

Rick Zuccaro's Piano Donation Program Hits All the Right Notes!

There are smiles all around when Rick Zuccaro, Vice President of Sales for the Carbone Group, presents a digital piano to an elementary school — and the biggest smile comes from Rick himself.

The presentations are actually donations of the pianos to the schools, to enrich their musical education programs. They are made possible by the proceeds of Billy Joel Tribute concerts Rick produces featuring him and a group of top Central New York musicians. The most recent concert took place on October 10 before a packed house at Valentino's Banquet Hall in New Hartford.

Concertgoers fill out a form naming an elementary school they would like to see receive a piano — and youngsters from the audience draw the winning name(s) during the concert.



Rick performs October 10 at Valentino's. He has been playing the piano since age 9 — and has recorded and performed professionally with accomplished musicians in New York, Los Angeles and Las Vegas. He has also written over 100 songs and recently released his music portfolio titled, "Songs of a Lifetime."

Encouraging Children

"Music has been such an integral part of my life that I feel compelled to do everything I can to encourage children to take an active interest in learning to play an instrument," Rick explains.

"Our school systems have to focus on subjects like Math and English, but I would like to bring an awareness that both are extremely prevalent in music theory and composition, throughout every musical style. There is a direct mathematical correlation between all the musical notes, as well as vocabulary skills, creative writing and freedom of expression that is achieved through learning, performing and writing music."

Although Rick plays all styles of music, he explains that he was most influenced by Billy Joel and Elton John. "Since I can perform Billy Joel's portfolio of music closer to the real deal, I chose to put a Billy Joel Tribute Band together."

He adds that he was also influenced by feedback he received from playing at the New York State Auto Dealers meeting in Florida last year. This year, he is performing for the NYSADA at Walt Disney World - Universal CityWalk in November.



Rick Zuccaro introduces students at Remsen Elementary School to the Yamaha DGX-650 digital piano he had just presented. To date, "Ricky Z's Digital Piano Donation Program" as the effort is officially called has provided eight such pianos for elementary schools across the region.



Syracuse radio personality Melissa Midgley helps young volunteers from the audience draw the names of the elementary schools that won Yamaha digital pianos at the October 10 concert. Melissa co-hosts the morning show on The Dinosaur 95.3 & 103.9 FM, where she also hosts an all-Billy Joel Show. Rick Zuccaro was recently a guest on the program.

In addition to her radio work, Melissa is a second-grade teacher in the Solvay School District. She introduced Rick's Billy Joel Tribute Band that evening. Three pianos were given away at the concert, two made possible from the proceeds and a third donated by the Carbone Auto Group. The lucky schools whose names were drawn were General Herkimer Elementary School in Utica and Marcy Elementary School. The third piano was donated to Solvay Elementary School.

