
Music City Pickers LIVE! House Concert FAQ's

Where do I have my show?

It really depends on the type of crowd you're going to invite. Of course, inside your house is probably the most common place. It's super easy to clear out a space in the living room and place chairs around the performers. Having the show inside eliminates any chance of weather issues. However, renting a small stage for MCP LIVE! to set up and have your guests sitting around the pool is pretty awesome! Just make sure you have a backup plan to bring the party inside or under a tent in case of rain.



Remember, if you decide to do your show outside, a tent or canopy is required to cover the performers and their equipment. Also think about lighting the performers for outdoor evening concerts. You can purchase flood lights from a hardware store or rent lights from a local lighting company.

Tidbit: Ask your guests to bring lawn chairs or ask your neighbors if you can borrow some chairs to seat all your guests (especially barstools — which make a great back row). If need be, you may need to rent seating, tables, beverage services, etc. If you're in the Nashville area we would highly recommend Southern Events for any kind of party rentals.
www.southerneventsonline.com

Some hosts, who aren't satisfied with their space, recruit like-minded friends to co-host the shows in their homes. It can be terrific to work with a close friend as a partner in these events.

Most people underestimate the number of guests they can comfortably fit in their living room. To estimate your capacity, clear the middle of the room (coffee table, etc.) and move the couches to the side or against a wall, if possible. Then, start arranging available chairs (dining room, kitchen, breakfast nook, office chairs) to get an idea of the number of people your space could hold. Once you've set up a few rows, it's easy to imagine how the rest of it would fall into place.
**Remember to allow at least a 10' x 6' area for the performers. Also make sure you have 3 chairs or stools of the same height for them to sit on.*

Should I serve food and beverages?

If you're having an outdoor BBQ, then you've answered your own question. If you're having the concert inside your house, then consider the expense and cost to feed all of your guests. Having tables, chairs, plates, garbage bins, plastic or flatware all have to be taken into account. Consider a potluck where guests bring their own food and beverages!

Alcohol

While some hosts would suggest that alcohol is a bad idea, many hosts manage it just fine. It takes a little extra care, food, and attention, and you should only do it if your friends tend to be the responsible type. If you have alcohol at your events, be aware that it may increase your liability risks, just as it would with any party/event in your home. Selling alcohol without a permit is against the law. Many hosts are comfortable with their guests bringing a bottle of wine, but you'll need to do what feels right for you. Please remind all of your guests to drink responsibly.



When should I have my MCP LIVE!

House Concert?

We recommend at least six weeks to promote your concert. Many hosts book their schedules three to twelve months in advance. For most people, hosting a weekend show (Fridays or Saturdays are most popular) makes it easier to draw a larger crowd. Be aware of local events and celebrations in your area that could interfere with the audience turnout of your event. Sporting events (especially playoffs) can wreak havoc on concert attendance.

What if I want to sell tickets? We use [eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com) for our shows at The Little Brick Theatre in Franklin, TN. It's easy to sell tickets online with their service and it integrates with Facebook and Twitter. There are many options to choose from regarding ticketing.

Tickets & Cover Charge vs Suggested Donation

Anything other than a donation makes your concert a commercial activity, which is often forbidden in a residential area. If you have doubts, you may want to check with your homeowners association. The IRS may also have some issues with this, especially if the money passes through the hands of the homeowner. For shows attended by adults, we've found that a suggested donation of \$10-20 is usually better than passing the hat.

Who do I invite?

One of the first steps to take is to compile a list of as many invitees as possible. Attendance, for many hosts, is the most challenging part of hosting house concerts. But with a little planning, your concert can be a success! A full room adds so much to the feeling of a concert — whether that number is 10 or 1500. Performers really sense and feed off the energy in a room when they play. Empty seats, however, suck the energy out of any event. Whatever the size of your space, do your best to avoid empty seats, even if you have to hide some chairs! There's a common expression in music — "the crowd makes the show," and you'll see it happen first-hand when you host your events.

If you think purely in terms of people you see consistently and know personally, you will seriously limit your resources. List everyone you could invite. Don't neglect to invite someone simply because you don't think they'll be into it. Time and time again the biggest compliments come from people who thought a house concert wasn't their kind of thing, who then were blown

away by the quality and fun-factor of the show. Your invitations will provide information and links to the artist's music, and let people decide for themselves if they should come.

Most house concert presenters use their email accounts to create a list from their address books, and use our free e-flyers to promote their events. However, in addition to your current email program, there are many websites and programs (like Evite or Punchbowl) that can also help you do this.

Create a list of everyone you know within an hour's drive of your home. List your friends, neighbors, co-workers, club members, parents of your kid's friends, and soccer-moms. Get in the habit of adding people you meet, or have overlooked in your invite list. You'll be amazed at how many people you meet or bump into each day that escaped your mind when you made the initial list. "I'm hosting a music event soon, and I'd like to invite you, can I get your email address?"

How do I prepare for the concert?

Use a notepad, spreadsheet, or program to keep track of RSVPs. Be aware that 10- 20 percent of the people who say they will attend will not show up on the day of the show.

If you are uneasy about over-booking (accepting more RSVPs than you can seat), start a waiting list and promise to contact those folks when seats open up. You'll send a reminder email 2-3 days before the show to confirm everyone.

Two to Four Weeks Before the Show

You'll want to check in with the artist, and take care of last minute details. What time should they arrive? Give them a reasonable time window of at least a few hours.

**Remember they will need at least 1 hour to set up and soundcheck. The last thing you want is for MCP LIVE! to be checking their sound system while you're guests are arriving.*

Additional Details:

- Does everyone have accurate directions to your place?

Two or Three Days Before the Show

Send out the reminders. Let your RSVP'd guests know that they are expected, and remind them how special this event will be. Tell them how much it means to you and the artist that they will be there. If they have doubts about attending, now is the time for them to tell you so that you can try to find someone else to fill their seat.

Day of Show

Prepare the rooms — for the artist and for the show.

Artists really enjoy having a secluded place to warm-up and relax before the show. If you don't have a dedicated guest bedroom for them, try to find a space (basement, office, etc.) where they can have some uninterrupted time alone for an hour or so. It really helps artists perform at their best if they don't have to be constantly in "mingle-mode" for the entire visit.



Artists will appreciate a few bottles of water, and an available light snack could hold them over. Tea and coffee are good to have on hand as well.

If you are providing food and beverages for your guests, you'll want to have that set up ahead of time. Make it easy for people to serve themselves. Mind the alcohol though, if it's part of your event. This responsibility is a great thing to hand off to a trusted volunteer.

Setting up the Performance Room

- Leave enough room for the performers (3 microphones and stands, 3 chairs or stools and the L1 Bose Speaker stand).
- Make sure there are aisles for guests
- Use the shortest chairs down front, taller chairs and barstools in the back. • Try to face all chairs toward the performer.
- Try to aim some light toward the performer, and have the rest of the room a bit darker. An adjustable desk-lamp on the mantle, or a clamp-on light from Home Depot can do wonders.

Showtime!

Set the right expectations with the first email you send out. Reinforce the house concert message with every conversation and every invitation. It's a CONCERT. Emphasize the word. Don't let anyone get the impression that it's a party with music.

Please contact us with any questions you may have.

Contact Us

Music City Pickers LIVE!

live@musiccitypickers.com

888-407-1019

www.musiccitypickerslive.com

