



IN CINEMAS JUNE 25

# SING, FREETOWN

A FILM BY **CLIVE PATTERSON**

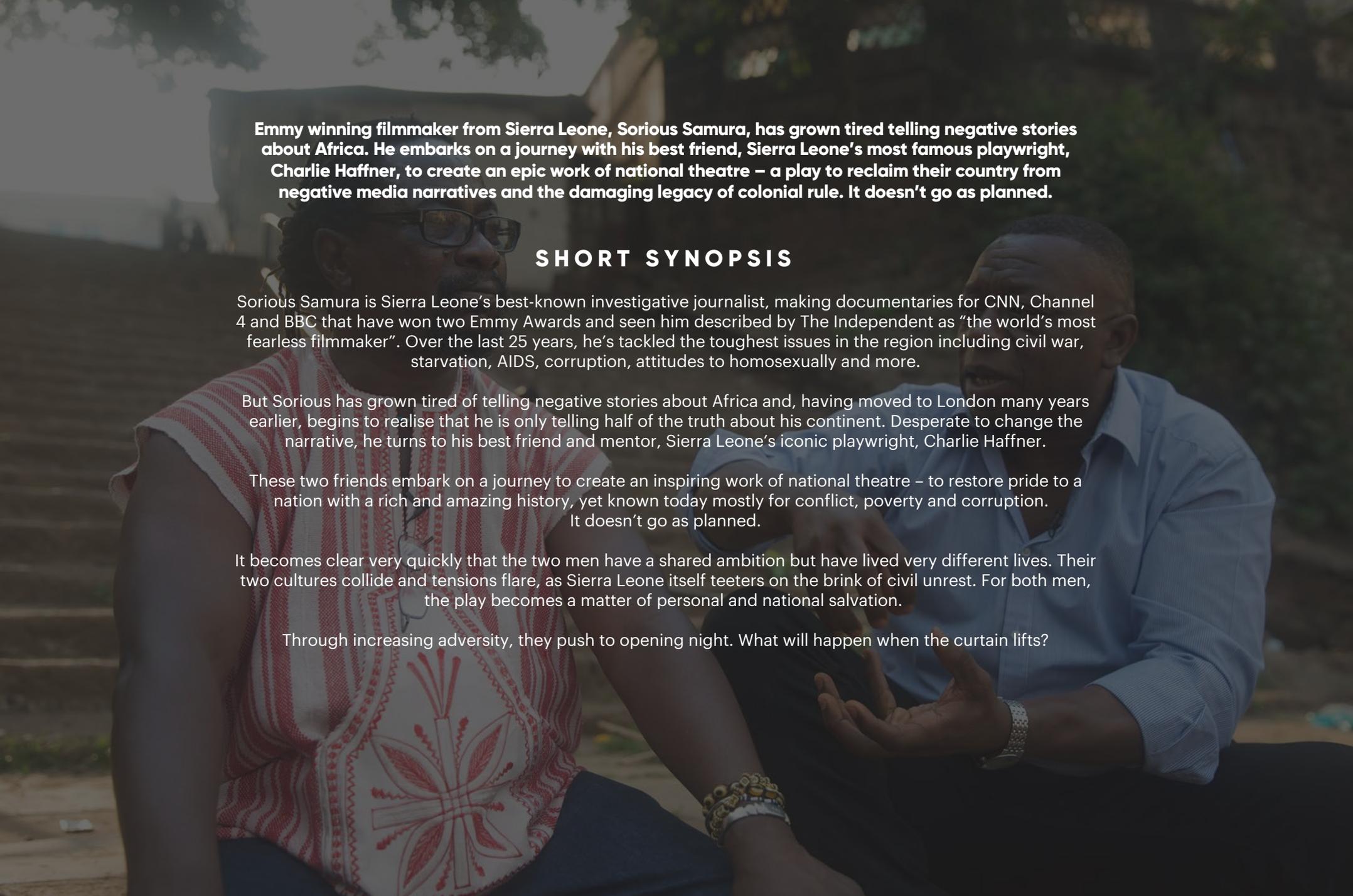
KATYBELLE PRESENTS  
AN INSIGHT TWI PRODUCTION

94 MIN | UK, US | 2021

UK PUBLICIST  
Jon Rushton  
[jon@jonrushton.com](mailto:jon@jonrushton.com)

UK OUTREACH SPECIALIST  
Micallar Walker-Smith  
[micallar@darkmatteragency.co.uk](mailto:micallar@darkmatteragency.co.uk)





**Emmy winning filmmaker from Sierra Leone, Sorious Samura, has grown tired telling negative stories about Africa. He embarks on a journey with his best friend, Sierra Leone's most famous playwright, Charlie Haffner, to create an epic work of national theatre – a play to reclaim their country from negative media narratives and the damaging legacy of colonial rule. It doesn't go as planned.**

## SHORT SYNOPSIS

Sorious Samura is Sierra Leone's best-known investigative journalist, making documentaries for CNN, Channel 4 and BBC that have won two Emmy Awards and seen him described by The Independent as "the world's most fearless filmmaker". Over the last 25 years, he's tackled the toughest issues in the region including civil war, starvation, AIDS, corruption, attitudes to homosexuality and more.

But Sorious has grown tired of telling negative stories about Africa and, having moved to London many years earlier, begins to realise that he is only telling half of the truth about his continent. Desperate to change the narrative, he turns to his best friend and mentor, Sierra Leone's iconic playwright, Charlie Haffner.

These two friends embark on a journey to create an inspiring work of national theatre – to restore pride to a nation with a rich and amazing history, yet known today mostly for conflict, poverty and corruption. It doesn't go as planned.

It becomes clear very quickly that the two men have a shared ambition but have lived very different lives. Their two cultures collide and tensions flare, as Sierra Leone itself teeters on the brink of civil unrest. For both men, the play becomes a matter of personal and national salvation.

Through increasing adversity, they push to opening night. What will happen when the curtain lifts?

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

As a person of mixed heritage, I understand what it means to exist between two cultures. When I first started working with Sorious Samura 12 years ago, I recognised that he was very much of two cultures too. He was a renowned British reporter of African affairs and he was also a Sierra Leonean expat in a foreign land. What I hadn't anticipated when setting out to make this film was how much that cultural tension would become a key feature of the unfolding narrative.

Sorious' journey is ultimately one about reconciling the divisions in his identity. It's a process which finds reflection in the tensions that arise between himself and his great friend and mentor, Charlie Haffner. It is also reflected in Sorious and Charlie's own description of the predicament facing Sierra Leone, and much of Sub-Saharan Africa – a fractured identity due to the damaging legacy of colonial rule. This multi-layered grappling with notions of identity, at both the personal and national level, is what I believe this film is about. As the world becomes increasingly mobile and migratory, I feel these themes can only become more relevant. When I look at my children – one quarter Japanese, one quarter British, one half Ugandan – it becomes even more important to foster discussion around these issues.

For Sorious, this journey was also about re-establishing his identity as a storyteller. I have spent over a decade making films with him, almost exclusively in Africa. He has become a close friend and colleague. But during this time, I noticed a growing frustration in him at the type of stories we would be commissioned to tell – often about war, corruption, disease, or other problems afflicting the continent. These were the type of negative depictions that angered him as a child growing up in Sierra Leone, to the extent that he would throw stones at international journalists. So when Sorious told me about his intention to return to Sierra Leone and work with Charlie on an inspiring new play to help his nation, I knew there was a rich and deeply personal story to be told – a story that would not only show Sorious in a fresh light, but also his deeply fascinating country.

For me personally, this film represents the culmination of 12 years working in Africa alongside Sorious. I have been privileged to discover the continent in his company and to learn from his insights and perspective. With this film, our aim was to offer international audiences a fresh view of his country. As an outsider, I have a connection to our intended audience and some of the

perceptions that prevail. I hope this film will challenge those perceptions. I wanted to create a visual and narrative experience that allowed audiences to discover the richness of Sierra Leone in much the same way I had, in the company of two incredible companions who could illuminate both the nation's culture and beauty, and inherent tensions and difficulties, with passion and eloquence.



**SORIOUS SAMURA**

# BIOs

---

## **CLIVE PATTERSON**

### **DIRECTOR & PRODUCER**

Clive Patterson is an award-winning producer and director of documentary films and is the senior producer at Insight TWI – an Emmy, BAFTA and Peabody award-winning production company in London. He has made over a dozen films with Sorious Samura which have been broadcast on the BBC, Channel 4 and Al Jazeera English. He was a founding member of the team that created the award-winning Africa Investigates series on Al Jazeera English, along with Sorious. More recently, he produced 'So Foul A Sky', a feature length documentary which premiered in competition at CPH DOX this year.

## **SORIOUS SAMURA**

### **LEAD CONTRIBUTOR & ASSOCIATE PRODUCER**

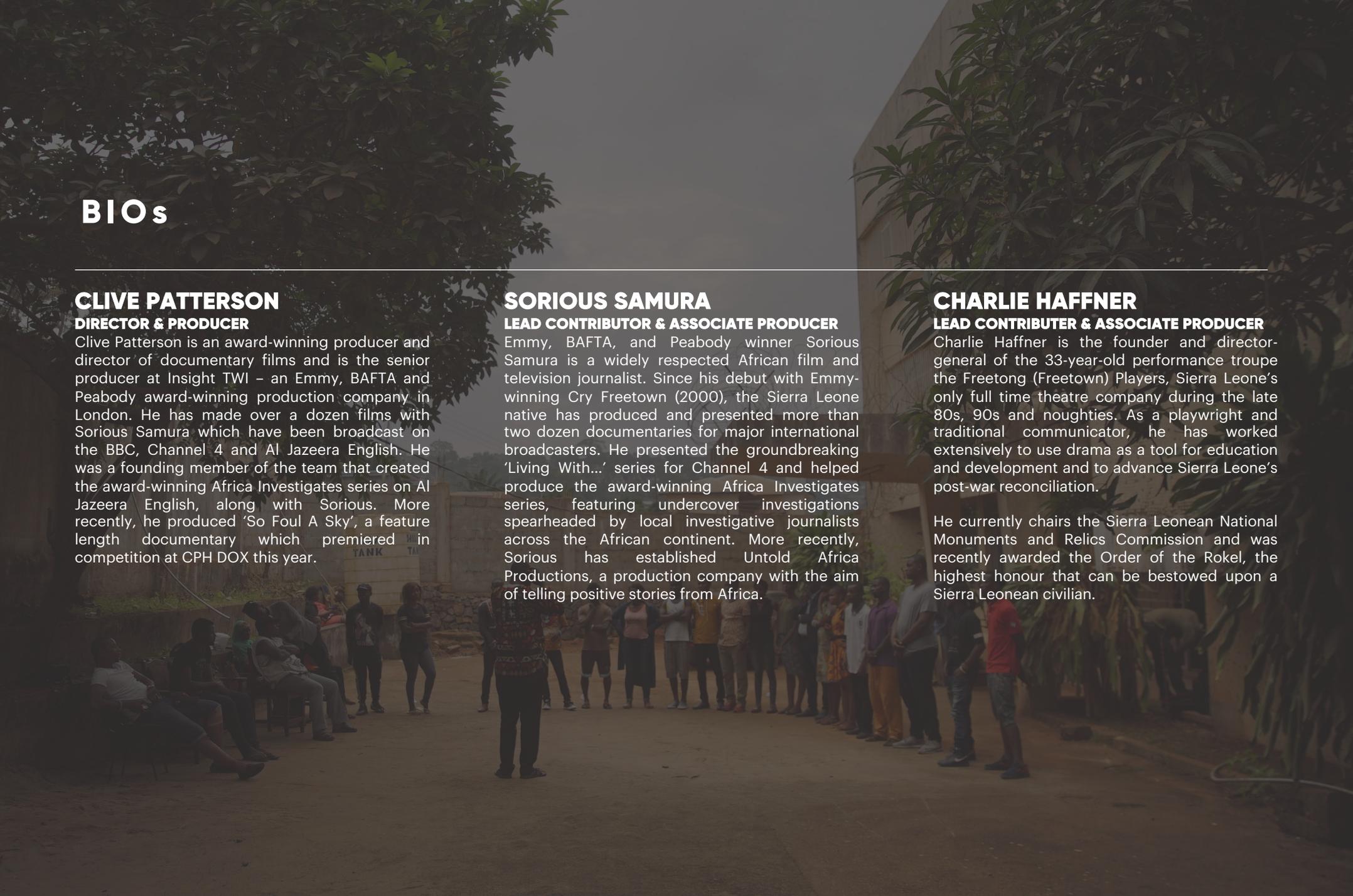
Emmy, BAFTA, and Peabody winner Sorious Samura is a widely respected African film and television journalist. Since his debut with Emmy-winning Cry Freetown (2000), the Sierra Leone native has produced and presented more than two dozen documentaries for major international broadcasters. He presented the groundbreaking 'Living With...' series for Channel 4 and helped produce the award-winning Africa Investigates series, featuring undercover investigations spearheaded by local investigative journalists across the African continent. More recently, Sorious has established Untold Africa Productions, a production company with the aim of telling positive stories from Africa.

## **CHARLIE HAFFNER**

### **LEAD CONTRIBUTOR & ASSOCIATE PRODUCER**

Charlie Haffner is the founder and director-general of the 33-year-old performance troupe the Freetong (Freetown) Players, Sierra Leone's only full time theatre company during the late 80s, 90s and noughties. As a playwright and traditional communicator, he has worked extensively to use drama as a tool for education and development and to advance Sierra Leone's post-war reconciliation.

He currently chairs the Sierra Leonean National Monuments and Relics Commission and was recently awarded the Order of the Rokel, the highest honour that can be bestowed upon a Sierra Leonean civilian.





**CHARLIE HAFFNER**

---

**KATY BARKSDALE**  
**EXECUTIVE PRODUCER**

Katy Barksdale (Katybelle Films) has over thirty years of experience working on social justice issues in the US. Her work with education leaders in Sierra Leone over the past decade and her recognition of the importance of authentic African storytelling and cultural tradition were a catalyst for her passion for “Sing, Freetown”. Her belief of film as a lever for social change has driven her production of several films, including the award-winning documentary, “John Lewis: Good Trouble”.

**NICK FRASER**  
**EXECUTIVE PRODUCER**

Nick Fraser is one of the world's most noted authorities and often quoted commentators on nonfiction film. He has worked in the documentaries field for decades, and is a leading figure in the distribution and dissemination of nonfiction film. He was formerly the Commissioning Editor of Storyville, the BBC's long-running, influential and cutting edge nonfiction program that airs documentaries made in the United Kingdom and around the world. Documentary films shown on Storyville have won many awards, including an Oscar, Sundance prizes, Peabody awards, IDFA trophies and Grierson Trust Awards.

**RON MCCULLAGH**  
**EXECUTIVE PRODUCER**

Ron is an investigative filmmaker. He began at the BBC and then founded his own production company 30 years ago, Insight News TV (latterly) Insight TWI. He has produced and exec produced many investigations in challenging places and trained hundreds of journalists to make their own films. He has won a BAFTA and two Emmys.

**JON OSSOFF**  
**EXECUTIVE PRODUCER**

Jon Ossoff served as the CEO and Managing Director of Insight TWI for seven years. Under Jon's leadership, Insight TWI produced internationally broadcast investigations and exposés of sexual slavery by ISIS, crooked judges, foreign officials who steal US funded food and medical aid, contract killers, human traffickers, war crimes, and bribery. As Insight TWI's former CEO, his production credits include films that have won major awards and been broadcast on dozens of television channels around the world.

WORLD PREMIERE

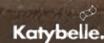


# SING, FREETOWN

A FILM BY CLIVE PATTERSON

KATYBELLE PRESENTS  
AN INSIGHT TWI PRODUCTION

KATYBELLE PRESENTS AN INSIGHT TWI PRODUCTION A FILM BY CLIVE PATTERSON "SING FREETOWN"  
EDITED BY MARK KEADY STEFAN RONOWICZ GRAEME HOLMES CLIVE PATTERSON MUSIC BY SIMON RUSSELL CINEMATOGRAPHY BY CLIVE PATTERSON  
HEAD OF PRODUCTION SELINA KAY ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS SERIOUS SAMURA CHARLIE HAFNER EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS NICK FRASER RON MCCULLAGH JON OSSOFF  
PRODUCED AND DIRECTED BY CLIVE PATTERSON



IN CINEMAS JUNE 25