

Kenneth Wilson, *The Poetical Cellist*
“Highway Cello”
biking and busking from Hadrian’s Wall to Rome

How to Host a House Concert

It’s easy, and it’s fun.

What is a House Concert? It’s an invitation-only concert in your home, where your guests – the audience – make donations to pay the artist. It’s as simple as that.

What do I have to do? You provide the space, and you invite the audience. That’s all.

To make it a real success you should:

- make sure the people you’ve invited RSVP; you need commitments, not vague promises,
- tell them what to expect: it’s a concert, not a party,
- be clear there’s a suggested donation, eg £10, and this money pays *The Poetical Cellist*, not you,
- decide whether there will be food and/or drink; and if there is, whether it’s “bring your own” or not,
- be definite about the start time, and tell people roughly how long it will last (usually two sets of 30-40 minutes with a break in between).

Preparing the room. Most living rooms will hold more people than you think, if you are prepared to move tables out of the way, and bring in kitchen or other chairs. Have seats for all guests, or tell them if they need to bring a cushion and sit on the floor. A real feature of a House Concert is that the audience is close to the performer! If the weather’s fine we can do it in the garden – as long as you’ve invited the neighbours.

I love House Concerts – the informality, the closeness, the opportunity for a bit of interaction as we go along. Normally I perform as *The Poetical Cellist*, so there will be some short poetical commentary in between the musical items. People often react to the music, and also to the poetry. This is all part of the experience. It’s for everyone to enjoy.

There are two kinds of House Concert on this Highway Cello tour.

1. **Organised in advance.** In this case you have time to decide exactly how you want it. You can organise the room, email reminders to your guests, clean the bathroom, etc.
2. **The spontaneous.** You saw me in the street. You decided, “Let’s do it!” And because I’m moving on tomorrow, it *has to be tonight!* Well, what I say is *Carpe diem* – seize the day. It may not be perfect, but it will be real live music, in your home. And you’d regret it if you didn’t!

I almost forgot. Please will you also give me a bed for the night, and enough breakfast to get me back on the bike in the morning? Let’s do it!

Kenneth Wilson
07968 379919
kennethwilsoncello@gmail.com