

The Format

There's usually some sort of mingling period, for a half hour to an hour, wherein folks begin arriving and sipping on a little bit of wine, munching on treats and socializing. I personally like it when house concerts are BYOB and potlucks of sorts. But you can handle all that however you are most comfortable. We've found that providing drinkables and some munchies before the show, with a potluck AFTER works best for feeding people and making the music happen. This may not work if your start time is later in the evening, but we can work that out. Most concerts are an hour long or two shorter sets of music with an intermission in the middle. After the concert or during intermission, we will make CDs available as well as have a chance to sign up on the mailing list. These are solo concerts for me - if you are interested in the full band, that is another conversation we need to have about space and cost.

The Money

Typically, the host will collect a suggested donation from the guests - either at the door or during the break, or however. The suggested amount ranges from between \$5 to \$15 - with \$10 being pretty typical. I tend to leave it up to the host how much is an appropriate amount to ask of their guests. And I never begrudge any guests who are unable or choose not to contribute. I know it can be weird to have to be explicit with money sometimes with your guests - so I have found that it's best to just be as upfront and clear as possible from the start. For instance, state it in any invitations, etc that there is a certain expectation that money will be involved in a more formal way than just "passing the hat to help pay for gas." Having the money basket at the door is a good idea, and actually seems to make things less awkward. Sometimes - but not always - the performers get a meal and/or lodging with the presenters as part of their compensation.

Press

If you have local newspapers, radio and/or television stations, we can contact them if you will provide to us who they are. You know your area better than we do, and that information would be very helpful to us. Also, if there are any other performance places that you think we should know about, please tell us about those right away. The more venues we can string together, the better chance we have of coming to your area especially if it is out of town.

Thank you

Thank for considering the notion of hosting a house concert. Whether or not you are still interested or able to host one, I highly recommend that you keep your eyes and ears open for some house concerts of your favorite artists and attend them. I think you will enjoy the experience.

House Concerts 101

What is a House Concert and why have one

A house concert is a unique chance to experience live music in a warm and intimate environment. It's when someone opens their home, backyard or community center and invites you to share in a performance by one of their favorite musicians. It's a chance to meet the performer and get them to sign their CD. A house concert is also a great social evening with friends and neighbors. It is a chance to have an evening that everyone will remember.

Here's How It Works

Contact your family and friends in your area. Tell them you are hosting a house concert. Ask them to donate money for the ticket price and perhaps bring a dish for potluck. If you don't have fifteen friends, there are other options. Perhaps one of your friends would be willing to host a house concert. Or perhaps they have friends who will bring in people. You can also post flyers around town to get the word out. With social media like Facebook, it is easier than ever to spread the news.

What Home is Right for a House Concert

A host will want to fill at least 15 - 20 chairs for a show and even more would be better. People who host house concerts regularly are able to seat 20 - 50 people, though house concerts can be much larger if a home is big enough to accommodate more. Before moving forward with a house concert, a host should feel confident that they can not only set up, but fill at least 20 chairs for the show. Parking should also be considered. And no one's home is perfect, so I don't care about the stain on the carpet.

Invitation

It can be done by traditional mail, by phone, e-vite, social website or via email at least two weeks in advance of the event. The longer the time period, the better. The most important factor is that the show is advertised as a "sit down concert." Audience expectation will be the difference between having a party with some background music and having a concert where people come together for a special evening. Make a list of your closest 50 - 100 friends and their addresses. Then make another list of 50 people you know who you would allow into your house who you think might want to see this particular artist. Our experience is that invitations receive a 20 - 25% turn out. You may want to include a map or special parking instructions. Also, if you are comfortable with it, I will post the house concert on my website schedule and ask that if folks are interested in attending, that they email for more specific details and to RSVP. This way, you stay in control over who you are inviting into your home and how many people to have.

Neighbors

You might think to invite neighbors or at least let them know it is happening, especially if parking is a challenge. As a courtesy to neighbors, shows start and end at a reasonable hour.