

Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question. Then fill in the answer on your answer document.

## The International Sweethearts of Rhythm

- 1 Swing was one of the most popular kinds of music in the United States during the 1930s and 1940s. A form of jazz, swing music was played by bands in ballrooms and musical theaters. Swing musicians usually played instruments such as the clarinet, the saxophone, the trombone, and the trumpet. They frequently played the bass, the guitar, and the piano as well.
- 2 Hundreds of swing bands toured the country. Fans often waited in line for hours to hear their favorite groups.
- 3 One popular swing band that performed to sold-out crowds was the International Sweethearts of Rhythm. Two things set the Sweethearts apart from other bands. First, all the musicians in the 17-member band were women. Second, the group was racially integrated.
- 4 The Sweethearts were organized in 1937 when Laurence Clifton Jones, the director of the Piney Woods Country Life School in Mississippi, arranged for a group of students to play music together. Jones thought the young women could help raise money for the school. They were soon playing their music all over the state in school gyms and small dance halls.
- 5 The women chose to include “International” in the band’s name because they came from many different cultural backgrounds. The band included African American, Chinese American, Mexican American, American Indian, and Puerto Rican members. All the band members aspired to become accomplished musicians.



The International Sweethearts of Rhythm

© 1944 by Rosalind Cron. Used by permission.

- 6 In 1939 the Sweethearts began to travel outside Mississippi and tour other parts of the southern United States. During this time many people were intolerant toward those of different races. Some disliked the idea of women of different backgrounds performing together. On occasion the band members faced discrimination, but their popularity grew despite the challenges.
- 7 By 1941 the Sweethearts had become so successful that they decided to tour full-time as a professional band. At this point a few new musicians joined the group. The band traveled, rehearsed, slept, and ate in a large bus. It was an exciting, adventurous life. But they remained focused on their main ambition: to play great swing music.
- 8 The popularity of the Sweethearts increased; they were successful wherever they performed. In the early 1940s, they played mainly in large cities. Audiences filled places such as the Apollo Theater and the Savoy Ballroom in New York and the Howard Theater in Washington, D.C. On opening night at the Palace Theater in Memphis, Tennessee, more than 4,000 people waited in line.
- 9 A significant event during this time created special opportunities for all-female bands like the Sweethearts. In December 1941 the United States entered World War II. Because of the military draft, there were fewer male musicians. This created more opportunities for the Sweethearts to display their talents on a national stage.
- 10 All through the war years, the Sweethearts performed around the country. They made two coast-to-coast tours, recorded songs, and appeared in short films. Their music was played over shortwave radio to troops stationed overseas. One of their greatest honors was an invitation to perform for American soldiers in Europe. In 1945 the Sweethearts went on a six-month tour in France and Germany, playing for African American soldiers. The army newspaper *Stars and Stripes* published stories praising the group's performances.
- 11 The success of the Sweethearts refuted the idea that women couldn't play music with the same skill and passion as men. In fact, they became one of the longest-lasting all-women bands of the 1940s. By 1949, however, the swing era had come to an end, and the Sweethearts disbanded.
- 12 The group was nearly forgotten until the 1970s, when a jazz musician and historian named Marian McPartland contacted many of the original band members. In 1980 she arranged for them to meet at the Kansas City Women's Jazz Festival. An album of the Sweethearts' music was recorded in 1984. Two years later a documentary film devoted to their remarkable achievements was released. Today jazz fans can find recordings of the Sweethearts' amazing music on the Internet.

- 31** The main difference between the Sweethearts and most other bands of the 1940s was that the Sweethearts —
- A** were allowed to travel and perform in Europe
  - B** were a racially integrated group of women
  - C** played swing music outside the South
  - D** tended to perform in large cities

---

**32** In paragraph 11, the word refuted means —

- F** ignored
- G** performed
- H** disproved
- J** questioned

**33** Which sentence from the selection helps explain why the Sweethearts became successful?

- A** *Swing musicians usually played instruments such as the clarinet, the saxophone, the trombone, and the trumpet.*
- B** *At this point a few new musicians joined the group.*
- C** *The women chose to include "International" in the band's name because they came from many different cultural backgrounds.*
- D** *But they remained focused on their main ambition: to play great swing music.*

---

**34** The author organizes the selection by —

- F** comparing the Sweethearts with other swing bands of the time
- G** describing the Sweethearts' experience of traveling throughout the country
- H** detailing the major accomplishments of the Sweethearts
- J** relating the history of the Sweethearts in chronological order

---

**35** The author wrote this selection most likely to —

- A** explain how swing music is played
- B** encourage young women to learn how to play musical instruments
- C** celebrate a group of musicians who influenced American popular music
- D** prove that the 1940s were a turning point for female musicians

- 36** Paragraph 3 reveals that the author intends to —
- F** offer reasons why the Sweethearts performed well
  - G** explain what made the Sweethearts unique
  - H** express an opinion about the type of music the Sweethearts performed
  - J** describe how members of the Sweethearts were selected
- 

- 37** Becoming a full-time traveling band helped the Sweethearts by —
- A** increasing their popularity
  - B** enabling them to recruit new members
  - C** allowing them to earn money for school
  - D** providing them with opportunities to listen to all-male bands
- 

- 38** Which sentence expresses the main idea of the selection?
- F** The International Sweethearts of Rhythm traveled and performed in the United States during World War II.
  - G** The International Sweethearts of Rhythm commonly performed to sold-out crowds in ballrooms and theaters.
  - H** The International Sweethearts of Rhythm were an all-female touring swing band popular during the 1940s.
  - J** The International Sweethearts of Rhythm chose to play swing music because it was what most people wanted to hear.

- 39** Based on the selection, why did the Sweethearts stop playing together?
- A** The musicians became tired of traveling to different cities.
  - B** Swing music eventually became less popular in the United States.
  - C** Americans were uninterested in music during World War II.
  - D** Musical groups composed of only women were no longer a novelty.

---

**40** Which of these is the best summary of the selection?

- F** The International Sweethearts of Rhythm were a touring swing band made up of young women from different ethnic backgrounds. Although the band faced discrimination in the segregated South, the Sweethearts achieved success in the 1930s and 1940s.
- G** In 1937 a group of young female musicians formed a band that would become known as the International Sweethearts of Rhythm. The musicians played instruments such as the clarinet, the saxophone, the trombone, the trumpet, the bass, the guitar, and the piano.
- H** Swing was an extremely popular kind of music played by many American bands during the 1930s and 1940s. One of the most interesting and talented swing groups of this period was the International Sweethearts of Rhythm, a 17-member band from Mississippi.
- J** The International Sweethearts of Rhythm were a successful band that included African American, Chinese American, Mexican American, American Indian, and Puerto Rican members. Just a few years after the group was founded, the Sweethearts were able to become a professional touring band.

- 41** A documentary film about the International Sweethearts of Rhythm was made most likely because the band —
- A** promoted other swing bands while performing around the world
  - B** made major contributions to the growth of swing music
  - C** played in many different music venues throughout the United States
  - D** performed a new style of music that was embraced by the public

- 
- 42** The band's name is significant because it highlights —
- F** the fact that the musicians came from diverse cultures
  - G** the support the musicians gave to soldiers in wartime
  - H** the type of music the band played
  - J** the fact that the band performed in countries around the world