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Happy And Gay



Two cartoon couples go out dancing and a series of mishaps occurs.

Director: [Loreli Pepi](#)

Writer: Loreli Pepi

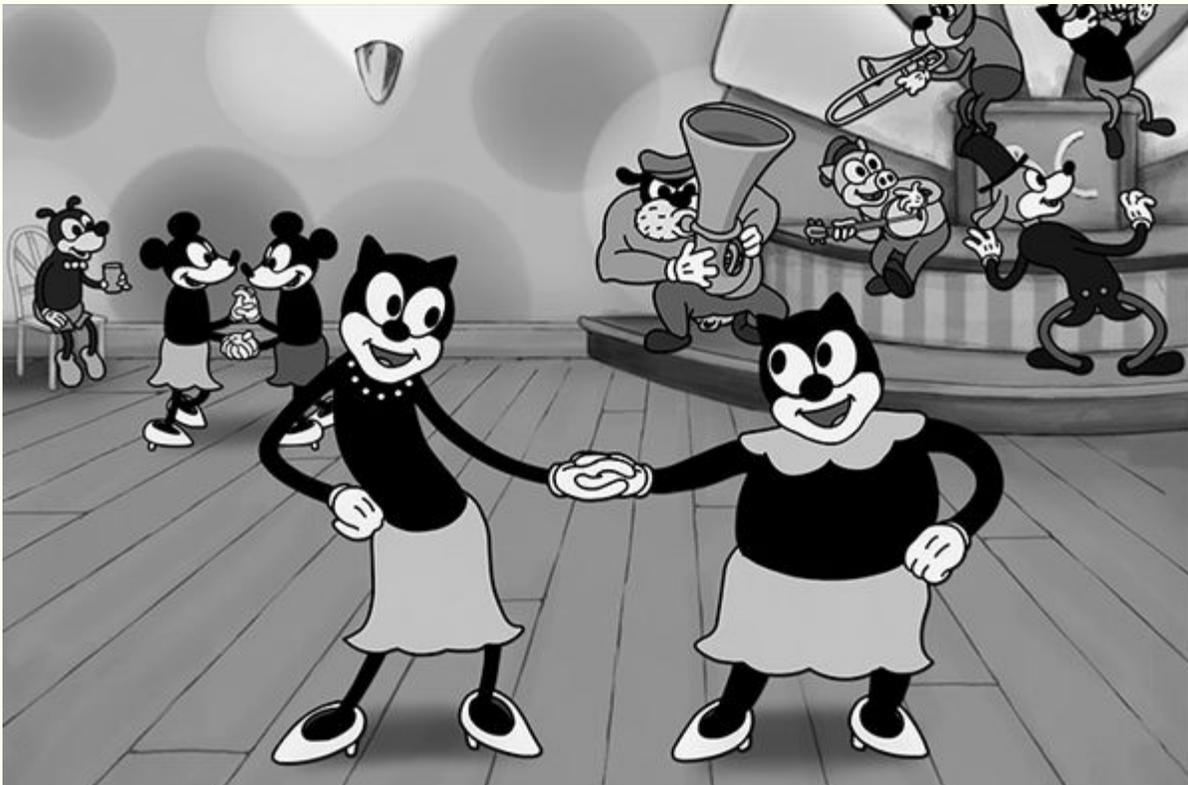
Starring: [Leah Callahan](#), [Brian Carpenter](#), [Brian King](#), [Charlie Miller](#)

Year: 2014

Runtime: 11 minutes

Country: US

Reviewed by: [Jennie Kermode](#)



"Pepi's attention to detail is superb and means that there are a lot of extra treats for those familiar with the genre."

Remember those cheery cartoons of the Thirties with their cute anthropomorphic characters, their love of tradition, their foolish shrieking women and their jolly black characters who kept making hilarious mistakes? They were equally vicious to gay and lesbian characters, if they acknowledged their existence at all, but a lot of the damage done came simply from erasure - the dearth of any positive characters outside the narrow band of what was approved. Happy

And Gay is a retrospective attempt to correct that - an experiment looking at what might have happened if other people got the chance to be heroes.

The focus is on four cool cats - one lesbian couple and one gay male couple - who decide to go out for a night on the town. Along the way they face a scuffle with a homophobic taxi driver, police brutality and a church where they are declared to be sinners - all presented in the style of the time as wacky misadventures. From their squeaky voices to their suddenly elongating limbs, our heroes are perfect recreations, which makes their stigmatised difference seem all the more trivial. The villains, whether bumbling or sneering, are also drawn to type, pointing up the strangeness of their inability to recognise the part they're playing.



Director Loreli Pepi has said that she was drawn to the idea of creating something seemingly historical yet anachronistic. It's a combination of style and theme that could not have existed at the time, yet a young child watching this alongside other cartoons might easily assume it was a genuine product of that era (lighthearted and playful, it doesn't contain anything inappropriate for children). Pepi's attention to detail is superb and means that there are a lot of extra treats for those familiar with the genre. The title also applies to a bright piece of jazz used in the film's centrepiece dance routine and the mood is decidedly upbeat, but there's also a sly humour entirely appropriate to this kind of filmmaking, and characters we meet in passing sometimes behave in unexpected ways.

Though it certainly has a political point to make, Happy And Gay doesn't depend on that for its energy. It's beautifully observed, and its sharp wit makes it a delight to watch.

Reviewed on: 06 Jul 2017