

The One Page Guide to House Concerts

What is a house concert? How to I put on a house concert?

- by Matthew Moran

Introduction

A house concert is exactly what the name says, a concert in someone's house. Not to split hairs but it could be a concert in a backyard or even a community center at a condo complex. It is a concert outside of a **traditional music venue**.

Key elements about house concerts:

- There is no charge for tickets, **donations only**.
- It is not a party with a background musician but a true **listening event meant to support the artist** – both with attention and income.
- It **does not require a large fancy home or complex event planning**; just a willingness to support live music by providing both a location and inviting people to attend.
- It does not **cost much (or anything)** to put on. Some hosts provide snacks. If alcohol is “allowed” (*many house concerts are no alcohol events*), it is typically BYOB.
- It is a unique, amazing, fun, and simple event.

How it works

A host opens their home to an artist (*songwriter and/or group*) as a performance venue and **possibly a place to spend the night if the artist is traveling**. The host and friends promote the show by inviting family, friends, and others passionate about music. The artist typically will promote their show as well.

The artist will perform for an hour plus – often two sets with a short break for mingling and merchandise. During the break, the artist might talk with attendees about his or her music and be able to **sell CD's, t-shirts, or other merchandise**.

The host will typically ask attendees for a donation for the artist. *Hint: As the artist, I might ask for donations but **I would rather focus on my performance** and let the host ask for donations. It sounds less needy. ;-)*

Why donations?

It is simpler. Donations ensure the “party” is not viewed as a business. This protects the host as charging a ticket price could **run you afoul of commerce laws**.

For the artist, getting their music in front of an audience of listeners might be more important than the ticket revenue. Typically, the donation system works well. The host can collect donations by reservation prior to the event or at the door. **The host includes on the invite and announces during the show, something like, “Hey everyone. Matt is working hard and giving us great entertainment value. We are asking for a donation of \$20 per person – more if you can, less if you can't.” See how simple that is?**

Logistics

Typically, I work with my hosts closely to help them with things like invitations and RSVP (I recommend <http://www.evite.com> or <http://www.eventbrite.com>). In fact, I will write the invites for you if you wish. You can find a sample here: <http://mattmoranhousesample.eventbrite.com/>

Other than that, electricity (for amplification) and space for people to sit or stand is all you need. A small living room can pretty easily house 20 people. I've had them sitting on couches and floors or rented chairs (*\$1 per chair*). Guest can also bring folding chairs.

My preference is that the host does not have to rent or pick up seating. It is one less expense and one less item on the to-do list.

Conclusion

If you want to support live music and the arts, house concerts are an excellent way. They provide both established and new performers a way to be heard and can form the basis for a career in music.

The information above is meant as a general guideline and is from my perspective as a songwriter and performer. Any performer you speak to who plays house concerts might have their own particular tastes or requirements... just ask them.



About Matthew Moran

Matt is a songwriter and performer based out of the Los Angeles area. He is also a published author and presents to business & songwriter organizations on the topic of social media, online presence, and professional development. You can find out more at his website:

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He has additional information about house concerts as well as links to his music and his performance schedule.