

# BACK *to* FRONT

## Striking up first chords

Music Room makes learning fun and affordable in Cranberry

Powell River's newest member of the music community is opening its doors and looking for students. The Music Room, operating in a home studio in Cranberry, hopes to become the place where adults and children alike can learn to play an instrument in a cooperative and fun environment.

Both Tom Dowding and Jenny Garden believe that everyone wonders if they can play music, and that beginning in an atmosphere of fun makes all the difference. "We all know the benefits of music," says Tom. "But it can be a big investment of time and money at the beginning, when nobody's really sure if it's a real interest, and if so, what instrument to play."

Tom and Jenny are opening the Music Room this month and will offer an enjoyable and affordable way to find out. "We're offering individual and group lessons, but they won't be as formal as traditional lessons usually are. It will be a light-hearted and simple way to start," says Tom.

Tom began studying piano when he was four and has completed the Royal Conservatory of Music program. He has been teaching music for over 10 years. "It started with family friends who wanted to learn," he says, "and it grew from there. I soon realized that there was nothing more exciting than watching a kid plug in the guitar, for example, for the first time, and seeing their face light up when they hit their first chord."

Tom studied music at college and has worked in studios, on



### Music makers

Jenny Garden and Tom Dowding are opening the Music Room with enjoyable and affordable lessons, instrument rentals, and jam and recording sessions. Exploring, experimenting and learning will all take place in an atmosphere of fun.

the road and backstage. "I always had the dream of the Music Room," he says. "I absolutely love working with beginners, of any age, who've never touched an instrument before."

Tom and Jenny's partnership began at the age of nine. "My family came from England to Powell River," says Tom. "We moved right next door to Jenny's family. We've been building tree forts and getting into trouble ever since."

Like many young people, they both left Powell River after high school and went their separate ways, thinking they'd be happier elsewhere. "But Powell River was always calling me," says Jenny. "After several years, Tom and I met again in Vancouver and started talking about moving back to Powell River and opening our own business. Now here we are."

While Tom will be giving music lessons and running the record-

ing studio, Jenny will be handling the business side of things. She has a bachelor of commerce degree from the University of Calgary. "We used to play that we were establishing businesses, or running a library when we were kids," says Tom. "She was the organized one." He laughs. "Now that we really are starting a business, it's still the same."

The Music Room is focusing on group lessons and has a couple different programs. Introduction

to Music is for anyone, of any age, who is interested but isn't sure where to start. Students will learn the basics of music in a fun and friendly group atmosphere and have a wide selection of instruments to try. A key part of this course includes an instrument that the student can use at home during the eight-week lesson period.

The Music Room also offers a class for students who are beyond the beginner stage and want to fine-tune their skills. This course offers a chance to make music with others in a progressive, fast-paced studio environment. Students will take part in a recording session during the last week of this course.

The Music Room will have drums, keyboards, guitars and more. Students will be encouraged to play the music they like. "We see ourselves opening the door and igniting some real interest," says Jenny.

The Music Room invites interested readers to its open house from 11 am to 4 pm on Saturday and Sunday, September 6 and 7. "We want everyone, individuals of all ages and families to come," says Jenny. "They can see all the instruments available and find out what we're offering."

Tom plans to begin lessons September 15.

The Music Room is at 6858 Cranberry Street. Phone: 604.483.9101. Website: [www.music-room.ca](http://www.music-room.ca). Email: [info@music-room.ca](mailto:info@music-room.ca).

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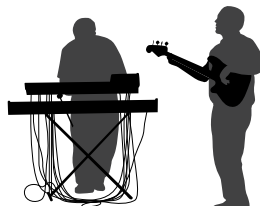
## Don't Miss Our Grand Opening

Check out the Lesson Studio and get all your questions answered:

**Saturday September 6<sup>th</sup> - 11:00am - 4:00pm**

**and Sunday September 7<sup>th</sup> - 11:00am - 4:00pm**

[www.music-room.ca](http://www.music-room.ca)



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