

HOUSE CONCERTS: Tips, Info and Suggestions (from “Concerts In Your Home” website/organization)



What is a House Concert?

It's an invitation-only concert in someone's home, presented by a host who does not profit from the event. Most house concerts are:

- held indoors and on weekends
- attended by 20-50 people
- paid for by a \$10-20 donation per guest (to the performer)
- known to include light snacks, beverages
- attended by the host's friends, neighbors, co-workers, and maybe a few fans of the artist
- attended by a 25-60 age group
- performed by solo acts, duos and small groups
- performed with a very small sound system or no amplification
- very intimate — the audiences sit close and are attentive
- stronger for artist's merchandise sales than traditional venues

Choosing a Location

A house concert takes place at a house. When the weather turns seasonally ideal, some hosts do patio, or backyard shows, but you always need a backup (inside) in case the weather doesn't cooperate. Indoors, the living room is usually the best choice, often providing a balance between a cozy spot and the opportunity to stretch into an adjoining area. Also, a window or fireplace can make a nice background scene for the performer.

TIP: To estimate your capacity, clear the middle of the room (coffee table, etc.) and move the couches to the side or against a wall if possible. Then, start arranging available chairs (dining room, kitchen, breakfast nook, office chairs) to get an idea of the number of people your space could hold. Remember to allow at least a 4' by 6' area for the performer — more if it's a duo or group.

Your Invitation List

One of the first steps to take as a house concert host is to compile a list of as many invitees as possible. A full room adds so much to the feeling of a concert — whether that number is 15 or 1500. Performers really sense and feed off the energy in a room when they play. Empty seats, however, suck the energy out of any event. Whatever the size of your space, do your best to avoid empty seats, even if you have to hide some chairs!

Don't neglect to invite someone simply because you don't think they'll be into it. Time and time again the biggest compliments come from people who thought a house concert wasn't their kind of thing, who then were blown away by the quality and fun-factor of the show. Your invitations should provide information and links to the artist's music, so let people decide for themselves if they should come.

Suggested Donations

Technically, house concerts are free. You are not selling tickets. You are not running a business. And the best way to make that point (to those who would be concerned) is to have a “suggested donation.” However, it should be clearly understood by all your guests that their donations are how the artist is being paid. You might announce before you introduce the artist, “If you can’t afford the suggested donation this evening, that’s O.K., but please pull me aside sometime tonight so that I can make up the difference in the donations jar.” That’ll get the point across, and very few people (if any) will take you up on your generous offer.

****How much should you suggest?***

\$10-20 per person is the usual range, depending on the caliber/requirement of the artist, and the comfort level of your guests. You can choose a fixed number like \$10 or suggest a range such as \$10-\$15 per person. Discuss this with the artist several weeks ahead of time, to see what the expectations are.

Setting Up the Performance Room

- Leave enough room for the performer (and speakers if needed!)
- Use the shortest chairs down front, taller chairs and barstools in the back.
- Try to face all chairs toward the performer.
- Try to aim some light toward the performer, and have the rest of the room a bit darker. An adjustable desk-lamp on the mantle, or a clamp-on light from Home Depot can do wonders.

****Merchandise Table***

Make sure the artist has a high visibility table for their CDs and other merchandise.

Greet Guests, Collect Donations

Have your RSVP list handy as the guests arrive, and have the donations jar/hat in an obvious place where you can direct them.

Introduce the Artist

Once you've allowed your guests to mingle for the first half hour or so, it's important to set the tone for the concert. Encourage folks to find seats and settle in. Then give the artist an introduction. There is no penalty for being brief. "Hi Everyone, thanks so much for joining us at our (first?) house concert. Tonight we're pleased to bring you, all the way from San Francisco Bay Area, Staci Frenes!"

Encourage CD Sales and Mailing List Signatures

Artists rely on you to help steer guests to their merchandise table at the end of the show. Thank everyone for coming, then encourage CD sales and mailing list signups.

Staci Frenes Contact Info

If you are interested in hosting a house concert for Staci Frenes, please contact booking@stacifrenes.com

Visit Staci on Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/stacifrenes>)

Or Twitter (<http://www.twitter.com/stacifrenes>)