



SIX STRING LIFE // // // //

UXBRIDGE'S BRIAN WRIDE

The guitar is alive and well in Durham Region

by Rob Caldwell

"The guitar is the most democratic of instruments" reads the quote at the top of guitarist Brian Wride's blog. The long-time musician has taken the saying to heart and has been teaching guitar, bass, ukulele and mandolin to people of varied backgrounds and abilities for more than 10 years. "I love watching people of all ages grow from playing simple chords and melodies to playing some fairly sophisticated pieces of music," he says.

Born and raised in Markham, Wride and his family now make Uxbridge their home. "We love Uxbridge. Whether you're into sports, arts, nature or literature, there are opportunities here. You can walk anywhere in town and the local trails are wonderful. There are the little things, too – we have one of the best book stores in the country (Blue Heron Books) and we have a shoe store (Uxbridge Shoes and Repair) where the owner knows more about feet than most podiatrists. We also have fine dining, family dining and great cafés."

Being involved in the community is important to Wride, and he counts Christmas shows that he's performed at Windreach Farm

– which provides opportunities for developmentally disabled people – as some of his most memorable. "They're so loving and generous and happy despite having profound challenges. I try to remind myself that I have no excuse not to be the same."

Recently, he has been recording a series of instrumental guitar tunes inspired by nature. It's a project he has taken on for the fun of it and to further his recording skills. Though it's sometimes challenging to juggle the roles of teacher and musician, he feels each has its own rewards. For now, teaching is his main focus. "Guitar is a difficult instrument and everyone struggles with it at some point. I get great satisfaction from helping students through those difficulties," he says. "I seem to have found a bit of a niche with adult beginners, and I love it when people decide later in life to expand their horizons and reach outside of their comfort zone."

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You can book Wride for guitar lessons and can often catch him live at community events, such as the weekly Uxbridge open mics hosted by singer/songwriters Tania Joy and Darrin Davis, or the monthly York Region Fingerstyle Guitar Association open mic in Stouffville, Ont.

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