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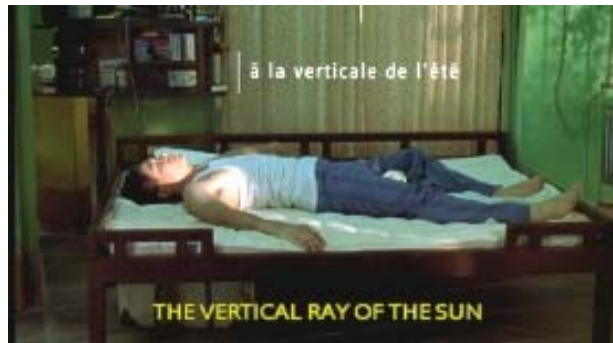


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**REVIEWS**



*"Forest-green has always been one of my favorite colors.... After watching ' The Vertical Ray of the Sun ', I am now strongly leaning towards a different shade... a sort of emerald green."*

To film lovers it would seem obvious that Tran Anh Hung, was heavily influenced by French cinema especially the work of the master director of artistically based films; Robert Bresson. Bresson was known for making films about the inherent substance of his characters... their inner beauty and surrounding environment rather than their day-to-day escapades. Of Tran's first three films, "The Vertical Ray of the Sun" most encapsulates that ideal.

## The Vertical Ray of the Sun

by Anh Hung Tran

Review of the film and DVD by Gary W. Tooze



Passive and artistically mysterious in its details, yet fully acceptable to Art film devotees, the story of three sisters flutters between multiple paths in present day Hanoi. An elliptical narrative starting with a traditional memorial on the anniversary of a Mothers' death and ending with a similar gathering commemorating the

deceased Fathers' birthday one month later. The purposeful confusion, on which three sisters stories are branching and expanding in paced detail, is easily muted in the viewers mind by the overwhelming visual splendor that just keeps blossoming on screen. This visual symphony of art is backed by a lilting traditional score by Ton That Tiet.

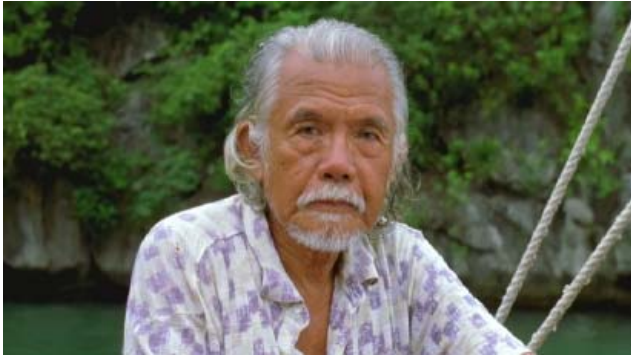


Each scene seems to overflow with beauty, whether in the surrounding environment with its crisp chirping sounds of birds, insects, rain or the unique art objects that adorn many of the households that we enter into. It is so easy to get sensual comfort from this film, that the details, which at times can be hazy, are all secondary. When they become clearer, as the film progresses, we then realize how close we have become to its characters.

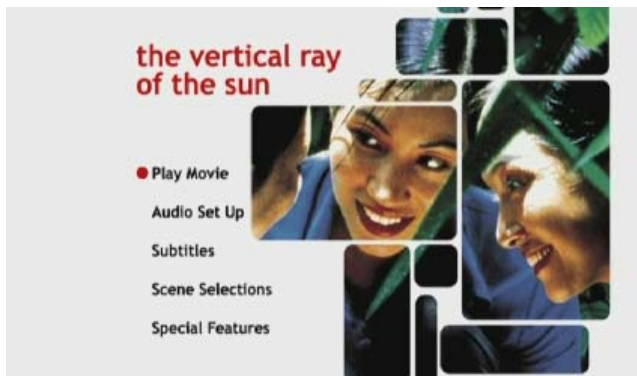


What beauty of both the scenery and subtle characterizations "The Vertical Ray of the Sun" evolves into a masterpiece of art. Awash in multiple shades of green it left me mesmerized. If "red" is the benchmark color for director Stanley Kubrick, then it surely must be "green" for Ahn Hung Tran.

*"I wanted my film to feel like a caress,"* Tran told Trevor Johnston of the London Independent. *"It had to have a gentle smile floating through it, a sort of floating feeling."* He wanted to find a style, he said, *"which didn't present the drama as a series of emotional problems for the various couples"*. In fine-tuning that style he has left us with a poetic masterpiece that I am anxious to revisit ★★★★★ out of ★★★★★ .



### DVD and Film Details



The Columbia/Tristar DVD is perhaps one of the most beautiful I own. Anamorphic with stirring, sharp visuals and removable English subtitles. The Dolby Digital 2.0 Surround is crisp. Not much to comment on the extras; a few trailers and star/director filmographies.

The artistic overtones are so thoroughly encapsulating I was visually stunned by the whole thing. Yes... I recommend the purchase, even if viewing for only the cultural imagery as one might view a "Baraka" or "Koyaanisqatsi".

★★★★★ out of ★★★★★

### Credited cast overview:

Tran Nu Yên-Khê .... Lien  
 Nhu Quỳnh Nguyễn .... Suong  
 Lê Khanh .... Khanh  
 Quang Hải Ngô .... Hai  
 Chu Hưng .... Quốc  
 Mạnh Cường Trần .... Kiên  
 Lê Tuấn Anh .... Tuấn  
 Ngọc Dung Lê .... Hương

#### Also Known As:

At the Height of Summer (2000) (International: English title)  
 Summer Solstice, The (2000)  
 Vertical Ray of the Sun (2000) (International: English title)  
 À la verticale de l'été (2000) (France)  
 MPAA: Rated PG-13 for thematic elements and some sex-related material.  
 Runtime: Australia:113 / Denmark:112 / France:112 / Spain:112  
 Country: France / Germany / Vietnam  
 Language: Vietnamese  
 Color: Color  
 Sound Mix: DTS / Dolby Digital

### Technical Information

#### Release Information:

Studio: Columbia/Tristar Studios  
 Theatrical Release Date: January 1, 2000  
 DVD Release Date: December 18, 2001  
 Run Time: 112 minutes  
 Production Company: Columbia Tristar Home  
 Package Type: Keep Case

#### Aspect Ratio(s):

Widescreen anamorphic - 1.85:1

#### Discographic Information:

DVD Encoding: Region 1  
 Layers: Dual  
 Available Audio Tracks: Vietnamese (Dolby Digital 2.0 Surround), English (Dolby Digital 2.0 Surround)  
 Available subtitles: English

#### Edition Details:

- Region 1 encoding (US and Canada only)
- Color, Closed-captioned, Dolby, Widescreen
- Theatrical trailer(s)
- Widescreen anamorphic format

Certification: Australia:PG / Finland:S / France:U /  
Hong Kong:IIA / Spain:13 / Sweden:Btl / USA:PG-13



Send mail to [GaryTooze@dvdbeaver.com](mailto:GaryTooze@dvdbeaver.com) with questions or comments about this web site.

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