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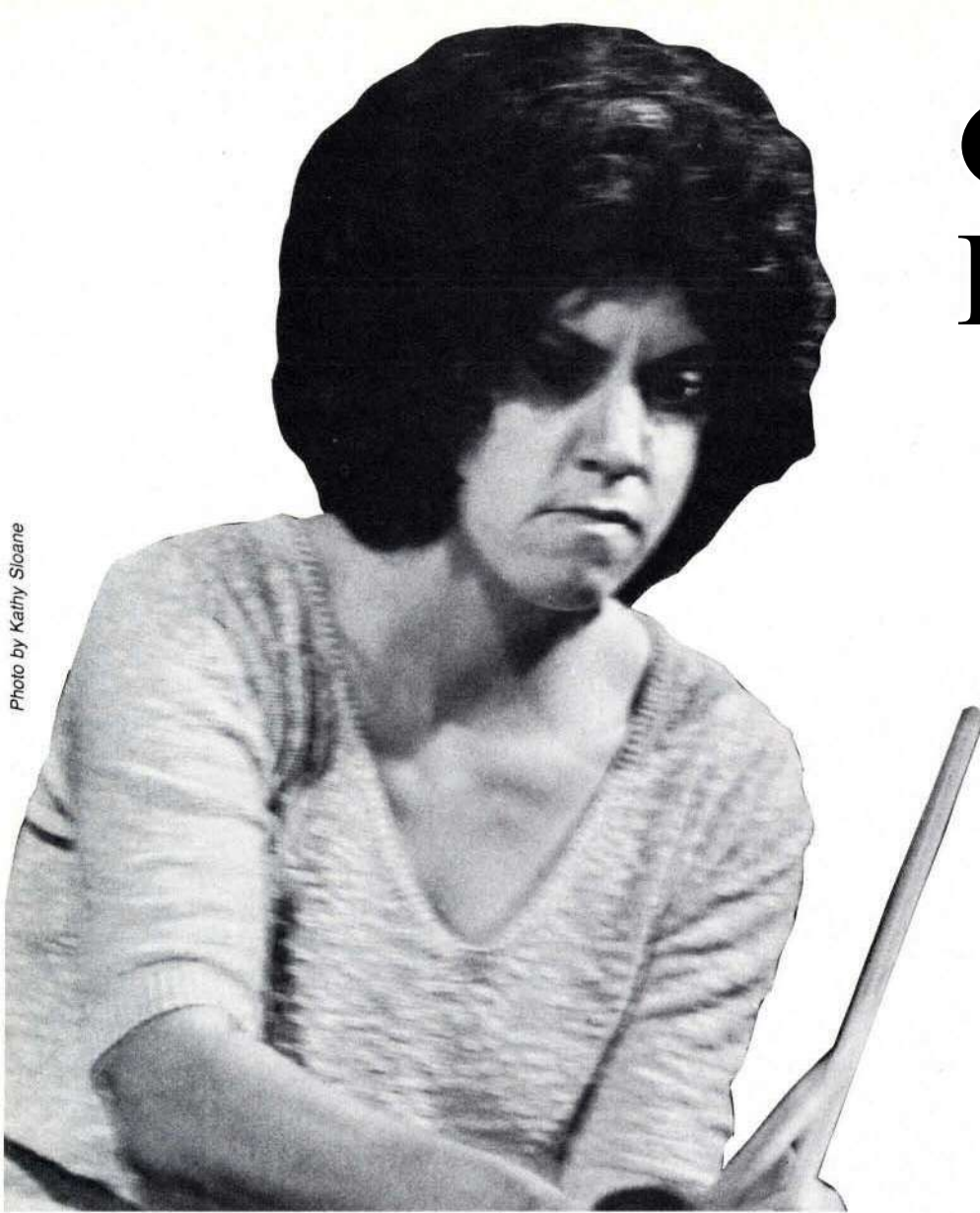
History Of  
Rock Drumming: Part II



# Carolyn BRANDY

# ALI

Photo by Kathy Sloane



*Alive!* first came to my attention through photographer Kathy Sloane. She was telling me great things about these women who had a jazz band on the West Coast. While I was listening to all of the superlatives, I was thinking, "Big deal! Another novelty act." But then I caught myself and thought, "Hey, that's a real loser's attitude. Why not give them a listen?"

The newest record, *Call It Jazz*, was recorded live at The Great American Music Hall in San Francisco and it definitely grabbed my attention! Then Barbara Borden and Carolyn Brandy (the drummer and percussionist respectively) were good enough to visit the MD office one afternoon, where this conversation took place.

Recently, I had the pleasure of catching two sets of *Alive!* at Seventh Avenue South in New York City. As good a record as *Call It Jazz* is, it does not capture the magnitude of *Alive!*. First, this is a band of musicians with an original sound. There's no listening to their songs and thinking "Hey, that

sounds like so-and-so." Secondly, the band plays softer than most bands and that reminded me of something Mel Lewis said: "Intensity has nothing to do with volume." There was so much strength in the subtlety of *Alive!* that it was almost deceiving.

There are no slouch/hack musicians in this band! Like watching Stan Laurel act—there is always something going on. I developed the greatest respect for these people as human beings and as musicians.

In spite of all the "open mindedness" of living in 1982, I know that what these women are doing isn't easy. It isn't easy for anyone, but going by my own original attitude, I have a feeling that the hill has been a little steeper for *Alive!*

Anyway, the beauty of it all is that they are succeeding! Like a long shot winning a race, or a little guy beating the tar out of some lug in the ring—that's inspirational! That's *Alive!*

**SF:** Okay. How did you get—musically—from birth to today?

**BB:** Well, it took about thirty-six years. I

grew up in Los Angeles. When I was about four years old. I was banging on pots and pans, and when I was five I got a toy drum for my birthday. I liked that for a while but one day I got mad at somebody and put a hole in it, and that was the end of my childhood career. But, I always liked musical instrument toys.

There was always a piano in our house. My twin sisters played piano and sang so I was always surrounded by music. When I was about nine, it was time to decide whether to go into the chorus at school or into the band. I wanted to play in the band. My mom said, "How about the violin?" I said "Absolutely not!" My friend next door was taking piano lessons, and I started doing that for about nine months. I was glad I did it because it was a very good basis for reading, and it gave me some musical knowledge. But, I really wanted to play drums. When I was about ten. I went into a music store with my mom and wouldn't let her out until she bought me a drum set. It was kind of a funky set, shiny with silver sparkles. I said, "Yeah,

# Barbara BORDEN

## VE!

by Scott K. Fish

Photo by E. Shaw Green



yeah. That's the one I want." So she got it for me. Then I joined the elementary school orchestra and played drumset. I had a very nice teacher who tried to teach me to read drum music, but I would sort of adlib all the time. I played to records a lot. I set up my drumset all backwards at first. Finally, it was that elementary-school teacher who taught me to turn it around. In junior high I took maybe a year's worth of private lessons and played in the concert band. Music was flourishing while I was going to school. In junior high there was a little dance band. Actually one of the first things I played in outside of school was the Jewish Youth Orchestra. We played for money and we played for Bar Mitzvahs and different events. There were about twelve kids: violins, trumpets, and clarinets.

In high school I joined the marching band, concert band and stage band. I continued to learn to read charts and I took another year of private lessons in there somewhere.

SF: Did you want to read?

**BB:** Well, it was like second nature, because I was always playing in concert band, and in stage band I was always reading. We always had charts. They started out pretty easy in junior high and then in high school we had some good arrangements. Then I decided to go to junior college and went to L.A. Valley College because Bob McDonald was there. He was a really good big band teacher and I was really into big bands. I liked playing in big bands and was usually the only woman, except for an occasional piano player or sax player. I went there about a year, got a lot of good training, and the charts were really good. Then I decided to go to San Francisco. The Blackhawk was still happening, although it folded soon after I got out there. I went to San Francisco State and continued music as a major, and studied with the tympanist of the San Francisco Symphony, Roland Kohloff. Being a percussion major, you had to learn marimba, snare drum technique, and tympani. I liked that, but I always loved set drums.

SF: I bet they didn't even have a drumset, right?

**BB:** No they didn't. And they didn't have a jazz program really. The only thing that was happening was the stage band, but it wasn't for credit. They let us in the music department *only* if we didn't interrupt anything else. We had a really good band that won some competitions.

So, I stayed there for another year and a half, and then decided to *be* a musician. I was always working gigs besides going to school. I started out playing casuals, and studied with Chuck Brown. I gradually got a five night a week lounge gig. I used to also do some drum solo gigs. Drums can be very melodic. I think in a band context the main role of the drummer is a supportive one. But, I also feel that drumming can stand alone as a form of expression in certain situations. At one of these solo gigs, rhiannon, the vocalist in Alive! heard me play. Later on, when the band decided to add a drumset player, they called me to audition.

SF: That was when the band was a trio?





Photo by Kathy Sicane

BB: Yes. Singer/piano player rhiannon, percussionist Carolyn, and a bass player, Suzanne.

SF: That's a pretty strange lineup.

BB: Different! I went and auditioned and the piano player was being added. We auditioned about the same time. We played two dates and a six week tour. After that we decided that we liked the band and the band liked us, so we became a working partnership.

SF: How did you get from birth to today. Carolyn?

CB: Well, I was the kid who took violin. At six, I started on the piano. I played piano for about two years. At age nine my mother encouraged me to play the violin. I played a lot, took private lessons, and finally burnt out. I think. After high school I stopped playing for about four years.

SF: You weren't involved with percussion during that time?

CB: Nothing. In the Sixties there was a whole cultural revolution that happened. I took notice of people playing drums in the streets, and was totally mesmerized by it. This was in Seattle, Washington. I started getting involved with the congas, and for about four years played what we call "thunder drumming"; playing without knowing any rhythmic patterns. It's a lot of fun but it sure can be boring. Sometimes you fall into a groove and

sometimes you just don't. And often everybody's trying to out muscle each other.

BB: I know a lot of drumset players that "thunder drum."

CB: But, I was really taken with it. I was hearing the melodies of the drums. I was not only taken with the music, but also the concept of the energy that it produces—a communal kind of energy. It was so magnetic. Once the groove was established you could fall in anywhere. Anybody could pick up something and play. I really liked that. I was really attracted to that. It was a good feeling.

After "thunder drumming" for four years, I was really in a rut, so I decided to start studying. I started studying Afro-Cuban, rhumbas, guaguanco—and I'm still studying today. You could spend a lifetime learning the music. It's very old and it's contemporary as well, so that the traditional music is constantly changing; revived by the traditional people who play it. For the first eight or nine years I was pretty much into the ethnic studies of congas. Of course, the bell parts and the rattle parts go along with that in the songs and the dances. It's all together. When you study that music you study the dance, and the religious reasons, and social reasons. It's a cultural thing. While studying that music I started playing with drum ensembles. I played with

Haitian dancers, and I played with a group from Zimbabwe for four years—dancers and drummers. They played the mbria which is like a thumb piano. It's not a thumb piano but similar. I've also played Brazilian music and Ghanaian music, and played in Latin jazz groups, too. At one point I was working a day gig in a restaurant, playing three nights a week, and raising a child. I have a nine year old son. And it was really crazy.

At that point I decided that I needed to learn more, and should go to a place where I could be more inspired. So I went to San Francisco. I had visited San Francisco and I met Marcus Gordon, a drummer and teacher of Afro-Cuban and Haitian music, and he plays Bata as well as congas. When I moved to San Francisco I started studying the real roots of the music; the music the congas come from. I think a lot of people play congas without realizing that the patterns they play are all based in this music that's really profound, old, and quite difficult to play. It's quite a profound study. To play tastefully can take a lifetime to learn how to do. Often times, what you *don't* play is more important than what you do.

I was in San Francisco about a year when I hooked up with rhiannon. We put this band together called The Rubber Band and we played one gig!

At the point of The Rubber Band, I was totally into congas. I was studying congas, and the way the rhythms went together, and the time, and the poly-rhythms. Fortunately, for myself and Alive!, I've really branched that out to where I play a whole array of sound effects and sound as well as conga.

SF: I've noticed, that in almost all the band reviews, the journalists qualify the band by saying, "Alive! is an all-woman band." I've never read anything like, "Chick Corea and his all-male quartet." How do you feel about those kind of qualifications?

BB: I see it more as the trappings of society. This society is used to male bands, and let's face it, every once in a while you might see a female band-member, mostly singers. Next frequent would be pianists. But to really see a woman playing other instruments—drums and conga drums—is unusual. I see this happening now more than ever. There are people creating situations—The Kansas City Women's Jazz Festival for one—to help women musicians become more visible. However, there are still not many visible bands comprised of all women. I know of Maiden Voyage, a big band out of L.A., led by Ann Patterson. I'm sure there are others but they're just not visible yet so that people can get used to the idea.

There are some very good women musicians out there. Joanne Brackeen is a composer/pianist that comes to mind as a very strong innovator in jazz today,

and there are many others. My general feeling is that women will continue to become more visible, and we'll eventually be seeing bands comprised of all women, all men, or a combination of both, so that the issue will just be good music.

We were born in the Forties. The women of that era were into families *first*. If you had kids you couldn't say to your husband, "Well, I'm going on the road. I'll see you in six weeks. Here are the kids." It's still hard to do that *now*, but it's happening more.

SF: It's hard for guys who are musicians to do that, too. One of the questions I wanted to ask you was about having families as professional musicians.

BB: It's possible, but it is hard.

SF: Carolyn, you have a nine year old son?

CB: Yeah. It's really difficult. You have to have a lot of cooperation from people at home, either your family or your extended family, or it doesn't work. At some point in your career touring is the inevitable next step, unless you're a musician who has enough work locally. But, in our particular instance, touring was the logical next step. We're a band, a group, a unit, and there's just not enough work in one town. So, it's something that I've had to deal with and fortunately, I've had a lot of help.

SF: Are you on the road for long stretches at a time?

BB: The longest seems to be about six weeks. We did a lot of touring a couple of years ago, on the road practically nine months out of the year. Now we've pared it down to about five months and that seems good now, but I really think you have to tour more than that. You have to be willing to do that.

SF: We were talking about attitudes before, and you mentioned when you decided to go into music full time you "took the oath of poverty." To me that seems to be a prevalent jazz attitude. I wonder why that is? Why do jazz and poverty have to go hand in hand?

CB: That's sort of a cultural phenomenon, isn't it?

BB: We just realized yesterday, popular music is called popular music because it's popular. A lot of people pay to go see artists who are playing it, they buy the records, and they continue to do that. Jazz has always only appealed to a smaller sector of the population. When I said I took the oath of poverty, I meant that when I went into the music business, it wasn't in pursuit of money. I'm not opposed to making money. In fact it's important to have enough money so I can keep playing music. But, going for the money isn't the emphasis. The emphasis is on playing good music, being the best musician I can be, playing the music that I like and not the music that is popular necessarily to masses, unless I

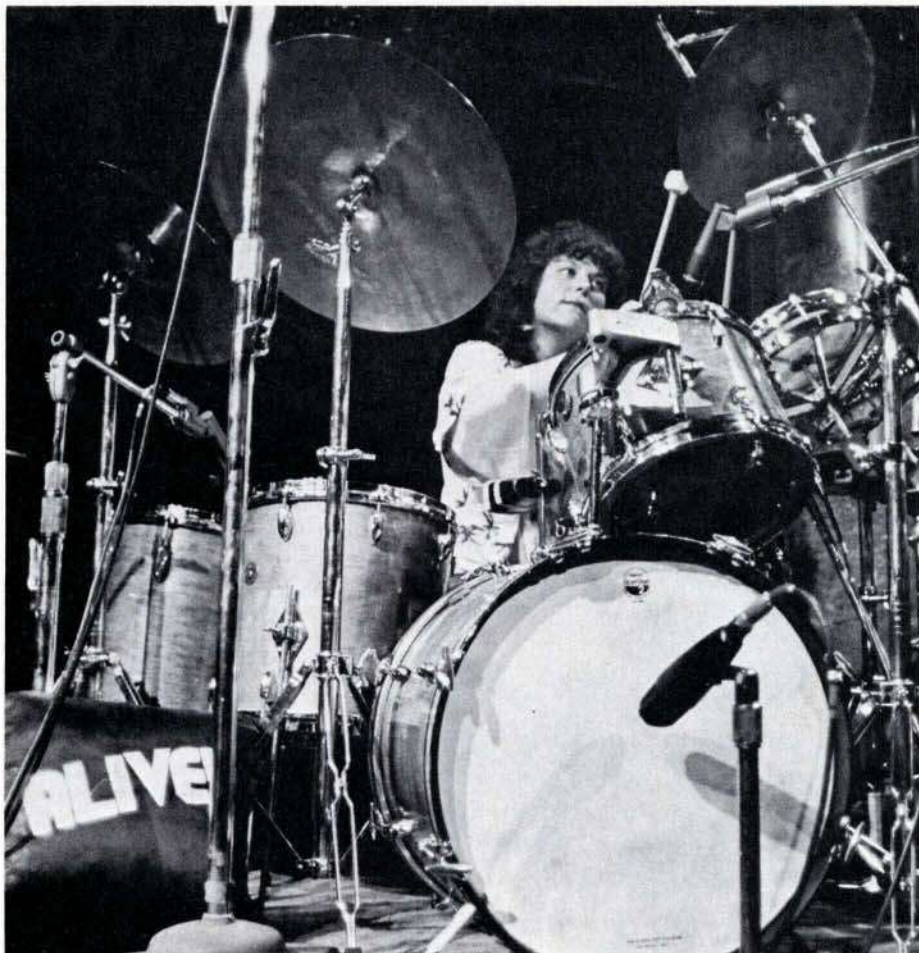


Photo by Kathy Sloane

find it challenging to do so. I think that might be the difference between a jazz artist and a popular artist. A jazz artist is really into freedom of expression. And a lot of times it's not a very popular form. Sometimes it's hard to listen to and not many people understand it, but the musicians are doing something they feel strongly about. Whereas much of the time in popular music you're well aware of the business end of it. You're after that one record that's going to make you a million dollars. You start out knowing there is a much larger audience to tap.

SF: I wonder what would happen if, when artists like yourself were asked about your music, you said, "Well, our music is accessible to anyone," rather than saying, "Well, we're trying to reach this audience or that audience." I wonder if it wouldn't become more accessible.

CB: That's a pretty heavy question and that's exactly what we're trying to do. Because in one example not only can it be categorized as jazz ... we actually think our music is *not* purely jazz. It's kind of a mixture of some jazz, more pop kind of songs. But we get categorized in "What do you call your music?" So you immediately have to think of some label that doesn't fit all of it. Not only that, but we're also categorized as this "all women band." Right there are two boxes that

we're trying to enlarge and get ink) the mainstream of music and to the people who are interested in seeing us play. We're available to both men and women who hear music. The music is accessible to both sexes.

SF: I was reading a concert review of Maiden Voyage. Here's part of what the reviewer wrote: "The seventeen maidens sitting in three rows have convinced their audiences that they can cook as well with their instruments, as they are expected to with kitchen utensils." It seems to be concentrating on an area that should have no bearing on the music.

BB: I go through this a lot with the teacher I'm studying with. He's also a coach as well as a teacher. He said, "One day it would be really great if they just put a big curtain out, put the musicians behind it, let them play and let the people hear the music, and forget about what color they are, what sex, how old ... all that stuff." All those categories just get in the way.

SF: Where does the inspiration for the songwriting come from?

CB: I think we're inspired by our lives. We write from our experience. That's one reason why the music's so varied and different. Most everyone tries to write. The majority of the tunes are

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*Alive!* continued from page 23

written by Janet Small the pianist. Suzanne Vincenza's written a few tunes and I've got a few.

My songs come from my experience. "Spirit Healer" came from me actually playing the drums. I was sitting down playing my drums and the melody line came to me. But then, as I wrote the song and arranged it, I arranged myself out of the song!

On "Step By Step," I heard the music and wrote words to it. I wrote "Show Me The Way" on the kalimba. "Diamonds Are Where You Find Them" came from the kalimba.

SF: What instrument do you mainly compose on?

CB: I do it all different ways. Sometimes the drums. A couple of songs have been with the kalimba. Sometimes people give me music and I write words to it. I'm better at writing words than music. Or, I'll have a melody in mind and I'll have to go to somebody that can put it down on paper for me. I wish I played piano.

SF: Do you have a working knowledge of piano?

CB: No. I have a piano at home though, and I've been taking lessons. I've got a song now that I'm writing on the piano but I've been writing it for two years.

BB: One of my ambitions—and I know Alan Dawson does this—he has a set of vibes in his house that he plays tunes on and learns tunes on. I don't know if he does composing, but I imagine he would

compose on that too. I would like to do that because then you're still dealing with the sticks, and the eye/hand coordination as well as getting the harmonic and melodic things happening.

SF: Did you play vibes in school?

BB: I played marimba. I liked it a lot, but not as well as vibes. I like the sustain that vibes get and the softness of tone. It's an instrument that I've always been attracted to but I've never wanted to carry them around as far as gigging. I'd like to have a set that I could keep in my house and use as a piano.

SF: A lot of times, when I listen to music, I find that I anticipate where the music is going to go. When I was watching you at Seventh Avenue South, I'd be anticipating a musical change and I was constantly surprised that the music would take an unexpected direction. How are the songs arranged?

BB: Usually I try to get it written down on paper. The melody, chords, and words. The first step is usually to get Janet and Suzanne to learn the basic structure of it. Meanwhile, rhiannon has the words. If I can play something well enough on the piano, I'll make a tape to give the people first. That's helpful. If I remember correctly, on "Loving You" I brought in the charts and I had it pretty definite in mind how I wanted the song to go as far as tempo and rhythm changes.

Where the drum solo is, I thought of having a duet between Carolyn and I. We tried that out, but it didn't seem to

work as well as my doing a solo there. That's how that evolved.

We start out trying several things and see what works the best. Then we try to tighten things up. Sometimes it takes months to get things to the finished product that you might hear. Months of trying different things out in performance. Now that Helen Keane is working with us, she has suggestions. She's a producer of records so she's got good ears for hearing music in a totality that we might not have as individual musicians. A lot of her suggestions are about building the song and strengthening it. Making it as strong as you can.

SF: I was very impressed with the way all the musicians in *Alive!* worked with percussion instruments, especially on "Spirit Healer." They were playing some intricate rhythms. Sometimes it's hard to get five adults to clap at the same time! Is that something you've all worked at?

CB: We've been working on that since the beginning. There are several different percussion ensemble things that we've done. We've always been doing it. We've done rumba and samba together, and lots of 6/8. The other musicians are pretty cool about it. They catch it ... *right now!* You just show it to them *once* and they've got it. You can't really just whip those things together. You have to get in a groove with each other, and sometimes it takes quite a while, even if you have people that can pick the parts up right away. It's difficult music.

SF: Well, it's not just percussive. There are definite melodies going on between the percussion instruments. To keep that groove going, and to be able to trade off—like I noticed you and Suzanne doing—that's not easy.

CB: It sure is fun though! I love it.

BB: Carolyn has a vast background playing in percussion ensembles. So, she knew all the bell parts and all the different things and she likes to put those things together. She arranged "Spirit Healer" long before I even joined the band. When I came in the band I didn't have a lot of experience with African rhythms and Latin rhythms. So, it's been real good for me to be working with Carolyn in that respect, and she with me because she didn't have a lot of experience in the bebop and swing music.

Rhiannon, the vocalist, is very interested in percussion instruments and so is Suzanne. They have a natural take to it. Janet too. Being a drummer it's not too hard to pick up on the parts once you know what they are. But, I'd say it took me a good year to get into the bell parts to where I could feel it enough to improvise on my bell and change the rhythms. Everytime we do that particular bell ensemble it's different, because we're all so relaxed in it now that we can add differ-

*continued on page 76*

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ent little touches here and there to go with what's happening.

SF: You play the kalimba great. Carolyn. How long have you been playing it?

CB: I haven't been playing it too long. Maybe a year and a half. I played with a group of musicians from Zimbabwe for about four years so I got the sound in my ear real strong.

SF: What kind of drums are you playing now Barbara?

BB: About a twenty year old set of Gretsch which I love. 20" bass drum, a metal Ludwig snare drum, two 9 x 13 toms, 14" and 16" floor toms. And two *Roto-toms*. I endorse Remo. I'm using two old K. Zildjians, a 20" ride and a 15" crash that used to be a hi-hat. I just bought a new A. Zildjian swish. I have A. Zildjian hi-hats. All Tama stands. Heavy but good. I use *Fiberskyn-2* thin heads for an acoustic situation, and *Pin-stripes* in electric rock or funk situations.

SF: Why the pillow in your bass drum?

BB: I prefer to have my front head on the bass drum, and when I'm home that's what I do. When I'm traveling I don't want to carry an extra case because we're so packed in the van. So I have to put one of my *Roto-toms* and my stick bag inside the bass drum. So, I have a front head with a hole in it, and I use the pillow because I like the muffled sound. I like the pillow, too, because it says "Alive" on it!

SF: Did you ever have friends that you

played in bands with when you were growing up that quit playing music when you kept on?

BB: Yes.

SF: What was the difference between you and them?

BB: Well, a lot of times people get into trappings, or they may have a family. A lot of people go out and find out what it really takes to be a musician and don't want to deal with it. I've found that being a musician takes commitment, dedication and patience. Playing on the stage is about 5% of it. The other is hauling instruments, practicing, dealing with business, dealing with your own emotional self, and the other band members. It's a constant challenge on many levels. Then your creativity is out there, you're always open for a lot of criticism. Some people find that very difficult and want to find a very quiet nook and hang out. When you're kids in school you have that quiet nook. The school provides that very reassuring situation. When you get out in the big world there's a lot to contend with.

The other part is—and I think this is true for all of us in the band at some point—we drifted away from things for a while and felt that we had to do other things. Our singer was an actress for many years, then she got back to singing and that's what she wants to do now. Sometimes following your own creative path takes you to different places. You

might be a musician for a while, then do theater for a while. I know a lot of drummers who are very good singers. From the back of the band to the front of the band. I think it's a matter of following your heart. Our piano player is writing a song about how sometimes you wonder if you should have taken the other way.


SF: Do you ever think about that?

BB: There are moments when it gets real difficult and I say, "Why am I doing this?" But then I think, "What would I really want to be doing?" I know I'm still on the right track. I think you know when you're on the right track. You have this constant energy to put yourself out there and do whatever it is. You're not bored. You're always meeting the challenge. I think that's a very exciting way to live your life.

SF: Why do you think you continue, Carolyn?

CB: I don't know. It's fate isn't it? We got into a discussion about what makes somebody succeed and become a great improviser. What is it? Is it hard work? Is it struggle? Does it boil down to "It's a gift"? Is it 99% hard work and 1% inspiration? Surely it's a lot of hard work. I believe in that 10% genius, 90% hard work.

I don't know why some people stay in the music business and some fall along the way. If you asked *them*, I don't think the people would say that they fell along



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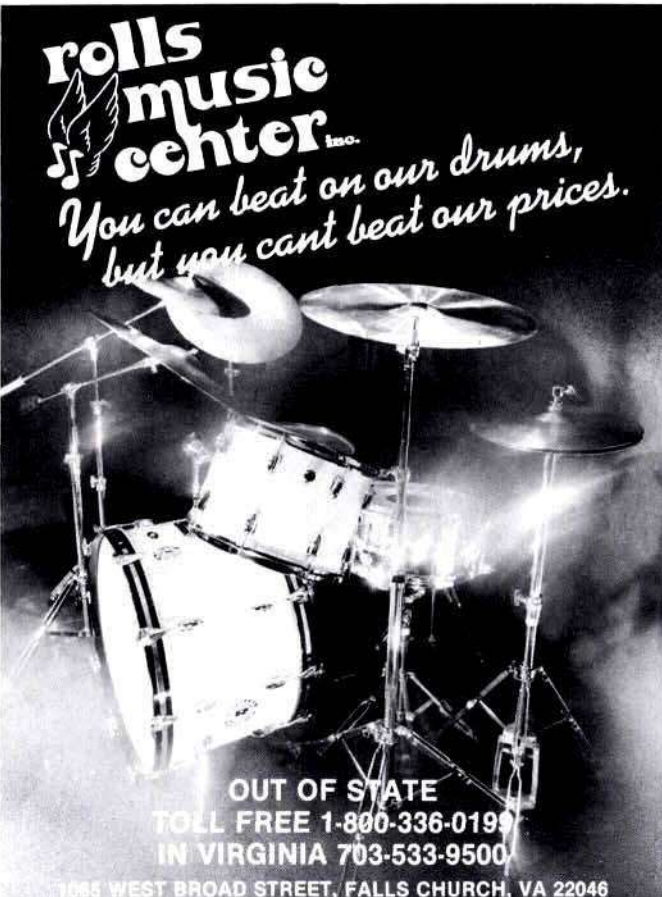
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the wayside. They would say, "I chose to do this, *because*. . . ." Is it the financial situation of being a musician? Because the financial rewards are not guaranteed, that's for sure.

SF: Financial rewards aren't guaranteed in anything else either.

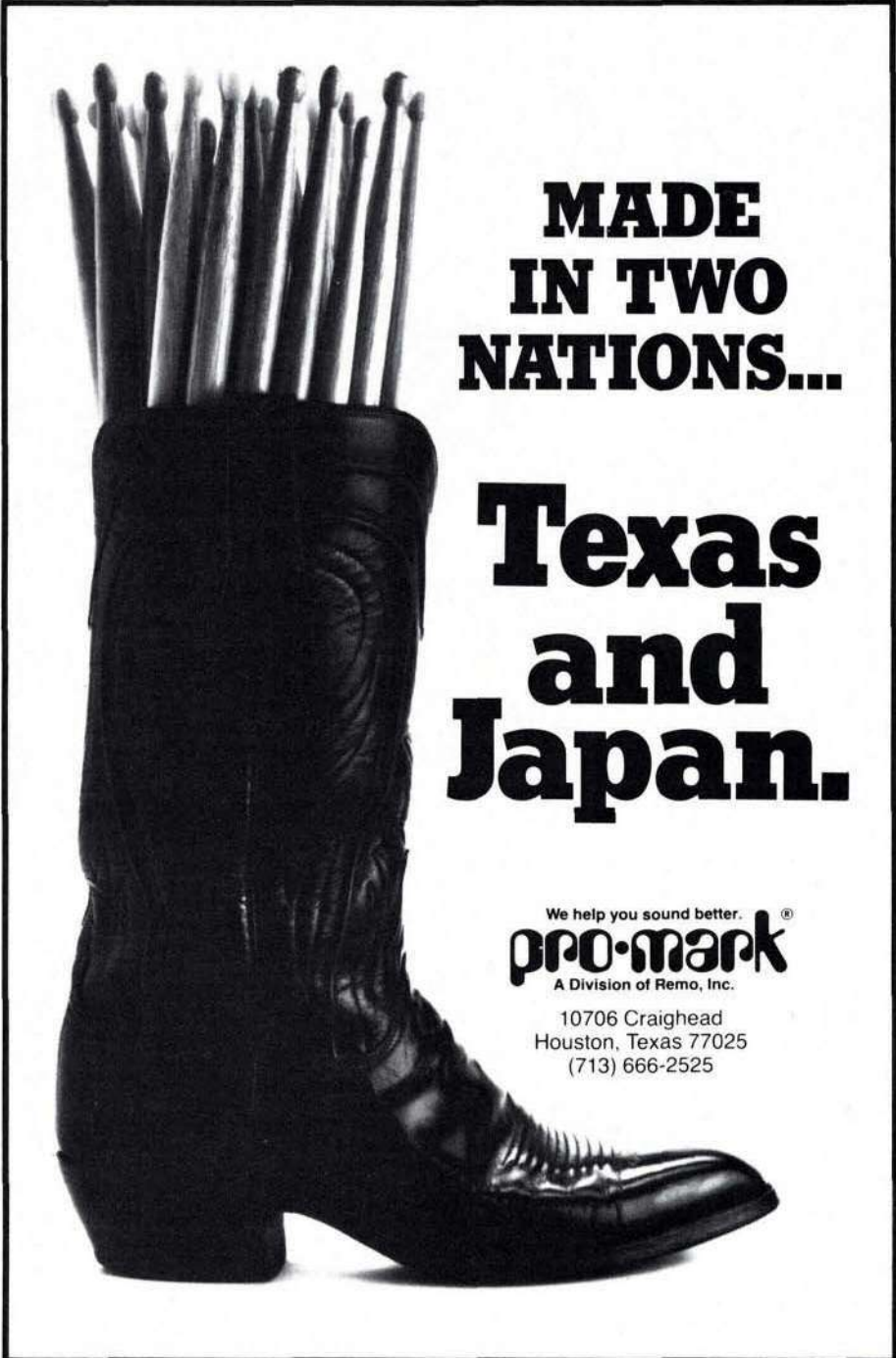
CB: In some things. If I learn to be a typist, I know that there's a certain financial range I'm going to be in. I can go to work and work forty hours a week. But, as a musician I might work for six months and then I might not work at all for three months, or I may *need* to take a vacation. Unless you're in a situation where you could make it eight hours a day—some studio musicians can do it that way—but, I think "why" I stayed in this is the creative process. It's mind blowing. I like to write as well. And everytime I write something I have to go so far inside myself to pull up what I'm trying to express—to be honest. I really learn a lot about myself. The drumming is really deep; to learn drumming. The exciting thing is that there's no bottom to it. I don't care where you are in your career or on the path of drumming, there's always going to be that thing out there that you can still learn, that you can still improve upon. Drumming is huge! Each instrument has its hugeness to it. To me, drumming is life itself. I really, truly believe that. I've learned so much about myself through drumming, by sitting down alone, skin to skin and just one drum. I have learned about my brain and my concentration. All the reasons why I want to get up and not do it anymore, the frustrations, and the creative rewards. And teaching, you can see it all unfolding in another person. You can see them mentally struggling, because you've gone through some of these same things. I've really learned so much about human nature and about myself through learning to play these drums. I say, very honestly, that I'm a "student" and will probably always consider myself a student of drumming.

SF: Barbara, you were mentioning something about clinics and teaching before. How much are you involved with that?

BB: I haven't done too many clinics. I've done *some*, and I like doing clinics a lot. I have a few private students. I feel like teaching is another art. I like it but I feel that, especially for beginning students, that it's important to be consistent. To be there for them. With my traveling I can't always do that, so I usually pick people that have been playing a while and can hang without having that consistency, and they might even study with other people on a more regular basis.

SF: What do you teach? Are there any particular books that you like?

BB: To be honest with you, there's *some* books I like. I try to gear it on a more individual basis. Some people want to



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learn rock drumming, some people jazz drumming, and I pick what's appropriate for them. I do emphasize technique. Probably because I've been taught that way, and I feel it's important for clean drumming, although there are drummers around who do everything totally opposite of the way I do it, and I feel comfortable and fine because it works for them.

SF: What material did you learn from? *Stick Control*?

BB: *Stick Control* goes on forever—just page one! I did some straight book stuff; Jim Chapin's book. Sometimes you can get hung up in the books and miss the

point. Some people go from book to book and never get anywhere. I feel like a drummer has got some very important duties. One is to keep time; to keep the band swinging. You can't do it all by yourself. You have to have *everybody* swinging. The other thing, all the drummers I like—like Shelly Manne, Alan Dawson, Louis Bellson, Steve Gadd—I like them all for different reasons, but they are all very *musical* drummers. I really think that's important in the kind of playing I like to do. You can get into these books and do every lick, but then if

*continued on next page*



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you don't use it correctly—what's the use? If you're getting your speed up, playing fast and nothing's appropriate—why bother?

SF: What kind of things do you practice?

BB: I could do about two hours of just warm-up stuff with a metronome. Single-stroke rolls, doubles between the hands and the bass drum, different rudiments, different four-way independent things. Then I play along with records. I think it's important to be able to play *without* a metronome, but I find for technical warm-up exercises it's good to use a metronome. Part of the practice is just creating on the drumset. I work with practice pads a lot, then I like to go to the drumset. I work on *sounds* around the set; *speed* around the set. If I get stuck on something, I invent a new exercise, which I call "creative practicing," so that I don't get to the point where I'm so frustrated that I want to throw down my sticks. I just break it down to its simplest denominator and start from that. When you get right down to it, besides keeping good time and the musicality, a third thing that I admire in drummers is truly *saying something* when they play. Reflecting who *you* are and not playing Steve Gadd's licks. I think that's part of the learning process; trying to imitate people you like, but then take it into yourself, fool around with it, and play it

in your way.

Some people get lost in this technological upswamp and you get into speed and you sound like every other fast drummer in the world. In the olden days, before all that was going on, people really expressed who they were. You could tell what drummer was playing when you heard the recordings of the old drummers. Now it's becoming more muddled. Of course, there's also many more drummers.

CB: It goes back to what Barbara was saying about jazz. In creative music you're going into it with the idea that you're doing the music for the art.

SF: And if you make a living aside from that?

CB: That's great.

BB: You have to aspire to make a living at it and I think it's fine to do that, and having people work for you that do that. But, that's not the focus. I mean, you don't want to be so poor that you stop playing. I saw Shelly Manne give a workshop recently—and I grew up on Shelly Manne records. Shelly said that it's always been that if ever he had the choice between a \$15 jazz gig or a \$200 recording gig, he'd take the jazz gig. And I believe it.

SF: You were first in the band, Carolyn. Did you get bummed out when Barbara joined?

CB: Oh, occasionally. I never really got mad at Barbara, but when you're the only drummer you have all this sound space to deal in. When there's a second drummer you have to pay more attention. That can be good and bad. I love the way Barbara plays. Sometimes we work things out in rehearsals but a lot of what we do is spontaneous. I think we complement each other real well. I'm thrilled to work with Barbara because she's quite an astute musician. She's very disciplined and always working on the art of the music.

BB: I feel that Carolyn and I are equals, and we both come from such different places. I didn't have a wide exposure to the kind of drumming that her roots are in, and I come from a place where Carolyn doesn't, with all the big band jazz and swing stuff. It's a good complement to each other because we learn a lot from each other.

SF: Is it important to be aware of the roots of this music?

CB: I believe that's really basic. The more you get into your music, the more you get into what has gone on before you, and that's very important.

BB: One of the things I'm real interested in is the history of drumming. Set drumming is a very new thing. I think it is important to know the roots. With Carolyn's kind of drumming you get used to playing with other people. But with drumset you learn to cover all the bases.



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Like when you're playing a Latin rhythm you use the toms as tones. When you play with a conga drummer—they have those tones, too. You have to work out a way not to step on each other.

**SF:** Since you've been together did you have to alter your individual tunings of the instruments?

**BB:** Not really, but they mesh well. They don't interfere harmonically. It takes a long time to really learn how to tune a drumset. Through workshops and asking questions, and through listening to music and developing your ears. Recently I purchased one of those Drum Torques. I find they're good if you have to change your tuning a lot. I like one sound for jazz and one for rock, and I'll change heads from *Fibreskyns* to *Pinstripes*. So, I just write down the torque settings and I can tune them very quickly. Then I fine tune them with my ear and a drum key.

**SF:** Do you feel that a woman considering a career in jazz or drumming should look at being a woman as a challenge?

**BB:** The way I looked at drumming when I started to learn was I wanted to play drums! I didn't even think about man, woman or any of that. I was a kid at the time. I feel that if a person really wants to do something—they'll do it! I mean, there's a piano player from Europe, he's eighteen years old and he's only a little over three feet tall. He had a disease that

he was born with. He played with Charles Lloyd, in San Francisco. His bones are very brittle, he's had 150 broken bones. Now you would think, "How could a person like this play the piano?" I mean, he could say, "Well, I'm only three feet tall I can't even reach the piano pedals." Or, you could say, "I want to play the piano," and invent ways to do it. That's being creative.

So, for any woman or anybody that is doing what's not considered the norm, just follow your heart. If you have a strong feeling about playing drums—do it! Sure those things will come along that go with it, but you don't have to let that stop you or stand in your way. You have

to learn how to deal with any situation in a way that feels good to you and that doesn't get in the way of the music.

**CB:** Maybe it'll be difficult, but whoever said it wouldn't be? Each challenge that comes on makes you a stronger person and a stronger player.

**BB:** I read an article with a girl from a new rock band. The question was, "Well, how does it feel to be a woman musician?" And she answered, "Well, I never knew how it felt to be a man musician!"

**SF:** Dreamers make the world go around, right?

**BB:** Yes. Dreamers that do their dreams. Action-packed dreamers!

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