

THANK YOU



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Is thrilled to be awarded the title of
The High Note Music Studio
for 2021



(The focus is on the experience of the teacher (s), qualifications, teaching philosophy, school/studio location, cost per lesson, if virtual learning is offered.)

The nominees are . . .

- Elite Piano Studios, 3315 Banwell Rd., Windsor
- Featherstone Music & Performing Arts Company, 628 Monmouth Rd., Units 8 & 9, Windsor
- Half Step Away, HalfStepAway.com, Tecumseh
- Marie-Rose Music Studio, 1700 Sprucewood Ave., LaSalle
- Renée's Music Studio And Store, 421 Puce Rd., Belle River
- Sonata Piano Studio, 13311 Tecumseh Rd. East, Tecumseh
- South Windsor School of Music, 2965 Dominion Blvd., Windsor

And the Biz X Award goes to . . .
Renée's Music Studio And Store

Offering lessons for any age from infants to seniors, Renée's Music Studio is like one big "music family," describes Owner Renée Rutledge. "I have always felt and treated our students like family," she indicates. "I tell my teachers all the time that teaching music is as much about cultivating a relationship with our students, as it is teaching them the skills to become successful musicians." Their slogan is "Begin early, love it daily, enjoy it for life!" Besides offering private lessons for piano, vocal, violin, guitar, ukulele, and drums, Renée's offers the Music Pups group class for infants and toddlers and Music for Young Children for beginners aged three to six years (find more details on: ReneesMusicStudio.ca). Rutledge has more than 20 years of teaching experience and has received her ARCT in Piano Performance from the Royal Conservatory of Music. She opened her business in September 2000 and she believes she has a unique teacher training program. "If I see potential for a student to be a great teacher one day, I will encourage them and instruct them as part of their training as a musician," explains Rutledge. "I have already had several former students teach at our studio in the past before moving on with their schooling and careers and have four students currently teaching for me." Recently, she has turned her focus to building the store and instrument service side of her studio, where people are able to purchase or rent equipment and have stringed instruments serviced (ReneesMusicStore.ca). "And just for fun I have been offering décor and other music-oriented gift items at the studio," she adds. Nominator Teanna L. writes: "Renée is passionate about her school and just built a beautiful facility. During the pandemic, they have not stopped providing music classes to children and now have a store to help other small businesses within her school. She's fantastic!" Judges were also

impressed with the entire facility and the amazing atmosphere. Judge Kerluck states, "It actually kind of takes the whole teaching element and rolls in an experience — inside a barn! I like the fact that it's not just simply, 'I'm going to teach your kid piano,' it's more interesting. And they also do repairs, it's very well rounded." Judge Barker agrees and believes "Renée's Music Studio has a warm and welcoming environment that's great for learning." Rutledge believes it is important to collaborate and support other local small businesses and has alliances with La Belle Fromage, and Wine Works, in Belle River. "I have also been heading up the pre-concert activities for the Windsor Symphony Kids' Concerts for over seven years now," she states. Currently, she leads a team of eight instructors, and their training ranges from private lessons to music degrees, as well as high school music programs. "I am committed to seeing our teachers hone and expand their skills through regular teacher meetings, lesson observations, and professional development seminars," she asserts. "Besides qualifications and experience, I look to hire teachers that are passionate and have a desire to share their love of music," she adds. Rutledge says, thankfully, during the COVID-19 pandemic, technology allowed them to move lessons online for virtual learning. "Music is definitely therapeutic, and we hope it was a blessing to our students that we were able to provide some consistency and music therapy during the pandemic,"

she says. Rutledge is the Music Director at the New Life Pentecostal Assembly in Belle River. She has also played the flute with the Jubilation Orchestra and Choir, and performed throughout Ontario, as well as overseas. For a period of time she says she also enjoyed playing locally with The Silver Ambassadors. Her business supports several charitable organizations, including the Lakeshore Fire Department, and New Life Assembly. "My dream is to open a second location, a main street location in the town of Belle River that is not only a music studio and store, but also has a coffee shop with live music," Rutledge describes. "I also dream of creating an outdoor musical playground, on our property behind the studio." *Due to a conflict, Judge Goulet did not vote in this category.*



Renée's Music Studio contains seven teaching rooms (each with an upright acoustic piano), and a grand piano is also available to help students who are preparing for exams/competitions. Owner Renée Rutledge (shown with her daughter Ellie) operates her business like one big "music family" and enjoys inspiring her students to "shine like gold" to achieve their music goals. *Photo courtesy of Karly Buttenwick.*