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Music 19: PV Soundscapes

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Statement on Ethical Considerations – *Young @ Heart*

The primary purpose of the documentary film *Young @ Heart* is to tell the true story of an offbeat choir of senior citizens as they prepare for a major concert in their hometown. In their pursuit of this goal, the filmmakers (who from here on will be referred to as “we”) have a responsibility to the public, to scholarship, to the organizations that are funding our endeavor, and to the people we intend to represent through our work. With these responsibilities in mind, we would like to directly address the Society of Ethnomusicology’s Position Statement on Ethical Considerations, Section II, and the American Anthropological Association’s Code of Ethics, Sections III.A – III.C.

I - Society of Ethnomusicology’s Position Statement on Ethical Considerations, Section II

1. We will never willingly state or imply any information that we are not completely confident in the factuality of. We will, to the best of our ability, make our intentions clear to all people involved in the making of the film.
2. We will inform any and all persons represented in the film of their rights to privacy and confidentiality, as well as the potential of any documentary to unintentionally misrepresent its subjects. We will, whenever possible, obtain written or otherwise recorded documentation of consent to being filmed from all persons represented in *Young @ Heart*. If this cannot be practically achieved, as with the filming of a large audience, we will make our presence and our intentions as visible as possible without compromising the authenticity of the story that is our driving force.
3. We will never willingly violate the ethical values of the cultures and individuals represented in our work. To ensure this, we will make our filming schedule available to everyone involved in the film, including who, what, where, and when we intend to film.
4. We will comply with all federal, state, and local laws concerning copyright, and only utilize non-copyrighted materials with the creator’s (or proprietor’s) informed, documented consent. We acknowledge the possibility for futures misuses of the audiovisual material we obtain by outside parties, we recognize our responsibility for our

part in this process, and will seek ways to prevent and/or address any such misuse.

5. As this will be a commercially released, major-studio film, it is vitally important that anyone who may be represented in the film be prepared for increased notoriety and scrutiny from the general public before they consent to being depicted in the film. This includes informing the persons in question of the film's potential revenue, as well as how this revenue will be distributed.

II - American Anthropological Association's Code of Ethics, Sections III.A – III.C

- A. We will do everything in our power to ensure that the creation of this documentary does not harm the safety, dignity, or privacy of the people with whom we work, conduct research, or perform other professional activities. Towards this end, we will actively consult with the Young @ Heart choir and their director before, during, and after filming, with the goal of establishing a working relationship that can be beneficial to all parties involved. This relationship is crucial if we are to obtain in advance the informed consent of persons being depicted, providing information, owning or controlling access to relevant material, or otherwise identified as having interests which might be impacted by the creation and distribution of the film.

We acknowledge the possibility that close and enduring relationships may form during the filmmaking process. Should such a relationship form, we will do everything in our power to ensure that obligations to openness and informed consent are met.

Finally, we recognize the debt we will owe to the Young @ Heart choir and other individuals who contribute towards the film's success. However, it should go without saying that monetary compensation would obviously affect the authenticity of the story we desire to tell, as well as drastically change the working relationships we hope to build. Thus, it is our intention to repay the generosity of others through total dedication to telling their stories truthfully and with the utmost respect.

- B. We will not willingly deceive anyone. We will not knowingly misrepresent any information (i.e. fabricate evidence, falsify, or plagiarize). We will not attempt to prevent reporting of misconduct.

We acknowledge that the Young @ Heart choir is an independent organization, and should anyone other than us, the filmmakers, intend to document them in any way, they are free to express their intentions to the choir, and the choir is free accept their offer.

Unlike the Young @ Heart choir, though, we are not an independent organization. We are funded by a film studio, which will retain the rights to our completed film. Thus, we have no control over the dissemination of our finished product to the public, and cannot insure that it will be accessible to all. However, we will do everything in our power to ensure that the information presented to those who can access the film when it is commercially available is truthful. Furthermore, we will give as much context through editing and other post-production processes (i.e. voice-overs) as is necessary for the film to be properly understood. This context will include who we are, what our qualifications as documenters are, what our relevant philosophical or political biases are, if any, and why we were drawn to the Young @ Heart choir as a subject for our film.

In conclusion, we acknowledge that, in the process of making this film, we may encounter some highly sensitive and personal events such as serious illness and death. It is our hope that, by following the guidelines above, these situations will be handled with the utmost dignity and sincerity. Still, our first obligation is the truth, and we will not intentionally leave out any information relevant to our central storyline because of its sensitive or personal nature, though *we will not depict any people or personal events without informed consent*. Finally, we acknowledge that mistakes may be made, but it is our hope that by forming a healthy relationship based on mutual respect between the Young @ Heart choir and ourselves, these mistakes will not diminish the overall message we wish to convey: a message of hope, of resilience, of joy, and of inspiration.