

# HOUSE CONCERT HOST GUIDE



Hi and thank you for your interest in having Dan perform for you and your friends! I'm Dan's wife Stephanie and I will be your contact throughout the booking process. In Dan's 12+ years of experience as a professional musician, for him, nothing compares to the intimate and deeply soulful experience of a house concert. We're really excited to have an opportunity to share this with you!

This guide will take you step-by-step through the simple process of setting up a house concert with Dan. After playing many house concerts, Dan has learned a lot about the best way to structure these shows to make them the best experiences they can be.

At the end of reading through the guide, if these parameters seem good to you, then I'll have a short list of questions for you that we'll use to pick a date for your house concert.

We hope this will inspire you and get you ready for what is guaranteed to be one of the most unforgettable things we do all year. Here we go!

## #1 THE HOUSE

We have staged house concerts in living rooms, garages, backyards, and on back patios; in small houses, big houses, condos, and apartments; at a winery, in a photography studio, and at a local community center. Point is, the "house" can be any space you have access to where your friends can gather, sit, and enjoy a concert.

THE ONLY REQUIREMENT FOR THE SPACE IS THAT EVERYONE IN ATTENDANCE MUST BE ABLE TO GATHER IN THE SAME SPACE, SEATED, FOR THE ENTIRETY OF THE HOUR LONG CONCERT.

Pre- and post-concert mingling times can of course spill into other rooms or areas of the property, but we ask that, for concert time, everyone is gathered close and seated, together, directly in front of where Dan will be set up to perform. We've learned that seating around tables works against the intimate vibe we're going for so ask that there please be no table seating for the concert. It's fine if there aren't enough chairs for everybody - carpet seating in a packed living room or blankets on the lawn in the backyard can work great as extra seating options.

## #2 THE DATE

We will work with you to figure out the best date for your house concert. Dan books at a high rate for private events and public shows on weekends so while we may have the occasional Friday or Sunday available, the majority of his house concerts fall on a week night. In our experience, these are the best nights anyways as the show ends at a decent hour and it's often easier to get a good group of people together on say a Thursday than a busy weekend night. We've typically had our most fun house concerts on week nights as it adds to the amazingness that you could be doing something so unique and fun on a random Wednesday.

The bottom line is if you have a good group of people, it will be an incredible experience no matter the day of the week. Again, this is not a lengthy event; the time from guest arrival until the music is done is typically only about 2 hours (more on this in a minute) - making this the perfect event for a unique weekday evening get together.

## #3 THE GUESTS

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



There are two reasons we ask you to have this minimum number of guests at the show: 1) Fewer than 20 people and the concert doesn't feel like the exciting event it should be; and 2) In our donation based model, 20 or more adults contributing to donations and purchasing merchandise is what starts making it a financially viable night for Dan.

In our experience, making sure there is a minimum of 20 people there usually means that the host will need to invite a good deal more than 20. The typical scenario seems to be that about half of those invited tend to be able to come to the event.

**SO INVITE DOUBLE THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE YOU'D LIKE TO HAVE AT THE CONCERT. IF YOU'RE AIMING FOR 25, INVITE 50; AND SO ON.**

If you aren't sure you'll be able to get 20 adults to come on your own, you might "co-host" the show with a friend who also has a group of people to invite, and increase your overall attendance.

If your space can hold more people and you want to have more, then great, the more the merrier! If you have an idea for something bigger, we can absolutely do it, and we're eager to hear what you have in mind. We've done house concerts with as few as 20 and as many as 200 people in attendance, and have loved every one of them.

## **Adults only, if possible, please**

We leave the decision to have children in attendance to you, the host, however, because the show has a lot of quiet parts, and because it's essential that we're able to create and maintain an uninterrupted focus on the performance for the whole concert, we recommend making it an adult-only affair if possible.

Every child is different, but we've found that age 10 generally seems to be a rough line dividing those able to display good concert etiquette from those who may end up causing a distraction, thus affecting the experience for the rest of the guests and potentially affecting Dan's ability to make it a successful night financially. As much as Dan loves kids, music is his livelihood and these shows are a part of that income so we appreciate your understanding!

**IF YOU HAVE KIDS, OR IF YOU HAVE FRIENDS WITH KIDS WHO WANT TO COME BUT WOULD BE UNABLE TO COME IF THEIR SMALL KIDS COULDN'T COME ALONG, WE RECOMMEND ARRANGING TO HAVE A RESPONSIBLE ADULT WATCH THE KIDS IN A PHYSICALLY AND ACOUSTICALLY SEPARATE SPACE FROM THE CONCERT.**



This could be a babysitter or a parent willing to volunteer to watch the kids in a separate room. This works great and, of course, the kids are welcome to hang before and after the live performance.

Also, if you think you'll have some sitting-quietly-and-listening kids in attendance, we've still found that a minimum number of 20 adults is what makes for a viable event, so make sure to count the kiddos as "extras" when putting together your guest list.

## **#4 THE INVITATION**

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

### **This is a donation-based concert**

The language we'll send you to use in the invitations 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 do not specify a suggested donation amount for our house concerts. The reasons for this are twofold:

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 expectations.
2. Perhaps more importantly, 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 evening without feeling any pressure. While it is true this is part of how Dan makes his living, sharing music with people is the most important thing.

Occasionally we have hosts who prefer not to ask their guests for donations and prefer instead to pay an up front guarantee for the show. Either way is fine and we've done both ways many times. If this approach interests 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 let your guests know you'll have drinks and snacks for them if that will be the case, or perhaps you'd like to ask everyone to bring a little something to share. This is entirely up to you, and is not a requirement for hosting a house concert.

PLEASE BE SURE TO ASK YOUR GUESTS TO RSVP  
IN YOUR INVITATIONS.

We've discovered that when guests are asked to RSVP, there is a much better turnout rate as opposed to a "come by if you can" approach.



## #5 THE CONCERT

So you've invited everyone, RSVPs are in, and you're ready for the show - here's how it goes down!

- Dan will arrive one hour before guests are scheduled to start arriving, to set up his equipment and run a quick soundcheck.
- Guests arrive at the time you and I have decided together that the event will begin. This is usually in the early evening, but could be afternoon if it's a Sunday show. As guests arrive, we all hang out and mingle for about an hour prior to the performance.
- Then, after an hour or pre-concert hanging out, everyone gathers in the performance space, people find their seats, the host (that's you!) gives a brief introduction, and then Dan performs for about an hour.
- As soon as Dan plays the last note of the concert, you get up next to Dan with a vase tip jar (we can provide this) to make the donation announcement. It should go something like this (please feel free to put this in your own words as long as it conveys the same message):

"THANK YOU ALL FOR COMING TONIGHT. I HOPE YOU ENJOYED THIS AS MUCH AS I DID. I WANT TO REMIND YOU THAT THIS IS A DONATION-BASED CONCERT. YOUR DONATIONS TONIGHT WILL ALL DIRECTLY BENEFIT OUR MUSICIAN AND WILL SHOW HIM OUR APPRECIATION FOR THIS AMAZING EXPERIENCE HE BROUGHT US TONIGHT. I'M GOING TO LEAVE THIS JAR RIGHT HERE AND ENCOURAGE YOU TO GIVE GENEROUSLY. THANKS AGAIN!"

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

## A Note On Donations

It's really important to us that we're able to make these concerts possible for anyone to host, and the way we do that is by doing the shows on a donation basis. Dan often makes far more money in his other types of performances, but truly enjoys the house show experience. That said, it is still a healthy part of his income so it's obviously super important that we have our host's full enthusiasm behind that aspect of the event.

We've found that guests are always really receptive and super happy to be a part of supporting the unique and memorable event they've just experienced. It's kind of a big love fest by the end of the night.

## A note on the flow of the event, and an example schedule

We've found that it's really important that the pre-show mingling time is right about an hour. If it's shorter than an hour, then people don't have enough time to get comfortable, and if it's longer than an hour the focus of the event starts to get fuzzy. It's one of the most fun nights of the year, but it's important to remember that fundamentally this isn't a party; it's a concert.



Let's say you want the performance to start at 7:30. In that example, here's how the schedule would go:

5:30 - Dan arrives for set up  
6:30 - guests arrive  
7:30 - concert begins  
8:30 - concert ends

And then of course we can all hang out afterwards for as long as you'd like!

WE REALLY APPRECIATE YOU TAKING THE TIME TO GO OVER THIS!! ALL THESE DETAILS FROM THE INVITATIONS, TO THE SET UP, TO THE FLOW OF THE EVENT MAKE IT SO WE CAN HAVE A TRULY UNIQUE AND INCREDIBLE NIGHT WITH YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS. WE CAN'T WAIT TO BE A PART OF IT AND THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST IN HOSTING THE MUSIC!

## 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 with Dan, then the next step is to answer these questions so we can factor your concert into our touring plans. We're currently focusing mostly on the West Coast (California, Oregon, Washington) but definitely have plans for touring well beyond soon so please submit no matter where you live and we will do our best to make it happen!

1. IN WHAT CITY AND STATE DO YOU LIVE?
2. WHAT IS THE SPACE YOU HAVE IN MIND FOR THE CONCERT (AND PLEASE LET US KNOW IF IT'S INDOORS OR OUTDOORS)? (I.E. LIVING ROOM/INSIDE YOUR HOUSE, WINERY/OUTSIDE BY VINEYARDS, ETC.)
3. DO YOU WANT TO HOST A DONATION-BASED CONCERT AS DESCRIBED ABOVE, OR DO YOU WANT INFO ABOUT PAYING A GUARANTEE FOR THE SHOW INSTEAD?
4. A) DO YOU THINK YOU'LL BE ABLE TO GET A MINIMUM OF AT LEAST 20-30 ADULTS TO COME?  
B) WHAT IS THE TOTAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE YOU MIGHT EXPECT TO COME?
5. A) DO YOU ANTICIPATE THERE WILL BE CHILDREN AT THE EVENT?  
B) IF YES, WILL YOU BE ABLE TO PROVIDE FOR A SEPARATE, SUPERVISED, ACOUSTICALLY SEPARATED SPACE FOR THEM TO GO TO FOR THE ENTIRETY OF THE PERFORMANCE?
6. PLEASE TELL US WHAT UPCOMING MONTH(S) ARE IDEAL AND LIST ANY DATES DURING THOSE TIMES THAT YOU WILL BE UNAVAILABLE TO HOST A HOUSE CONCERT. (VACATION PLANS, A WEDDING TO ATTEND, RECURRING WEEKLY COMMITMENTS, ETC.) SO WE CAN AVOID SCHEDULING YOUR CONCERT ON THOSE DATES.
7. WHAT IS THE BEST EMAIL ADDRESS AND PHONE NUMBER TO REACH YOU?

We always try to line up a run of at least a few shows along a route as we're traveling, so as far as picking dates it just comes down to the routing making sense for us. As soon as we have a target date or list of potential dates for your house concert we'll let you know what those are and work together to confirm the date for your house concert.

**Thanks again and we can't wait to do a house concert with you!**

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