



GENARO MOLINA Los Angeles Times

Five-year-old Ryland Almanza, wearing the mask of his wrestling idol Sting, enjoys Saturday's action.

# Wrestling Fans Get Into the Act

■ **Show business:** About 4,000 devoted followers fill the bill as extras during filming of a movie downtown.

By JOHN M. GLIONNA  
TIMES STAFF WRITER

In a city where most movie shoots are elite, off-limits affairs overseen by uniformed cops, this one was a regular free-for-all featuring those big-muscled kings of publicity, the hairy-chested he-men in black leotards from the World Championship Wrestling organization.

And like 4,000 other wild-eyed wrestling fans turned unpaid extras who filled the Grand Olympic Auditorium in downtown Los Angeles Saturday, Steve Szapiro was in head-lock heaven.

Wearing a shiny king's crown with phony plastic jewels provided by event promoters, Szapiro joined fellow wrestling fanatics in a staged screech-hoot-and-hollering session during the shooting of a movie based on

their favorite sport.

Producers for the film "Ready to Rumble" couldn't have been happier.

Although they could have shot scenes for the movie in Toronto or Las Vegas (where the fight sequence filmed Saturday supposedly took place), they said L.A. fans captured the multiethnic roots of the sport's fandom.

"On most shoots, the extras we attract are just average folks, not ready-made fans," said Jeffrey Silver, a producer for Outlaw Productions. "But these people

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