



## A TREE OF PALME

136 minutes, RATED TV 14 VL (ADV Films)

### I ONLY WANT TO BE "HUMAN"...TO BE "ALIVE"

A journey of soul seeking for a robot with dreams of becoming human.

This is a film created, directed and written by Takashi Nakamura. Known for his work as animation director for Katsuhiro Otomo's "Akira", key frame animator for "Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind" and "Macross: Do You Remember Love?"

The work of Takashi Nakamura is well known in the Japanese anime industry and his work on "A Tree of Palme" is definitely a highlight in his career.

Originally planned as a television series, "A Tree of Palme" took seven years to plan and three and a half years to produce.

With many animation going digital, this film was created almost entirely of cel animation.

The background art in this film was created by art director Mutsuo Koseki, known for his works on films such as "Laputa: Castle in the Sky" and "Grave of the Fireflies", "A Tree of Palme" is a film that will be known for its production values.

As for the storyline, Nakamura's goal was to do something different from what was out there in Japanese animation

and to make a film that would be about a state of soul that each of us have and depending on the viewer, will have their own interpretation of their feelings of the film.

Needless to say that despite the film looking very childlike, this film is anything but.

The storyline encompasses a planet with three regions. The World above called Touto, the world of land called Arcana and the world below called Tamas.

People believe that Touto is a place where Gods live. Arcana is the land where most people who work in factory towns reside. Tamas is a region where tribes live in and in Tamas is a giant Kooloop tree called Soma which ingested the memories of ancient civilizations.

The storyline of "A Tree of Palme" revolves around a robot named Palme who was created from the sacred Kuroop tree.

One day, a mysterious woman gives Palme the egg of Touto that gives him life and puts him on a crusade to become human.

Joining him in his crusade are a group of misfits that through his journey will also be doing some soul-searching along with Palme.

Although very Pinocchio-like, the storyline of "A Tree of Palme" is not as happy as one would think.

There are mercenaries who would kill to get the egg of Touto and needless to say, this film has its share of violence.

The animation of this film is definitely top notch. Although cel animation is not used during this digital age, Nakamura takes us to the pinnacle of cel animation. Also, a distinct, unique style of how the characters are created definitely stays within his goal of making this animated film different from others.

The audio is presented in Digital 5.1 in English and Japanese and I can tell you that both audio tracks are excellent and the English dub is very well done and well-acted.

The DVD comes with special features such as a behind-the-scenes featurette on the making of "Tree of Palme", character, mechanical and prop design sketches, artwork, 5 key sequence animatics, the Japanese promos and trailers and an informative trailer.

"A Tree of Palme" is a film where people will have different feelings about and different interpretations.

For me, it was a film that showed us the pain in the lives of Palme's friends who had parents that were not really there for them and if they were, their parents were abusive towards them.

As for Palme, like Pinocchio, he wants to be human. He has felt love but he will do what it takes to become human.

And this is where the distinction between Palme and Pinocchio ends as the cute and gullible Palme becomes a robot that will do what it takes to become human and that anything becomes quite violent and surprising.

This is truly a film that is different and unique and also a film that probably requires more than one viewing to really understand things.

Nakamura really did want people to watch and think about this film and this film did just that.

With beautiful animation, beautiful acting and a unique storyline, I highly recommend this animated film.

— DENNIS A. AMITH

REVIEW GRADE

A