

# HAF 10 Life's a Struggle

**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN:** Taiwan

**GENRE | FORMAT | LANGUAGE | RUNNING TIME:** Drama, Musical biography | Digital Format | Mandarin, English | 120 mins

**DIRECTOR:**

Tom LIN Shu-Yu

**PRODUCER:**

Emma LIN Mei-Lun

**HAF GOALS:**

Funds, Co-producers, Sales agents

**BUDGET:**

US\$ 3,500,000

**SECURED BUDGET:**

US\$ 630,000

**DIRECTOR'S FILMOGRAPHY**

2019 *The Garden of Evening Mists*

2015 *Zinnia Flower*

2011 *Starry Starry Night*

2008 *Winds of September*

**ONE-SENTENCE SYNOPSIS**

The story of late Taiwanese rapper Shawn Sung and his younger brother, living in LA as parachute kids, and how Shawn creates the most famous Mandarin hip-hop song ever, *Life's a Struggle*.

## SYNOPSIS

After accepting the Golden Melody award on behalf of his late brother, Ting agrees to an interview with ICRT to talk about Shawn “M80” Sung. In the interview, accompanied by songs that inspired Shawn, Ting discusses their life as parachute kids in America. Shawn had always been his idol, but his artistic and rebellious nature made him unwelcome in their relatives’ homes. Ting gave up the comfort of their aunt’s place and, with Shawn, moved to their own place. But freedom came with a price: a house without adults was a magnet for troubled kids. For protection, Shawn started to get involved with gangs. Although Ting, being the responsible one, disagreed with Shawn’s actions, he was also helpless. Not until an incident landed Shawn in prison, betrayed by his best friend, did the brothers understand their situation. Upon release, Shawn found that Ting has changed and had become independent of him. Full of loneliness and rage, Shawn turned to music, writing the song *Life’s a Struggle*. But just as he was starting to see a future in music, hoping to win his brother’s affection once again, Shawn discovered he had cancer...

(*Life’s a Struggle* - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GsrXRqXQHmM> )

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I have never been a huge fan of hip-hop or Shawn Sung, but his life struggles alongside his younger brother moves me deeply. Looking at their story is like holding up a mirror for me. I know the life and loneliness of parachute kids in LA: My CalArts graduate thesis film is on the same subject. I also know what it’s like to lose a talented brother since I lost my older brother to cancer. I want to tell the story of these two brothers, this minority amidst minorities in America, struggling with racism, betrayal, and loss, while their affection towards each other is tested again and again. When the moment of the loss of innocence is captured, it is raw, full of sorrow, unforgiving and angry. And that moment is Shawn Sung’s *Life’s a Struggle*, an anthem for the voiceless, an angry cry from the bottom of their hearts.

## DIRECTOR

### Tom LIN Shu-Yu

Growing up in both Taiwan and the United States, Tom LIN Shu-Yu's films have always carried a distinctive mix of cultural backgrounds. In 2002, LIN started working in the Taiwan film industry after receiving his M.F.A. from California Institute of the Arts. Since 2008, he has directed four feature films. His latest, *The Garden of the Evening Mists*, adapted from the award-winning Malaysian novel of the same name, is his first English-language film and will be released in 2019.

## PRODUCER

### Emma LIN Mei-Lun

Emma LIN Mei-Lun, born in Taipei, graduated from the National Taiwan University of the Arts – Drama Department – and has worked in the film and television industry for nearly 22 years. Moving to Beijing in 2003, she assisted communications between China and Taiwan's media industry. Returning to Taiwan in 2008, she focused her energy on cultivating talents and project developments. In 2012, she was invited to produce Taiwan's famous military film series *No, Sir!* (dir. Kun Mei-Chang, 2016). In 2017, Shawn Sung's family entrusted her with the film adaptation of his story.

## PRODUCTION COMPANY

### M80 Film Co., Ltd.

M80 Film Co., Ltd. located in Taipei, Taiwan, was founded in April 2018. The production company was established exclusively for the Shawn Sung biopic *Life's a Struggle*. All cultural innovations, original soundtracks, movie tie-in novels, and Shawn's commemorative albums, including any kind of products deriving from the film will be authorized or coproduced by M80 Film.