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Music for the Injured Soldier: A Contribution of American Women's Military Bands During World War II

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Abstract

This study is an investigation of the contributions of women's military bands in the United States to the reconditioning of the injured American troops during World War II. Primary and secondary sources revealed that these bands welcomed home hospital ships, performed for convalescing soldiers in hospitals, and provided music for hospital dances. While each of the bands investigated served in similar capacities, only one, the 403rd Women's Army Corps (WAC) Band, was stationed at a hospital. While entertainment by women's bands was an important part of the Army Reconditioning Program for the injured, the study also revealed a working partnership that developed between these musicians and the medical community. Sixty years after the war, band members believe their performances in hospitals were the most important contribution of their service. Some historians have concluded that music used in military hospitals during the war was the impetus for the music therapy profession.

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