

Read the text. In each question choose the right answer

A Unique Sound

What kind of band plays music that is over 1400 years old? Well, Red Chamber does! Red Chamber is a unique band of four women. They were all born in China, but now live in Canada. Each of the women is a world expert at playing several instruments. But what is unusual is that the instruments they play haven't changed since the Tang Dynasty - a period of ancient Chinese history dating from 618 AD - 907 AD.

The members of Red Chamber don't play percussion instruments like drums and tambourines, or wind instruments like horns and trumpets. Instead, they specialise in string instruments that are like today's guitars, banjos and harps. The names of the instruments probably aren't ones that you recognise though. The band's main instruments are called the 'liu quin', 'zheng', 'pipa' and the 'ruan'.

Although their instruments might be old-fashioned, the band certainly isn't. As well as playing Chinese classics from 1,400 years ago, the band plays modern jazz music and some of their own songs. At a recent concert, they even surprised their audience with a programme that included Bluegrass music, a type of music that comes from the southern United States, and folk music from Bulgaria and Borneo.

In addition to the work the women do with their very popular band, they also have their own individual projects. Mei Han, the zheng player, has produced two CDs and has appeared on TV and radio shows around the world. Guilian Lui, who plays the pipa, has performed to large audiences in Europe, Asia and North America. The ruan player, Zhimin Yu, has toured with the well known Chinese National Broadcast Orchestra and Geling Jiang, who plays all four instruments, has recorded songs for films.

The band chose the name Red Chamber because in Chinese culture, red symbolises happiness and good luck. But with their exciting mixture of music from around the world and their exceptional musical talent, luck is not something the band needs to worry about. With the enthusiastic reviews the women have been receiving from both music critics and excited fans, Red Chamber will definitely be around for a long time to come. And as long as they keep playing, so will the amazing sounds of ancient China!



exam tip

Multiple Choice Reading

Read the text quickly to get the gist. Read the questions and possible answers. Find the part in the text that contains the answer to the question. Read carefully trying to find synonymous phrases. Remember that the questions follow in the order the information appears in the text.

1. The members of Red Chamber _____

1. were born in Canada.
2. use the same instrument.
3. are all Chinese women.
4. lived during the Tang Dynasty.

2. Percussion instruments include _____

1. tambourines.
2. horns.
3. harps.
4. trumpets.

3. At one Red Chamber concert _____

1. only traditional music was heard.
2. modern jazz was all that was played.
3. only American music was performed.
4. different types of music were performed.

4. Guilian Lui _____

1. has made two CDs.
2. has played in front of thousands of people.
3. has been on radio programmes.
4. has played in several films.

5. Red chamber are popular because _____

1. they play an interesting variety of music
2. they have good luck.
3. they symbolise Chinese culture.
4. they play all around the world.

6. The above text is typical of _____

1. a tourist guide.
2. a TV guide.
3. a music magazine.
4. a history book.