

# La Meilleure Façon de Marcher

( "The Best Way to Walk" )

France : 1976 : dir. Claude Miller

: Contrechamp / Prospectale / Filmoblic / Channel 9 : 86 min

prod: Hubert Niogret : scr: Luc Béraud : dir.ph.: Bruno Nuytten

*The children of "l'Atelier" de Saint Saturnin* .....

Patrick Dewaere; Patrick Bouchitey; Christine Pascal; Claude Piéplu; Michel Blanc;  
Marc Chapiteau; Michel Such; Frank D'Ascanio; Nathan Miller

| Ref:  | Pages | Sources | Stills | Words | Ω | 8 | ≠ | M | ⊗ | Copy on VHS | Last Viewed |
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| 5235b | 2.5   | 8       | 3      | 1,208 | - | - | - | - | - | No          | Unseen      |



Source: 20<sup>th</sup> London Film Festival programme

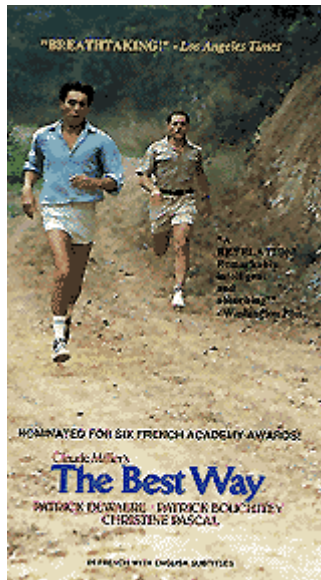
**Speelfilm Encyclopedie** review:

"Young volunteer at a 1960 summer camp becomes leader of his colleagues through his big mouth and extrovert behaviour, but he can't get a handle on a dreamy intellectual until he catches him in his room dressed in women's clothes. He covers his troubled fascination in a tactic of taunting dominance in which he will himself prove the losing party. [ = "Zijn troebele fascinatie verpakt hij in tergende dominantie-taktiek waarbij hij zelf de verliezende partij zal blijken"] Sexual identity is merely a sub-theme in a remarkable debut film full of spot-on observations whereby insecurity is hidden behind hollow bravura and social conformity still asserts itself. \*\*\* "

**The Good Film and Video Guide** review:

"As a portrait of life on a summer camp for small boys, this item is beguiling; as a discussion of the torment of homosexual love it is modish or superficial, or both. One of the instructors (Patrick Dewaere) has good reason to believe that one of the others (Patrick Bouchitey) is gay, except that the latter has a girlfriend (Christine Pascal), but she, disappointed by his prowess in bed, begins to be drawn into the game the instructors are playing with each other. Claude Piéplu is the owner of the camp. \*\* "

Source: Award Films Website



**Bloomsbury Foreign Film Guide review:**

“When an instructor at a summer camp for boys accidentally discovers the son of the camp-owner in make-up and drag, he bullies him unmercifully, but it’s the victim who gets the girl. The first film by the former assistant to Truffaut and Godard is a neatly made, sardonic but too pat tale of sexual identity. Dewaere as the bully, and Bouchitey as the camp camp counsellor, set up sexually ambiguous sparks leading to the rather embarrassing farewell party scene.”

**Movies on TV and Videocassette 1988-89 review:**

“A tale of two young counsellors at a boys’ summer camp circa ’60 – athletic Dewaere, sensitive Bouchitey, and their involved relationship. Dramatic insights and sardonic humour maintain interest. \*\*\* ”

**The Time Out Film Guide review:**

“A film about getting off on the "right" foot. Dealing with the confusions of adolescent sexuality, it’s less about groping one’s way toward adulthood than about the search for sexual identity. Set in 1960 in a boys’ summer camp, it traces the ambiguous relationship between two camp monitors. Miller, Truffaut’s former assistant, handles the contrasts of his script with assurance, especially those between group conformity and

private individual feelings. Only at the end does his touch falter, because until then his perception of emotional nuances effectively masks the fundamental stereotype equations he makes between sex, class and, to a lesser extent, politics. But overall it’s a highly assured first feature.”

**20<sup>th</sup> London Film Festival (1976) programme review:**

“To say that this film is about repressed homosexuality would be to mislead for it is really more a character study of two men set in a summer camp for boys. One is aggressive, a bit of a bully and confident of his power over others, the second (the son of the camp owner) is more introverted, has a girlfriend, and dresses in women’s clothes in the privacy of his room. The conflict between them develops into a kind of power game with each trying to score points. Claude Miller, in a very promising debut, brings a sharp, clear filmic eye to the subject, framing the two men against an atmospheric background of camp life and (except for a moment of violence towards the end) keeping all melodramatic possibilities at bay. The film also contains two outstanding performances: Patrick Dewaere perfectly captures the edgy bonhomie and latent fascism of the "strong" man, and Claude Pléplu gives the story a satirical shading as the fussy camp leader.”  
- John Gillett

**Award Films International – commercial gay video distributor – website review:**

“Patrick Dewaere gives a powerful performance in **"THE BEST WAY"** as the handsome, macho athletic coach at a boys’ summer camp. Confused by his sexual attraction towards Philippe, an effeminate [sic] drama instructor, he begins a subtle campaign of psychological and physical intimidation that leads to a catastrophic turn of events. Nominated for six French Academy Awards. UNRATED. Nudity, harsh language and mature sexual themes [sic]. Viewer discretion advised. In French with English subtitles. Colour. Running time: 95 minutes.”

**CVMC video retail/rental website review:**

“During a power-outage at a Summer camp for boys, Marc sets off to find some candles and instead stumbles onto co-instructor Philippe in drag. With his secret now known, Philippe

must worry if it will be spread, attempts to buddy up with Marc in an attempt to bring this potential to a halt. In the process, a sexual tension forms between the two, both drawn to each other in their own ways. Philippe is basically honest about his attraction; Marc can't accept his comparable feelings, acts them out in sadistic manners. Will the two ever resolve the dilemma? Here, the adults are certainly the leads, yet lots of boys are present and offer a number of humorous scenes. A well done examination of sexual confusion which was nominated for six French Academy Awards; directed by Claude Miller.

Rated NR: adult themes [sic]; brief nudity; sexual themes; violence; profanity  
Language: French (with English subtitles)  
Categories: Boarding School & Camp, Boy Films, Little to Preteen, Comedy, Dark Comedy, Drama, Gay & Lesbian. ”

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



Source: CVMC website

Shown at the 1976 Cannes Film Festival. Sexual power games between the inmates would obviously hold more interest for this archive, but to the extent that the adults here are merely exhibiting the same obsession with status and pecking order as one will find in any schoolyard, the film is perhaps saying something about adult self-delusions of superiority to children. Summer camp "counsellors" are, in any case, like schoolteachers, a vassal state of the institution of childhood, and even though the boys in this film may simply mill namelessly about in the background under the watchful eye of their bitchy shepherds, it still has a direct relevance to the archive. One can scarcely divorce the suppressed homosexual dynamic between the two principals from the context of their working amid a sea of young boys stripped down for the summer.

For other summer camp tales, see the sitcom **"Camp Runamuck"**, **"ERNEST GOES TO CAMP"**, **"MEATBALLS"**, **"NO KIDDING"**, **"POISON IVY"** and **"WELCOME OR NO TRESPASSING"**, and see subject index under **SUMMER CAMP / SUMMER SCHOOL**.