

Entertainment

MADE IN ONTARIO

Successful Meatballs premiere next month

HOLLYWOOD — The most successful Canadian movie of all time is not *Why Shoot The Teacher* or *Outrageous* or even *In Praise Of Older Women*.

It's a new comedy called *Meatballs*, produced and directed by 31-year-old Canadian wunderkind **Ivan Reitman**, the man who brought you *Animal House*. And its world premiere is slated for Toronto next month.

Reitman made *Animal House* for \$3 million; so far it's grossed \$120 million.

He made *Meatballs* in Northern Ontario last summer, with Saturday Night star **Bill Murray** as his leading man, for \$1.3 million, and unveiled it here for the first time at a public screening two weeks ago.

Since then four studios have been bidding frantically for it. Yesterday Paramount Pictures won North American distribution rights to Reitman's new comedy, and the Toronto world premiere became a reality.

Reitman called his movie *Summer Camp* until he discovered a porno movie with that title. *Meatballs* is the saga of summer camp, with Bill Murray as the counselor you always wished for.

Meatballs also marks Reitman's return to directing, his first outing since he helmed his Canadian-made horror movie spoof *Cannibal Girls* with Second City stalwarts **Andrea Martin** and **Eugene Levy**.

"In those days I needed me more as a producer than I did as a director," Reitman confided over breakfast at the Polo Lounge.

He proved himself as a stage producer, too, mounting a Christmas musical at the Royal Alex to showcase the talents of extraordinary illusionist **Doug Henning**. That show, *Spellbound*, won mixed reviews but enthusiastic audiences. When it opened in New York as *The Magic Show* it ran five years, the 12th longest running hit in Broadway history.

At the moment Reitman and his

GEORGE ANTHONY



French-Canadian actress wife **Genevieve Deloir** are living in **Hedda Hopper's** former home in Beverly Hills with their two-year-old son Jason, awaiting completion of their new house in Bel Air.

He still works out of an office at Universal, but now the studio has moved him from the back lot to an executive suite next to **Dick Zanuck** and **David Brown**, the producers of *Jaws*.

Reitman is committed to making a sequel to *Animal House* for Universal, and is also executive producer of the TV spin-off series, *Delta House*. The studio also wants first crack at several other projects he's working on — including **David Steinberg's** comedy *Sex In America*, temporarily on the back burner until Steinberg can work out some kinks in the script.

"Give **Steven Spielberg** \$10 million and he makes *Jaws*," one Universal executive explains. "Give **Ivan Reitman** \$3 million and he makes \$120 million. He's the hottest producer this town has ever seen, and he's even younger than Spielberg!"

Even his string of made-in-Canada hits, including *Rabid*, *Shivers* and *Death Weekend*, opened in a profit position.

"I'd take the film to Cannes, sell off the foreign territories and make enough money from those sales to pull the picture out of debt before we opened in America," says Reitman matter-of-factly.

This time he doesn't even have to go to Cannes. With the deal he signed yesterday *Meatballs* — and its Canadian investors — is already sitting pretty.



IVAN REITMAN — *Meatballs*, from the man who brought you *Animal House*.