



The Peter Woolston Hope On My Horizon Tour HOUSE CONCERT HOST GUIDE

Hi! First up I'm so excited that you're interested in hosting a House Concert :D As a performer my experience of house concerts has been so much fun - they're some of the most rewarding and memorable gigs I've ever done so I'm so excited that we've got this opportunity to experience this together.

This guide will help take you step-by-step through the method other artists and I've used for successful house concerts - there's lots that's been learned about house concerts that you can use to structure the show to make it as enjoyable and successful as possible.

It's important that you read this guide through all the way
- even if you have run a house concert before -
this will help us be on the same page as we start planning together.

Once you've read this there'll just be a short list of questions at the end of this guide to help us figure out the date for your house concert. I know this will inspire you and together we'll get excited for what is guaranteed to be one of the most unforgettable things you and your friends will do all year.

Ready?



#1: The "House"

I've played in living rooms, yards, kitchens; in small houses, and big houses; in cafes, at churches, in prisons... the point is **the "house" can be any area you can get** where your friends can get together, sit and enjoy a concert. (The prison is the exception to that rule :p). Pre and post concert we will be mingling and likely spilling into other rooms or other areas of a property, it's just that at concert time, **everyone gathering close together in a seated space**, directly in front of where I'm performing works best.

We just need a space where everyone who's there can be 'together' in the same space, seated, for the whole hour-long concert.

Sitting around tables ruins the intimate experience that I'm aiming to bring to the audience so I ask that there's **no table seating** for the performance. It's OK if there's not enough chairs for everyone - sitting on the carpet in a packed living room or on a blanket on the lawn work great as extra seating options. If you need to you can ask guests to bring folding chairs and I also have a bunch we can use if you're local - a comfortable crowd is an attentive crowd!

#2: The Date

I'll work with you to pick a date for your house concert. This is fun and exciting.... and a little bit hectic on my end as I'm normally juggling a bunch of different locations and schedules and logistics to arrange into a logical way for the tour. In a perfect world every day would be in the weekend (duh) and so every house concert would be in the weekend ... but alas that's not the real world. But if you look at a calendar it shows us that Friday and Saturday are only 28% of the week and that gives us lots of other possible concert dates :D - **there's a 72% possibility that your concert will fall on a "school night"** but don't despair! While a show in the weekend can be lots of fun week night shows can be even better :D The bottom line is when you've got a great group of friends together you can't stop the fun from happening no matter what day of the week it is!



A house concert is not a particularly long and tedious thing; the time from when your guests show up until the music is done is typically only 2 hours which makes it a

perfectly unique weekday get-together. If you want a weekend date I will certainly try to make that work but keep in mind that others also want weekends and I've only got 2 of those each week! **Thanks in advance for being understanding about that :D**

At the end of this guide one of the questions I'll have for you is for you provide me with any dates that you WON'T be available to host your house concert.

So if you have a vacation planned, a wedding to attend, a regular weekly event that means you're not available I'll want to know so that I know to plan around that for you.



#3: The Guests

To get the best possible enjoyable outcome for you and your show we really need a **minimum of 20-30 adults** to show up.

There's 2 reasons we need this minimum: 1) Fewer than 20 people and the concert doesn't feel like the **exciting event** it really is; and 2) in the donation-based concert model, 20 or more adults contributing to donations and purchasing merchandise is what makes it **financially viable** for me as a musician.

In my experience making sure there's a minimum of 20 people usually means that you'll need to invite a bunch more than 20 people. Typically it seems to be that about **half the number of people you invite actually show up** on the night.

So don't be timid just invite double the number of people you want to come to the concert. If you're wanting 20 then invite 40 and so on.

If you aren't sure you'll get 20 adults to come on your own then "co-host" the show with a friend who also knows a bunch of people to invite and this will increase your attendance overall. If your 'space' can hold more people and you want more to come then go for it - the more the merrier! If you've got the idea of running something bigger then I can absolutely handle it - I'm **eager to hear what you've got in mind :D**

Adults only please

As the show has quiet parts, and because its essential that I create and maintain an uninterrupted focus on the performance for the whole concert I **ask that there be no kids in attendance during the concert**. I know though, that there's that rare kid who can sit silently and listen to music for an uninterrupted hour like a little grown-up (I was one) and that's okay. Every child is unique but I've found that around 10 years of age is a

general age where a child can display good concert etiquette versus causing a distraction. If you're in doubt it's best to err on the side of being cautious. Having someone causing a disturbance in the show significantly affects the experience of the whole audience, which can affect my income. As much as I love kids (so much!) I do need to make money from the gigs. **Thanks for understanding and working with me on this!**

If friends want to come who have small kids but this means they couldn't come then I'd ask that you arrange for a responsible adult to take charge of the kids in a physically and acoustically separate space during the concert.

It could be a babysitter or a parent willing to volunteer, and they need to take the kids to another room in the house - *a place that is sonically isolated from the performance space* - and be kept there for the entirety of the concert section of the evening. This way those friends can come which works great and it also means the kids can hang out with everyone before and after the performance as a bonus! If you think you'll have some children sitting quietly in the audience I've still found that a minimum of **20 adults** is what makes it a viable event so please make sure the kids are 'extras' when putting together your guest list.

"Adults only please" always extends to a dog or cat. Are your guests allergic to cats? "My dog will just chill out so that's OK right?" Unfortunately many people are allergic to our feline friends so if you've got a kitty just let me know ahead of time. If you've a proud pooch owner (even of a 'purse dog') please arrange to have it hang at a friends place for the evening or keep it in another separate room for the show. Even the best dogs don't do concerts well, as animals can be really distracting to the audience and me.



#4: The Invitation

This is the fun part - invite a whole bunch of your friends! I'll **provide you with some precise language that I need you to include in your invitation**, but besides that, I want you to have a bunch of fun telling your friends why you want them to come to this awesome event you're hosting :D

This is a donation-based concert.

The words you'll send out for the invitation will read something like this:

**This will be a donation-based concert.
Please come prepared to make a donation to the artist at the conclusion of the show.**

I don't want a suggested donation amount set for house concerts for a couple of reasons:

1) Past experience proves that shows work out better when people can donate what they are moved to donate based on what they've personally gotten from the concert experience, without being coerced or given any preset expectations.

2) But what's probably more important is that if any of your friends are cash-strapped but love music it's important to me that they are able to come and enjoy the evening with you and me without being pressured to have a set amount of cash to put in. While it is true that house concerts need to make money, **sharing music with people is actually the most important thing to me.**

Occasionally hosts don't want to ask their guests for donations for the night at all and want to pay an up-front guarantee for the show instead. I can work either way - I really just need to match whichever approach suits you. If you want a non-donation show just let me know and we can discuss the fee structure.

Other invitation elements

You may want to have some awesome snacks and drink for your guests, or maybe you want to ask people to bring along a little something that they can share with everyone - either way works fine for me and it's entirely up to you. It's not a requirement for hosting a house concert so don't feel any obligation or expectation - do what suits you and your crowd.

EXAMPLE INVITE:

Please feel free to personalise your invitations to how you'd like it but ensure that you include the following word-for-word sentence in whatever you send out: *"This is a donation-based concert; please come prepared to make a donation to the artist after the show."*

If you want a simple "cut and paste" approach here's what I suggest using:

"You are invited to a house concert by New Zealand based recording artist Peter Woolston at our home on _[DATE]_, as part of Peter's New Zealand and US house concert tour promoting the release of his new CD 'Hope On My Horizon'. The event takes place at our home at _[ADDRESS]_. Please arrive at _[START TIME usually 7pm]_ as we will start hanging out then, and the concert begins promptly at _[CONCERT TIME usually 8pm]_. *[Do you want people to bring anything else? Chairs, drinks etc. - tell them here. Do you need to tell them anything about parking? Let them know :D]*

Peter's music is powerful and deeply authentic, delivered with an unmistakable rock voice that brings to mind Bono and Jon Foreman. His music has been featured on national television, covered by nationwide newspapers and appeared on international radio and blogs across the world. Learn more about Peter at his website

<http://www.peterwoolston.com>. If you would like to attend, and I think you would, please respond ASAP and let me know how many people are in your party! This is a house show, so there is limited space - of course we want to make sure you are counted before it fills up. This is a donation-based house concert; please come prepared to make a donation to the artist after the show. Sincerely, *[Your Name]*".

Please make sure you ask your guests to RSVP.

I've discovered that when someone is asked to RSVP there is a much better turnout rate as opposed to a "come if you can make it" approach.



#5: The Concert

Everyone's invited, the RSVP's have come in and you're ready for a fantastic show ... here's how it goes down!

- I will arrive one hour before your guests are scheduled to show up so that I can setup my equipment (I have a sound system I'll bring - my music isn't ear-bleeding loud, just loud enough for people to hear, understand and enjoy), and then soundcheck and make sure I've got what I need ready so I'm not messing about with things while the guests are there.

- Your guests will arrive at the time you and I have together decided the night will begin. The concert is usually an evening event but it could also be an afternoon if it's the weekend. While your guests arrive **we'll all hang out together for around an hour.**

- After hanging out for about an hour pre-concert we'll get everyone to gather in the performance space, find their seats and the host (that's you!) gives a brief introduction and then **I perform for an hour at the most.**

- As soon as I play the last note of the last song you jump up right in front of me with a vase or jug of some kind to make the **donation announcement**. It should be something like this example:

"Thanks for all coming tonight. I hope you enjoyed this as much as I have. I want to remind you that this is a donation-based concert. Your donations tonight will directly benefit our artist, and will show him our appreciation for this amazing experience he's brought us tonight! I'm going to leave this vessel right here and ask that you give generously. Thanks again!"

- After that we all hang out a bunch more until the guests start heading home.

A note about the donations

It's very important to me that I'm able to do **these concerts for anyone to host**, and the way I can achieve that is by doing the shows on a donation basis. But since the donations are how I earn income as a musician and pay the expenses of touring it's obviously super important that I have our host's full enthusiasm behind that part of the event.

I can coach you on your donation speech and will make a point of going over this with you while I'm setting up on the day of the concert. I'll even give you a little cheat sheet of things to remember to say in case it makes you nervous and you lose track of things in the moment.

I've discovered that the success of any donations is in direct relationship to the enthusiasm of the speech from the host at the conclusion of the concert.

I've also discovered that guests are always very open and super happy to be part of supporting such a unique and memorable event that they've just experienced. I know it sounds weird but it's sort of a big love-fest by the end of the night :p

Just a thought on the event and an example schedule

I've found it's **very important that the pre-show hangout mingling time is really kept to about an hour**. If it's shorter than 1 hour people really don't have enough time to relax and get comfortable, but if it's longer than an hour people start to lose focus of the event being a concert and it gets a little fuzzy for them.

I know it's gonna be one of the most fun nights of the year to be sure but it's important to remember that this isn't a party - it's a concert.

So let's say you'd like the performance to start at 7.30PM. In this example here's how we'd lay out the schedule:

5.30pm I arrive and setup

6.30pm guests arrive

7.30pm concert starts

8.30pm concert ends

And then we all hang out together for as long as people want to stay and you're happy to have them there!

... and that's how we organise a House Concert.



Everything that we've covered in these details - from the invitations, to setting up, to the schedule and flow - all serve the single most important goal I have for this event:

To create along with you, an amazing unique and special night - an intimate concert experience, where incredible memories and meaningful connections with "your people" are made through music.

It's going to be **AWESOME!**

Questions for you

If everything I've run through in this House Concert Host Guide seems good to you and you're keen to host a house concert on my 'Hope On My Horizon Tour', then just answer this list of questions that follow. I need you to reply to every question ASAP so I can factor in your place for the organisation of the 2015 Hope On My Horizon Tour. It would be helpful if you can **return your replies within 7 days of getting this guide, but the sooner the better.** ☺ Please answer ALL these questions completely and email your answers to

contact@peterwoolston.com

Thanks in advance!

- 1) What city and state do you live in?
- 2) What is the space you have in mind for the concert? (e.g. inside your house, somewhere outside, etc.) . It would be awesome if you took some photo's you're your smartphone and sent them to me after the email (or with it if you're a geek).
- 3) Do you want to host a donation-based concert as described or do you want information about paying a guarantee for the show instead?
- 4)
 - 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?
- 5)
 - a) Do you anticipate that there will be children at the event?
 - b) If yes, will you be providing a separate, supervised, sonically isolated space for the children to go for the entirety of the performance?
- 6) Please list any dates in February, March, April and May that you will be unavailable to host a house concert. (Vacations, a wedding to attend, recurring weekly commitments, etc.). I need to know all about these dates so I can avoid scheduling your concert on them.
- 7) What is the best email address and phone number to reach you efficiently at?

We'll compile this information from all of the hosts all over, and then using everyone's availability we'll stitch together a timetable that works if you're prompt with your communication. As soon as we have a date or a range of possible dates selected for your house concert I'll get back in touch to let you know what those are. If the date looks good to you too then we'll book and confirm your house concert!!!!!! VERY exciting :D For some additional resources to prepare for your House Concert please visit <http://peterwoolston.com/house-concert-resources/>

I can't wait to do a House Concert with you: D
- Peter