Independent animator Bill Plympton has been bringing his unique, off-kilter comedic sensibilities to the screen for a few decades now, and several years back, he ventured into genre territory with the feature HAIR HIGH. Yet the film hasn’t managed to break out past the festival/limited-release circuit—until now; Fango got the scoop that it’ll finally hit DVD this summer.

Plympton’s company will be self-distributing HAIR HIGH, which takes place in the ’50s and tells of a love triangle gone very bad. When Spud, the new kid in school, begins an affair with popular girl Cherri, her boyfriend Rod gets incensed, leading to murder, undead revenge and other assorted cartoon grue. The voice talent includes Eric Gilliland, Sarah Silverman, Dermot Mulroney, Beverly D’Angelo, Keith and the late David Carradine, Tom Noonan, Justin Long and THE SIMPSONS creator Matt Groening.

Despite all that talent, copious fest play between 2004-2005 and a few theatrical gigs in the subsequent years, no commercial home release was forthcoming for HAIR HIGH. “No one really wants to distribute independent animated films that aren’t geared to children,” Kerri Allegretta, a member of Plympton’s team who’s overseeing the DVD, tells Fango. “This is more like teenager/adult-oriented animation. We’ve been begging Bill for years” to take the disc-release reins, and the result will be a special edition whose debut is being aimed to tie in with this July’s San Diego Comic-Con.

“I’m putting the elements together now,” Allegretta continues, “and I’m going through all the voiceover sessions. We’ve got Matt Groening, Sarah Silverman—she’s hilarious—David Carradine and Keith Carradine. When we opened the movie at the Two Boots Pioneer Theater in Manhattan, this guy made a huge costume of the Rooster from the football scene that someone could fit into, and I have video of him putting it together that’s sped up with funny music added to it. It took him like a week to do it, day and night. We’re going to put the trailer for [Plympton’s 2008 feature] IDIOTS AND ANGELS on there too.” There will also be a commentary by Plympton, and other extras yet to be determined.

While it has become tougher to get independent, personal features like Plympton’s released in the current climate, Allegretta notes that last year’s release of his DOG DAYS compilation DVD “was his best release ever among his films. I believe we’ve done two shipments of it already. I guess you could call HAIR HIGH old, but nowadays a film that’s two months old is really old, and I still have people e-mailing me asking for it. Our French distributor released it like four years ago on DVD, so everyone in France has it. You go on-line and type in HAIR HIGH, and everyone’s like, ‘Where’s the English version?’ ”

Allegretta and the rest of the Plympton gang are hoping that IDIOTS AND ANGELS, a dark urban fantasy that has also had a healthy and award-winning festival life, will have the chance to be seen by a wider audience. “We want to get U.S. distribution for it, for theaters first, and then hopefully someone will pick it up and release it on DVD. It’s really because of the economy right now, no one wants to touch anything at this point. That’s what was so amazing about THE SECRET OF KELLS; it’s doing so well, and it got Oscar-nominated before it had even been released. That gives Bill some hope. It’s a good thing to see other independent works getting out there.” You can read more about HAIR HIGH in Fango #294, on sale in May, and see Plympton’s official website here .

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