



REVIEW BY JAMES MADDEN

Childlike innocence is often cast as ephemeral. Youthful naivety drastically transforms into rebellious angst ridden teenage years. Spanning over fifteen countries and speaking to more than twenty interviewees, Genevieve Bailey's documentary *I Am Eleven* proves that we can all learn something from eleven-year-olds.

Topics as varied as bullying, friendship, education, war, poverty, religion, love and growing up are all covered with a variety of responses from the subjects. The most impoverished children have some of the greatest insights concerning financial wellbeing—or lack thereof. While other elements seem universal, this offers discernable differences in perception.

Bailey's camera is focused, direct and allows the kids to shine. Nick Huggins' playful music adds exuberance to the already lively and oftentimes surprising words of the children, best evidenced with Remi from France: "I love snakes and I don't like racist people at all."

I Am Eleven concludes with images demonstrating unity among difference where the interviewees share importantly similar traits: they like to dance, and they like to have fun. As the film begins, Bailey states that she wanted to make something energetic, optimistic, universal and real. *I Am Eleven* is all that and much, much more. ■