



The 2018 Dawn Larsen House Concert Host Guide

Hi! First of all, I am so happy that you're interested in hosting a house concert. In my experience as a performer, house concerts have been by far the most fun, rewarding, and memorable concerts I've ever been a part of. I'm excited we have an opportunity to experience this together.

This guide will take you step by step through the method by which I'll organize all the house concerts on our 2018 Summer House Concert Tour. In the process of doing more and more house concerts, I have learned a lot about how to structure the shows to make them the most enjoyable and successful events that they can be.

It is important that you read this guide all the way through
• even if you have done a house concert before •
so that we are all on the same page as we start planning together.

At the end of reading through the guide, if all seems 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. I hope this will inspire you and get you excited for what is guaranteed to be one of the most unforgettable things you do all year.

Ready?!

#1 The "House"

I have staged house concerts in living rooms, backyards, decks, patios, barns, giant houses, condos, wineries, breweries, galleries, and once on a boat. The "house" can be any space that you have access to where your friends can gather, sit and enjoy a concert.

The only *requirements* for the space are that everyone in attendance must be able to gather in the same space, *seated*, for the entirety of the hour long concert, and that there is a power outlet.



Pre and post concert mingling can of course spill into other rooms or areas of the property, but I ask that for concert time, everyone is gathered close and seated together directly in front of where I'll be performing. I have learned that seating around tables for the concert works against the creation of the intimate experience I aim to bring to the audience, so I ask that there be no table seating for the concert.

#2 The Date

I will work with you to pick a date for your house concert. This is fun and exciting, but a bit hectic for me as I work to juggle a summer's worth of dates to make things work out for everyone as I travel around the US in what I hope is a somewhat logical way.

In a perfect world, every day would be a weekend and then I could do every house concert on the weekend. But...Friday and Saturday account for only 28% of the calendar and I play nearly every night. This means your show has a 72% chance of falling on a week night. But don't worry, week night shows have been

some of the most fun! If you have a good group, you'll have a great event. The concert is not a particularly lengthy event so it lends itself well to week nights. The time from guest arrival to until the music is done is typically only 2 hours. I'll talk about this later in this guide.

So if you want a weekend date, I will try my hardest to work that out, but keep in mind others want one too and there are only 2 per week. **Thanks in advance for being flexible!**

At the end of the guide, I'll ask you to provide me with any dates from June and July that you will be *unavailable* to host your house concert so that we can plan our tour.



#3 The Guests

To create the best possible scenario for a great show, I'll ask that a minimum of 20-30 adults in attendance.

There are two reasons I ask for this minimum number. 1) Fewer than 20 people and the concert doesn't feel like the exciting event that it should be.

2) In my donation-based concert model, 20 or more adults donating and purchasing merchandise is what makes the concert a financially viable event for me.

In my experience, making sure there is a minimum of 20 people means inviting many more than 20. Typically **half of those invited tend to actually attend the event.**

Invite double the number of people you would like to have at the concert. If you are aiming for 20, invite 40.

If you aren't sure you'll get 20 adults to come on your own, then **co-hosting** a party is a great idea to increase the overall attendance.

If your space can hold more people and you want to have more, great! I can absolutely do that and **I would be glad to work with you** providing the seating and concert-like setting is still maintained. I have done house concerts with as few as 20 and as many as 110.

adults only please

Because the show has a lot of quiet parts and is really about adult themes, and because it's essential that I'm able to create and maintain an uninterrupted focus on the performance for the whole concert, I ask that there be no kids in attendance during the concert.

That said if it's a rare kid that can sit quietly and listen to music for an uninterrupted hour like a little grown-up, that is very OK. Every child is different, but I have found that age 11 generally seems to be a rough line dividing those able to display good concert etiquette from those who may cause a distraction.

If you're in doubt, best to err on the side of caution. Having someone create a disturbance mid-show can significantly affect the audience's experience, which can in turn significantly affect my income. As much as I love kids, and I do, this is my job. **Thanks for your cooperation and understanding with this!**

If you think you will have some quiet attentive kids in attendance, please remember that it will still require at least 20 adults for this to be a viable event for me.

If you have kids or if you have friends who have kids who want to come but would be unable to come if their kids couldn't attend, I ask that you arrange to have a responsible adult take charge of the kids in a physically and acoustically separate space during the concert.



#4 The Invitation

Invite a BUNCH of your friends! I want you to have fun and be creative in telling your friends why you want them to come to such a fabulous event that you are having! So create your own invitations. However, **important**, below in the blue box is language that I'll need you to include in your invitation:

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

I do not specify a suggested donation for my house concerts for two reasons:

1. In my experience, I do better financially at shows where people can donate what they are moved to in the moment without any previous expectations.
2. More importantly perhaps, if you have a friend that is cash poor but a lover of music, it's important to me that they be able to enjoy the evening without feeling any pressure. While it's true that I supplement my living performing, **sharing my music with people is the most important thing!**

Occasionally, I have hosts who prefer not to ask their guests for donations and prefer instead to pay an upfront guarantee. Either is fine and if this interests you, please let me know and we can discuss the fee-structure for a non-donation show.

other invitation items:

You may want to let your guests know if you will have **drinks and snacks** for them or perhaps you would like to ask everyone to bring a little something to share. This is entirely up to you and not a requirement of hosting a concert.

**Please be sure to ask your guests to RSVP in your
invitations. It will result in a much better turnout rate.**

#5 The Concert

So... if you have invited everyone, RSVPs are in, and you are ready for the show - here is how it goes down:

- I will arrive about 1 1/2 hours before the show starts to say hello to you, set up and do a sound check.
- When the guests arrive at a time you and I have decided together, **we can all hang out and mingle together for about an hour.**
- Then everyone gathers in the performance space and is seated. Then the host, that's you, does a brief introduction. **I perform for about an hour.**
- As soon as I have played the last note of the concert, you get up with a basket, vase, hat, something, to make the **donation announcement.** It should be something like:



“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 directly reflect the artist, and will show her our appreciation for this amazing experience! I’m going to leave this (*vessel*) right here and encourage you to give generously! Thanks again!”

- After that, we can all hang out some more until the guests leave.

a note on the donations...

It's really important to me that I'm able to make it possible that **anyone can host** these concerts. The way I can do that is by doing the concerts on a by-donation basis. And since it is the way that I support my art and pay for touring expenses, future recordings, and merchandise, it's extremely important that I have my hosts' full enthusiasm behind that aspect of the event.

I've discovered that the success of the donations has a direct relationship to the enthusiasm of the speech the host gives at the conclusion of the concert.

I'm a good speech coach and will help you with your speech if you like before I set up. I will also provide you with a cheat sheet if you want! In my experience, guests are really receptive and happy to take part in supporting the unique and memorable event that they've just experienced. It's a typically love fest by the end of the night!

A note on the flow of the event & an example schedule

I have found that the pre-concert mingling time is perfect at an hour. If it's shorter, folks don't have time to get comfortable enough. If it's longer, the focus of the event starts to get fuzzy. The event is fun to be sure, but it's important to remember it isn't a party, it's a **concert**.

Say you want the performance to begin at 7:30pm:

5:00pm - I arrive and set up

6:30pm - guests arrive and we mingle

7:30pm - **concert begins**

8:30pm - concert ends, donations, and more mingling if you like.

That is how I organize a fabulous, unique,
intimate, house concert!

It is going to be awesome!



#6 Let's get started!

If all the parameters I have outlined in this House Concert Host Guide seem good to you, and you'd like to host a house concert in my 2018 Summer House Concert Tour, then I have some questions for you. I need you to answer all the questions so that I can factor your event into my tour schedule. It would be so helpful if you could **please return all your replies as soon as possible.**

You can answer online by going to this link:
<https://goo.gl/forms/MyI8GHto9HvaHpT23>
or

You can print the following page, fill out then email to me at:
dawnlarsenmusic@gmail.com

Over the next few weeks I will be working to compile information, then using it to stitch together a route that works for as many of you as possible. I should have it compiled by May 1, possibly sooner. As soon as possible, I will get you a list of dates. If all looks good, then I will book and confirm with you.

I can't wait to do a concert for you!!!

Dawn



Questions for you...

1. Name _____

2. City and state where you live _____

Street address _____

3. Describe the space you have in mind for the concert (inside, outside, etc.)

4. Donation or guarantee concert?

5. What is the total number of people you think you can get to come?

6. Please list any dates in June and July that you will be UNAVAILABLE to host a house concert.

7. Email _____

8. Phone _____