

## Lakin's 2024 Spring/Summer House Show Tour



Hi friend!

First of all, I am so happy that you're interested in hosting a house show. In the experience I've had as a performer, house shows have been some of the most fun, rewarding, and memorable concerts I've ever done. My last house show tour was nearly 5 years ago—pre-Covid shutdown era AND before having two kids! So I'm excited to finally have an opportunity to experience this together again.

I've put together this **step-by-step guide** for all of those wanting to host a concert in this 2024 Spring/Summer House Show Tour so that each show can be the most enjoyable and successful event possible!

I believe it's important that you read this all the way through—even if you've hosted a house show before—so that we are all on the same page as we start planning together.

At the end of reading through this guide, if all the parameters seem good to you, then I'll have a short list of questions for you that I will use to pick a date for your house show.

My hope is that this will inspire you and get you excited for what is guaranteed to be one of the most unforgettable things I do all year. Ready?

## #1: The “House”

I have staged house shows in all kinds of places, from living rooms, backyards, and back patios to houses, both big & small, apartments, art galleries, and tv studios. Really, **the “house” can be any space to which you have access** where your friends can gather, sit, and enjoy the concert.

**The only requirement for the space is that everyone in attendance be able to gather in the same space, seated & comfortable, for the entirety of the hour-long concert.**



Pre-concert and post-concert mingling can, of course, spill into other rooms or areas of the property, but I believe that for concert time, it's best if everyone is **gathered close and seated**, together, directly in front of where I'll be set up to perform. Sometimes even sitting around tables for the concert works against the creation of the intimate experience I'll be aiming to bring to the audience. If you're unsure if the space you have will work for the setup, feel free to send me a picture & hopefully we can work out something that will work best!

It's also fine if there aren't enough chairs for everybody—carpet seating in a packed living room or blankets on the lawn in the backyard can work great as extra seating options.

## #2: The Date

I will work with you to pick a date for your house show. This is fun and exciting, and it's also a bit hectic on my end, as I'll be juggling something like 10-20 different hosts' schedules to make things work for everyone as I move in a (hopefully somewhat) logical way around the West Coast (and possibly further inland!) playing shows almost every day of the week for the duration of the tour.

In a perfect world, every day would be the weekend, and then we could do every house show on the

weekend! However, a quick look at the calendar reminds us that Friday and Saturday only account for about 28% of the week—meanwhile, I'm hoping to play shows nearly every night! **This means that in reality, your concert will have about a 72% chance of falling on a “school night.”**





But don't despair! While weekend shows can certainly be a lot of fun, I've had some of my best shows on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. The bottom line is that if you have a good group of people, you can't stop the fun from happening, no matter the day. And, this is not a particularly lengthy event; the time from guest arrival until the music is done is typically only about two hours (see more on this in a minute)—making this the perfect event for a unique weekday evening get-together.



So, if you want a weekend date, I will certainly try to make that work—but keep in mind that other people want one too, and there are only two per week. **I want to thank you, in advance, for being flexible so that I can accommodate as many potential hosts as possible.**

**At the end of this guide, one of the questions I'll have for you is to provide me with any dates from *April through September* that 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 makes you unavailable, I'll want to know each of those things to help plan the tour.**

### #3: The Guests

To create the best possible scenario for a successful show, I'm hoping we can have a **minimum of 20 adults in attendance.**

There are two reasons for this: 1) Sometimes fewer than 20 people for a concert doesn't feel like the **exciting** event it should be; and 2) in this donation-based concert model, 20 or more adults contributing to donations or purchasing merchandise is a nice way for the show to be financially viable for me as well. 😊



In my experience, making sure that there is a minimum of 20 people in attendance usually means that the host will need to invite a good deal more than 20. The typical scenario seems to be that about **half of those invited tend to actually come** to the event.

**So, you can plan on inviting double the number of people you'd like to have at the concert. If you're aiming for 20, invite 40; and so on.**

If you aren't sure you'll be able to get 20 adults to come on your own, you might consider "co-hosting" the show with a friend who also has a group of people to invite, and hopefully increase the 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, I can absolutely do it, and **I'm eager to hear what you have in mind**. I've done house shows with as few as 20 and as many as 50 people in attendance, and have loved every one of them.

### Adults Vs. Children

Because the show has a lot of quiet parts, and because it's essential to be able to create and maintain an uninterrupted focus on the performance for the whole concert, we should figure out **a good situation in the case that there will kids in attendance during the concert**.

If you have that rare kid who can sit silently and listen to music for an uninterrupted hour like a little grown-up, that's perfect! (See photo to the right 😊) Every child is different, but I've found that age 10 generally seems to be a rough dividing line for those able to display good concert etiquette from those who may end up causing a distraction.

**If you have kids (or if you have friends you want to come that would be unable to come unless their small kids can come along) and you're in doubt, it's best to err on the side of caution. Perhaps you can arrange to have a responsible adult take charge of the kids in a physically and acoustically separate space during the concert.**

This could be a babysitter or a parent willing to volunteer for the duty, and they can take the kids to another room in the house—a place that is sonically isolated from the performance space—and keep them there for the entirety of the concert portion of the event. This works great, and of course the kids are more than welcome to hang out with everyone before and after the performance!



Having someone create disturbances mid-show can certainly affect the audience's experience, and I definitely want to create the best possible environment for the show. **Thanks for your understanding and cooperation with this detail!**

Also, if you think you'll have some sitting-quietly-in-listening kids in the attendance, make sure to count the kiddos as "extras" when putting together your guest list.



## #4: The Invitation

Invite a bunch of your friends!!! **I will provide you with some precise language that I'll have you include in your invitation;** but besides that, I 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"

As I mentioned before, there is no cost for you to host this concert! You are providing me a great service by offering up your space & introducing me to your friends. I am hoping that selling merchandise & making this a donation-based concert will help me cover my travel expenses and secure some more funding for my music ventures. So, some of the language I'll send you to use in the invitations will read something like this:



***This will be a donation-based concert. If possible, please come prepared to make a donation to the artist at the conclusion of the show!***

However, **I will not specify a suggested donation amount for my house shows.** The reasons for this are twofold:

- 1) In my experience, I do better financially at shows where people can donate whatever 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 I make my living, **sharing music with people is the most important thing!**

*Occasionally, I 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 and I've done both kinds of shows! If this approach interests you, please let me know, and I'll discuss the fee structure for scheduling a non-donation show.*



### Other invitation items

- You may want to let your guests know that you'll have drinks and snacks for them if that will be the case, or perhaps you'd like to ask everyone to bring a little something to share for a potluck. This is entirely up to you, and is not a requirement for hosting a house show.

- **Please make sure to ask your guests to RSVP in your invitations.**

I've discovered that when guests are asked to RSVP, 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!

- I will arrive one hour before guests are scheduled to start arriving, in order to set up equipment and to do a sound check.
- 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 an hour.**

• Then, after an hour of pre-concert hanging out, everyone gathers in the performance space, people find their seats, the host (that's you!) gives a brief introduction, and then **I perform for about an hour.**

• As soon as I've played the last note of the concert, you get up front next to me with the vase or basket or box of some kind to make the **donation announcement.** It should go something 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 her our appreciation for this amazing experience she brought us tonight. I'm going to leave the special jar right here and encourage you to give generously. Thanks again!"***

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

### A note on the donations

It's really important that I am able to make it so **these shows are possible for anyone to host**, and the way I do that is by doing the shows on a donation basis. But since the donations are how I will pay my expenses while I am on tour, it's obviously super important that I have the host's full enthusiasm behind that aspect of the event.

I will make a point of going over this with you as we're getting set up on the day of the show. I can even give you a little cheat sheet of things to remember to say in case you get nervous and forget in the moment.





**I've discovered that the success of the donations in these kinds of events has a direct relationship to the enthusiasm of the speech that the host gives at the conclusion of the concert.**

I've also discovered that 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

I've found that **it's really important that the pre-show mingling time is really right about an hour**. If it's shorter than an hour, then people don't have enough time to get comfortable; and if it's longer than an hour, 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's a concert.



Let's say you want the performance to start at 7:30. In that example, here's how the schedule would go:

5:30 – I arrive and do my setup  
6:30 – Guests arrive  
**7:30 – Concert begins**  
8:30 – 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 show.

**All these details—from the invitations, to the set-up, to the flow of the event—serve the singular goal I have for this event:**

**To create with you a truly unique and special night—an intimate concert experience, where magical memories and meaningful connections with your community will be made through music.**

**It's going to be awesome.**

# Questions for you

If all of the things I've outlined in this house show host guide seem good to you, and you'd still like to host a house show in this 2024 Spring/Summer House Show Tour, then the next step for you is to answer the list of questions below.

I need you to reply to each of these ASAP in order to factor your house into the routing for the 2024 Spring/Summer House Show Tour. It would be helpful if you could **return your replies no later than Monday, March 18**, but the sooner the better. 😊 Please answer all seven questions completely. Thanks!

- 1) In what city (and state) 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) Are you okay making this a purely donation-based concert?
- 4) a) Do you think you'll be able to get about 20 adults to attend?  
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, do you think they will either be able to sit through the performance (about an hour) or that you'll be able to provide for a separate, supervised, sonically isolated space for them to go for the length of the performance?
- 6) Please list any dates in **April (after the 15th), May, June, July, August, & September** that you will be **unavailable** to host a house show (vacation plans, wedding to attend, recurring weekly commitments, etc.—I'll need to know about all of these dates so that I can avoid scheduling your concert on them!)
- 7) What is the best **email address** and **phone number** at which to reach you efficiently?

Over the next few weeks I'll be compiling this information from dozens of hosts all over the West Coast, then using everyone's location and availability to stitch together a route that works for as many people as possible. I should have all of this data compiled and route planned by the end of March (if not sooner), if everyone is prompt in their communication.

*I should mention that I've had some interest from folks in areas such as Colorado, Texas, & Nevada, so don't count yourself out if you are not on the West Coast! If it makes sense, we can try to make it work!*

As soon as I have a date or a list of possible dates selected for your house show, I'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 show! Very exciting.

**I can't wait to do a house show with you.**

Much love,  
Lakin

