

La Guerre des Boutons

("War of the Buttons")

France : 1961 : dir. Yves Robert :

: 95 min

prod: : scr: : dir.ph.:

[Martin Lartigue \("Petit Gibus"\)](#)

André Treton; Michel Isella; Jean Richard; Yvette Etrévant; Pierre Trabaud; Jacques Dufilho; Michel Galabru; Michele Méritz

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	Words	Ω	8	€	M	♻	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
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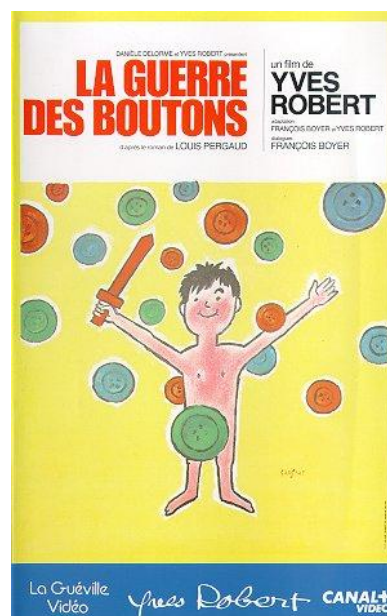


Naked hostilities in the French countryside, or: the triumph of buttonless uniforms

Source: indeterminate

Speelfilm Encyclopedie review:

"Rivalry over takings from the sale of postage stamps for a charity appeal leads to a war between two groups of school pupils. Parents and teachers are powerless. Reconciliation between the two ringleaders only follows when they are sent to an approved school. Despite being crowned with the Vigo prize, this isn't a new version of the anarchy of **"ZERO DE CONDUITE"** but an uncomplicated comedy which is at worst highly impudent; perhaps the film can amaze yet by the ease with which 6 to 8-year olds can curse and swear. Slick and enthusiastic performances from the countless children, thanks to which the adult players scarcely have anything to contribute. *** "



Source: indeterminate website

The Time Out Film Guide review:

"The buttons in question belong to the trousers of two rival gangs of urchins and are snipped off, along with braces and shoelaces, in a crescendo of running battles. If that notion doesn't, as they say, grab you, then how about an atrociously mugging and coyly foul-mouthed little hero with a twinkle in his eye as big as the Ritz, who proposes to drive the enemy from their lair by farting them out? A huge commercial success, like all films with naked children.¹ "

Excerpt from **The Moving Picture Boy** entry on Lartigue:

"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 capture 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 André, 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 [in "B • BERT ET L'OMNIBUS], 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... "

[no listing in "Halliwell's Film Guide", "Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide 1996", "Rating the Movies (1990)", "The Sunday Times Guide to Movies on Television", "TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995", "Variety Movie Guide 1993", "Video Movie Guide 1993" or "The Virgin Film Guide"]

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[no listing in "Halliwell's Film Guide", "Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide 2001", "Speelfilm Encyclopedie", "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"]

¹ *What a strangely perverse remark (apart from being flatly untrue), and how typically Time Out...*

The stills and captions overleaf are from Films and Filming, Nov 64. No review attached.

No further information currently available. It's pretty disgraceful that a film so well-loved should be completely overlooked by all the above reference works. But that's why an archive such as this one is necessary, after all. It's so long since I last saw the film it wouldn't be appropriate to comment on it further here, but the excellent 1994 remake, "WAR OF THE BUTTONS", shot in rural Ireland, keeps faith with it very well - far better than the comparable remake of "LORD OF THE FLIES", at any rate - and is an enjoyable film in its own right. Two years after this success, director Yves Robert made the farce "B• BERT ET L'OMNIBUS", starring Lartigue, billed as "Petit Gibus".

See "LA GUERRE DES GOSSES" ('36), "THE WAR OF THE BUTTONS" ('94) and subject index under FOLLOW-THE LEADER / CHILDREN'S GANGS, RECOMMENDED TITLES and WAR.