

# Olivier Pairoux about SPACEBOY

## Me and my Rubik's cube

Olivier Pairoux talks about his film like a seasoned TV presenter... which he is! Full of enthusiasm, he tells about 12 year old Jim, who is passionate about *all things space travel*. His father is an astrophysicist who might soon take off on a space mission. But Jim has his own project: building a hot air balloon with his school friend Emma. Though when competing for first prize at a competition for young scientists, unexpected obstacles arise.

### Jim has a particularly big dream!

Olivier Pairoux: Don't we all want to achieve things in life? It is so important to never give up believing in your dreams and fighting for them. That's what Jim will find out. But that doesn't mean everything is permitted; dreams can only be realised with the help of others: your parents, friends, etc.

### Besides the director you were also the scriptwriter of SPACEBOY.

Pairoux: Which explains why you find so many aspects of myself in Jim. I've

always been passionate about space. As a child I often marvelled at the flickering starry sky with my mum, later I started reading about it. Even movies like STAR WARS intrigue me immensely.

### Do you have more things in common with Jim?

Pairoux: I'm a sucker for robotics and Rubik's cubes; I have at least 50 of them at home that I like to play with. The film was also a return to my childhood years; I grew up in the 80's.

### What was so special about that era?

Pairoux: We had so much freedom. I rode my bike far away from home or went camping with my friends in the forest, and nobody even cared about it. Unfortunately all this has changed. Today we don't let our children roam the streets, wandering carefree.

### The film also tells about the relationship between fathers and sons.

Pairoux: I have two sons, Stan and Oliver. When I started working on SPACEBOY, they were still young. But



as they grew up, I came to experience fatherhood in a different way and added new insights to the story. My sons are now 10 and 5 years old, and throughout the screenplay I can detect the evolution I made as a father.

### Basile Grunberger has to act out your younger self?

Pairoux: Above all, Basile was a hard worker, thoroughly prepping himself. His perseverance seems unlimited: for six weeks he gave the best of himself, every day from morning until evening.

### Did you ask so much of him?

Pairoux: We shot this scene in a tropical garden: Jim and Emma are on the ground. When a snake comes crawling over them, they must not make a

sound so as not to be caught by the gardener. During the filming, Basile tried to control his fear of the five-meter-long beast, while he urgently needed to pee. He was lying there whispering *"I need to go to the toilet"* but he couldn't. So the stress you see in his eyes isn't just because of that snake...

### What do you think: will you ever travel to space?

Pairoux: We've sent the film to the European Space Agency and they loved it. Perhaps somewhere in the audience there might be a child that wants to delve deeper into the matter, after seeing SPACEBOY. Imagine that kid later becoming an astronaut and embarking on a space journey, encouraged by my film. Isn't that a lovely thought?

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