



Review from *Video Librarian*, March/April, 2018

Keeper of the Beat: A Woman's Journey into the Heart of Drumming

Good documentaries often introduce audiences to someone they'd love to meet for a nice long conversation in the three-dimensional world. Filmmaker David L. Brown's *Keeper of the Beat* is all about one such subject: sexagenarian Barbara Borden, a terrific musician and a joyful, indomitable individual. Borden turned to drumming and percussion at an early age, flying in the face of accepted "wisdom" that girls/women do not play drums. By the 1970s, Borden was playing in jazz bands and likened by critics to legends such as Art Blakey. Happily, there is archival footage that shows her wailing away with a kind of disciplined abandon, as well as visuals tracing later chapters of her career playing in two all-women bands. One of those groups reunites for a feverish performance here that exudes collective passion along with Borden's personal infectious force. Viewers also see Borden as a teacher and ambassador of drumming; she is a strong believer in the primal exercise of making noise together (as in drum circles) to unite communities. Recommended. (T. Keogh)