



✻ Award-winning documentary director Greta Schiller (together with partner Andrea Weiss) has always maintained that 'the obvious thing we're interested in is looking at histories that have been lost — trying to recreate them and celebrate them in some sense before they're lost forever.' At the ICA for the next fortnight there'll be opportunities to see the results of the Schiller/Weiss philosophy in the films 'International Sweethearts of Rhythm' and **TINY AND RUBY: HELL DIVIN' WOMEN**, together with a programme of other documentaries on women jazz and blues musicians, selected by Schiller. 'Sweethearts' tells the story of the eponymous multi-racial, all-women jazz big band of the '40s. 'Tiny and Ruby' is an affectionate portrait of that band's trumpet player, the 'female Louis Armstrong', and drummer, lovers and partners for 43 years. "'Sweethearts' is a portrait of a group of women," Schiller explains. 'However, out of those women, Tiny really shone out. She's a spectacular personality; with no intellectual rationalisation, she provides a lot of inspiration to people — she did what she wanted to do with her life'. Additionally, Schiller confirms that Tiny, as a black lesbian musician, 'overcame incredible obstacles — there weren't any big movements for black or women's or lesbian liberation. Every obstacle that society puts up to keep people in a preconceived place, she didn't see them as obstacles. She saw them as walls to knock down and keep going forward.' Tragically, as the films bear out, some of the greatest female artists in jazz and blues found just too many walls in their way. ●ROSE COLLIS

### ICA C'THEQUE

■ **ICA Cinematèque** Nash House, The Mall, SW1 (930 3647) Charing Cross/Piccadilly Circus tubes. See West End for films in the ICA Cinema. £2.50, half-price Mon. Annual m'ship £12, student art pass £6.00, day pass 75p. [X]

■ Thur 23-Sat 25 at 6.30:  
L'Age d'Or

See Everyman above.

+ **Big Business** (James Horne, 1929, US) Laurel and Hardy, 20 mins.

■ Sun 26 at 7.30:

Doris Chase

See Video.

■ Mon 27 at 6.30, 8.30:

**International Sweethearts of Rhythm** (Greta Schiller/Andrea Weiss, 1986, US) 30 mins.

+ **Tiny and Ruby: Hell-Divin' Women** (Greta Schiller/Andrea Weiss, 1988, US) 30 mins.

+ **Maxine Sullivan: Love to Be in Love** (Greta Schiller, 1989, US)

Schiller and Weiss' documentaries are ideally seen in tandem, as together they reconstruct chapters of women's history in music and American society forgotten or made invisible. Mixing rare archive clips and contemporary interviews, 'Sweethearts' follows the rise and fall of the multi-racial, all-women jazz band that successfully toured the US and Europe during the '40s. Schiller and Weiss skilfully evoke the atmosphere of the times and inject some extra zest into the tale by interviewing fans of the band as well as the musicians. 'Tiny and Ruby' focuses on one of those whose character positively bulged out of the earlier film — star trumpeter Tiny Davis — and her long-term lover and partner, drummer Ruby Lucas.

★★★

### Tiny and Ruby: Hell Divin' Women

30 min. color 16mm & video 1988.

Sale: 16mm: \$425; video: \$295. Rental: \$55.

Directed by Greta Schiller and Andrea Weiss.

Distributor: The Cinema Guild.

Synopsis:

This sequel to INTERNATIONAL SWEETHEARTS OF RHYTHM profiles the band's star performer, Ernestine "Tiny" Davis, and her partner of over 40 years, Ruby Lucas. The film documents Tiny's career before joining the Sweethearts, as well as after the group disbanded after WWII.

Comments:

A great, lively, down and gritty production. Terrific archival footage. An extremely well done independent production. Frank, candid and to the point. Technical quality good.

Age Level: College-Adult

Uses:

Women's studies groups, black history, history of music in America courses, public television, community groups.

Awards:

Finalist, 1989 American Film & Video Festival

AFVA NO. 1989.13,495.

Subject Areas:

Music & Musicians; Profiles

TIME OUT FEBRUARY 22-MARCH 1 1989

From Mon: **Women in Jazz and Blues:** Mon at 6.30, 8.30: **'International Sweethearts of Rhythm'** (Greta Schiller/Andrea Weiss, 1986, US) Docu. 30 mins.

This lively documentary traces the history of the legendary 16-piece, all-women, multi-racial jazz orchestra of the '40s, and their rise to acclaim through a net of male-domination and racial prejudice. Schiller and Weiss's award-winning film uses rare archive performance footage and recent interviews with original members (the most memorable answers pouring forth from the weathered lips of ace trumpeter Tiny Davis) to illustrate what most of us should already know — that women are naturally quite capable of running the show themselves. (Derek Adams)

+ **'Tiny and Ruby: Hell Divin' Women'**

(Greta Schiller, 1988, US) Documentary. 30 mins.

This accompaniment to 'Sweethearts' concentrates on the long-time friendship between Tiny, undoubtedly their biggest asset, a horn-blower of such skill that the great Satchmo was once said to have offered her a seat in his orchestra, and her similarly extrovert manager, drummer, bassist and sweetheart Ruby Renee Lucas. Tiny states: 'I was wild, wide and fast — the screen could never fit me in'. Well nothing's changed, she and Ruby still have an energetic raw edge that would put most of us to shame. Just witness their fabulously loose impromptu jam of the blues standard 'W.O.M.A.N.'. (Derek Adams)

+ **'Maxine Sullivan - Love To Be In Love'**

(Greta Schiller, 1988, US) Video. Work-in-progress. Director's Schiller and Weiss will be present at both screenings.

'Tiny and Ruby', in the ICA Cinematèque's season devoted to women in jazz and blues. See Rep for review.

