

House concerts for art music:
multiple stakeholders, audience development, and sustainability

Anne Ku
Department of Business and Management
Webster University in Leiden
The Netherlands

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ABSTRACT

For many classical musicians, giving a house concert means performing to an attentive and appreciative audience in an intimate setting. Often it is considered a final dress rehearsal for a competition or a more substantive concert where the stakes are higher. For the audience, it is an opportunity to enjoy live music and get close to the performers in a home setting that is more comfortable and conveniently situated than a well-known concert hall. Owners and producers of such house concerts not only support musicians and artists but also build new communities. Such concerts may attract sponsors and collaborators who help reduce the costs and raise the profile or perceived value. An important byproduct is the networking that occurs and sticky relationships that get formed. We compare the experiences of several house concert series in the Netherlands and USA with respect to meeting stakeholder goals, audience development and sustainability.

1.0 Introduction and distinctions

House concerts, also known as home concerts or salon concerts, are events that take place in venues primarily used as private dwellings. For such occasions, a private space is temporarily transformed to serve a public function when it is used for a live music performance where the performers and listeners are not all friends or relatives of the house residents.

One house concert host sums it up nicely. *“A house concert is a live musical performance given in someone's home. In comparison with a musical performance in a concert hall, a house concert is a much more intimate experience. You can speak with the musician before and after the performance, and sit close enough to really see and hear how they play. In comparison to a performance in a bar, you can focus completely on the music, without all the distractions of people ordering food, talking, smoking, etc. There are always nice people to talk with during the intermission, and the hosts usually have drinks and light snacks for the guests. Musicians appreciate having an attentive audience and they often spend the night in the home of their hosts, as part of a musical tour through an area. At some house concerts, guests are expected to make reservations and pay a fixed price for their seat. Other house concerts are more informal. In any case, everyone wins: musicians have an audience and some income in a comfortable setting, guests have a chance to hear high-quality live music up close, and the hosts get to enjoy it all without even leaving home.”* Innerfireworks.com

For reasons of cost, capacity constraints and privacy preferences, such concerts are not usually publicized widely. As a result, research on the economics of house concerts is limited to in-depth interviews with a known subset, though not necessarily representative, of house concerts for “art music.”

“Art music” refers to serious music that includes classical and contemporary (spanning music from the renaissance period to the present day) but not the folk or the singer/songwriter variety of the Americana movement. The latter uses house concerts extensively as a means to grow the fan base. These singer/songwriters are equivalent to the 18th century composer/performers who performed their own works and traveled with their music to find new patrons and commissions.

Much has been written about the house concerts of singer/songwriters who get their fans to host concerts from their homes. The concert host not only provides the venue but also the audience, largely tapped from their own friends and networks. In addition, the host may happily accommodate and feed the musicians as some consider it a privilege to be a host. Atmosphere at such house concerts tends to be much more informal than at art music house concerts. Listeners get close to these musicians through the personal nature of their songs and their storytelling. It is not uncommon for such folk musicians to tour exclusively from house to house, which is an efficient means to travel (no costs of venue rental, audience development, accommodation) and earn a living through performance and CD sales. Websites abound with directories listing such musicians and hosts, articles containing useful tips, and videos of live performances.

The hospitality element cannot be understated, i.e. that a musician from out of town can enter and be accepted by a community, save on accommodation and other costs, share music and self-expression, engage in intimate conversation, and profit from ticket and CD sales. The house concert producer effectively removes or minimizes the transaction costs of concertizing for the performer.

If this is an efficient means to earn a living and expand one's fan base, why don't classical musicians pursue this route, instead of relying on established concert venues? First, the acoustical requirements for classical music, particularly chamber music or those that involve a piano, are higher than that for folk music. Second, such a touring strategy requires identifying your fans and persuading them to produce concerts, a task alien to most classical musicians. Third, not all classical musicians are comfortable playing in a smaller space. Consider the winners of international piano competitions, for example. The prize is being the soloist with an orchestra in a big concert hall, far away from the audience. If you put them in a house concert setting, are they able to build a rapport with the audience? It is no wonder that classical musicians are misconceived as being distant and aloof, a kind of elitism not associated with folk singers who seem more approachable and more fitting in a home setting.

Ironically, classical music was once upon a time produced and consumed at home. Art music house concerts originated from the late 18th century salon concert tradition also called "hausmusik" in Europe. Fanny Mendelssohn became famous for her Sunday morning salon concerts. They are still called salon concerts in the USA to differentiate from house concerts of singer/songwriters. Many started as a direct extension of the venue owner's teaching practice, for example, student recitals. Others are organized by composers and performers originally as "tryouts," i.e. an informal performance before a more important concert. Some have grown and achieved charitable status and continue as such.

The social aspect of house concerts is one distinction from concerts staged in public venues. As Dutch musicologist Emanuel Overbeeke puts it, "*When you go to a public concert, you usually go with someone you know and thus don't feel inclined to speak to anyone else. At a private concert such as a house concert, you can go alone but feel much at ease to speak to other guests.*" Such socialization is encouraged by close proximity, small physical space, and familiarity of the host and individual guests.

However, this is not to say that house concerts are necessarily house parties. While a house concert can evolve into a party, the main objective is presenting live performance of foreground music to an attentive audience. Socialization and networking follow. At house parties, socialization is first, and often the music recedes to the background as conversation takes priority.

In this paper, from now on, house concerts refer to salon concerts or those specifically organized for art music.

2.0 Motivation for house concerts

Initiators of house concerts can be classified into the following main groups:

1. **Amateur musician** (i.e. does not depend on music making for livelihood) who wants to engage in music making
2. **Professional musician**, such as voice, piano, or other instrumental teacher and/or composer, who requires performance opportunities for students, self, and peers
3. **Music connoisseur** who wants to support live art music

Aside from these main groups, there are other permutations such as when a performer persuades the owner of a house to host or produce a concert. Likewise a composer may organize a concert in someone else's home for the performance of his/her own compositions. An instrument maker may have an incentive to use house concerts to attract people to his instruments. Such private concerts are more flexible to organize compared to public concert halls that are booked a year in advance and follow strict rules of programming. In summary, all house concerts are motivated by the concert first, and the house second.

A private home offers several advantages over a public venue. When the owner, producer, and/or performer are one and the same, the home offers convenience, accessibility (property rights), and low or no cost (rent-free). There is no expiration of a private place (no closing time) unless the owner stipulates. The quality of conversation is also different, says Robert Pollock, composer, pianist, concert producer, and founder of Ebb & Flow Arts foundation in Maui. *"You want to engage in conversation after a house concert. At a public place, you never get the freedom to stay beyond the contracted hours of the concert."*

The distance between the performer and the audience is much smaller in a private setting than a public one. This proximity has some consequences, as explained in musicologist Emanuel Overbeeke's review of a house concert in *Le Bon Journal*, 4 June 2010. *"The difference between a house concert and a public concert brings to mind a distinction, put into words by W.H. Auden with the best one liner ever written: 'private faces at public places are wiser and nicer than public faces in private places.' The small house, especially small when full, is ideal for private repertoire that can be expanded as long as the intimacy remains intact. To challenge the private atmosphere with public music without a public performance, provoked mixed feelings. To hear the other musicians performing from a relative distance behind doors and walls probably had a distorting effect on the listener."*

A small physical space allows greater interaction between people. In such an environment, it's hard to avoid eye contact with someone else. Just a glance and a smile would invite conversation. A host who readily introduces strangers to each other also facilitates dialogue and interaction.

For the audience, what sets a house concert apart from a public concert is being treated not as a ticket-holder but as a guest. You are “invited” to a concert. You are welcomed as a guest into someone’s home. Though you may be a stranger, you are definitely not an intruder. The concert is presented as a shared listening experience in a relaxed home setting. Through this, you are connected with everyone else.

One house concert producer / goer expresses the difference between house concerts and public concerts. *“The thing that strikes you as most different is how the artists get to discuss their music. You’d never see it to this extent in a concert hall or university recital. The intimacy of the home and the fewer number of audience members makes it feel like you are very lucky to get to be ‘one of the few.’ A special feeling.”*

Location is one of the reasons for starting the house concert series at El Jardin de Belagua in Spain. Residents in this affluent suburban area love classical music but not enough to drive to central Madrid where parking is a non-trivial matter. The producers of this house concert series converted the lower level of their villa into a concert hall, with a Yamaha grand piano on a small stage, chairs, and sound recording equipment. Guests park their cars in the tennis courts and walk through a separate entrance from the main villa residence. There is another grand piano upstairs in the owner’s piano teaching studio for musicians to use as a dressing room.

In summary, house concerts exist because they meet needs of different stakeholders, which are further discussed next.

3.0 Multiple stakeholders and their goals

A concert is the result of a joint collaboration among the performer(s), producer(s), sponsor(s), service and product providers, and the audience. Each of these bodies has a stake in the outcome of the event, hence named stakeholders. These parties have a vested interest in reaping returns from an event that they have put in effort and resources.

Aside from obvious financial incentives, the stakeholders have other goals when participating in an event such as a house concert.

Performers need an audience to perfect their music. This need is so strong that performers would actively organize concerts to attract audiences. It is not just to seek feedback in the way writers, composers, and other creators expect of their consumers. Performers need live performance situations to test the readiness of their ability to perform. Practising without the presence of listeners is not enough. Knowing that someone is actively listening makes a big difference to a musician’s performance.

A “tryout” is a performance before an important concert or competition where the stakes are higher. It can be said that each concert is a tryout for the next. Dutch guitarist Robert Bekkers considers tryouts vital to test a new programme. *“In an intimate setting, it is less damaging to your reputation if it doesn’t work out. You have fewer critics in a small audience. Yet a house concert is beyond playing for your friends and family. Playing before an audience helps you determine how ready you are.”* He actively seeks tryout opportunities, such as playing new pieces for his guitar builder, for his students when they have not studied for their lessons, and even in public places.

Besides the presence of listeners, musicians also need to adjust to the environment of the live performance. The place where they perform is usually quite different from where they regularly practise or rehearse. Most musicians study under ideal conditions, i.e. no noise, no interruption, no other “bodies.” Unless it’s a prestigious, established concert hall, most environments for live concerts are not ideal, and musicians have to get used to different acoustics, space, unexpected noise and movement, and other kinds of interruptions or annoyances.

Musicians can be more daring with their choice of repertoire in a house concert. They are not pressured to conform to the tastes of the public such as public concert halls and theatres that need to keep their subscribers and regular clientele. Musicians know that audiences at house concerts are more open to the unfamiliar. They feel more at ease to explain the unfamiliar works in an intimate space where they can freely talk about the programme and develop a rapport with the audience.

Often for tryouts and experimental repertoire, free entry is used to ensure attendance as it removes any barrier or cost to enter. Free entry frees up the resources for entry ticket administration. This is one reason for free concerts at conservatories and music schools. Another is to free the performers from meeting any audience expectation, such as an experimental situation. When listeners don’t have to pay to attend a concert, they would be more willing to give feedback, tolerate interruptions, and forgive the performers and producers for less than perfect delivery.

When musicians are invited and contracted to perform at a house concert (not for tryout reasons), the remuneration is the primary goal as with any concert.

Listeners, meanwhile, welcome the opportunity to experience live music in an intimate space not otherwise possible in a large public venue. The price of entry (ticket) reflects the extent to which similar expectations of a professional concert are met (i.e. acoustic optimality, still and quiet environment, performance quality, fame and status of the performer.) Some seasoned house concert goers are attracted by the possibility of getting to know the performers. One concert producer noticed that most people attend her concerts for the music, not the drinks or food. Another expressed the incredible sensation of feeling live music going through his body at such concerts.

Live music is the main attraction, and networking a byproduct. Dutch composer and musicologist Rolf Straver said that he did not mind going alone to a house concert just as he would to a music festival but not to a public concert. By going alone, he could meet people and mingle more easily. He observed that the hosting function was very important, particularly for Dutch people who would not normally introduce themselves to each other.

Amsterdam-based Italian economist Marco Carpasso shares his experience as a house concert guest. *“By allowing guests to be physically close to the musicians during the performance helps the same guests to feel also close to the music, thus losing the awe of non-pop (i.e. art) music they sometimes stand in. I think that most of the people have with art music the same relation they have with mathematics: they are afraid of something they do not know, only because it is often presented to them as something alien and far away.”*

People get inspired by the music, the artist’s way of playing, the artist’s dedication to his music, the surroundings, and the reception of the audience as a whole. All these reasons explain why the return rate of listeners (returnees) is so high.

Suppliers of services or products for a house concert are paid as per normal. They are considered collaborators if they provide their goods and services without charge or at a reduced charge. They get reciprocated in other ways such as publicity or promise of additional business. The following is an illustrative list of items and services usually acquired for a house concert production.

- Refreshments: water, coffee, tea, juices, soda
- Snacks
- Baked goods
- Catering for meals
- Wine
- Flowers for the musicians
- Cleaning
- Piano tuning
- Printing: announcement or invitation flyer, poster, programme booklet
- Art work
- Web hosting
- Hiring of chairs, instruments, music stands
- Recording equipment or sound engineer
- Photography
- Videography

Sponsors, collaborators, and advertisers expect different degrees of positive publicity, goodwill, and other benefits-in-kind in return for their input and support. A sponsor is one who pays for the event or

one part of the event such as footing the costs of printing. A sponsor's endorsement can be a source of validation, directly enhancing the quality of event publicity. A collaborator, as explained in the preceding paragraph, provides goods and services rather than direct monetary support. An advertiser pays specifically for publicity and mention on website, flyers, posters, programme notes, etc.

The **venue owner, concert host, and concert producer** may be the same or different persons. The core function is to bring the performer and the audience together. Each case requires a separate analysis. There is certainly greater freedom of decision making when all three roles are the same. For example, the host can decide at his own discretion whether to give away free tickets last minute. When the roles are separate, there are property right issues that require consultation for agreement. The venue owner is responsible for getting the venue ready for the concert and accepting the risks of damage. The concert host is responsible for greeting the guests and artists. The producer has the overall financial responsibility for the event and its success or failure.

House concerts provide the ideal conditions for networking before the concert, during the intermissions (if they exist), and after the performance. These networking opportunities can be seen as marketplaces for transactions or future collaborations, i.e. for problem/solution finding, price discovery, exchange of ideas, and the satisfaction of human wants (Lane, 1978). It is the author's hypothesis that networking after a shared listening experience in a comfortable and non-threatening environment leads to sticky relationships. In other words, the networking is more effective and efficient than say at an event where no "sharing" occurs beforehand.

Studies on networks of small groups may shed light on the networking of stakeholders in a house concert situation. See Katz et al (2004) for recent interest in this area. One economist considers the production of house concerts as having high sunk costs of entry (in order to build a reputation) but benefiting from network economies.

4.0 Audience development

The Canada Council for the Arts defines audience development as "identification, engagement and retention of audiences, and building of their commitment to, knowledge of and appreciation of specific arts disciplines and art forms."

The first priority of audience development for concert producers is to get people to come to a concert. Next is to increase attendance. The concern of cultural economics is to ensure enough paying listeners and patrons cover the costs to make the event worthwhile. This is a basic requirement for house concerts to be financially viable.

House concert producers have other goals within audience development, one being creating the right environment for a positive experience.

Robert Pollock of Ebb & Flow Arts does not believe a full house to be necessary for a successful concert. *“An intimate gathering of even just 3 or 4 people can make a huge impact on the individual attendees. What they receive is probably more powerful on others than what one receives as member of a larger audience.”*

It is common knowledge among performers that the effort involved in preparing a piece for one listener or a full house is the same. However, the resulting performance is varies enormously. There is almost an implicit acknowledgement of failure when nobody or fewer than expected number of people show up. On the other hand, a sold out concert signals success before the event even begins.

The following are examples of audience development, grouped by the different categories of concert producers.

Amateur musician wanting to play recruits musicians and audiences to play together.

If the host or producer can foot all costs, then audience development is no longer seen as a profit motive. Before becoming a full-time musician, the author produced and financed her house concerts for sheer enjoyment and pleasure. It was a hobby not a career. The motivation is not dissimilar to that of Jeff Abrams, mediator and amateur flute player, who has been producing outdoor concerts from his home in Houston, Texas 2 to 4 times a year for the past 14 years. In addition to paying an entrance fee that goes towards the performer(s), the guests bring their own food and drinks. The free-for-all jam session afterward the show is a big attraction.

Professional musicians produce concerts for different reasons.

Margaret Sewell, the producer of Salon Concerts in Tulsa Oklahoma, states her goal *“to share classical music with others in a way they wouldn't otherwise get to experience it up close and personal, with the artists able to discuss the music, composers, musical life and answer questions from our guests. We want to make classical music and its musicians approachable. We are trying to get the younger 20, 30-somethings to develop an interest and of course, keep this music alive and pass it on to their children. We want to give people an evening awash in beauty as well as a cerebral workout. People need to relax, rejuvenate, get away from their problems even if it's just a few hours and connect with others. These evenings provide this.”*

One musician wanted to show live examples of CD recordings used in a music history course she gave. She recruited her students as her audience for several home concerts. Encouraged by the success, Russian pianist and musicologist Olga de Kort-Koulikova has since produced regular concerts from her home in Dongen, Netherlands featuring herself and/or her friends. She recommends other musicians to produce their own concerts for it gives them the opportunity to study new repertoire and play with other musicians.

Music connoisseurs support musicians and share their love of music.

A group of four music lovers producing an as-yet-unnamed house concert series in Amsterdam Westerdok in the home of an artist and his friends describe their joy of organizing such concerts. *“It is a hobby, absolutely non-profit. We want to stay far away from making money out of these house concerts. We want to be as transparent as possible. Our guests are friends, not customers. We try to breakeven. We have a mailing list with email addresses. If the first mailing is not getting enough response, we usually send some more personalized emails. So far, this has always worked.”* The group is driven by opportunity first, i.e. they organize themselves to produce a concert only if there is an interesting artist or group or idea they want to support.

In 2009, the author’s own Monument House Concert Series expanded to other private homes to create new performance opportunities for musicians. Merrenna French, an Australian project manager in the Netherlands describes the experience of hosting two of these house concerts in her sparsely furnished house. *“I felt like a Russian princess welcoming the guests into my house to enjoy an exclusive private concert. I enjoyed putting flyers into people’s mailboxes and getting stopped on the street to ask what I was doing. I felt part of the community.”*

5.0 Sustainability

That several ad hoc house concert efforts evolved into regular concert series is testimony to the economic viability and sustainability of house concerts.

Producers of the Funen Arts Concerts Production in Funen Park, Amsterdam increased the regularity and frequency of their concerts because of demand by musicians and listeners. Their fortnightly Sunday afternoon concerts are programmed well in advance for both musicians and artists that exhibit in their one-bedroom ground floor apartment which the two owners have converted to seat a capacity of 40. They publicize on their website, e-mail list, and event listings in local print paper.

Another successful house concert series in Amsterdam relies just on e-mail notification (no website) as short as one week before the concert. The prestigious location of Keizersgracht is more central and the ground floor house more spacious than the venue in Funen Park. Four different grand pianos are stored on the ground floor of the owner/producer who is a photographer by profession. There is a hat at the door to deposit your 15 euros. The host serves coffee and wine by himself.

The author has concluded that the following ingredients are necessary for sustainability of house concerts, namely automation of processes and outsourcing to reduce costs.

1. Audience development must be made efficient and effective. This starts with the invitation process. While crafting personalized e-mails to individuals may build one’s network, this activity is extremely time-consuming and slow. People will reply immediately if they cannot attend. A mass e-mail that “sells” is more effective. The invitation must be in the message, i.e.

not a passive announcement that a concert will take place but that you are invited to come to a concert. The wording of the e-mail should entice the recipient to action. Spend time on composing a message that appeals to all. Send e-mails in stages: the first to mark and set aside the date, the second with further details, the third to press for action for the slow-to-decide.

2. Include clear details about the concert, what to expect as well as the location of the event and how to get there. Out-of-town guests particularly need to know about detours, public transport and parking.
3. Build your network for audience development and musician pool using social media network tools such as twitter and facebook. These tools are fast and efficient.
4. Charge for entry, best to pre-pay in advance as confirmation. It obliges the guest to commit the date in his diary. A pre-paid reservation removes the financial risk of unserved capacity and over-extended cost basis. Free entry by donation concerts work only if someone ensures everyone donates, but it does not give any confidence to the host if enough people will show up.
5. Minimize interruption to daily life by having the concert in a separate space in the home. One house concert host achieves this by having the concerts outdoors in the garden. Another manages by having little if any furniture. See the example of El Jardin de Belagua that has a separate space for concerts.
6. Use checklists and project management to ensure details are not left out. Ensure plenty of slack, for there will be last minute phone calls and e-mails demanding your attention.
7. Outsource as much as possible to minimize the amount of work and concern. Get the wine at cost or get a wine merchant to serve and absorb the costs of the wine. This frees you from having to get the wine, get the wine glasses, wash the wine glasses, and serve the wine. The provision of alcohol is both an attraction and a detriment. It entices people to come and stay. It can also be a runaway cost if not managed carefully, such as letting guests open wine bottles well after the concert is over.
8. If snacks or meals are included, outsource the cooking and serving to a caterer. As concert host, the two most important things are to welcome and ensure the guests feel at home and supporting the musicians so that their needs are served. Everything else can be outsourced.
9. Another form of outsourcing is sponsorship. Consider getting as much of the concert sponsored as possible. This could include front row seats, musician's travel expenses, donation of gift items, flowers for the musicians, and other items listed in section 3.0.

10. Consider volunteers to help with all of the above, but remember that free entry reduces revenue. Volunteering is a good way to get training as future concert producers. All musicians should volunteer and appreciate all that's involved in producing a concert.
11. Consider partnering with solution providers for a series of concerts rather than one-off concerts. This reduces transaction costs of decision making, negotiation, rule making, etc.
12. Consider outsourcing the reservation process. Are there websites to do this for you?

6.0 Conclusion and future research

The main rationale for presenting this paper is to interest the academic community in a form of music performance and appreciation that is under-researched for reasons of limited access and comparability.

While house concerts have existed since the 18th century, if not earlier, the manner of production can now gain from efficiencies in audience development (e-mail, social media networks, websites, etc), selection of musicians, and pooling of suppliers, sponsors, collaborators. With proper project management, a house concert is like any other event with budgets, milestones and time lines.

Aside from the immediate needs that are met for performers and audiences, there are gains in the sticky networking that takes place at such "market places." In a smaller and more intimate space, people are more approachable and more likely to engage in conversation. Such networking opportunities benefit entrepreneurs and other self-employed professionals, career changers, pensioners, and those who do not otherwise get to meet people outside their professions and normal circles.

The concert host / producer enlarges his or her network through the process of invitation and engagement with the audience, performers, sponsors, and other collaborators. Producing house concerts is one way to establish one's reputation and brand which take time to build and develop.

More research is required to ascertain the degree of effectiveness of the networking at house concerts. Some questions include the extent to which performers get new performance opportunities and the reciprocation that goes on.

One question that emerged from this research is why classical musicians don't follow the house concert model of folk singer/songwriters as a means of livelihood. Why don't more classical music lovers produce house concerts?

Other questions include the following:

1. How can the private nature of house concerts be retained when the concert series get expanded or moved to bigger locations?

2. How can the informal environment be preserved when house concerts grow into a commercial business or charitable status?
3. How does the public side of sponsorship coexist with the private aspect of house concerts?
4. Will making house concerts more visible be a deterrent to its success? Legal and tax issues for example.
5. To what extent are house concert opportunities a necessary part of a musician's performance portfolio, i.e. to spread the risk of cancellation and void periods? As house concerts have shorter lead times than public concerts, this may be a way to fill the gaps in concert tours.
6. Would an independent rating of house concert series increase the transparency and provide a new circuit for music tours?
7. Can classical musicians resort to house concerts the way Americana singer/songwriters do to increase their fan base and to tour?
8. How else can we compare house concert experiences? From the consumption side?
9. How can volunteers be better managed to keep costs down?
10. Can musicians with house concert series swap concertizing opportunities (thus touring in other locations)?
11. How have house concerts successfully expanded into other domains, such as art exhibition, educational events, etc.?
12. What other purpose do house concerts serve? Matchmaking and dating?

Finally, consider that house concerts are viral. Once you have had a positive experience at a house concert, it changes your perception of live music. You want to go again. You want to take someone with you. Combined with the need for community as reported in Strauss (1999), house concerts could be a very powerful force for the future of music.

About the author

Anne Ku was introduced to the concept of "house concerts" in Houston, Texas by the late composer/pianist Robert Avalon who needed an audience for an improvisation experiment in February 2001. She brought her editorial colleagues and energy industry contacts to the home of a pianist who owned two Steinway grand pianos, thus filling up half the seats. It was her first taste of audience development as well as performing in a house concert. [This was a case of a musician getting another musician to host a house concert and providing free entry to maximize attendance.]

Inspired by the positive experience, Anne invited Avalon to speak and perform his works in her house in London. This whetted her appetite for hosting and producing house concerts. Subsequently Avalon introduced her to Dutch guitarist Robert Bekkers in Amsterdam, for whom she began organizing house concerts for future visits. [Here is a case of an amateur musician wanting to make music.]

In 2004, Anne moved to the Netherlands to live with Bekkers, build their piano guitar duo, and commence her full-time studies at Utrecht Conservatory. In 2006, the pair launched the Monument House Concert Series from their renovated Dutch national monument house next to a canal in central Utrecht. While the initial goal was simply to share their love of music, the series has expanded further.

Anne's view on producing house concerts changed when she became a professional musician. The joy of organizing concerts was no longer fitting to the time involved. She felt the impact of opportunity costs, i.e. having to give up practicing and composing to do audience development and all matters of concert production, which were time-consuming and interruptive. Having to take on the risk of low attendance and unrecoverable costs was also a challenge (without the benefit of a full-time salary). The rationale of producing house concerts changed to one of gaining experience, experimenting with new repertoire and collaborations, fundraising, tryout opportunities before important concerts, performance opportunities for her students and classmates, and vehicles for reciprocation. As a result, producing house concerts served a new purpose --- it became a platform to experiment and learn. [Here is a case of a professional musician producing concerts to serve different needs, such as tryouts.]

As producer of Monument House Concert Series in Utrecht, Netherlands, Anne encourages existing patrons to bring new guests and targets new groups rather than relying on returnees to fill the seats. Besides getting new listeners, she also seeks diversity in terms of nationality, age, profession, and location (where they travel from). The exposure to new and diverse audiences brings about opportunities for future performance and collaboration, such as the presence of other concert producers and impresarios to hire the musicians.

Currently in its 5th year of production, the concert series continues to grow in diversity and expand to new locations to reach new audiences. The concerts have the unique selling points of being extremely international (20 nationalities at the most recent concert), English-speaking, collaborative (artists, photographers, film makers, caterers, wine merchants), fully audience supported (no sponsors), and widely publicized on the Internet through websites, twitter, blogging, facebook, and linked-in.

Websites

- Blog about concerts, cultural economics, creative entrepreneurship: <http://concertblog.wordpress.com>
- Monument House Concert Series, Utrecht: <http://www.pianoguitar.com/concerten/>
- House concerts of Olga de Kort-Koulikova, Dongen: <http://www.olgadekort.nl/>
- Funen Concerts Art Productions, Amsterdam: <http://www.funenconcerts.nl>
- "Salon" Classical House Concerts, Oklahoma: <http://www.classicalhouseconcerts.com>
- Ebb & Flow Arts, Hawaii: <http://www.ebbandflowarts.org/>
- El Jardin de Belagua, Madrid: <http://www.eljardindebelagua.com>

Author correspondence: Anne Ku, pianist, Bekkers Piano Guitar Duo <http://www.pianoguitar.com/>

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