



The Kelly&Ellis House Concert Host Guide

Hi! First of all we are you are totally awesome for even considering hosting a house concert! House concerts are one of the most completely fun and rewarding kinds of shows we do, and a personal favorite of ours. Let's have some fun!

This guide will take you step-by-step through the process of organizing and launching a house concert. Over the years Casey and I have learned some key guidelines that are integral in making a house concert successful.

At the end, if you think you're game, there are some questions to help us set a date.

Please read all the sections - even if you've hosted before - as these are the guidelines that work the best for us.

I hope this guide helps simplify the process and gets you excited for what is guaranteed to be one of the most unforgettable things we do all year!

#1 The House

We've staged house concerts in living rooms, back yards, barns and patios; in small houses, big houses, condos, and apartments; at wineries, galleries, theaters and community rec. rooms. all it has to be is a "space".

A "house" is just a gathering space for friends who are interested in having an intimate experience listening to music in a quiet and supportive environment!

Pre and post concert mingling can happen anywhere but for the duration of the show **we ask that people gather in one spot, seated close to each other, without tables or barriers** directly between them and us. This is key to creating the perfect performing space!

It's best to have chairs, couches and even folding chairs set up in a theatre-like arrangement. People can sit on the floor, cushions, blankets on lawns and that works as long as they are comfortable and can see us.



The main requirement is that the audience can all gather in the same room, section of the yard, etc., seated comfortably for the whole show.

#2 Nailing Down the Date

As we route our tours, we will have parameters to help you choose a date. Sometimes it takes some juggling on our part to make it work but it's just a game of getting the pieces in the right order!

Unfortunately, it's easier for most people to do these concerts on a weekend. We do appreciate this! However, we work any or every night of any given week and keeping the show short and early makes it completely doable on a "school night"! These are often the most rewarding shows we do!



That being said, we will have Thursday - Sunday shows every week, needing to be filled so there are always those possibilities! But, they are usually the first to be booked so your flexibility is greatly appreciated and will help us to make these tours successful and meaningful! **And...ultimately enable us to even do them at all.**

#3 The Guests

To create the best scenario for a show, we ask that you have a minimum of **20-30 adults in attendance**.

From our experience, a gathering of fewer than 20 seems too casual and less like a "concert" and more like folks just hanging out. It's hard to feel **the excitement** in such a small group. Also, in our donation-only-based concert model, 20 or more adults contributing to the donations and purchasing merchandise is what starts making it a **financially viable** night for us.

So, invite double the number of people you'd like to have!

We've noticed that in order to reach the 20-30 minimum it usually means inviting almost twice as many people. Typically about **half of those invited actually come to the event**.



If you aren't sure you can get 20 people to come on your own, **you might "co-host" the show with a friend or two!** That way reaching the 20-30 number might be more doable and you might find that even more people want to attend!

If your space can't hold more than 20, no problem! If you can or would like to host

more **we'd be delighted to work with you on whatever ideas you have!** We've performed these intimate shows for audiences of 25 - 150!

Adults and Older Kids Only, Please

To make the show as compete and memorable as possible we really need a listening room environment. This will make it so quiet, poignant moments can be easily heard and the energy of the fun or funny uplifting moments can be shared! To really feel this, the audience needs a relaxed environment in which to focus.

This is why we ask that there be no young kids in attendance during the show part of the evening.

I mean, if you have a child who is genuinely interested in the show and can sit quietly for an hour and enjoy the music. They are more than welcome!

It's really your call, but it's best to err on the side of caution to ensure everyone can enjoy the show. If there are distractions during the performance it usually affects the audience's experience and can, in turn, significantly affect our income. We adore kids and cats and doggies!!! But, this is our job. We work hard to be as professional as we can for you! **Thank you in advance for understanding!!!**

If you have kids, or if you have friends who want to come but can't leave small children at home, please consider having a responsible adult take charge of the kids in a physically and acoustically separate space during the concert.

This could just be a babysitter or parent willing to volunteer and they only need to make sure the kids feel comfortable playing and having a good time, without there being any noise that is audible in the concert space. And, before and after the show, they are welcome to hang out with the rest of us!

If you plan on having some mature "kiddos" in audience, we have found that we still need a minimum of 20 adults to make the evening work for us financially. But, they are welcome extras!

#4 The Invitation

Invite a bunch of like-minded friends! **We will provide you with some precise language that we'll need you to include in your invitations;** but in addition to that, we want you to have fun telling your friends why you want them to come to this awesome event you're hosting!

"This Is a Donation-Based Concert"

The language we'll send you to use in the invite will read something like this:

"This will be a donation-based concert. Please come prepared to make a donation to the artist at the conclusion of the show"

We leave the donation amount up to the guest for 2 reasons:

1. In our experience, we do better financially at shows where people can donate what they are moved to in the moment, without any previous demands or expectations.
2. Even more-so, if you have a friend who is cash-poor but a lover of music, it's important to us that they be able to enjoy the music without feeling any pressure. This is how we make our living but **sharing the music with eager listeners is just as important.**

Sometimes a host will prefer not to ask their guests to make a donation and would rather pay an up-front guarantee for the show. Either way is fine, and we've done both. If this is more appealing to you, please let us know and we'll discuss the fee structure for scheduling a non-donation show.

Other Invitation Items

You may want to include drinks and snacks in the evening. Perhaps you enjoy entertaining and would like to let them know what they can expect. Sometimes hosts have a sort of pot-luck dinner and BYOB set up for after the concert. This part is entirely up to you!

While an RSVP doesn't ensure attendance, it does require a slightly higher level of commitment and results in a higher turnout. Just asking people to "stop by if you can", especially on a weeknight, has resulted in poor attendance for us.

Please be sure to
ask your guests to
RSVP in the
invitation.

About 1 month before, 2 weeks and 1 week before the event, I will send you snippets of songs, videos or other fun things for you to include in emails as reminders for your guests. This may ensure a better turnout!

#5 The Concert

So, you've invited double the amount you'd like to have attend, RSVPs are in, and you're ready for the show. Here's how it goes down:

Casey and I will either arrive a couple of hours or so before guests arrive to set up and get ready to go, or we will have been there for the night and will find time throughout the day to do so (more on this later).

Guests arrive at the time you and I have decided upon. This is usually early evening but can be afternoon if it's a weekend day. As folks arrive, you all can visit, eat and drink for about an hour before the show and **we will briefly visit with everyone. (we can't talk too much right before we sing but we'll be happy to visit a little before and a lot after the show!)**



Then after the hang-out we'll gather in the performance space, folks will find their seats and we'll tune and prepare to begin.

Usually **the host will give a short intro** - then we begin! **We will play about an hour** unless we have decided that the evening has a different tone. (we'll set this up before the date is set!)

As soon as we've played the very last moment of the show, we ask that you to get up with us on stage and with a vase, pitcher or anything into which guests can make donations that will safely hold them and make **the donation announcement**. It should go something like this:

"Thank you all for coming tonight. I hope you enjoyed this as much as I did. I want to remind you that is a donation -based concert. Your donations tonight will all directly benefit our artists, Leslie and Casey, and will show them our appreciation for this amazing experience we have shared. I'm going to leave this right here and encourage you to give what you can but generously if you can. Thanks again"

After that, we all hang out some more until the guests start heading home.

Then we'll pack up, thank you and head out **or**:

#6 Providing lodging

More often than not our hosts will offer us a place to stay for the night or even that and the night before (depending on travel time between towns).

This is not a requirement but helps us a lot in not having to pay for expensive accommodations, load and unload all our gear several times a day and it offers us time to get to know you even better while we have time to visit alone!

A Note About Donations

It's important to us that **these concerts are possible for anyone to host**. That's why we work for donations. But, the donations and sale of merchandise is the only way we make money on the road and we have road expenses to cover as well. This is why we need our hosts to set the tone. We need our hosts to show full support of us and the donations we receive.

We've also seen that guests are typically very receptive to the idea **when they know why they are being asked to make a**

We have found that the success of the donations is directly related to the level of enthusiasm the host puts into the "donation speech" at the conclusion of the concert.

donation and when they are aware of how special and unique the event they just experienced really is!

Flow and an example of a schedule

We like to **keep the pre show mingling to about an hour**. It gives everyone time to get settled and visit so they are ready to sit and absorb the music without feeling rushed. However too much more than that makes the purpose of the evening fall out of focus and it runs the risk of turning into a house "party" not a house concert. It's important that everyone has fun but the most important thing is: this is a concert.



So, you and I will decide what feels good as a start time. Let's say 7.

4:00 We arrive and set up (unless otherwise arranged)

6:00 Guests arrive and mingle

6:45 Guests are encouraged to use the facilities, refresh their drinks and find a seat in the performance area

6:58 The host makes a brief announcement

7:00 We begin

8:00 The concert ends and the host makes the donation announcement

Then we all hang out!

It's awesome!

All these details - from the invitations, to the set-up, to the flow of the event - serve the singular goal we have for this event.

To create with you a truly unique and special night - an intimate concert experience, where magical memories and meaningful connections with your community will be made through music.

It's going to be so much fun!

Questions for you:

If all of the parameters we've outlined in this house concert host guide seem good to you, and you'd like to host a house concert, then the next step is for you to answer the following questions:

We'll need you to reply to each of these as soon as you can in order to fit into the routing with a secure date! Please answer all seven questions completely! Thank you so much!

1. In what city and state do you live?
2. What is the space you have in mind for the concert? (i.e. inside your house, outdoor space - see various photos above)
3. Do you want to host a donation-based concert as described above, or do you want information about paying a guarantee for the show instead?
4. Number of Adults:
 - a. Do you think you'll be able to get a minimum of 20-30 adults to come?
 - b. What is the total number of people you might expect to come?
5. Children
 - a. Do you anticipate there will be children at the event?
 - b. If yes, will you be able to provide for a separate, supervised, sonically isolated space for them to go to play and be kids for the performance segment of the night?
6. Please list any dates throughout the year or within the dates I've proposed in my email that you are **unavailable** to host a house concert (vacation plans, weddings or graduations, folks out of town for summer or spring break, weekly commitments, etc.)
7. What is the best **email address** and **phone number** at which you can be reached?

Thank you for enabling us to come to your town and play for you! This grass roots, independent musician business model highly depends on folks like you offering a space and an audience so we can do what we do best and still make a reasonable living! Thank you!