



# AH! MY GODDESS: VOLUME 4

FILM ★★★ EXTRAS ★

2005 • 100 mins • 12 • £19.99 • Out now

Director: Hiroaki Couda Writer: Kousuke Fujishima

Starring: Kikuko Inoue, Yumi Tooma, Aya Hisakawa

**The hapless demon Marller returns with a tiny sidekick, determined to drive Belldandy back to Heaven.**

EVERY SERIES HAS A WEAK RUN, usually towards the end of a series. (Everything's susceptible to it – think of the middle chunk of season three of the usually superb *Battlestar Galactica*, for instance.) This volume is it for *Ah! My Goddess*, essentially a bunch of filler episodes of varying quality before the series gains proper momentum for the final two volumes. The romance between Belldandy and Keiichi proceeds at a snail's pace and mini-goddess Skuld creates a new friend, the robot Banpei-kun. The fine animation (exemplified in a scene when Belldandy uses her full power as a first class goddess) and Banpei-centric episode are about the only thing which makes this disc anything more than tolerable.

Continuing on from the previous volume, Urd is dying to give her sister's romance a much needed kick up the fundament, which of course goes horribly wrong, as these things are so often wont to do. Some comic relief comes in the form of Marller, the hapless demon who is determined to wreck the gang's cozy lives, at which she fails constantly – being shot down automatically by Banpei-kun while Keiichi drinks tea and unwisely enlisting the miniature god of poverty as her lackey. Belldandy gets the rest of the jokes with her 'jealousy storms'; as Marller forces Keiichi into questionable situations, thunder and rainstorms suddenly appear overhead and vanish a second later when Belldandy realizes he's actually being helpful.

Sadly, the English dub and subtitles continue to be intensely irritating, even if the American cast do try to make their performances sound believable. It's something of a wasted effort, however, with Belldandy still referring to 'Mr. Keiichi'. The Japanese dub and dulcet tones of Kikuko Inoue are far preferable; even if the subtitles are periodically mistranslated, this version remains a thousand times better than the English one.

#### DID YOU KNOW?

This is actually the fourth time Japanese voice actors Kikuko Inoue (Belldandy), Yumi Tooma (Urd) and Aya Hisakawa (Skuld) have reprised their roles. All three played the goddesses in the original OAV, the *Mini-Goddess* series and the theatrical movie.

**Extras:** As with the previous discs in the series, there're precious few, just a creditless closing sequence which is both utterly pointless and a shameless waste given the popularity of the show. Let's have a bit more effort next time, eh? **Lesley Smith**