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Back Beats and Rim Shots: The Johnny Blowers Story

Warren W. Vache

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Big Band music instantly reminds us of America on the homefront during World War II, lavish Hollywood musicals, and the jitterbug. Fans of big band music will enjoy *Back Beats and Rim Shots*, which vividly describes the life of jazz drummer Johnny Blowers (1911-2006) and the atmosphere of America during the time when the big band sound reigned supreme. Blowers's career typified the enchantment of the big band era and illuminates the fierce competition between the musicians as they struggled for success. Author Warren Vaché follows the life of the musician from his boyhood in a small southern town to the mean streets of New York, where he gambled on his future in music without friends or connections, until the almost unbelievable lucky break that put him on the road to success.

Back Beats and Rim Shots chronicles the time Blowers spent recording for Vocalion with Bobby Hackett's first band at "Nick's," the famous jazz spot in Greenwich Village, as well as later recordings with industry titans such as Louis Armstrong, Bing Crosby, Frank Sinatra, Ella Fitzgerald, and Billie Holliday. Vaché skillfully intersperses Blowers's recollections with a straightforward narrative. Including a discography, *Back Beats and Rim Shots* is a must for the music aficionado.

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