



HOSTING A HOUSE CONCERT

Thanks for your interest in possibly hosting a house concert for Danny . . . we're excited about the prospect. Since many people are new to the world of house concerts, we've prepared this info sheet which answers all of the most common questions. It's a bit on the long side, but please take a few minutes to read through it, so that we know we're all on the same page. It should provide you with a good clear template for hosting an enjoyable and successful evening of music.

SECTIONS

1. A Little Background
2. Space Consideration?
3. Plugged or Unplugged?
4. The Matter of Money
5. Promoting the Concert
6. Private or Public?
7. Setting the Tone
8. Do Your Thing

1. A LITTLE BACKGROUND

The institution of house concerts first gained popularity in the northeast, as many dedicated listening room concert halls lost economic viability and shut down, leaving a huge void of venues in the intimate and subtle acoustic music realm. House concerts have risen to fill this void, and are now an essential staple of every songwriter's tour schedule. And Danny, being the personable and accessible guy that he is, loves playing them.

House concerts can vary quite a bit from one another . . . from very intimate and unplugged living room affairs with 20 people, to large outdoor deck mini-festivals with 200 people in a large yard. As the name implies, most are hosted in private homes . . . but some larger ones are hosted in community halls, church rooms, and offices. About the only definitive commonality is that they're hosted by individuals, as opposed to being hosted by commercial venues.

2. SPACE CONSIDERATION

Do you have a suitable space for hosting a house concert? Odds are, you do . . . but it's important to do a fair appraisal of your situation and make sure you could fit at least 20 people into your space comfortably, and to make sure that there's adequate seating for everybody. Friends can generally help by bringing their own chairs if asked . . . so it's good to have an idea if that'll be necessary, upfront . . . so you can include that info in invitations and announcements.

If you're concerned that your space might be marginal, just ask us, and we can discuss it.



3. PLUGGED OR UNPLUGGED?

If your space is extremely large, or if you think the crowd size might grow to bigger than about 35-40 people, it might be necessary to consider a small sound system. Danny's music is quiet and subtle, and even a very small boost in the sound can really help carry the poetic nuance all the way to the back of the room, and improve the concert experience tremendously. Sound systems are easy and inexpensive to rent. We can easily walk you through that process if it seems like it might become necessary.

4. THE MATTER OF MONEY

Artistically and musically, the intimate setting of a house concert can create some of the most impactful nights of musical connection. But they're an essential part of Danny's financial ecology, as well.

Danny works exceptionally hard, and his travel and production expenses are high, and it's important that he generate income during his time on the road. One of the great virtues of house concerts, though, is that those costs can be defrayed among a wide group of people in a way that makes it an easily affordable situation for everyone.

Generally speaking, the host requests that each guest contribute a suggested donation at the door. The suggested amount varies depending on the general demographics of the expected audience, and the expected size of that audience. Typically, the suggested amount ranges from between \$15 to \$20 per guest. As a ballpark, we try and make sure Danny walks away with at least \$500 from the door every night . . . though the more the merrier, of course.

It's important that the host make it clear in any invitations and announcements that there will be this expectation of a suggested donation. We understand that it's uncomfortable for some hosts to involve their guests with money matters . . . but that's all the more reason to be clear and upfront about the monetary element. It saves everyone from the awkwardness of having their guests arrive only to be confronted with a donation basket they didn't expect.

We've found that rather than feeling resentful or put upon, guests respond well to the transparent explanation that their contribution is what supports Danny's music and allows him the time to write and rehearse and record and travel and perform, that this is a full time occupation with high expenses . . . and that house concerts are a grassroots way for the community to support the art it deems to be so valuable. Rather than shy away from the issue of money with your guests, embrace the role of leading the trumpet call to support the arts in your community in this small and direct way. And encourage your guests' generosity as a form of activism. Your guests will appreciate their role in the evening that much more.

In this same way, an unattended "tip" jar on the corner of the table gives the impression that the financial element of the evening is of little relevance, rather than championing the cause of supporting an artist . . . not by collecting "a little gas money" but by helping generate "a reasonable living" for an artist.

5. PROMOTING THE CONCERT

Danny can announce the concert to his email list, but . . .

The host's enthusiasm for Danny's music is the single biggest factor in generating excitement for the evening, and getting folks out for the concert. So share your feelings unabashedly with your friends and family, and encourage them to spread the word, in turn. These are truly grassroots affairs.

To make it easy for you to spread your enthusiasm, we've created a presskit page on Danny's website with lots of materials that can be easily cut-and-pasted into invitations, evites, announcements, blog postings, or posters. Including: biographical materials, hi-res photos, rave reviews and press clippings, and pre-designed posters, ready-to-go.

There's also fully downloadable MP3s and live performance video online that you can link to and give your friends a taste of what to expect from Danny's music.

We can help you use these materials to put together enticing announcements and invitations about the show, to generate a buzz of excitement from your friends for the concert. But nothing speaks louder to your friends than your own words.

6. PRIVATE OR PUBLIC?

Generally speaking, house concerts are public events. If agreed upon by the host, the concert date will get listed on Danny's online tour calendar along with a request to email for more information if a guest is interested in attending. None of the host's private information is posted, unless explicit permission is given by the host. Emails come to us, and we forward them to the host, so that:

- 1) The host's personal information is kept private from spam collectors and nareadows
- 2) The host can keep track of an RSVP list, and can cut off attendance if/when a threshold is crossed.

It's then the host's responsibility to forward all the appropriate details and directions to the interested party. And in that way, the host is in control of who is invited into their home. And just for the record, we've never once had a single behavioral issue at any of Danny's house concerts. Not one. It seems that Danny's music makes a pretty good filter for civility.

That said, some hosts prefer that the concert be an entirely private event. If you're interested in such an event, let us know, and we can work out a fair price. We tend to like to do private events at a fixed rate since there's no opportunity for outside attendance to help offset the cost.

7. SETTING THE TONE

It's important to make it clear to your guests that this is a concert, not just a party with music going on in the corner. Danny loves parties (God knows!) . . . but his music is delicate and nuanced and complex . . . and it's important for you, as the host, to set the tone for the evening, and explain that this will be an attentive listening affair, and insist that conversations be taken outside during the concert portion of the evening.

That said, these concerts can serve as wonderful social functions, and many house concert hosts choose to invite their guests to arrive early for wine and dessert and some good mingling . . . and often, hosts choose to make the event a potluck, creating even more of a sense of community from the concert.

It's just that the social element is done within the expectation that when the concert portion of the evening begins, that people will settle down and listen. They'll be happy they did.

8. DO YOUR THING

OK . . . so all this was meant as a template to help you envision how a house concert might look at your place, and to make sure all the important issues were touched upon. But please understand . . . this is your event, and it will take on a reflection of your own personal style. Within the general context of these basic guidelines, Danny is open to all kinds of shows for all kinds of people. In fact, he relishes the variety, and the human connection.

So please tell us what you have in mind. And let us know if you have any questions or concerns generated from what you've just read, and we can discuss it. We can certainly work out a concert that you and your friends will find moving and inspiring, and which Danny will be delighted to have played.

Thanks for reading all this, and giving the idea of a concert your thoughtful consideration. And if past records are any indication, we think you'll really enjoy the whole process . . . as many many first time hosts of Danny's house concerts have gone on to become presenters of regular monthly concerts. An uncanny number. So it's not a hard thing to do, at all . . . and it's a very gratifying experience.

We look forward to planning a concert together.

All the best --

Danny's Management Team . . .

Denis Grabill (booking agent)
Black Oak Artists
denis@blackoakartists.com

Jim Hastings (manager)
Live Once Records
liveoncerecords@gmail.com

