



Kenneth Wilson, *Highway Cello*

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 artist,
- 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 *Highway Cello*, with 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.

I almost forgot. Please will you also give me a bed for the night, and a modest breakfast in the morning? Let's do it!

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