

A QUICK GUIDE TO HOUSE CONCERTS

What is a house concert and how do we put one on?

By Ethan Harrison Smith

INTRODUCTION:

A house concert is exactly what it sounds like, it is a concert in someone's home. This can mean a lot of different things for a lot of different people, but house concerts can be held in living rooms, backyards, porches, garages, etc. This term can also encompass other spaces that the host may have access to such as a community space at a condo complex – basically any space that can host a concert, but often doesn't.

Key Information About House Concerts

- There is no charge for admission, and it is by donation only.
- It is not a house party with music in the background, but an event meant to support the artist – both with attention and income.
- It doesn't require an expensive event venue or complex planning – Just a willingness to support live music by providing an audience and a location for them to gather.
- It doesn't cost much or anything to put on. Hosts sometimes provide snacks. If alcohol is allowed by the host, it is usually BYOB.
- It is a unique and memorable event and experience for all of those who attend.

HOW IT WORKS:

A host will open their home up to a performer (solo artist or a group) as a performance space. The host and friends will promote the show and invite family, friends, and other music lovers to attend. The artist will typically invite people to attend as well.

The artist will perform for at least an hour, possibly more, performing 1-2 sets of music. During the break and after the performance the artist might talk with audience members, and sell CDs, t-shirts, and/or other merchandise.

Typically, the host will ask for donations for the artist at the beginning of the performance and/or at other times during the evening.

ABOUT DONATIONS:

Donations are both simpler and lower pressure for attendees. Donations also ensure that the house concert performance is not viewed as a business event. This protects the host because charging a ticket price could challenge local commerce laws.

For the independent artist, performing in front of an audience of eager listeners is often more of a priority than ticket revenue. Typically, the donation policy works well. The host can collect donations either at the door or in advance. The host lets people know about the donation both at the door and on the invite, something like: "Hello everyone. Ethan is working hard to perform and provide entertainment for this house concert. We are asking for a donation of \$15 per person – more if you can, less if you can't."

LOGISTICS:

Hosts and performers typically work together very closely in anticipation of the event, including the writing and sending of the invitations. <http://www.evite.com> or <http://www.eventbrite.com> are two recommendations for an invitation method. The artist and/or the host may end up writing the invite.

Other considerations include electricity (for amplification) and a space for people to sit or stand. A small living room can usually accommodate 20-25 people. Attendees may sit on couches, recliners, the floor, or if the host desires, they may rent chairs. Guests can also bring their own folding chairs.

Much of this is based on individual host preference. Also keep in mind that some things can help a house concert to be presented in a way that encourages a listening space, and a memorable experience. Mood lighting, chairs, and the chosen space can all add to the ambience of the evening and help guests, performers, and hosts to have a great shared experience.



CONCLUSION:

If you want to support the arts, live music, and musicians, house concerts are a great way to do so. They provide independent and established artists a way to be heard in the ever-changing musical climate.

The information above is a general overview of how many house concerts are arranged, hosted, and presented. All artists have their own preferences on the way they do things, and their own requirements... remember, communication is key.

ABOUT ETHAN HARRISON SMITH

Ethan Harrison Smith is a singer/songwriter and performer originally from the Atlanta area, and currently based in Asheville, NC. You can find out more about him at <http://www.ethansmithmusic.com> - He has additional information and links to his music and his performance schedule.