

Drenge

("Boys")

Denmark : 1977 : dir. Nils Malmros : Steen Herdel / EBC / Malmros : 90 min
prod: : scr: Nils Malmros : dir.ph.: Dirk Brdel

Mads Ole Erhardsen; Jesper Hede
Lone Rode; Lars Junggren; Poul Clemmensen; Mette Marie Hede; Lotte Hermann; Lisbet Lipschitz; Lis Nielsen; Ilse Rande; Svend Schmidt-Nielsen; Ib Tardini; Inez Thomsen; Flemming Ytzen

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	Words	Ω	8	€	M	⊗	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
5330a	4	3	7	896	-	-	-	-	-	No	Unseen



The androgynous features of the small boy – Mads Ole Erhardsen – are typically regarded as the mask of "innocence" but, as Malmros' film indicates without being too didactic, that "innocence" is often illusory. The expression in the eyes is chiefly one of befuddlement and a lack of worldly confidence. The child is a witness to the insanity of life, and senses perhaps, though incapable of articulating it, that leaving the womb had been a BIG MISTAKE.

Source: CVMC website



Right: with Jesper Hede, "an appallingly wordly wise cousin"

Source: CVMC website

International Film Guide 1978 review:

"Overt sex education in the primary school might appear to be the norm in Scandinavia, but Nils Malmros's **"BOYS"** suggests that there are still more subtle ways of entering adulthood, with the guilt an inevitable accessory to the excitement attached to the mysterious discovery of sex. The film describes three phases in a boy's development, his extreme youth, his teens, and his early twenties. The calm, stable family environment is sketched without rancour or disdain. Ole's parents are decent and sensible enough. After all, the clandestine thrill of exploring the secrets of the dark garden next door would be diminished if parents were to be accomplices.

Ole is a gentle soul, more observing than observed, and occasionally taken advantage of. Like Malmros himself, Ole is a tolerant person. He does not speak much, and Malmros lets the intervals between conversations elapse naturally, leaving one to imagine the confused and darting thoughts that come to Ole as he sits with a girl or - in the haunting final shots - wades fascinated through the flooded basement of his family home.

Structurally, **"BOYS"** is an intriguing exercise. Ole progresses through the various stages of boyhood only to return to his infancy, as though Malmros were hinting that all one's later life may be affected by those first bizarre revelations about one's own body and one's reaction to it." - Peter Cowie

CVMC video retail/rental website review:

"Although this one will be best appreciated by those familiar with the Danish language, this

exceptional film starts off with a boy (Jesper Hede) of about seven years arriving at the home of some friends of his parents. There he resides for the next week or so and chums up with the family's five year old (Mads-Ole Erhardtsen): Ole. Soon, it becomes apparent that the eldest of this twosome is experiencing a stage of sexual curiosity, and he initiates his younger friend into a variety of games involving mutual exposure to satiate himself.

The second half of the film places Ole in high school and explores his romantic/sexual interest in a female peer, perhaps suggesting that his homoerotic experiences during childhood did not impact his sexual development [sic], the teenage Ole seeming rather typical for a heterosexual adolescent. Certainly original and daring, this film could be considered the male version of **"IS-SLOTTET"**¹. Well done from all perspectives; highly recommended!

Rated NR: brief/moderate nudity; sexual themes

Language: Danish

Categories: Boy Films, Little to Preteen, Adolescent, Drama, Girl Films, Adolescent

NOTE: This movie is in Danish with NO ENGLISH SUBTITLES OR DUBBING. "

The Moving Picture Boy entry on Erhardtsen:

"Nils Malmros, director of the remarkable **"TREE OF KNOWLEDGE"**, had four years earlier made a study of male character-forming in **"DRENGE"**.

In its first episode, little Mads Ole learns the mysteries of sex - ignorance of which had not

¹ Hardly, since this is the earlier film by ten years

been among his major worries – from an appallingly worldly-wise cousin, not much older

than himself, who comes to stay. It is a



Ole wears a nervous, sulky countenance – the face of a child who finds himself committed to a game far too rough for his liking – life.
Source: The Moving Picture Boy

beautiful comedy of innocence [sic] and pretended sophistication. (The other stories are more soulful but less entertaining.)

Mads Ole, no surprisingly, had several subsequent calls from TV.”

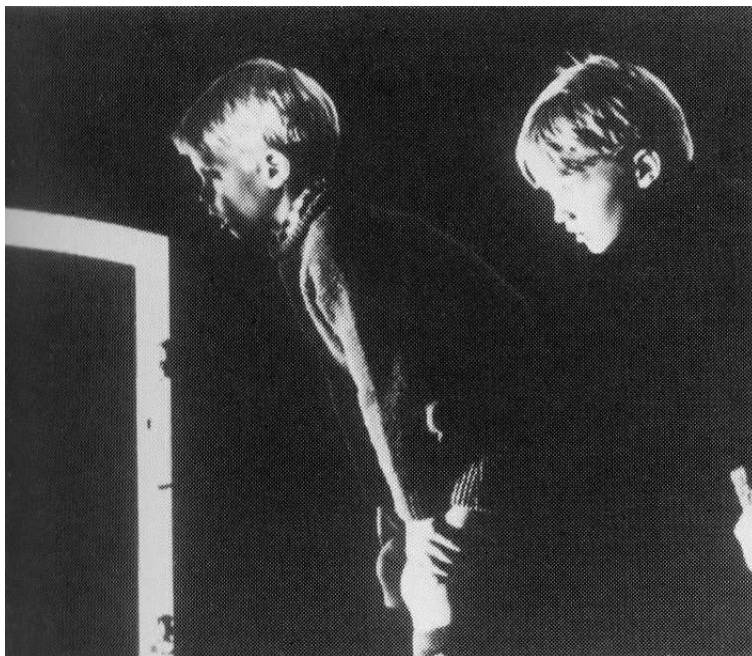
[no listing in "Halliwell's Film Guide", "Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide 2001", "Speelfilm Encyclopedie", "Bloomsbury Foreign Film Guide", "The Critics' Film Guide", "The Good Film and Video Guide", "Movies on TV and Videocassette 1988-89", "Rating the Movies (1990)", "The Sunday Times Guide to Movies on Television", "The Time Out Film Guide", "TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995", "Variety Movie Guide 1993", "Video Movie Guide 1993" or "The Virgin Film Guide"]



Source: International Film Guide 1978



Source: CVMC website



Source: International Film Guide 1988

No further information currently available. Erhardsen was about 7. The most intriguing aspect of Malmros' later film "**KUNDSKABENS TRAE**" was that, in order to portray the changes in a group of classmates as they pass through the watershed of puberty, he took three years to shoot the film, during which time his players physically did pass through that watershed, their personalities subtly registering the impact. Nothing else is known of Jesper Hede.

See subject index under [DIRECTORS](#), [SCANDINAVIA](#) and [SEX & SEXUALITY](#).