

Robert Lynen

Titles: 9 Sources: 2 Stills: 1

Born: Jura, France; May 24th 1921

Died: Karlsruhe, Nazi Germany; April 1st 1944. Executed as a resistance fighter.

Halliwell's Filmgoer's Companion entry:

"French child actor later executed by Nazis as collaborator."

The Moving Picture Boy entry:

"Though both Robert's parents were artistic, neither was of the cinema: his father was a painter, his mother a former singer of American extraction. The boy was a strange selection, on the face of it, to portray "Carrots", the tragically misunderstood hero of Jules Renard's story, in its first sound version in 1932. (The director, Duvivier, had already made a successful silent one seven years earlier.) He had no previous acting experience, and his dreamy, poetic air didn't suggest the mischievousness that was a necessary part of "**POIL DE CAROTTE**"'s make-up. But, with the scenario tailored to fit his very different temperament, and Alexandre Tansman's music to create a haunting atmosphere. the frail, skinny Lynen, peering through a mist of freckles, is unforgettable.

Overnight, Robert became France's favourite child. The public longed to see him rescued from rural misery: very well then, he should become a boy king ("**LE PETIT ROI**"), and have royalty thrust on him again a few years later ("**L'ÉDUCATION DU PRINCE**"). But he should also continue from time to time to embrace poverty ("**SANS FAMILLE**", "**LE PETIT CHOSE**"). Lynen really was a star. He was neither good-looking, nor cute, nor funny, nor even particularly boyish. On the contrary, he was a pale, delicate creature (without benefit of freckles) with a soft, rather feminine profile. But there was sweetness and intelligence and a kind of gallantry about him that touched all hearts.

Of his remaining eight films, one was Duvivier's famous "**UN CARNET DE BAL**" (37), and there were to be two more star roles in 1938, in "**L'ÉDUCATION DU PRINCE**" and "**LE PETIT CHOSE**". He was also featured in "**MOLLENARD**" (37), "**LE FRAUDEUR**" (37) and "**LA VIE EST MAGNIFIQUE**" (38). But the shadows were gathering around Robert Lynen. In 1937 his unstable father had killed himself by jumping from a fifth-floor window; and in September 1939 France went to war.

Lynen was in two more films: "**ÉSPOIRS**" (40) and "**CAP DU LARGE**" (42). The latter had been filmed in the Zone Libre, and on February 7 1943, soon after its completion, he was arrested by German security agents and charged with being a resistance fighter. He was imprisoned at Marseilles, then moved to Fresnes and finally across the border to Karlsruhe, where he was executed on April Fool's Day, 1944. Heroes don't always look like heroes. A year earlier, as it happened, Robert's father in "**POIL DE CAROTTE**", the great Harry Baur, had died after being arrested and tortured by the Germans."

FILMOGRAPHY

Year	Age	Title	Role
deb 32	11	POIL DE CAROTTE ("Carrot Top")	in title role, Francois
33	12	LE PETIT ROI ("The Little King")	in title role
34	13	SANS FAMILLE ("Without Family")	with <i>Serge Grave</i>
35	14	SON AUTRE AMOUR ("His Other Love")	
36	15	LA BELLE EQUIPPE ("The Great Team")	
36		L'HOMME DU JOUR ("Man of the Day")	
37	16	UN CARNET DE BAL ("A Dance Card")	
37		MOLLENARD	
37		LE FRAUDEUR ("The Fraud")	
38	17	L'EDUCATION DU PRINCE ("Educating the Prince")	
38		LE PETIT CHOSE	
38		LA VIE EST MAGNIFIQUE ("Life is Wonderful")	
40	19	ESPOIRS ("Hopes")	
42	21	CAP AU LARGE	