

Meatballs Toronto hit

"Hollywood North" stars turn out for world premiere

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TORONTO — Last Thursday Toronto rocked to the sounds of summer camp fever. The cause of all this furor was the world premiere of Paramount's Canadian film *Meatballs*.

On hand at the festivities were Toronto's leading glitterati, the entire cast and film director Ivan Reitman, the man who co-produced *Animal House*.

But the real reason that throngs of on-lookers crowded the Yonge street entrance of the Uptown Theatre was to get a glimpse of *Meatballs* headliner and Saturday Night Live regular Bill Murray.

The event was replete with all the clichés of a big Hollywood opening — disco music blared into the streets; streamers and balloons heralded the premiere; police held the crowd back and local announcer Gene Taylor interviewed the arriving celebrities.

Taylor could have used some coaching. He missed Canadian notables Frank Schuster, horror film-maker David Cronenberg, and punk-rock queen Carol Pope, among others.

Inside, after scurrying to find a seat, I felt a little out of place. The audience was filled with real-life campers from Camp White Pine, the movie's fictional Camp North Star. For the campers, cast, and crew, *Meatballs* was a very personal movie. It's not often that I watch a movie amid flying fingers shouting out "look, there I am!"

It was a little like watching someone's home movie. Fortunately this home movie is something that any outsider can appreciate. I wasn't bored for a minute.

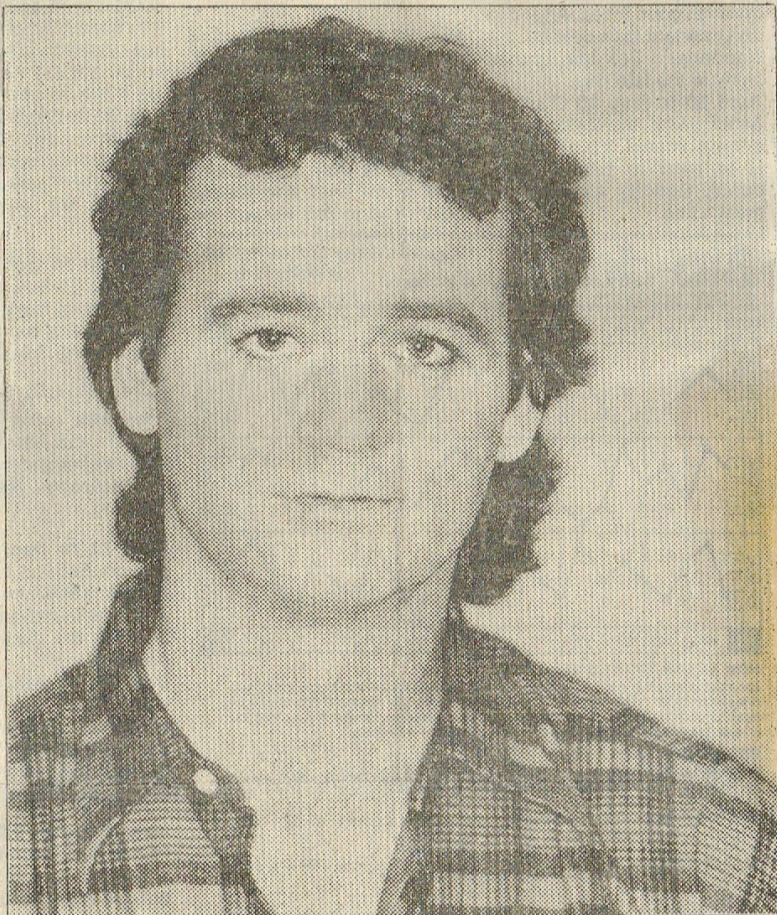
Paramount and SRO publicists turned the event into as much fun as three weeks away from your folks. Not that it wasn't without its pitfalls. In their overzealousness, the organizers had invited more people than there were seats for. But, with a little bit of encouragement, parents held their children in their laps and star Bill Murray organized his campers into a tight unit in the lower half of the theatre.

No screening would be complete without the apres-movie reception. For *Meatballs* that called for an elegant buffet with the centerpiece being what else but — meatballs.

Murray, obviously tired from a busy day of press and photographers, decided to refrain from organizing the sing-along.

However, the next day when I interviewed Murray, he broke into full musical form when I announced it was my birthday. In reality, I jumped the gun by seven months, but I couldn't resist the opportunity of getting the full famous Bill Murray happy b-u-u-r-t-h-day treatment.

Murray also offered his personal recipe for a birthday cocktail (scotch and water with no water — you have to wait



Bill Murray: His first trip to Canada was less glamorous.



Movies

Leonard Klady

for the icecubes to melt), and asked if I'd like his infamous "noogie". I passed on the latter item.

It's difficult to know when Bill Murray's being totally serious. He claims to have plans to follow the Toronto opening with a full Tasmanian tour.

Murray remembered his first trip to Canada as being much less glamorous. Five years ago, when touring with the *National Lampoon*, he hit a dour-faced audience in London, Ontario, he and tour co-star Gilda Radner asked the audience what made them laugh. The reply: "Tell us a hockey joke." To this day, Murray has not learned a hockey joke.

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Can it be true that Toronto is turning into Hollywood North? Three major films are currently in production in the city and a half-dozen more are ready to

roll before the end of the summer.

I ran into Rita Moreno in the lobby of the Four Seasons but didn't get an opportunity to cut a rug with the star of *Dancing*. Moreno is in Toronto filming *Gemini* with Madeline Kahn. *Gemini* is being directed by Dick Benner — his first film since *Outrageous*.

The following afternoon, I ran into friends and wound up having lunch with Suzanne Somers and husband Allan Hamel at the Courtyard Cafe. Suzanne is filming *Nothing Personal* with Donald Sutherland. She told me that this is her last season on *Three's Company*. From now on, it's the big screen for *Sweet Sue*.

The most talked-about new star in town is D.D. Winters. Winters, a former waitress, is now headlining *Tanya's Island*. Her co-stars are Dick Sargent and a highly-intellectual ape.

Also on Winters' busy agenda are a co-starring role in an upcoming Peter Sellers movie, a *Playboy* centerfold, a recording contract and the cover of *Maclean's* magazine. Looks like she could become a hot property if her acting talents match her obvious physical attributes.