

A CHILD STAR IS BORN

By [V.A. Musetto](#)

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“OWL and the Sparrow” is a beautifully composed romance from Vietnam. Yes, the nation in which the US fought a divisive war is now a budding movie powerhouse.

“Owl and the Sparrow” is directed by Vietnamese-born, American-raised director Stephane Gauger.

At the film’s heart-tugging center is child actress Pham Thi Han, who provides an amazing performance as a 10-year-old girl — wise beyond her years — who runs off to Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon) to escape her wicked uncle’s sweatshop.

She joins hundreds of other girls her age who pound the city’s streets eking out a living by selling flowers.

An unhappy female flight attendant and a male zookeeper befriend the child and seek to give her a better life.

But the story isn’t what’s important. It’s Han’s sweet, delicate face and searching eyes — and her assured performance.

Who would have suspected that a child who had never before acted could be so wonderful?

OWL AND THE SPARROW

Mean streets.

In Vietnamese, with English subtitles. Running time: 97 minutes. Rated PG (thematic elements). At Cinema Village, 12th Street, east of Fifth Avenue.