

# RIBBON GUITAR

## The Guitar that started it all

By Jessica Brassard



Meet Marty Urquhart, the creator and sole manufacturer of the Ribbon Guitar. The idea for the design first emerged in 2009, while Marty was recovering from minor surgery. He was inspired to use the shape of a ribbon because of his son, Rory, who has autism. "We had a few puzzle piece ribbons around," and it got him thinking. Marty had never made a guitar before but he had always been a lover of music and had an aptitude for mechanical design. His family recognized the merit of this project right away, "It's a good idea, follow it through." Kim, his wife, commented when he shared the idea. With the help of his father, an amateur carpenter, the use of his workshop and some C.A.D software, Marty was able to create a prototype in pine. After perfecting the design, "Away I went..." Marty said, completing the puzzle piece guitar. This was the start of the Ribbon Guitar.

Since 2009, Marty has completed 12 guitars for various people and charities. All major parts for each guitar are Canadian made, coming from all over the country, Hamilton, Ontario, Montreal, Quebec, and Fraser Valley, British Columbia. He has worked with Traffic Jam Campaign, to Stop Human Trafficking and Slavery ([www.facebook.com/trafficjam.org](http://www.facebook.com/trafficjam.org)), the

Kids Cancer Alliance of Louisville Kentucky (<http://www.kidscanceralliance.org/>), a prostate cancer ribbon guitar was even auctioned off to help raise money for a Mount Kilimanjaro climb. He is currently working on a guitar for the Golden Hat Foundation; a non-profit organization dedicated to raising awareness and improves the lives of those with Autism ([www.goldenhatfoundation.org/](http://www.goldenhatfoundation.org/)).

Marty has made many fond memories since he started this endeavour, including driving up the "Highway of Heroes" on Remembrance Day, with his daughter Allie, to deliver a thank-you guitar to the band the Trews (a yellow Ribbon). Although the best part about building Ribbons guitars, Marty says, besides how relaxing and rewarding it is, is how proud his son Rory has become. Knowing "the guitars will be out there for along time." Especially the one Rory designed himself, for an old family friend.

As for making guitar building into a full time business, "it would be totally cool if it happens" but it is not in the plan for the near future. Marty is currently expanding his design inventory, that he will make for profit but the Ribbon guitars would "never be mass produced. Making Ribbon guitars will always remain a labour of love." The purchase price only covers the cost to



L: Jake Owen being presented with #011 as a thank you for performing at a charity auction

R: Marty and Rory with the original Autism Awareness Ribbon guitar and #003 Pink in background

produce the next ribbon guitar. Despite all the guitars made so far and those to come, Marty noted "It will always be a puzzle ribbon to me". **LH**

For more information, or to get in touch with Marty you can contact him through this website, <http://www.ribbonguitar.com/> or on facebook, [www.facebook.com/pages/Ribbon-Guitar/132645843415351](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Ribbon-Guitar/132645843415351)