

House Concerts: A Guide to Hosting

Or, How to Host Your House Concert with Hannah Kaminer Music



Hello friend!

I am so glad you are interested in hosting a house concert. In my experience, house concerts are usually deep, lovely, and meaningful – a gift from the host to their friends. They can also simply be times where people are able to press pause and connect to something real and raw and beautiful – listening to music with other humans. That is one of my favorite things about house shows.

Please read through this guide and see if the parameters sound good to you. In this guide I share some guidelines for house concerts from Shannon Curtis's House Concert Host Guide. Shannon has performed at tons of house concerts and these are her suggestions for making the show both enjoyable and successful. After reading through this guide, let me know if you would like to move forward. I will do my best to guide you through this process. Let's go!

House.

House concerts can take place in barns, living rooms, apartments, wineries, art studios, rooftops, and backyards. The “house” can be any space where you and friends can come together, sit, and enjoy listening to music. Ideally, here are some requirements for the space:

- Everyone can gather close in the same space when it is time for the concert
- There is space for everyone to sit in this space, whether on chairs or on the floor/ground
- Non-table seating is best, to create an unimpeded sense of connection



Date.

I will work with you to pick a date for your house concert. It would be great if it could always be a Friday or Saturday, but sometimes my or your schedule does not allow for that. Some of the best shows happen on weeknights. Something else to consider is that house concerts are not particularly lengthy events; they run about two hours from guest arrival until the music ends, so they can work well for a weeknight.

Guests.

To create the best possible experience for all the guests, I suggest that you have a minimum of about 20-30 adults in attendance. (This number can be less if you are working with a small space – just let me know.) If there are too few guests, it does not feel much like a concert; having a minimum number also helps make playing house concerts a financially viable project for me as a musician.

About 50% of the invited guests tend to attend the event. Having at least 20 people attend, then, means inviting double that number (again, we can discuss this if you are working with a small space) you would like to show up. If you aren't certain you have enough people to invite, you can cohost with a friend. By all means, invite more people than this – as many as the space can hold, just let me know what you have in mind!

Mostly adults, please.

I love kids. They do tend to have needs (which is good) and wants (also very good) and dread sitting still (also an awesome trait, but not so good for house concerts). I encourage you to make it an adults-only event or an adults-and-children-likely-to-enjoy-sitting-quietly event.

Inviting people.

The more tangible and personal the invite, the better. Phone calls and postcards and in-person invites are awesome. Emails and evites are okay, too, but in conjunction with those more personal interactions.

I will provide you with some specific language to put on the invitation. It will say something like this: “This is a donation-based concert.” I don’t suggest a specific donation, because I want people to give as they are able and moved to give, and that may be less or more than an “average” specific

number. Some house concert hosts prefer to pay an up-front guarantee for the show, and prefer not to ask their guests for donations. We can discuss that, too, if you would like. Be sure to use the words “house concert” rather than “house party” or “house show” – this will help create realistic expectations on the part of the guests. The invite should also ask



the guests to RSVP. This works better than a “come by if you can” approach. Finally, let the guests know if they can expect drinks or snacks. That is entirely up to you!

The concert itself.

Here’s what you can expect on the day of the house concert:

- I will arrive one hour before guests to set up my equipment and sound-check.
- At the time of the event, the guests will begin to arrive and we will hang out! This should be about an hour before the music is slated to begin.

- After about an hour of hanging out, everyone will gather in the concert space, the host will give a brief introduction, and then I perform for about an hour.
- As soon as I've played the last song, the host (you) will get up front next to me, holding some type of container, and remind people about the donations. You will want to say something like this: "Thank you all for coming! I hope you enjoyed this as much as I did. I just want to remind you that this is a donation-based concert, and your donations go directly to the artist to help her to keep making music. I am going to leave this box/vase/vessel right here and encourage you to express your appreciation. Thanks again!" Having the host give this speech is important to my sustainability as an artist, and your enthusiasm is way more important to the guests (because you are their friend) than anything I could say.
- After the music: We all hang out some more. House concerts can turn into kind of a feast of connection!

Sample schedule

- 5:30 – Hannah arrives and sets up her equipment
- 6:30 – Guests arrive and we hang out
- 7:30 – Concert begins
- 8:30 – Concert ends and we can keep hanging out!

All these details help me to create the kind of house concert you are excited to invite your friends to – meaningful, connected, humorous, lovely, and maybe a little bit magical. So, here are some questions for you. If you are excited to host a house concert, please send me back answers to these questions. Then let's talk dates!

- Where do you live, and what is the space you have in mind for the concert?
- Do you feel good about hosting a donation-based concert as described above?
- Do you think you will be able to get the minimum of 20-30 adults to attend?
- What is the best email address and phone number for me to reach you?