

# LIBRARY JOURNAL

## **The International Sweethearts of Rhythm: America's Hottest All-Girl Band**

16mm or videocassette, color & b&w. 30 min. Jezebel Prods. & Rosetta Records, dist. by Cinema Guild. 1986. 16mm: \$425 (Rental: \$55); videocassette: \$295 (Rental: \$55). Preview avail.

MUSIC

The International Sweethearts of Rhythm faced both racism and sexism. As an all-female swing band, they constantly fought, not always successfully, against being labeled a novelty act. A racially integrated band, they toured segregated areas. The white musicians darkened their faces and hid to avoid arrest; all lived on their bus to avoid segregated facilities. Black-and-white footage and stills from the 1940s, intercut with contemporary interviews in color, tell the band's story. From its origins at a private school in Mississippi, the band moved to Washington, D.C., adding more experienced musicians, occasionally playing with stars, and making a USO tour for black troops after World War II. As with so many women who moved into "men's" jobs, they found their opportunities eliminated when the war ended. These women have a fascinating story that needs to be told. This film, despite some minor sound dropouts, tells it effectively. Recommended for collections of jazz, black studies, or women's studies that can afford it. Other libraries will find the Sweethearts on the "Women in Jazz" series from Stash Records.—*John Hiatt, Iowa City Public Library, Iowa*



*The International Sweethearts of Rhythm, an all-female swing band, tell their story in this program from Cinema Guild*