Tongues have been fervently wagging about Vincenzo Natali’s (pictured) long-awaited creature feature SPLICE—even more so now that monolithic distributor Warner Bros. is set to release the film June 4 in conjunction with Joel Silver and Robert Zemeckis’ unstoppable Dark Castle genre imprint.

Natali’s films—which include 1997’s CUBE and 2002’s CYPHER—are highbrow, thinking person’s dark fantasies, whose ample amounts of geek-pleasing are offset by a considerable amount of chin-stroking. In other words, not your usual multiplex fare. But after positive screenings at both the Sitges and Sundance film festivals, SPLICE’s word of mouth is high. Boasting a cast that includes Oscar winner Adrien Brody and DAWN OF THE DEAD 2004’s Sarah Polley, plus staggering creature FX courtesy of C.O.R.E. Digital Pictures and KNB, the film looks like a lock for monster mash of the year.

Fango spoke with Natali this morning to get his thoughts on the high-profile summer presence of his gene-splicing chiller—and a few new splices that the movie itself will be undergoing. As far as its new studio imprimatur (after previous distributor Senator Entertainment’s money woes orphaned the film), the director tells Fango, “Well, it’s entirely Joel Silver. He’s the visionary behind it all. It’s a funny story, actually. He saw a still image from the film on-line and thought it looked interesting. When SPLICE was at Sundance, one of his execs saw it and liked it, then Joel saw it and really liked it. Very quickly, he decided it would be released through Dark Castle.”

Clearly, Silver saw crossover potential in this genre exercise, and Natali notes that SPLICE’s fest audiences were very differently oriented. “At Sitges, the crowd was obviously already weighted in favor of the film,” he notes. “But obviously, Sundance is different. There’s just not as much geek presence, and I mean that in the kindest, most positive way. I really didn’t know how they’d respond there, but generally, it was well-received. I mean, I’m sure some people hate it, and that’s fine. It’s not to be embraced by everyone.”

Just to be sure it has the broadest possible appeal, Natali admits, the film will be undergoing a few Warners-mandated alterations. “You’re going to see a slightly nipped-and-tucked version,” he reveals. “I’m actually going into the editing room next week, and if they’re true to their word, it’s just going to be cosmetic. It really comes down to Joel. He loves the movie and actually enjoys the parts that would scare most producers away. He’s being very courageous releasing this. There are also a few things I’m changing after seeing the film with an audience. I believe what will come out of it will be a new and improved cut, but in essence, it’ll be the same film.”

Stay logged on to Fangoria.com for more exclusives with Natali regarding SPLICE and future projects, and be sure to pick up issue #294 of the mag, on sale in May, for an in-depth look at the film’s creation!

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