

# WILD HARBORS

## HOUSE CONCERT GUIDE

Thanks for your interest in hosting a house concert! We hope this answers your questions and puts you at ease – it can be a great low-key night of fellowship and entertainment. Above all, we want it to be easy for you, and for you to enjoy yourself at the concert!

1. **As a host, what I am agreeing to?** You'll provide a space for people to gather where music and listening can happen. You will invite your guests (and decide whether you'd like it to be open to the public or closed to just your personal list). A minimum of 20 guests makes for a special evening; 20 - 60 is a good range for a house concert. Then we fill your space with songs!
2. **What will the show look like?** We are songwriters and play our original music, mostly on guitar and piano. We also do some arrangements of cover songs. We often tell stories about the songs. Based on that, we plan for about a 60-minute concert, which can be slightly shortened or lengthened to fit your needs.
3. **Where can we do this?** Anywhere that has a semi-open space - a living room, basement, up to you! House concerts are meant to feel intimate; don't worry if your space feels small. You may be considering your church or other public space, which works, too.
4. **How will the night work?** The music set will be a focal point for your guests, where conversation stops and a listening space begins (as opposed to background music). A common house concert structure is:
  - o Artist arrives 2 hours before guests for setup
  - o Guests arrive and mingle for 45 minutes
  - o Performance begins
  - o Performance ends, mingling resumes until the end of the event (including merchandise sales)
5. **What about food and drink?** You decide the refreshments guideline; go with what suits your personality and budget. Ideas:
  - o Drinks, provided by you or BYOBeverage
  - o Drinks and a few snacks/desserts, provided or potluck
  - o Full-on party spread, provided or potluck
  - o Anything creative! Hot chocolate bar, fondue, 6-foot nacho table... it's your party. And you'll eat what you want to.
6. **How much does it cost?** We will talk with you about a minimum amount to cover the cost of the performance and travel. This can be covered several ways. Some hosts advertise an open or suggested donation for the artist to which their guests contribute at a designated point in the night. Some advertise a set cover charge and sell tickets. Some cover the fee themselves and just invite people to the concert. All of the above have worked in the past.
7. **Do I need anything special?** Nope. A table for us to set up merchandise (preferably near a power outlet). Some kind of seating for your guests. A power outlet for us to plug in our small sound system. Maybe an extension cord or two.
8. **When would we do this?** Weekends seem like obvious social nights, but the 2 – 3 hour total time frame of a house show works well for a weeknight, too.
9. **How do I get people there?** Once we agree on details, we'll give you some materials and guidelines to get the word out to your guests.

### **I'm in! What now?**

1. Email [contact@wildharbors.com](mailto:contact@wildharbors.com) to tell us you're interested.
2. Fill out the questionnaire we will send to you for more details.
3. Sign and return the provided contract to us. Then we're set!

### **Preparing for the Show:**

- **Make your guest list.** Statistically, about half of your invitees will show up. Take that into consideration when inviting! If you're worried about a small crowd, consider co-hosting with someone who has another social circle to pull from. Generally, the atmosphere of these events works best for an adults-only crowd. If you include whole families, be clear in the expectation that the music time is a listening space where all become quiet and focused. Consider a babysitter in another section of the house for the performance part of the night for kids that would not sit through an hour-long performance.
- **Compose your invitation.** We've got templates for you! If you're making your own:
  - o Date, guests' arrival time (NOT the performance time), location, parking info
  - o Open donations: consider wording like "This will be a donation-based concert. Please come prepared to make a donation to the artist." OR Suggested Donation/Door charge/Tickets: include the amount.
  - o Food provided/requested
  - o Format: Physical and/or phone call invitations work best. An email format like Evite can be a second approach - be ready to follow up through other means, as emails can get missed. Facebook events make good reinforcement and reminders, but many people glaze right over them (don't rely on these RSVPs for an accurate count).
  - o Include our band name, a photo, our website, and social media information for guests to check out our music before the show. Our logo and photos can be accessed through our EPK at [wildharbors.com/epk](http://wildharbors.com/epk). Download these instead of grabbing something from Facebook!
  - o Ask for RSVPs to help yourself plan and increase commitment
- **Send your invites about a month ahead of time.** People are busy; the sooner, the better! If your event is open to the public, send any and all social media/digital invitations and events to our email so we can share them, too.
- **Hype!** Send reminders the week before the show. Follow up with folks individually to increase their responses.

## The Day of the Show:

- Set up your space in a way that works for you. Chairs, cushions, blankets, anything! Angle seating toward the place we'll be playing. Think about how to create an intimate, festive mood with lighting or décor. Some people accomplish this simply with lamps/candles already present in their living space; some choose to do something different. Whatever you choose, do as much as is enjoyable and life-giving to you!
- Situate a table for our merchandise in close proximity to the food and performance space, so that guests will want to check it out before leaving. If possible, designate a friend or family member to help with merch purchases if needed to allow us to talk with your guests and for you to focus on hosting.
- We will arrive about two hours before the guests to load in our equipment, sound check, and set up merchandise.
- As guests arrive, we may mingle, or we may sneak off to a quiet spot to make sure we don't strain our voices before the performance. We're quite social people; we've just learned the hard way that sometimes we need to protect ourselves vocally.
- Walk around to give your guests a 5-minute warning before the performance begins so they can use the bathroom, refill their drink, and find their seat.
- Welcome your guests at the start of the performance with any need-to-know info and a brief introduction of us and house concert etiquette (silence your phones, etc).
- During the show, relax and enjoy with us! Resist the urge to run around taking care of any loose ends and details.
- At the end of the performance, verbally invite your guests to make their financial contribution (if this is the model you've chosen). Show them the vessel for this (a bowl, basket, clear jar, etc) and either model putting money into its set, visible location or pass it around. Your enthusiasm and words have a big impact on this! Also let guests know that we have merchandise available to take home.
- *Food/lodging for us:* neither is required, but both are greatly appreciated (lodging if we're far from home). Food can be as simple as a snack while we arrive and set up and then any food available to guests, or a light meal before or after the show. Water available for our set is hugely helpful; hot water for tea is an appreciated bonus! Let us know your plan ahead of time and we'll plan accordingly.

All that said, again – *enjoy yourself*. We want to bless you as well as your guests through this musical experience, and we want house shows to be something you and your guests want to keep doing. Contact us with any questions or info! We're looking forward to it!

-Jenna Badeker, *Wild Harbors*

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