

# HOW TO RUN A SUCCESSFUL HOUSE SHOW VENUE



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## Introduction

House shows (i.e. musical concerts put on at private residences) have become a common phenomenon across the United States (and likely much of the world) in these times of struggle in the economy and the music industry. I'm not talking about the random house party with a band playing, but the trend of a particular house putting on regular shows for a sustained period of time. This I shall call the "house show venue."

There is often a close-knit relationship between small venues (usually doubling as bars) and the local music scene. Small venue owners rely on small bands to bring in patrons and small bands rely on small venues to have a place to play and build an audience. But the success of bands to bring in an audience is never certain. It relies on a healthy attitude toward live music among the town/city's populace, a somewhat "luck-of-the-draw" pool of talent, and a booker that has his/her finger on the pulse of what's en vogue. Small venues that book the most recognized up and coming talent in the area stand to benefit greatly and outpace their competitors. However, when times are tough, this means that outpacing is really just staying alive, and, for those who are outpaced, it means death. And fewer venues in a given town/city means fewer places for bands to play. Hence, the ever-growing need for the house show venue.

But house shows are not merely a side step in an economic downturn. House shows also offer an alternative arena to the usual bar venues. Bar venues can be great for certain types of music. Depending on the bar, though, some places are more bar than they are venue. That means there will likely be a large group of people at the show who are really just there to drink and socialize. To the great annoyance of those people that came out that night to actually HEAR SOME MUSIC, the band (especially mellower bands) can actually face sonic competition from their supposed audience! It's rare that a bar owner would do anything about this in fear of upsetting some of his best customers (the ones who drink the most). Remember that if there is a door charge, the band usually gets a healthy percentage of it. But it is the alcohol sales that the bar owner is really after. It's most often that the bar keeps 100% of the alcohol income.

So, house show venues not only provide increased numbers of places to play for bands, but they also offer an environment where the music can be better presented. On top of that, who can deny the novelty of going to see a show in someone's living room! It's nice for the audience and the band to be in such an intimate and comfortable space.

But house shows are not a perfect solution to the problems of the typical small venue. The main reason lies in their very definition. House shows are put on at houses, and houses are not given the same flexibility by the Law as a commercial venue is. This means that there are number of ways in which house show venues die early deaths. The most obvious way is death by disturbing the peace. Bands and crowds of people are loud, and the neighbors don't always appreciate the entertainment you are so conveniently offering them. But over-ambitious house show hosts can also find themselves victim of other legal maladies. Did you know that most cities require an entertainment license if you are going to profit from the display of live music? And I need not mention the selling of alcohol without a license. This is a serious offense that can carry heavy consequences.

This book attempts to give you guidelines on how to run a successful and lasting house show

venue, complete with the do's and the don'ts, tips, hints, and tricks. I offer these up based on my experience of running such a venue out of a house I rented in San Diego, CA from 2004 to 2009. Dubbed The Habitat, this 3 bedroom Craftsman in the Golden Hill neighborhood served up bi-weekly events to an eager audience and provided much needed outlets for local and touring bands looking for a place to present their more nuanced soundscapes.

*(Note: In my mind, there is a house show venue continuum ranging from the "punk house" to an elaborate custom made in-home concert hall. This article attempts to provide guidance for something fairly well in the middle of that continuum.)*

## **So you want to put on house shows, aye?**

The first thing to consider when starting a house show venue: what's your motivation? Hosting house shows isn't just all fun and games. You have to be a booker, a promoter, a stage manager, the live sound support (equipment and operation), bouncer, general house manager, and the set up/clean up crew. You'll be the one dealing with the angry neighbor, and you'll be the one talking to the police should they arrive.

If money is your answer, forget it... You won't be making much money from house shows, and if you manage to, you'll be summarily shut down once word gets around (remember the licenses!).

If fame is your answer, forget it too... You may enjoy some marginal recognition by those "in the know," but it's bands that get famous, not owners of venues.

Women (or men)? Heh... is it worth it?

Because it's fun? Yes, it is fun, but it is also a lot of work (i.e. not fun).

The love of music? Ok, now we're talking. In my opinion, there is no good reason to run a house show venue other than the sincere love of music. I know a lot of people have thrown parties with bands from time to time, but maintaining a consistent parade of shows at your house requires dedication and a passion for seeing live music up close and personal.

## **Assessing your space**

Once you have convinced yourself that you really do want to put on house shows, the first thing you need to do is assess your space. Do you live in a house or an apartment? An apartment is going to be more challenging due to the increased coupling of noise between neighbors. Do you even have a decent spot in your house for a band to set up and an audience to stand/sit? If you can't imagine at least 20 people fitting into a room with a band, I'd advise against even considering it beyond a "once in a while" sort of thing. Are the acoustics of your space decent? A minor point, but one worth pondering. What's your flooring? If you have carpet, are you prepared for it to get seriously stained? Dirty shoes and drink spillage is inevitable!!! Do you rent, or do you own? Landlords may not take kindly to the knowledge of your plans. If you have roommates, are they okay with having a bunch of people and loud music in the house? It's obviously best to have roommates who are down with the cause.

The ideal house show venue is a decent sized house in either a very rural (i.e. spaced out) locale or in an urban area that is used to noise from the neighbors. Living rooms are often the most suitable spot in the house, and the bigger the better, generally speaking. It's best if none of the walls of the living room are exceedingly adjacent to the walls of your neighbor's house. Wood (or any hard) flooring is much preferable to carpet, which is going to get trashed immediately. The typical drywall construction of most homes is perfectly suitable acoustically. Drywall with wood floors can actually be quite pleasing, in my experience, especially if the room has somewhat tall ceilings and is not too small. If you own the home, all the better, although consider how long you plan to live there and the type of reputation you'd like to have among your neighbors. If you rent, you'll want to be extra careful to follow these guidelines in order to avoid eviction and a stain on your rental history. And, as mentioned, having or choosing roommates who also enjoy music and don't mind the periodic parties is essential if you share your confines with others. If you have a live-in significant other, spouse, or family, well... you'll know if you have their support or not.

## **The sound system**

I bring up the sound system so early in the discussion of hosting house shows because it is not something you want to panic about later when there's no time. It's best to figure out what you need, get it, set it up, and test it out before hosting your first show. Otherwise, you're setting yourself up for more stress than is necessary.

Now, you may be tempted to dismiss the need for any sound reinforcement. For one, it's a house show. Do you even really need amplification? Two, why can't the bands just provide it? While I'll admit that sometimes it can be utterly brilliant to watch a band play without any sound reinforcement, it's often just not practical for a band with electric instruments and drums. And leaving the PA up to the band(s) will produce mixed results as some bands have access to decent PA's and some don't. Plus, bands have a tough enough time dealing with their instrument setup and sound. They shouldn't be expected to also achieve a good PA sound, in my opinion. Making the effort to acquire a decent PA system and learning how to use it will produce a consistency to your shows that the patrons will come to appreciate.

The size of the PA system is up to you, but below is my recommendation based on my experience. I wouldn't consider this the minimum needed, but it's also far from overkill.

### **Suggested components for a house show venue sound system:**

1. 2 powered PA speakers (recommended brands—JBL, Mackie)
2. 2 speaker stands for the PA speakers (recommended brand—On Stage Stands)
3. 8 channel mixer (recommended brands—Mackie, Behringer, Soundcraft)
4. 8 channel snake (for easy connection of the stage mics to the mixer)
5. 6 to 8 microphones with stands (recommended brands-Shure, Audix, Heil)
6. 2 DI boxes (recommended brands—Whirlwind, Rolls, ART, Radial)
7. 1 digital reverb unit (recommended brands—Alesis, Lexicon)
8. 1 active stage monitor (recommended brands—Fender, Mackie)
9. Cables! (XLR cables for the mics, a couple instrument cables, cables to connect the mixer to the speakers and monitor)

### **Here is an example shopping list with prices:**

- 2 JBL EON315 Powered PA speakers = \$1000
- 2 On Stage Stands speaker stands = \$102
- Soundcraft EFX8 8 channel mixer with built in effects = \$409
- 1 Pro Co Stagemaster 25' 8 Channel XLR Drop Snake = \$169
- 3 Shure SM57 microphones = \$300

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- 6 On-Stage Stands MS7411B boom mic stands = \$180
- 2 Whirlwind IMP 2 direct boxes = \$100
- 1 Fender 1270P Powered Stage Monitor = \$260
- 10 Pro Co XLR20 20' mic cables = \$255
- 1 Pro Co Excellines EG-20 20' ¼" cable for the stage monitor = \$16
- 2 Pro Co Excellines EG-10 10' ¼" cables for the DI's = \$24

Total = \$3115

So you're looking at about a \$3000 investment if you buy all of this equipment new. Most of it can be found at any of the various online "mega stores" like [sweetwater.com](http://sweetwater.com) and [musiciansfriend.com](http://musiciansfriend.com). Of course, much of what you need can be found used on eBay, Craigslist, etc. for much cheaper. While buying used saves money, it can often lead to unexpected results. So, buyer beware!

The hookup and operation of all of this equipment is out of the scope of this book. However, there are many resources out there to learn about such things if you need to. Running live sound is as much art as it is technical know-how. Practice always makes perfect. A few basic suggestions:

1. Only mic what you need to. For a house show venue that usually means vocals and acoustic instruments that can't compete with electric instruments and/or drums. It's rare that you'll need to mic drums, electric guitar, or electric bass.
2. Keep the volume moderate. There is no need to blow your guests away. In my experience, bands that play super loud in a small living room usually make it so uncomfortable for the audience that they are forced to leave the room. Encourage the bands to play at a moderate to low level. This will also keep away the dreaded feedback demon that is live sound's worst enemy. If feedback becomes a problem, try rolling off some of the high frequencies. Needless to say, keeping the levels moderate will also help avoid neighborly conflicts.
3. Use reverb sparingly. Unless the band requests lots of reverb on their vocals, just use a small amount—or none at all—depending on what you feel is appropriate.
4. Watch for low frequency build up in the vocal. Most live vocal mics have a pretty heavy "proximity effect" which causes the lows to be artificially boosted when the singer gets close to the mic. Sometimes this is cool, but often it makes the vocal muddy. Roll off the low end as necessary to achieve a natural sound.
5. Keep the mics behind the speakers. Nothing causes feedback faster than a mic pointing at a speaker.
6. Choose a good mix location. Try to set up somewhere out in the space where the audience will sit/stand, but off to the side or some other convenient out of the way spot. Mixing from a location near the audience should make the live sound maximally palatable to their ears.

If you are new to live sound, don't be too hard on yourself. After all, the expectations of your audience are not extremely high. They know that this is a house, not a commercial venue. Don't be discouraged if the vocals are sometimes hard to hear. Some vocalists just don't project well, and

it's impossible to get them loud enough without causing feedback. In time you'll figure out what works and what doesn't.



## **What's in a name?**

All good house show venues have names. After all, people need a way to tell their friends where they are going tonight. Picking a name for your house show venue is like establishing a brand. Do it right, and it will stick in the brains of people and forever become associated with good times.

A name can be as simple as the address of your house or as esoteric as your imagination allows. Some examples of house show venue names I have come across:

The Habitat (the one I ran)

4862 Voltaire (literally the address)

The Treehouse

The Boathouse

The Maple/Montclair House (the intersection of streets where the house resides)

## Booking

Well, you've got the space, the motivation, a name, and the equipment to host shows at your house. Now you need the talent. As with most things in life, networking is key.

Start with people you know. Chances are you know someone in a local band. Start there and put together a bill of two or three local bands that work well together. For reasons previously mentioned, I would suggest going for bands that aren't ungodly loud. This may mean that you have to lean towards a mellower set of genres.

I wouldn't suggest putting out a generic request for bands on the internet or your local paper. You are just bound to open yourself up to a world of pain as you sort through hundreds of mediocre groups you would never go see yourself let alone have play at your house. Be picky, and select bands that you like. Don't be afraid to tell an interested band that they're just not your thing. Wish them luck and maybe even direct them to a venue that suits them better.

The internet is a great resource for finding talent. As of right now, Myspace.com has become somewhat of the de facto place for bands to showcase their material and network with fans, other bands, labels, and bookers. Make a webpage and start a Myspace page for your house show venue and start collecting "friends" of bands you like. Keep tabs on the other social networking sites like Facebook. Bandcamp.com is another one to watch. Also create an e-mail address for your house.

Keeping the bill to two or three bands is highly recommended. Being a house show venue, you're not going to be able to go on until 2am with live music. So you have to keep the bill to a modest size so you can fit everyone in.

In time, word will spread around "the scene" about what you've got going on at your place. You'll start getting e-mails and Myspace messages from bands not only in your home town, but also from around the country. It's up to you whether or not you want to host out of town bands, but I highly recommend it. The talent pool is so much wider when you consider bands from all over the country or world. I've hosted bands from as far away as Australia. The trick when booking out of town bands is to pair them up with at least one local band that has some amount of draw. Chances are that a touring band seeking a house show is not too high on the public's radar yet. So, if you were to book such a band and not include a local draw, the turn out might be rather sparse. The best possible scenario for a night is to book two local bands and one touring band. Sandwich the touring band between the locals to guarantee a decent crowd for all. If you're up for it, it's always a nice gesture to offer the touring band some couch space for the night so they don't have to find a place to stay.

One thing to avoid like the plague is booking a band that is too big for your space. I made this mistake a couple times, and, trust me, it's not fun. Sometimes it's hard to know when a band is too big for your britches, but trust your gut. If this band has played at a moderate sized local commercial venue before and sold out or nearly sold out, forget about it. The last thing you want is 100 something people at your house, spilling out into the street and attracting negative attention from the neighbors and local law enforcement. In my experience, it's the people that ruin it, not the music. I've had somewhat loud bands play at my place once in a while without a problem. But once you have a crowd of people spilling out onto the street, things get hairy quick. Groups of people are loud! You get a bunch of young people outside being social, and the next thing you know everyone is talking loudly or shouting to be heard. Not to mention laughing and just yelling to be

silly... Without the walls of your house to buffer the sound, crowds of people outside may cause more negative attention than a loud band playing inside.

## Promotions

So you booked a band. Now you just got to get people to show up! The trick with the house show venue is getting the right number of people to show. Too few and you and the bands will be disappointed. Too many and your place might get trashed and/or shut down. For most houses, somewhere in the 20-40 people range is probably perfect.

When you're first starting out, things will most likely be on the too few side. To get the ball rolling start where you started with the bands—friends and the internet. What are friends for if not for coming to your parties? So, solicit your immediate friends (and possibly family if it makes sense) to come to your show. Once that avenue is exhausted, start making some virtual friends on Myspace.com and the like. You can be aggressive about this, actively adding people that you casually know or total strangers that have mutual friends and may enjoy what you have to offer. Or you can take a more organic approach and let it happen as it does, only adding a few people that you have some connection with at first and then letting the virus of social e-networking do the rest.

Fliers and posters are another viable option, but far inferior compared to the more direct marketing you can do to friends, real and virtual. For every 100 fliers you put out there, you can maybe expect to get 1 person to go to the show. If you're going to do fliers or posters, be selective about where you put them. Choose places where you think people who'd be into a house show might frequent.

I would not recommend promoting in the local paper, radio, or television. Those forms of advertisement are too broad and could either draw too many people, the wrong type of people, or the attention of law enforcement. Small online blogs are ok if you want to go that route.

At the show itself, make sure to have an e-mail sign-up list floating around the house. Keep circulating this sign-up list at every show, and over time you'll build up a nice collection of people who've been to your space, know what you do, and very probably may want to come again. Hey, you may even get some regulars who come to almost every show! Make sure to e-mail your list at least a week before each event to try to get those interested to pencil your show into their agendas before they make other plans.

In greater time, as your house show venue gains fame (or infamy, as the case may be) you might be asked for interviews by local media. Here I urge you to remain modest and try to grant interviews only to small, under-the-radar media (again, like blogs). This is all for the sustainability of your space. Unfortunately, infinite growth of your house show venue is not what you're after. You have to grow it to a certain size and then maintain. Afterall, one of the points of the house show venue is to provide a more intimate space for the band and audience. So it makes no sense to have an expansionist's ideology unless you're using your house show venue as a stepping stone to running or managing a large commercial venue. Simply put, mainstream media attention is a sure-fire way to overexpose your house.

## The door and the bar

Special mention needs to be made of two ways that many house show venues get shut down—charging at the door and selling alcohol. In short, don't do either ever!!!

It would seem that charging a door fee would be ok, but most cities have ordinances which require a business to have an entertainment license if they are going to profit from live music. If the police become interested in the goings on at your place, they will easily use this excuse to fine you and shut you down. So, in the interest of self-preservation, simply make all the shows free (remember that money is not supposed to be your main motivator). Since you are a resident and not a business, there is no way you would ever be approved for an entertainment license anyhow.

Now, bands (especially touring bands) are often in need of a little cash from each gig in order to buy gas and food along their way. For bands like this I suggest a) setting up a nice dedicated area in the house for merch to be sold, and b) have a donation jar or hat around the house. I would not suggest having a donation jar at the front door because the police could theoretically try to use this against you. Even though the donation is strictly voluntary and thus there is technically no door fee, it's enough of a gray area that I would stay away from it and keep all donation requests well inside the house, away from the entrance. In general, the best way to get a good donation pool from your guests is to have one of the bands make a request for monetary help during their set and then immediately start passing a hat or other container around. Watch the "guilty" pressure open the pocket books of your patrons. It's not meant to be cruel, just a little healthy social pressure to show the band appreciation and help them sustain themselves.

If you feel the need to be partially compensated for your role in the evening (for instance, to pay for cleaning supplies, PA equipment, etc.) perhaps have a separate donation jar specifically for the house. I've never attempted this myself, but it seems like it would work for at least a little bit of cash. But please remember that making a profitable business out of your house show venue ought not be your motivation. There is no viable way to make this happen without the proper licenses, which will be difficult or impossible to get in a residential zone.

The second big no-no is selling alcohol. As tempting as this may be, it's probably a bigger mistake than charging at the door. The fines involved with selling alcohol without a license are likely to be much greater than having entertainment without an entertainment license. So in short, just say no! I suggest announcing the show as BYOB so people come prepared to provide their own beer and/or spirits. You could offer some of your personal stash for free, but that will quickly become cost prohibitive or attract a group of people who feed off of free alcohol. Unless you're a party animal, you'll want to keep the focus of your events as shows, not parties. Yes, in some fashion they will always be parties as well as shows. There's no getting around that. But if you start providing kegs and large selections of booze, you can bet that people will start coming for the wrong reasons, and before you know it you'll be operating a frat house instead of a house show venue.

I would also suggest promoting the shows as 21+, whether you actually card at the door or not. The fact is, you do expose yourself to some risk by having unknown underagers at your house who may have easy access to alcohol left on a table or in the fridge. You don't know what those kids are going to do and what type of situations they get into later in the evening due to drinking (e.g. drunk driving). The last thing you want is an angry parent or policeman questioning you about how you're providing alcohol to minors. Obviously, this is not your intention, but it could be an unfortunate consequence of your actions (or *in*actions). Promoting the show as 21+ is not a

guarantee of avoiding such a situation, but it certainly will reduce your risk. If underage folks see your promotions for the show and read that it's 21+, they are far less likely to bother showing up even if they really like the band(s).

Inevitably, you will have some underage kids show up to your shows. If you see some that are obviously under-age and drinking, don't be afraid to ask them to leave. It's your place and your ass. Most likely they will be intimidated and simply leave.

Selling food falls into the same category as alcohol more or less. It's far less risky, but there are public safety laws on the books about selling food as well. I would simply avoid it to be safe. I'm sure having a bag of chips out is fine, but preparing food for purchase is a definite no-go. Plus it's just more to do, not to mention, clean up!

## Preparing the house

A house is a personal abode, but if your hosting house shows it's about to become public domain. If there are areas of the house you want to be off limits, make sure to cordon them off in some fashion. Usually this just means closing bedroom doors and the like.

I suggest giving the house a decent once over before the show to make it look nice and presentable to your guests. It's up to you, but my theory is that people will be more likely to come back if they feel comfortable in the house. Clean spaces always make people feel more at ease. Hosting consistent house shows will definitely be putting stress on the tidiness of the house. To keep up with the endless cleaning, hire a house cleaner if you can afford it. The time and energy saved is well worth it, in my opinion.

Seating arrangements in the room used for the bands should be given some thought. It's nice to have some cushy chairs and couches along the edge of the room. Try to keep a clear path into and out of the room so that people can get in and out easily. The guests who can't fit on couches or chairs will either end up sitting or standing on the floor. This is perfectly fine, although you may want to encourage standing when a lot of people show up because you can definitely fit more people into a room when they are standing vs. sitting.

If the house is a little awkward to navigate, you may want to put up some signs pointing out the location of bathrooms, trash, and recycling. I also suggest putting signs up reminding people to be respectful of the neighbors when they're outside. If you have a porch, people will congregate there to smoke cigarettes. This can be a danger zone as far as noise goes, as the chit-chat tends to escalate in volume the more people there are. So, I also suggest keeping a general eye on the outdoor activities of your guests, especially after about 10 or 11 at night when your neighbors may be heading off to bed. You may need to regulate.

Back inside, small decorative touches and mood setting can also be nice. Follow your own aesthetic here. At The Habitat, I liked to keep the lighting low and spread candles around. I also liked to play mellow (but not too mellow) music in the background between bands. Interesting and funny coffee table books also provided a secondary form of amusement for my guests.

A final set of checklists would include making sure the bathrooms have plenty of toilet paper and hand soap, placing a bottle/wine opener in plain sight, and emptying the trash/recycling and ashtrays before the show. In time you will develop a pre-show ritual of setting up the house. I highly recommend going through that ritual the night before the show or at least several hours before you expect bands or people to arrive.

## The order of the evening

Assuming you're having night shows, here are some tips on how to schedule the evening.

In my experience for a three-band bill, something like this works pretty well:

- 7pm Doors open
- 7:00-8:00 People arrive. Bands load in. First band sets up.
- 8:00 First band on
- 8:30 First band off
- 8:30-8:45 break down and setup of next band
- 8:45 Second band on
- 9:15 Second band off
- 9:15-9:30 break down and setup of next band
- 9:30 Third band on
- 10:00 Third band off

Some may scoff at a start time of 8pm, but it would behoove you to try to make a habit of it. Your clientele will catch on that things start a little earlier than a normal club in the city. Having the doors at 7pm allows people to trickle in over the course of an hour. Play them some cool music on the stereo and chat them up! You'll make new friends and secure future guests. This is also the time when the bands should show up. Locate a good spot or spots in the house for the 2nd and 3rd bands to stash their equipment. And make sure the 1st band sets up on time!

20 to 30-minute sets are great, in my opinion. True, sometimes you're left wanting more, but better than wishing the band stopped 20 minutes ago. It also keeps the night moving along.

The 15-minute set changes can be unrealistic for bands with lots of equipment. So things may have to shift a little bit here and there. Don't freak out. Just encourage the bands to move quickly and it will get done.

Ideally, the show will be over by 10. It takes about an hour for people to leave after the last chord rings out (assuming you're not providing alcohol). So, by 11pm you'll probably be back to an empty house. This is good because 11pm is a pretty safe stopping time for most neighbors. You may want to check your local ordinance on noise at night and fine tune.

I didn't mention sound checks because you'll really only have a chance to do any proper sound checking with the 1st band. There's no time and it's overkill anyhow to do exhaustive sound checks for each band. This is a free house show. People aren't expecting perfect sound. If you're not a live sound guru, in time you will learn how to adapt quickly and get things dialed in fast. Feel free to fine tune the mix as you go. And be prepared to have to make sudden adjustments. I would suggest designating yourself a seat by the mixer so you can always be at the ready.

In between bands you'll have a little bit of time to socialize and check on the rest of the house. But unfortunately, duty will call you back to making sure the bands are switching over and that you have what you need for the next band. Ask them how many mics and DI's they need, and set them



up as the band's setting up. Make sure you keep track of which mic/DI is on which mixer channel so you aren't making silly fader moves during their set. It's also a good idea to see if the band has any special requests like reverb on the vocals or something they need particularly loud in the monitor(s).

Overall, try to have fun! Hosting house shows can be stressful, but if you keep a relaxed—yet aware—attitude, it should be a good night. Having a few drinks is ok, but don't get trashed! You have got to be the person in charge, and a drunk never makes the best decisions. Finally, if you can spare the clean up until the next day, do it! You'll be tired and seeking relaxation after the long night of playing host, event manager, sound guy, and (possibly, but hopefully not!) bouncer.

## **Above and beyond**

There are a number of directions you could take your house show venue beyond what I have outlined so far. Here are a few ideas that will step things up to the next level.

1. Record the shows. This is a lot of work, but if you or a partner records all the shows you could put out a compilation of all the bands that have played at your space.
2. Put on a festival. String together a bunch of bands and have an all day music festival at your house! I did one once and people loved it.
3. Mix it up. Incorporate art, movies, dance, spoken word, theater, stand up, performance art, political rallies, pot lucks, or anything else you can think of. You could mix different forms of art together in one night or have different nights for different things.
4. Build a stage. You can make one out of pallets or even buy one. It would be a nice little professional touch.
5. Curate a show at a different venue. Once you've established a network of talent you could use your contacts to put together shows at other interesting locations.

## **Parting words**

Here I've aimed to share with you a great deal of insight into running your own house show venue based on my own five years of experience. Following my tried-and-true advice, you should be able to keep your venue going for years and years. When you look back, you'll be amazed at how much you've helped your music community (local and beyond), brought joy to music fans, and met lots of wonderful people.

To me, house shows are much more than just another concert-going experience. At my space and others I have had the privilege of visiting, I have always been struck by the purity of soul emanating from the musicians on stage. There is nothing "holier-than-thou" about an artist playing a house show venue. They could be you, your friend, or neighbor. They're right there, pouring their heart out for nothing but the love of their art, the audience soaking up every sound. And you'll have helped make that happen!

# Table of Contents

[Introduction](#)

[So you want to put on house shows, aye?](#)

[Assessing your space](#)

[The sound system](#)

[What's in a name?](#)

[Booking](#)

[Promotions](#)

[The door and the bar](#)

[Preparing the house](#)

[The order of the evening](#)

[Above and beyond](#)

[Parting words](#)