

# LITTLE KINGS A SUCCESS WITHOUT STEREOTYPES



MONDAY MAY 8, 2006

By: **Sherry Mazzocchi**

Issue date: 5/8/06 Section: News

In her 99-minute independent film, *Little Kings*, producer and director Marylou Tibaldo-Bongiorno casts Italian-American stereotypes aside. In her introduction to the event, she said she wanted the film to capture "what it means to be Italian-American," without the ever-present shadow of the mafia lurking in the background.

Sure, there are the requisite scenes of family dinners overflowing with pasta, wine and yelling relatives. But she has crafted a movie that is as fresh and appealing as its youthful cast.

The film was presented on Apr. 27 at the Baruch Performing Arts Center as part of Mediated Ethnicity: Italian-Americans and the Cinematic Experience. Two other films in the series, *Mac* and *Ciao America*, were screened last week.

While the men in *Little Kings* are in competition with each other, they are mainly ruled by the women in their lives as much as their passions and outsized libidos. The women in the film are multifaceted. They struggle and ultimately fulfill their sexuality.

After the screening, Tibaldo-Bongiorno, her husband Jerome who co-wrote the film and two of the actors talked about making the film. Tibaldo-Bongiorno said, "Making this film was a labor of love."

Cast members Pietropinto and Giordano (who play husband and wife) both agreed that it is difficult for Italian-American actors to get parts that are not stereotypes. Giordano said when he auditions for parts, he is often told, "I'm not blue-collar enough and I'm too intelligent," to play an Italian-American.

Giordano also said he enjoyed finding his "inner louse" for the role of Gino.

The director told him, "You're the a\*\*hole in the film. Make him likable." Pietropinto talked about how she and Giordano improvised a scene at the end of the film. "It was important for them to have that moment together," she said.



Media Credit: VICTOR CHU | THE TICKER  
Marylou Tibaldo-Bongiorno smiles after the screening of her film *Little Kings*



L-R: Joe Sciorra, Marylou Tibaldo-Bongiorno, Rita Pietropinto, Jerome Bongiorno, Mark Giordano