

Salon Concert Q&A



Why host a Salon Concert?

A Salon Concert is a unique and cool event. You can take a common social gathering to a whole new level. Since most people have never been to a private concert in someone's home, your guests feel they are part of something special. The concert provides a unique focus to the evening with time to socialize. The attendees are made aware there is a suggested modest donation amount to support the performer and it also supports the arts in your community.

At little or no cost to you, you create an unforgettable evening by bringing everyone together to meet the artists and enjoy a show in an intimate setting. The personal touch and warmth of the experience enchant all who attend. Salon Concerts have grown in popularity because it's a win/win situation for everybody.

What do I need to consider?

Do you have enough seating room- You should have at least 30 places to sit in order to host a Salon Concert, the more, the better. The seats can include anything from chairs and couches, to pillows and carpets; Often you can borrow stacking chairs from a local church or school, use patio chairs, or ask friends and neighbors to bring a folding chair or two or cushions for the floor.

My place is too small. Can I still host a Salon Concert?

Most people are surprised at how many people can be seated comfortably in a living room. Using concert-style row seating, with kitchen or dining room chairs, and some furniture rearranging, an average 12 X 18 living room can comfortably seat 35 people. If your home is too small, consider hosting the concert jointly with a friend who has a larger space. In warm weather, you might prefer to hold your concerts outdoors in a backyard or on a deck. (Be mindful of noise, lighting, and bugs, and be sure to arrange an alternative rain site.)

What should I do first?

Confirm the performance date. Will the concert be during the week, or on a weekend? Weekends are usually best, but some concerts have to be held during the week for scheduling reasons. I have been very successful on practically every night of the week.

Who should I invite?

You need to decide if you would like to make seats available for only friends, or the general public. Most people start with their immediate circle of friends and family, and it fills up pretty quick. Otherwise, invite everyone you know who would enjoy this unique experience: neighbors, business associates, community groups.

Do I need special invitations?

Much of the promotion is by word of mouth, but some folks get creative with their computers. I'll provide you with some things you can email, some links etc. Some people even put up posters. This can be downloaded from my site, too, once we have agreed on a date for the concert.

Make sure you have time to promote the concert. The more people that show up for the concert, the more successful the event will be. Give yourself one month to contact friends, neighbors, put up posters, etc.

If you mail your invitations, send your mailing out about three weeks in advance.

Then follow up in the next weeks before the event. If you mail too early, people will forget, too late, and they have other plans. Getting the invitation into the homes of your audience with enough time to plan to attend is the most important aspect of the advertising. Be sure to explain the suggested donation for the artists and ask for RSVP.

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Directions to your Salon Concert: Be sure to give clear directions to both your guest and the performers well in advance. It is a good idea to also provide a phone number. If you are promoting the event to the general public, do not disclose the exact location of your event until people have made sincere inquiry or reservations.

Reserving seats / donation payments:

How can I charge people to come into my home?

My earnings are based on the number of people in attendance. Typical attendance at a Salon Concert is 25 – 60 or more people. Tickets usually range from \$25-\$40, and each guest donates for a ticket. You could make paper tickets but usually it's just a list/roster of names. The hosts are guests of the performer and they do not pay of course.

If you are concerned about asking people to pay, let them know that all proceeds from ticket sales go to the artist. To cover any out-of-pocket costs of promoting the shows, some hosts make an arrangement with the performers that allow them to keep a small percentage of the donations for such expenses, as long as they are predetermined.

You can let your invitees know this is a way for you and your guests to directly support a touring performer, and to have a memorable and unique evening at a reasonable price, a concert with a performer up close and personal.

Hosts will simply reserve seats for guests if they confirm by email or phone. Some hosts may want to collect donations prior to the show. This helps to prevent the problem of overcrowding or turning people away at the door, only to find out later that there are several no shows. Whatever you decide to do, make your ticket information clear to guests so that they can reserve seats and/or pay their tickets in advance. Keep a running list of who has pre-paid and/or reserved seats, and who will pay on arrival. Your goal is to pre- sell every seat for the concert.

Some hosts also keep a big jar at the entry table labeled “Donations For Artists” Or, “Suggested Donation: \$25.00 – All proceeds go to the performers”

By hosting a private concert at your home, you are simply providing a venue for the performance. For a special occasion or celebration in your life, some hosts invite guests and pay for the performance themselves.

At the event you may be busy greeting guests, so have a friend collect donations from those who haven't paid and check them off a list. You might want to have a small cash purse handy to provide change for guests.

How do I set up the space? Is there a need for sound or lighting?

I need an area that will comfortably contain me on a stool, with a few feet around me for my gear. I love to go “all acoustic” but sometimes a little sound reinforcement is needed, depending on the size of crowd and the room we are in. For lighting, the groovier the better. A couple floor lamps, table lamp...candles are a nice touch, too.

I will also need a table to display my CDs. This serves best in the entryway and can be also used for guest check in. I need a place to change clothes, and/or store luggage, instruments, cases and other belongings.

How long is a Salon Concert?

My performance will generally last an hour and a half to two hours.

What time do we start?

This can be tailored to each individual situation. Weekend evening concerts usually start at 8:00 PM, weeknights 7:00 or 7:30 PM. Weekend matinees are also an option. I will need to arrive between 1-2 hours before the concert to set up, prepare, tune, dress, warm up, etc.

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Shall I provide refreshments?

Coffee or tea with cake or cookies is very common. More elaborate refreshments are not expected or required, and are at your discretion. Some hosts ask their guests to bring a dish or dessert to add to the festivities.

Simple beverages such as juice or water will always suffice.

Some folks offer wine to guests. Many BYOB. Nobody should get hammered, though. Always an ugly sight.

Do I need to introduce the show?

We can work something out. This is not the Hollywood Bowl, things are pretty low key. You might mention I have CDs for sale and am happy to autograph stuff. This is also an opportunity to remind those with cell phones to silence the ringers.

What about a workshop?

Talk to me about my lyric workshop.

Is there a Cancellation Policy?

Before I agree to a Salon Concert date, you will have pretty much guaranteed the audience attendance. Besides Acts of God, there are only a few good reasons for a cancellation. Health crises, calamity... these things are tragic and understandable. Forgetting to mention the concert date to everyone you'd intended to is not. You should know 2 months out that things will be healthy.

For my part, I'll be there if I say I'll be there. I've only missed one concert date in 25 years.