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CABLE TV NOTES

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"International Sweethearts of Rhythm," a film about the 1940's all-woman band, is on Friday at 10 P.M. on Bravo.

Sweet Sounds

"A delightful 30-minute trip down memory lane," is how New York Times film critic Janet Maslin described "International Sweethearts of Rhythm" when it was screened at last year's New York Film Festival. The documentary, which will have its television premiere Friday evening at 10 on Bravo (a service available in many New York City suburbs, though not currently in Manhattan), is a retrospective look at the career of the interracial, all-women swing band that gives the film its title. Widely popular in the 1940's, the 16-member ensemble was anomalous both for its gender and its mix of ethnicities — sources of constant trouble during the band's heyday.

In recent interviews, individual Sweethearts speak about these difficulties — such as the saxophonist Roz Cron, a white woman who wore dark makeup to avoid unpleasantness during bus tours of the South. But there are also lots of cheerful reminiscences — about the rewards of fine-tuning the band, and the deep camaraderie that came from its members' common undertaking — while archival performance footage illustrates how joyous the resulting sounds could be.

"The band had largely been forgotten until 1980, when the jazz pianist and educator Marian McPartland organized a reunion at the Kansas City Women's Jazz Festival, and since then Rosetta records has reissued an album of their music," said Andrea Weiss, who produced and directed the film with Greta Schiller. "For me, it really was an inspiration to see women up there playing the trumpet and the trombone, which are traditionally male instruments. They defied segregation laws and all sorts of traditions to do what they believed in — playing the best jazz they could."