

"If people really believe in the music they're playing and put their hearts and souls into it, any kind of music can be fun to play."

Barlow was born to parents Barbara Diment and Doug Barlow in 1952, growing up in Belleville's east end and Toronto.

"There was always music" in the family, he said.

His mother — who'd appeared on Country Hoedown with Tommy Hunter — owned her own dance school, and Barlow was among the performers. At age 10, he performed a drum solo on CBC; around the same time he began to take music much more seriously.

About three years later he was playing with a big band nearly every weekend.

"I joined the musicians' union at 13 and had to get special permission from New York (because I was under 16), and swear I had never been a member of the Community Party," he laughed, adding he's now vice-president of the union.

By Grade 11, Barlow was more interested in music than school.

"You can quit school, but you have to spend the same amount of time on music," he remembered his mother telling him.

Barlow began studying drums, musical theory, and piano. He beat out several older, more experienced drummers at Hunter's audition.

"He was a good boy on the road," Hunter said. "He's a very talented musician, a really great drummer."

"There's drummers that play ahead of the beat; some are behind the beat. Brian is one of those guys who lays down a solid, solid beat. Once he starts nothing can shake him."



Left: Submitted photo  
"This was the first band I performed with, Pete Schofield and The Canadian College Show Band," says Brian Barlow. The photo was likely taken by his mother Barbara around 1965 during an afternoon concert at Toronto's Don Mills Plaza.