

ROB ELLEN WRITES A BLOG THAT INTRODUCES YOU TO THE CONCEPT OF HOUSE CONCERTS

1 Decide on an artist, might seem obvious but its the biggest factor in a successful House Concert, I always advice the first one choose someone you've been banging on about for years and have already pestered the best part of your friends and family with CD burns myspace links and have talked some into going to see them already, get in touch with your artist, if they arn't here use Myspace, or Facebook, ask them! you'll be surprised how open they will be to the idea, and you find out when next they are available, be clear in your negotiation as to what you can offer, (Read Introduction on the front page for some guide lines) invite them here to the hub www.houseconcert.eu if they aren't here already, and encourage them to post music.

2 Compile your ground rules, IE format of the show 2 x 45 mins, or support + artist, donation policy (and guide lines) house rules IE where people can smoke or otherwise bring their own drink and food, its nice to encourage a cook up in advance bring a pie or flan to share and you put out some nibbles. Tell people about family pets (some folk are allergic) are you children friendly, (are your children friendly?) some housey's have the choice of a kids room where kids hang out together if they don't want to hang with the music and mum and dad. and stay quiet. Usually kids can come if the families are friends already and only on a special invite or arraignment in advance. Cover parking arraignments, too you don't want to have car wars in your street every time you do a housy, always invite or at least inform your neighbours when your having one, if you can get your close neighbours involved all the better, no unwanted complains about noise. Post all this information to your House Concert Hub site, for all to read.

3 Give your self at least a month, to promote, pick a name for your housy something that represents the taste and atmosphere of your house concert, get someone who's good on photo shop to knock up a logo.

Use that logo and name and post it as an event here on the hub, we will then feature that on our front page. Post photos and house hub links of the Artist and some biog info (keep it brief) <http://houseconcerthub.ning.com/events/rachel-harrington-and-zak->

Here is how we do ours, please always add our widget to those. Then post a blog to your site with your event and any special information.

Then when its ready use the invite feature, to invite all your family and friends (you can invite your ning friends to so encouraging friends and family to join this group is good to) Ask them to spread the word to.

4. Ask the artist to do the same with their mailing list, and ask them to stress they need to apply to you for an invitation to your House Concert, most people who would be interested are like minded with you and your artist of choice but at this point you have the opportunity of giving them your ground rules and you'll know from that reply if you want to invite them or not I suspect. Much depends on how big it can grow, if your room is limited and your sure you can fill it, then word of mouth will be enough (a good night can work with as little as 20 people) The Square Wheels one at Steve and Clancy's has had as many as 70 people, so if you have the room, Invite your local Dee Jay,

and music reporter, there will be some-one you listen to or read who loves your artist or your style of music, get them on side, and they will tell still more people to.

5 OK its time for your concert, all these people are coming and the artist is on the way, now what do I do?

Have a good look at your room, usually the TV will be in the best place to put the artist, move that somewhere safe first. Pull your existing furniture back to the walls remove (or use as seats with cushions) Coffee tables and side tables if sturdy enough. Find the garden furniture and picnic seats use the kitchen stools place strategically and see how many seats you have out, put them together in rows with thought on getting in and out but as close as is comfortable, if you have any room left, call on the hard pressed neighbours again, ask them to either bring their own kitchen chairs or lend them, and fill up but leave some crossed legs flop space for bean bags or just floor sitting at the front, the artist will only need to get in and out with their guitar and a space for capos and plects etc, arrange this in advance when they arrive.

6 Have your donation collection prominent at the point of entry. Some housey's collect the money, we have a glass box with a torch shining into it where the money and advised donation is clearly visible, if you advise £7 most people through in a tenner because they are really behind what you are doing.

Introduce your show and thank people for coming, casually lay out the ground rules and policies tell people where everything is, toilets smoking area's ect and how the show will pan out, take a break when the artist can sell cd's and people can charge glass's and have a bite to eat.

7 Sit back in your favourite seat and enjoy your favourite artist, with some of your favourite people.