



Musical Makeover

This once-dated home sings a fresh new tune.

Text and styling by Charlotte Safavi

Photos by Robert Radifera for Stylish Productions



➔ **IN KEEPING WITH** the John Miles lyrics, “Music was my first love, and it will be my last,” the story of this Vienna home renovation begins and ends with a music room.

In 2024, Florida-based interior designer Syntha Harris was hired to design a music room for a tech entrepreneur, his Australian wife, and their blended family (four kids ranging from 15 to 21 years old).

“We wanted a room to play music and listen to music. Around this time, the house next door came up for sale. My wife and I stopped by the open house, while packing for an overseas trip, and we fell in love with the place and its potential,” says the homeowner.

The music room took a temporary back seat while the couple made an offer on the neighboring house, which was larger than their existing home. The new property also had a more open floor plan, a bigger backyard, and two additional en suite bedrooms.

A Modern Transformation

Once the deal went through, the homeowners began an extensive renovation on the eight-bedroom, 8,864-square-foot house, which was custom-built in the '90s.

“The original house was very dated,” says builder David Jorgenson of Fairfax-based AshMeg Construction, whom Harris brought on to oversee

Above: Custom built-ins for the guitar and music collection are painted in Benjamin Moore Classic Brown. The armchairs are upholstered in an olive-green Kravet velvet.
Below: The statement chandelier in the foyer is from Dulles Electric Supply.



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The dining room is wrapped in Drunken Monkey wallpaper from Jane Clayton & Company. The light fixture is Schonbek's Secret Garden.

the construction. "It was done in the Italianate style, all arched doorways, dated light fixtures, and heavy-handed Venetian plastered walls, with lots of faux-painted stonework and décor."

"It was clear that the homeowners wanted to make multiple architectural changes to the existing structure, creating better flow on the open plan and allowing the space to feel balanced, refined, and aligned with how they envisioned living — less traditional and far more connected," says Harris.

Starting in the foyer, all the arched openings, including into the living and dining rooms, were enlarged and squared off for a modern look. The foyer's transformation also included crisp white window-box trim, a modern glass-paned front door, and a clean-lined staircase.

"Transitional was a word that was bandied about," recalls Jorgenson. "We went room by room, removing walls, opening things up, remaking the spaces, moving from the ornate Italianate style to something fresher and cleaner for this family."

The kitchen was another huge transformation. The space was gutted, and 3 feet of depth was added along one wall from an adjacent laundry room. This allowed for a much larger kitchen island and a wall of paneled appliances.

The old kitchen sink window, with its dated curved transom, was replaced with a large picture window overlooking the garden. A custom-crafted brass hood became a striking focal point in the new space, which extends into the breakfast room via a wraparound counter and hutch.

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Cabinetry is by Prestige Cabinets in Boreal Forest by Benjamin Moore. The green palette ties in with the island top in Jadore Quartzite. A large round table from West Elm provides a gathering place in the breakfast area off the kitchen.

color green became our palette inspiration, complemented by rich brown tones,” adds Harris of the colors used to enrich the décor.

The pink-striped dining room, with its traditional crystal chandelier, became an elegant space with a whimsical wallpaper featuring monkeys and botanicals in moody earthy tones selected by the wife.

“We replaced the heavy-lidded wainscotting with vertical picture frame molding to serve as an eyelift and add visual height to the dining room,” says Jorgenson.

Other rooms were designed and added based on the homeowners’ hobbies and interests. These include a reading room, a movie theater room, and a game room that houses an extensive collection of board games.

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Creating a Musical Moment

Perhaps the most fabulous room of all is the music room, alternately open to the foyer or sealed off by a double-wide and extra-tall pocket door. After all, this is where the redesign concept started.

“Our favorite space to work in was transforming a traditional formal living room into a dedicated music room,” says Harris. “We created a moody, richly layered retreat designed for the homeowner to enjoy his extensive vinyl collection or play a treasured guitar beside a new contemporary fireplace set in a wall of exquisite natural leathered quartzite.”

“We went room by room, removing walls, opening things up, remaking the spaces, moving from the ornate Italianate style to something fresher and cleaner for this family.”

— David Jorgenson, AshMeg Construction

“I collect guitars used by famous guitar players, record albums, and related musical paraphernalia and collectibles,” adds the homeowner, whose most treasured pieces include artwork by Stevie Nicks and

The basement features a custom-built wet bar by AshMeg Construction.



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one of David Gilmour's guitars.

The resulting space features custom cabinetry to house the homeowners' collection along with recessed gold-framed wall display cases.

The renovation was completed at the end of 2025. Between the breakfast room, the movie theater, and the music room, everyone in the family has found their spot, especially when the relatives come to visit.

"Last Christmas the house was full of family from Australia and New Zealand. My wife wanted our home to be cozy and comfortable and feel like home. It does — and it's great for entertaining and hosting family and friends, with room for everyone's interests," the homeowner says. ■



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The homeowner loves board games, so this special game room was created to provide ample storage for his collection.