

TAKE ONE

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IVAN REITMAN

Four issues ago, *Take One* published a short history of Canadian cinema to celebrate its centenary. In that issue I made the claim that Ivan Reitman's *Ghostbusters* was a Canadian film, as a challenge to the deep-seated notion that Canadian cinema is only what is filmed in Canada. Since then, Geoff Pevere and Greig Dymond have published their take on Canadian pop culture, *Mondo Canuck*, which not only makes the case for *Ghostbusters* being Canadian, but also that Canada's contribution to North American popular culture has been enormous and generally unrecognized by an elite who prefers its culture more refined and homebred.

When CBC ran a two-part piece on our feature film industry following *The National*, last fall, it traced the history of American domination with some accuracy in the first part and then, in the second, sent a crew down to L.A. to interview director Ivan Reitman. The question they asked? "Is *Ghostbusters* a Canadian film?" His response was, "Well, it could have

been according to the old CFDC regulations." (Which essentially were the same as the current point system issued by the Certification Office in Ottawa.) Then there was a cut to Robert Lantos, head of Alliance, who was asked the same question. His response? "No, because the money didn't come to Canada, and the film wasn't made by a Canadian company." Who's right? The talent was Canadian (*Ghostbuster's* producer, director, associate producer, co-writer, star and co-star were all Canadians), but the money American.

Of course, the issue doesn't hinge on one film or filmmaker. Reitman will never be embraced by the Canadian cultural elite, he is too brashly American and simply too damn successful to be really Canadian. No, as Pevere and Dymond make clear in *Mondo Canuck*, the issue is one of identity. Who do we really think we are as Canadians? How do we see ourselves? In terms of popular culture, at least, there is no doubt. To quote Pevere and Dymond: "Canada is every bit as distinct in its approach to schlock as it is to art, and the former may indeed reveal vastly more of a national [character] than the latter. It's possible to see as much of ourselves (if not more) in Mike Myers [star and co-writer of *Wayne's World*] as it is in Margaret Atwood." The films of Ivan Reitman are about as far from those typically associated with the Great White North as one can get, but they are rooted in a Canadian sensibility and speak to what we can achieve beyond the narrow confines of "official" Canadian culture.

In that spirit, *Take One* is pleased to present, 100 Great and Glorious Years of Canadian Cinema—The Sequel. We have gathered together a second 100 names of those who have made a contribution to Canadian or international cinema. From Douglas Dumbrille, who hissed to Gary Cooper, "We have ways to make a man talk," to David Manners, who was the naive Jonathan Harker in Bela Lugosi's *Dracula*, Canadians have infiltrated Hollywood from the beginning. Closer to home, the National Film Board has proven to be a magnet for talented animators from around the world. Canadians have also excelled as documentarians and cinematographers, and our experimental filmmakers have always been on the cutting edge. The job description, producer-director-writer-cinematographer-editor, is not uncommon. We might not have much of a Canadian feature film "industry"; however, we have a vibrant film culture—one worth celebrating twice. **TAKE ONE**