



WHO YA GONNA CALL? *GHOSTBUSTERS* STARS (LEFT TO RIGHT) ERNIE HUDSON, DAN AYKROYD, BILL MURRAY AND HAROLD RAMIS BLAST OFF AGAINST THE GHOSTLY OPPOSITION

## Guinness Choice

# Ghostbusters

105 mins, USA, col

Dir Ivan Reitman

Bill Murray, Dan Aykroyd,

Sigourney Weaver, Harold Ramis



The biggest comedy hit of the year, *Ghostbusters* successfully combined breathtaking special effects with the comedy talents of television show *Saturday Night Live*'s Bill Murray and Dan Aykroyd. Although the film was originally conceived as a vehicle for Aykroyd and the late John Belushi, it is actually Murray's show all the way. After their research funding is

pulled, three parapsychologists (Murray, Aykroyd and Ramis) decide that their only alternative is to become professional ghost catchers. The three stumble across proof of unusually high paranormal activity in the apartment of their very first client, cellist Dana Barrett (Weaver), and end up fighting to save New York from the wrath of an ancient Sumerian god. The film has its tongue firmly in its cheek, and Murray is at his most laid back as he steadfastly refuses to take any of the chaos seriously. Sigourney Weaver is provided with fewer opportunities than she

would have a few years later in *Working Girl* (1988) to demonstrate her comic abilities, but still delivers a humorous spin to a role that is essentially a sexy foil for Murray's amorous investigator. Rick Moranis receives his first major exposure as Weaver's nerdish neighbour, but Aykroyd and Ramis (who also co-wrote the screenplay) are curiously muted as Murray's ghostbusting colleagues. As a result, Bill Murray gets all the best lines. On finding that Weaver has been transformed into a living stone hell-hound, his only observation is: 'OK, so she's a dog.' Murray had by now perfected his line in stony-faced wisecracks, and this film remains the most effective use of his screen persona (although his performance in 1993's *Groundhog Day* admittedly comes a pretty close second).

The effects are impressive, and the scene in the library where the 'busters encounter their first spook is still quite frightening. The film reaches its zenith with the arrival of what is possibly the very first effective comedy use of big-budget special effects, the stupendous marshmallow man, stampeding through the city with a malevolent grin on his puffy white face. The film's success was cemented by the chart success of Ray Parker Jr's catchy theme tune 'Ghostbusters', *Saturday Night Live* produced a host of other comedy stars in the 1980s, including Steve Martin, Chevy Chase and John Candy, none of whom enjoyed the box-office success experienced by the stars of *Ghostbusters* – a success they all went on to repeat in 1989's sequel *Ghostbusters II*.