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SURFING THE WAVES OF POPULAR CULTURE  
BY MICHAEL GILTZ & FRIENDS

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## The Child -- The Popsurfing Review

Here's what I wrote after seeing the new drama *The Child* when it debuted at Cannes. The movie opens in NYC today:

L'enfant/The Child \*\*\* 1/2 -- I just love the aesthetic of the Belgian Dardenne brothers ("Rosetta," "The Son," etc.) and so more of the same is just fine by me. An on the skids young thief named Bruno (the handsome and bruised looking Jeremie Renier) gets by with petty crimes till his girlfriend shows up with their newborn son. The two have a great if juvenile relationship, always tripping each other up, spraying each other with a soda, giggling, laughing and so on. Clearly, they're in love as much as these two immature kids can be. (They're around 18 or so.) She's waiting in line for something and he takes the newborn for his first walk with papa and blithely starts using the kid to beg for money. (He has no job, doesn't even register when she suggests getting one and knows where all the free flophouse shelters are.) Then he just decides to sell the kid and within an hour has given it up and garnered a handful of cash to split with her. She, naturally, freaks out, attacking him and collapsing. She's taken to the hospital, he somehow strives to get the kid back and all sorts of miserable complications ensue. As always with the Dardennes, the camera is right on top of the actors, creating a sense of intensity and immediacy far greater than you achieve by simply shoving a handheld into someone's face. (It must be their framing and long tracking shots that create an inherent tension whenever you're following someone around.) Yes, familiar in every way for them, but I ate it up. Some day I'll write a book about their work: "The Back of the Head: The Films of the Dardennes Brothers."

POSTED BY MICHAEL IN NEW YORK AT 1:45 PM



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