

La Promesse

("The Promise"; aka: "The Secret World")

France / US : 1969 : dir. Paul Feyder & Robert Freeman :

: 102 min

prod: : scr: : dir.ph.:

[Jean-François Maurin](#)

Jacqueline Bisset; Giselle Pascal; Pierre Zimmer; Marc Porel; Chantal Goya; Judith Magre;

Jacques Riberolles; Yves Lefebvre

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	KBytes	Ω	□	≠	Z	⚡	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
5275	1½	4	1		3	-	-	-	-	No	Unseen

Speelfilm Encyclopedie review:

"Introverted orphan boy is growing up with an uncle and aunt. When a young Englishwoman comes to stay with them the uncle introduces her as the daughter of a wartime friend, but in reality she's his lover. As with other men in the neighbourhood, the boy feels himself attracted to her, and through a language misunderstanding thinks she wants to take him back to England with her. An attempt at poetic atmosphere remains no more than that, but in the French-speaking version the little Maurin - one of a large family of acting children - is convincing and very moving. **½ "

Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide 2001 review:

"Bisset's presence gives slight boost to pretentiously directed film about young boy's infatuation with his uncle's mistress. ** "

Movies on TV and Videocassette 1988-89 review:

"Offbeat tale. A young French boy, scarred by his parents' death in a car crash, becomes deeply infatuated with a beautiful English lady visiting his aunt and uncle's château. When it comes time for Miss Bisset to go back to England, the boy is once again shattered and retreats into himself. **½ "

The Moving Picture Boy entry on Maurin:

"The last important cinematic son of Mado Maurin was Jean-François, a full brother of Dominique [*qv*] and Marie-Véronique Maurin. He had sandy-reddish hair, a lot of freckles, and rather fine pale-blue eyes.

After comic outings with Bourvil (in "TROIS ENFANTS.. ") and Fernandel ("L'HOMME À LA BUICK") he tackled the emotional role of a withdrawn orphan in "LA PROMESSE", practising strange rituals in a tree-house and intoxicating himself with the perfume of a young woman (Jacqueline Bisset)."

[no listing in "Halliwell's Film Guide", "The Critics' Film Guide", "The Good Film and Video Guide", "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"]

No further information currently available. The US version runs 94 minutes. Director Feyder is presumably a son of silent director Jacques Feyder ("**VISAGES D'ENFANTS**"). Film-makers do so love their tales of nascent heterosexuality in boyhood – the mystical significance of "the first kiss" etc – and if one wasn't especially heterosexual as a boy, or saw much indication of it in others, one is inclined to dismiss all this as a paranoid projection onto pre-pubescent of heterosexual self-obsession. The archive contains scores of little boy/little girl "romances" which are at the same time cloyingly sentimental and vaguely insulting, interpreting the emotional world of children by purely adult terms.

This film, whatever its aesthetic pretensions, sounds more intriguing, and redolent of "**BRENNENDES GEHEIMNIS**" / "**BURNING SECRET**" in its central theme of betrayal of the boy's expectations in the relationship. More obliquely, it recalls Dominic Guard's situation in "**THE GO-BETWEEN**" as a pawn of forces he only dimly comprehends.

Maurin, whose features are both robust and sensitive (a fair definition of one of boyhood's more interesting qualities), was 12. The only other film Holmstrom cites for him is "**LA MAISON DES BORIES**" the following year.

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