

Joni Mitchell ready to work on movie

Joni Mitchell is bouncing around town these days.

Here to make her movie acting debut, she has been dining on raw fish at **Masa**, a Japanese restaurant on Richmond St. W., and on pasta at **Carlavales** on Avenue Rd.

Mitchell will face cameras next week, playing both a black man and a white woman in an episode she wrote for **Love**, a 9-part anthology movie.

She celebrated her 37th birthday on the weekend and was feted at an intimate party in the home of Love producer **Renee Perlmutter**. Mitchell has been described as somewhat edgy about acting and consulted her Toronto co-star, **Winston Reckert**, regularly by telephone before arriving.

Mitchell got her international break through singing in local clubs and she has many friends **Mitchell** and acquaintances in the city. But she became very private the last few years and is too absorbed in preparing for the movie to socialize much.

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What's the big movie hit in China these days? Some turgid drama about how the peasants beat back the capitalists? No, it's **Death On The Nile**. And **Convoy**, a dumb U.S. crash and burn flick about truckers, is about to open in Peking. Can Canada's **Meatballs** or **The Changeling** be far behind?

The news about what 700 million Chinese moviegoers can now see at their neighborhood theatres comes from **National Film Board** chief **James Domville** who recently headed an official Canadian film industry mission to China for two weeks.

"It's hard to figure out what kind of films the Chinese would buy," Domville says. But he came away from Peking with promise of a Canadian Film Week in China next fall and a Chinese Film Week in Canada to follow. "That won't make any money for our producers but it's good public relations. By December we should be deciding titles of the Canadian feature



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films made by the film board and private producers," he said. Accompanying Domville were **Pat Ferns**, president of the **Canadian Film And Television Association**, **Claude Godbout**, head of the **Quebecois movie producers association**, and film board distribution chief **Bill Litwack**.

Opening doors

The Domville mission was aimed more at opening the doors to sales of Canadian pictures and TV programs than to win agreements for Canadians to film there. The film board and the Chinese last year exchanged movie teams, both of them making documentaries.

"Officially, the answer from the Chinese is that, yes, they want to buy from us," Domville says. "They are buying more foreign films and paying very little money, considering their population. They're into a massive development of TV. Most families in Peking now have a black and white TV set."

Co-production plans

Domville also approached the Chinese about an official co-production between them and Canadian producers. "They've just entered into agreement with Japan's (government) **NHK** network for a 12-part series. A genuine co-production was unthinkable between the Chinese and anybody a few years ago," Domville said. "We asked if they would work it out with us and they indicated that might be possible. In a year's time we will see concrete results. I'm encouraging the Canadian TV and film industry to take a long-term view.

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Flying!, the **John Hirsch**-directed revue spoof of old movies, closes Nov. 15 at Basin Street on Queen St. W.