



**“A CROWD-PLEASER IN THE BEST SENSE,**  
this alternately hilarious and heartbreaking movie  
will send you out of the theater with a new lease on life.”  
David Ansen, *Newsweek*

# YOUNG @ HEART

ROCK 'N ROLL WILL NEVER DIE.

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THIS SPRING ONLY IN THEATERS



Discussion guide developed by Heartland Truly Moving Pictures to accompany *Young @ Heart*, a Truly Moving Picture award winning film. A Truly Moving Picture award winner is a film that unlocks the vast potential of the human spirit and enables us to view stories that display courage, integrity and hope, taking entertainment to a higher level.



[www.TrulyMovingPictures.org](http://www.TrulyMovingPictures.org)

## **One Film Can**

Heartland Truly Moving Pictures, a non-profit organization, recognizes and honors films and filmmakers whose work explores the human journey by expressing hope and respect for the positive values of life. We believe that one film can move us to laughter, to tears, or to make a difference. *Young @ Heart* is a movie that demonstrates that One Film Can.

## **Synopsis**

*Young @Heart*, from filmmakers Sally George and Stephen Walker, captures seven unforgettable weeks in the lives of the members of the Young@Heart Chorus. Based in Northampton, Massachusetts, the group is made up of two dozen spirited seniors who specialize in reinterpreting rock, punk and R & B classics from a unique perspective. In *Young @Heart*, Walker and George take an often hilarious and poignant look at the group as they prepare for a one night only concert in their hometown. A lineup that includes former schoolteachers, executives, doctors and food service workers, the chorus is guided by their longtime director Bob Cilman. With less than two months to go until the concert, the performers struggle with the new lyrics and unfamiliar melodies of seven new songs. During their thrice weekly rehearsals, they gradually take possession of music ranging from R&B classics like Allen Toussaint's "Yes We Can Can" to Coldplay's emotionally powerful ballad "Fix You," upending assumptions about old age, love, sex and death.

Starting out as a lighthearted look at a quirky musical group, the film gains unexpected gravitas when two members of the chorus die within days of each other and the lyrics of the group's repertoire take on powerful new significance. From 92-year-old war bride Eileen Hall's rousing rendition of The Clash's "Should I Stay Or Should I Go?" to Pat Linderme's moving interpretation of Prince's "Nothing Compares 2 U," each performance responds to the ravages of age with startling emotional depth.

And, after almost two months of shooting, the Young@Heart Chorus delivers a triumphant performance that celebrates the joy of music and the lives of their lost friends. The end result is an inspirational journey with a singular group of people who may be old in body, but refuse to grow old in spirit.

**All the songs we've known take on a new meaning when they're sung by old people.** Director, Sally George

Stephen Walker and his wife Sally George directed *Young @ Heart*, and through the eyes of their camera crew we are introduced to a choir with performers ranging from seventy to ninety years old. In their spare time these choir members listen to classical music, jazz and big band, however during rehearsals they take on anything but.

### Discussion

Following is a list of a few of the songs that the Young @ Heart chorus performed in the film:

- *Fix You*, Coldplay
  - *Golden Years*, David Bowie
  - *I Feel Good*, James Brown
  - *Life During Wartime*, Talking Heads
  - *Nothing Compares 2 U*, Prince
  - *Schizophrenia*, Sonic Youth
  - *Should I Stay or Should I Go?*, The Clash
  - *Stayin' Alive*, The Bee Gees
  - *Yes We Can Can*, Allen Toussaint
- Did the songs with which you were familiar before viewing the movie take on new meaning when hearing them sung by the members of the Young @ Heart chorus? If you aren't familiar with any of the songs you can find the lyrics online at [www.lyrics.com](http://www.lyrics.com) or you can listen to clips of songs performed by the original artists at [www.iTunes.com](http://www.iTunes.com).
  - What is it about these songs being sung by an older generation that makes them take on a different message?
  - Would these songs take on another meaning if sung by a much younger generation, such as elementary or middle school aged choirs? How?
  - Can you think of other songs the choir could have sung that would have taken on new meaning when performed by this group? Why?

## **We don't get to keep these people forever.**

Director Bob Cilman

In the quote above, Director of the Young @ Heart Chorus, Bob Cilman speaks about adapting to new members of the choir as they fill the spaces that have become vacant by those who have left the choir behind. The choir is ever-changing and ever-adapting to new people and new songs, but the show always goes on.

### **Discussion**

- Each of the individuals in *Young @ Heart* appears to take the loss of acquaintances in good stride. At a certain age loss of acquaintances and loved ones becomes a larger part of life; however we are never certain of how long we will get to spend with the people closest to us. Think about not the inevitable loss, but about the time you are able to spend with those near you and how to make the most of your time with them. Are you already making the most of this time? How? Are there things you can be doing differently?
- Are there any members of the Young @ Heart Chorus that stand out against the others and have impacted you? In what way?
- Think about Bob Cilman's role as the director of the Young @ Heart Chorus. He has been directing this group for over 25 years and in those years used this chorus to inspire others through defying expectations—both of what to expect from music and what it means to age. Did this film help break stereotypes for you? If so, what were they?



**You do go on, because you realize everybody has to go in the end. We all do.**

Chorus member Eileen Hall

In the quote above, chorus member Eileen Hall discusses losing two of the choir members in such a short period of time. Rather than cancelling the upcoming concerts upon learning of each death, the choir performs to inmates at the jail and the packed house at the Academy Theatre in Northampton.

**Discussion**

- This documentary displays both the energizing power of music and the strength music has to draw groups together. Does music have this affect on you? What instances can you point to where music has benefited you?
- What in your life, if not music, has this same power? Why?
- *Young @ Heart* demonstrate that music can infuse lives with energy. What can you do to help infuse music in other people's lives—both young and old?

Visit the sites below to discover ways you can help bring music into people's lives.

- As part of their "Art. Ask for More." campaign, Americans for the Arts is expanding its message about promoting arts education by empowering people with the tools they need to make a difference in the arts in their communities. Learn more at [www.AmericansForTheArts.org](http://www.AmericansForTheArts.org)
- VH1 Save the Music, [www.vh1savethemusic.com](http://www.vh1savethemusic.com)
- Support Music, Brought to you NAMM and MENC: The National Association for Music Education, [www.supportmusic.com](http://www.supportmusic.com)

## Truly Moving Moments

*Young @ Heart* has been honored as a Heartland Truly Moving Picture Award-winning film. This award was created to honor films released theatrically that align with Heartland's mission to recognize and honor films and filmmakers whose work explores the human journey by artistically expressing hope and respect for the positive values of life.

These award-winning movies are made up of moving and inspiring moments – those moments that cause you to think, see something in your life differently, be inspired to do something. It's what makes the movie and its message remain with you well after you've left the theatre.

Think about *Young @ Heart*. What were the moments that stood out to you? How did they make you feel? How will they cause you to think about things differently in the future?

Share those Truly Moving moments with others at [www.TrulyMovingPictures.org](http://www.TrulyMovingPictures.org). Simply create a membership or login if you already have one and then search the movie list for *Young @ Heart*. You can leave your review of the movie or thoughts about your Truly Moving Picture in the "Thoughts and Reviews" section.

