



# THE 2016/2017 ADAM SMALE HOUSE CONCERT GUIDE

Well, hello! First of all, I am happy that you're interested in hosting a house concert. In my experience as a performer, intimate settings – by far – are the most fun, rewarding, and memorable concerts I've done. I'm excited we have an opportunity to experience this together.

**This guide will take you step-by-step** through the method by which we'll organize a house concert together. This guide will explain how to structure these shows and to make them the most enjoyable and successful as can be.

***It's important you read this all the way through – even if you've hosted a house concert before – so that we're all on the same page as we start planning together.***

At the end of reading through the guide, if all the parameters seem 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 memorable things you do all year.

Ready?

## #1: The “House”

House Concerts can be in living rooms, backyards, and on back patios; in small houses, big houses, condos, and apartments; at a winery, in a photography studio, and at a local theater, or even an old barn. The point is that **the “house” can be any space you have access to where your friends can gather, sit, and enjoy a concert.**

The only requirement for the space is that everyone in attendance must be able to gather in the same space, seated, for the entirety of the hour or so long concert.

Pre and post concert mingling can of course spill into other rooms or areas of the property, but we ask that for concert time, everyone is seated, together, directly in front of where I'll be set up to perform. It's fine if there aren't enough chairs for everybody – carpet seating, or pillows/cushions in a packed living room, blankets on the lawn in the backyard work great as extra seating options, along with lawn chairs of course. People can be encouraged to bring their own of folding chairs even.



If the concert is at night, and dark enough, putting up lights or candles creatively placed, really helps add to the atmosphere of being something special.

## #2: The Date

We will work with you to pick a date for your house concert. This is fun and exciting, and could be a bit hectic on our end, as I could be juggling several performances, whether they are house concerts or other conventional performance venues. This can be tricky to make things work for everyone as we move in a logical way around the country, state, or territory, playing concerts almost every day of the week (hopefully). This means that in reality your concert will have about a 71% chance of falling on a “school night.”

But don't despair! While weekend shows can certainly be a lot of fun, the bottom line is that if you have a good group of people, you can't stop the fun from happening, no matter what day of the week. And remember, this is not a particularly lengthy event. From when guests arrive until when the music is done is roughly about two hours, give or take. More on this later. This could be the making of a perfect event for a unique weekday evening get-together. So, if you want a weekend date, we will certainly try to make that work – but keep in mind that much of our club dates fall on weekends as well.

So I thank you in advance for being flexible.

*At the end of this guide, one of the questions I'll have for you is to provide me with any dates you will be unavailable to host your house concert. So if you have a vacation planned, or a wedding to attend, or a regular weekly event that make you unavailable, I'll want to know each of those things to help me plan my tour.*



### #3: The Guests

To create the best possible scenario for a successful show, **I ask that you have a minimum of 15 adults in attendance, with 20 being even better.** There are two reasons we ask you have this minimum number of people at the show:

- 1) Much fewer than 20 people and the concert doesn't feel like the **exciting event** it should be, and;
- 2) In our donation-based concert model, 20 or more adults contributing to donations and purchasing merchandise is what starts making it a **financially viable** night for us. Making sure there is a minimum number of people there usually means that the host will need to invite a good deal more than they wish to attend.

Be prepared that roughly half of those invited tend to actually come to the event.



So, if you're aiming for 20, invite 40; if you're aiming for 30, invite 60; and so on. If you aren't sure you will be able to get 20 adults to come on your own, you might decide to "co-host" the show with a friend (or neighbor) who will also have a batch of people to invite, and increase your overall attendance. If your space can hold more people and you want to have more, then great. The more the merrier.

If you have an idea for something bigger, we can absolutely do it, and we're eager to hear what you have in mind. I've played to 30, 000 people before. But let's not get too far ahead of ourselves. Besides, small and intimate is WAY more fun.

### **Adults only, please...**

Because some songs have quiet parts, and because it's essential that we're able to create and maintain an uninterrupted focus on the performance for the whole concert, having young kids in attendance isn't a good idea. That said, if it's that rare kid who can sit silently and listen to music for an uninterrupted hour, like a little grown-up, that's okay. Every child is different, but the age of 10+ generally seems to be a good concert etiquette age without getting distracted. If you're in doubt, it's best to err on the side of caution. Having someone create a disturbance mid-show can significantly affect the band, and the audience's experience, which can in turn significantly affect my income. And I love kids! Really, I do!!



Also, if you think you'll have some sitting quietly-and-listening kids in attendance, a minimum number of 20 adults are what will make for a viable event. So make sure to count the kiddos as "extras" when putting together your guest list.

If you have kids, or if you have friends who want to come but who would be unable to come if their small kids couldn't come along, we ask that you arrange to have a responsible adult take charge of the kids during the concert. This could be a babysitter or a parent willing to volunteer for the duty, and they should take the kids to another room in the house – a place that is somewhat sonically isolated from the performance space – and watch them for the concert portion of the event (apprx. one hour). And of course the kids are more than welcome to hang out with everyone before and after the performance!

## **#4: The Invitation**

Invite a bunch of your friends, and friends of friends! **I will provide you with some precise language that we'll need you to include in your invitations;** but besides that, we want you to have fun telling your friends why you want them to come to the awesome event you're hosting.

**"This is a donation-based concert"**

The language I will send you to use in the invitations will describe how the event will be a donation-based concert, and that guests should come prepared to make a donation to the artist at the conclusion of the show. We will not specify a suggested donation amount for our house concert. The reasons for this are two-fold:

- 1) The theory is we would do better financially at shows where people can donate what they are moved to in the moment, without any previous expectations.
- 2) Perhaps more importantly, if you have a friend who is cash-poor but a lover of music, it's important to us that they be able to enjoy the evening without feeling any pressure. While it is true that this is how we make our living, sharing music with people and having me play in front of friendly faces is the most important thing. And I thank you for helping me do just that.

Occasionally we have hosts who prefer not to ask their guests for donations and prefer instead to pay an up-front guarantee for the show. Either way is fine. If this approach interests you, please let us know, and we'll discuss the fee structure for scheduling a non-donation show.

### Other Invitation Items

You may want to let your guests know you'll have drinks and snacks for them if that will be the case, or perhaps you'd like to ask everyone to bring their own "refreshing beverage." This is entirely up to you, and is not a requirement for hosting a house concert.

Please be sure to ask your guests to RSVP in your invitations by a certain date. There is a much better turnout rate as opposed to a "come by if you can" approach.

## #5: The Concert

So you've invited everyone, RSVPs are in, and you're ready for the show – here's how it goes down!

We will arrive about one hour before guests are scheduled to start arriving, in order to set up our equipment, do a quick soundcheck, then relax a bit.



Guests arrive at the time you and I have decided together that the event will begin. This is usually in the evening – but it could also be the afternoon if it's a weekend. As guests arrive, **we all hang out and mingle for about a half an hour, or so.**

Then after the pre-concert hanging out, everyone gathers in the performance space, people find their seats, the host gives a brief introduction, and then **I perform for about an hour.**



As soon as the concert is finished, the host(s) gets up front next to me with a vase, basket, box, or some kind of donation gathering implement, and makes **the donation announcement.** It should go something roughly like this:

“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 all directly benefit our artist, and will show him our appreciation for this amazing experience Adam and his group has brought us tonight. I’m going to leave this vessel right here and encourage you to give generously. Adam also has CDs and t-shirts available. Thanks again!”

After that, we all hang out some more until the guests start heading home.

## ***A Note on the Donations...***

**The donation announcement is very important.** It's really imperative that I am able to make it so these concerts are possible for anyone to host, and the way we do that is by doing the shows on a donation basis. But since the donations are how we earn our living and pay our expenses while we're on the road, it's obviously super important that we have our host's full enthusiasm behind that aspect of the event.

**The success of the donations has a direct relationship to the enthusiasm of the speech the host gives at the conclusion of the concert.** Guests are always really receptive and super happy to be a part of supporting the unique and memorable event they've just experienced. It's kind of a big love-fest by the end of the night.

## ***A note on the flow of the event, and an example schedule...***

The pre-show meet and greet is vital to a successful House Concert. It's really important that the pre-show mingling time is right about 30min. If it's shorter than that then people don't have enough time to get comfortable; and if it's longer than 30-40min, then the focus of the event starts to get fuzzy.

It's one of the most fun nights of the year to be sure, but it's important to remember that fundamentally this isn't a party; it is a concert. Let's say you want the performance to start at 7:30pm. In that example, here's how the schedule would go:

6:00 – we arrive and do our setup

7:00 – guests arrive

**7:30-7:45 – concert begins**

8:30-8:45sh – concert ends

And then of course we can all hang out afterward for as long as you'd like

**And that's how we organize an awesome house concert!**

## **Questions for You**

Here is the list of questions we'll need for you to reply to asap in order to factor your house into the routing for a Tour that includes House Concerts.

- 1) In what city and state/province do you live?
- 2) What is the space you have in mind for the concert? (e.g., inside your house, an outdoor space, etc.)
- 3) Can you provide us a meal and a place to stay? (This also helps make the tour as viable as possible)
- 4) Do you want to host a donation-based concert as described above, or do you want information about paying a guarantee for the show instead?
- 5 a) Do you think you'll be able to get a minimum of 20-30 adults to come?  
b) What is the total number of people you might expect to come?



6) If there will be children at the event, will you be able to provide for a separate, sonically isolated space for them to go to for the entirety of the performance?

7) Please list any dates that you will be UNAVAILABLE to host a house concert. (Vacation plans, a wedding to attend, recurring weekly commitments, etc. – we need to know about all of these dates so we can avoid scheduling your concert on them.)

8) What is the best email address and phone number at which to reach you efficiently?

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As soon as we have a date or a list of possible dates selected for your house concert, we'll get back in touch to let you know what those are. If the date looks good to you, then we'll book and confirm your house concert! Very exciting.

House concerts are amazing and magical experiences that make fantastic memories and lasting friendships. **I can't wait to do a house concert with you.**

- Adam

