

Martin ("Petit Gibus") Lartigue

Titles: 3 Sources: 3 Stills: 1

Born: France; c1951



As the winsome mischief-maker of "**BÉBERT ET L'OMNIBUS**"

Source: *The Moving Picture Boy*

The Moving Picture Boy entry:

"The irrepressible "Tigibus" of "**LA GUERRE DES BOUTONS**" – the most popular French children's film of the last 40 years – was the son of a painter, and grandson of the great photographer Jacques-Henri Lartigue, who died as recently as 1986. Louis Pergaud's "gallic, epic and rabelaisian" story of the few-holds-barred warfare between the boys of the

villages of Longeverne and Velrans had been a minor classic since its appearance in 1912. Its name was taken from the Velrans' tactic of disabling captured Longevernes by cutting the buttons off their trousers – a tactic the Longevernes eventually trumped by going into battle stark naked and with nothing to lose.

It was filmed in 1936 – debuttoned – as "**LA GUERRE DES GOSSES**", with Serge Grave

playing Lebrac, the tough and charismatic Longeverne leader. When the actor Yves Robert decided to make a new version a quarter of a century later he restored the proper title and made a jolly romp of it, though in some respects making it too squeaky-clean for such an earthy affair.

He found a fine, Burt Lancasterish Lebrac in Andre Treton, and an admirably dour Aztec (the Velrans' Rommel) in Michel Isella, and these two forged the epic link. Martin Lartigue had the comic role of the baby of the party, Petit Gibus or "Tigibus" – younger brother of Grangibus – and made it his field-day, showing a total lack of soldierly qualities, getting drunk on patrol, and grumbling incessantly and ungrammatically. He was perhaps over-cute, but hammed it up to good effect.

An attempt to repeat the triumph a year later, starring Martin as a child who repeatedly gets mislaid "with hilarious results", proved a mistake. The spectacle of a child of ten or more behaving like a rather moronic five-year-old was merely embarrassing.

After playing the lead in a TV serialisation of "**Huckleberry Finn**", Martin held his peace for a few years, and then – still holding it – began to study mime. He did theatre work with Robert Dhéry, and made a cartoon film with Xavier Gélin, then decided to give up performing. He had been a great fluffer of lines and, surprisingly, a martyr to stage fright.

In his mid-twenties he left Paris for the Auvergne and began to paint in a naïf style, following in his father's footsteps. He has had several exhibitions."

What the Critics said:

In "**BÉBERT ET L'OMNIBUS**":

"...Likable and refreshing comedy for all ages, although Petit Gibus (from Robert's "**GUERRE DES BOUTONS**") is sometimes a rather irritating child actor."

– **Speelfilm Encyclopedie**

"...Much of the burden is carried successfully by the child actor, Martin Lartigue, who was "Gibus" in "**LA GUERRE DES BOUTONS**" (also produced by Robert in association with Danièle Delorme). The observation of heightened and depressed spirits is most persuasive as the kid perpetrates minor outrages one minute and lapses into escape dreams of cream cakes the next..."

– **Films & Filming**

FILMOGRAPHY

Year	Age	Title	Role
62	c10	LA GUERRE DES BOUTONS  ("War of the Buttons") with <i>Andre Treton, Michel Isella</i>	as Petit Gibus
63	11	BÉBERT ET L'OMNIBUS ("Bébert and the Bus")	in title role, Bébert
- -		Huckleberry Finn	TV serial – in title role