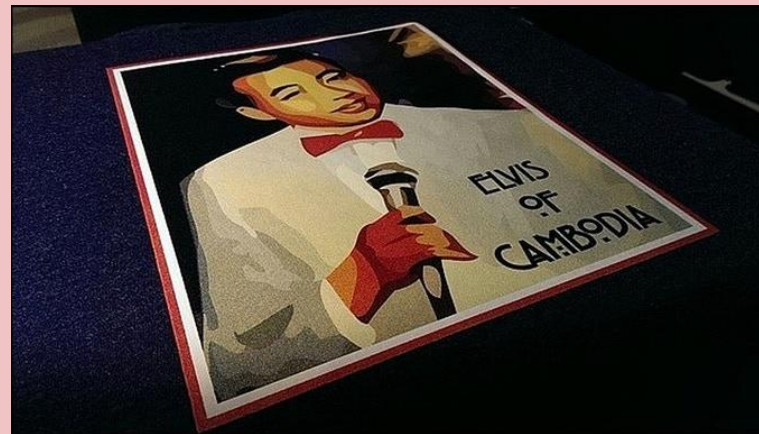
Sin Socheata's cover  
version



# ENDURING LEGACY



The life of Ros Serey Sothea in this graphic novel by Gregory Cahill



Elvis of Cambodia, a film by Chris G. Parkhurst



Setsochhata Sin - មិនស្អាចក្រោយ (No Regrets)



Vuthea វុត្តា - កាច់ម៉្លេះនាង (Kach Mles Neang) ft. Vin Vitou x DJ Chee

# ENDURING LEGACY



Beethoven and Ros Serey Sothea adorn the exterior wall of the German embassy in Phnom Penh. Art by the amazing Chifumi

Ros Serey Sothea's memorial in Kompong Speu

