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Don't mind doing it for the kids

Anticipated 'Kids Are All Right' to screen in Charlotte, Raleigh

by Lawrence Ferber :: qnotes contributor

TO prepare Julianne Moore for her role as a lesbian parent in "The Kids Are All Right," out director/co-writer Lisa Cholodenko gave her some critical materials to study: gay porn.

"Yeah!" Moore laughs, discussing the film in Manhattan's Waldorf Astoria hotel in late June 2010. To explain: Moore and Annette Bening play Jules and Nic, a middle-aged lesbian couple who spice up their sex life by watching gay male porn — which their 15-year-old son, Laser (Josh Hutchinson), discovers and has a very awkward discussion with them about. "That stuff is really funny," Moore admits regarding the scenes. "I love the honesty with which they explain it [to him]. It's really adorable."

This is but one raucously funny sequence in the "High Art" director's third feature, which she co-wrote with longtime acquaintance, heterosexual screenwriter Stuart Blumberg ("Keeping the Faith," "The Girl Next Door").

Debuting to acclaim and ecstatic reviews at 2010's Sundance and Berlin Film Festivals, "The Kids" begins when Nic and Jules' two children, Laser and 18-year-old Joni (Mia Wasikowska), who were conceived via artificial insemination with sperm from an anonymous donor, track down their biological father, Paul (Mark Ruffalo). A laid-back restaurateur, Paul is intrigued by his sudden "father" status, and slowly

ingratiates himself within the family unit. Nic, a physician with a strict if not uptight disposition, isn't exactly enthralled with this development, but Jules, in the midst of an identity crisis as far as career and life ambitions, develops a rapport with Paul — and unexpected sexual chemistry, which leads to explosive complications for all involved.

Comedic and sharply drawn, "The Kids" represents Cholodenko's first screenplay collaboration. While ultimately symbiotic — Blumberg gets credit for insisting they include the deliciously funny gay porn bit, which was borne from a random writing break conversation — Cholodenko admits the scripting process, which commenced following the release of her 2002 feature "Laurel Canyon" and endured for the better part of a decade, was fraught with tension and disagreement.

"There were times we wanted to throttle each other and quit," she says. "It was protracted and painstaking and [there were] differences of opinion, but ultimately we defaulted to where we began. I liked that he was bringing a comedic and commercial sensibility and he liked I was bringing a more auteur sensibility and we each wanted a little something of what the other had or could do well."

The script also reflected some personal events in Cholodenko's and Blumberg's own lives. She and long-term partner Wendy Melvoin (of Wendy & Lisa fame) were

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Black Pride in the QC

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