

# Why Gob is on the slide

Canadian Will Arnett tells SALLY BROWNE of his dramatic introduction into comedy

**W**HEN Ben Stiller received a script written by two brothers about a pair of male figure-skaters who enter the world championships, it was a case of "why hadn't anybody thought of this before?"

The crazy Will Ferrell and *Napoleon Dynamite*'s Jon Heder were called in to play the lead roles as the brawny Chazz Michael Michaels and the delicate Jimmy MacElroy, who go head to head as skating rivals and then head to groin as skating partners.

But who to play their arch villains — a brother and sister skating team with morals as dubious as their appalling wardrobe?

The answer was Canadian actor Will Arnett, known for his role as the abominable George "Gob" Bluth from TV's *Arrested Development*, and his wife, *Saturday Night Live* regular Amy Poehler.

Stiller, who signed on as film producer, describes them as "the funniest married couple I know". For Arnett, playing the cartoon-like villain opposite his wife was a role he couldn't refuse.

"It was actually great," Arnett says. "We're not a comedy team and we don't really have designs to work together all the time. Ben Stiller called us up and said, 'Hey, we've got the script and we'd love you guys to play this incestuous brother and sister.' And we thought maybe this'd be something we could have fun on and poke fun at ourselves a little bit."

Since defining the role of Gob in *Arrested Development*, Arnett has developed a reputation for being a great comic actor. But it's not something the 37-year-old planned on.

"I actually thought that I would do something far more dramatic," he says. "Unfortunately, people found my dramatic acting to be hilarious. But, you know, I realise that the best plan is to have no plan and be flexible. And I kind of fell into this whole world ass-backwards."

Somehow, he landed on his feet, and success has brought him such opportunities as visiting Australia for the first time for the premiere of *Blades of Glory*.

Despite playing the villain, he's not worried about being typecast as a "comic antagonist".

"Playing the villain can often be the most fun role because you can kind of get away with being awful and you're playing these incredibly flawed people. In a way, they're almost the more complex characters."

And although he enjoyed playing the love-to-hate-him Gob, Arnett assures us Gob's not the kind of person he'd invite around to a party.

"He's an idiot. People say to me, 'Oh, my friends call me Gob all the time, they think I'm a lot like Gob,' and I say, 'Man, that's not a compliment.' That guy was a world-class fool. But God bless Gob."

*Blades of Glory* opens on Thursday.



Poles apart: Will Arnett plays 'the most fun role' in the new comedy, *Blades of Glory*

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