

HOSTING HANDBOOK

“There is nothing that bonds friends closer together than the power of music — and perhaps a few glasses of wine.”

~ Robert in Brookline



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INTRO TO SHEFFIELD



We believe that chamber music is a powerful tool for connecting with one another and ourselves. Gathered together in relaxed, intimate spaces, we invite you to connect and build community over a shared artistic experience. Our hosts are at the heart of our work, introducing us to their friends, neighbors, and coworkers—new acquaintances who quickly become old friends!

Hosting a Sheffield concert is just like hosting a party at home, with the addition of an intimate chamber music concert especially for you and your guests, with a reception after the concert for the musicians and audience to meet. Every year we have four expertly curated programs to offer, each of which runs for about two weeks during our season, September—June. Dates are booked several months in advance during a 10-day Hosting Drive when hosts can select their preferred dates from those available.

WHAT OUR HOSTS ARE SAYING



"If you like hosting a party, this gives it a whole different twist! I was very much taken by the beautiful music, as well as the warmth exuded by the players. At the end of the concert, the food comes out, and the musicians come and join the party!" - Viola in Sudbury

"It is actually breathtaking to be so physically close to the real-time making of music. In such an intimate setting, the experience feels very personal." - Rebecca in Lexington

"It's a very moving experience to be so close to such an amazing performance...and to share it with my friends in the community." - Mark in Winchester

"Chamber music gives me the opportunity to hear classical music live and be exposed to more music than I typically hear on the radio or even in a symphony hall. I am a big fan of Sheffield Chamber Players, their program choices, great skill and sensibility." - Karen in Natick

I want to host a concert! What's first?

The first step is to let us know about your interest via email or the hosting form on our website. Our host relations coordinator, Alex, will visit your home to look at the space and discuss pertinent details. We'll figure out the best way to position the group and the audience, determine a maximum capacity for guests, identify a "green room" for the musicians, and answer any question you may have. A typical audience size is anywhere between 30 and 50, and a potential capacity of at least 25 is required at all host homes.

What are the costs involved?

We strive for our concerts to be accessible to hosts and audiences from all communities. The cost of bringing these world-class performances into private homes is considerable and we appreciate the generosity of hosts who are able to sponsor their concert. This enables us to deliver some of our performances to hosts who are unable to offer such sponsorship. When scheduling concerts, we work individually with each host to find the most suitable arrangement.

All donations made to Sheffield Chamber Players are tax-deductible as permitted by law.
Tax ID: 81-163362






THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX!

CO-HOSTING

Join forces with a friend to co-host a concert in one of your homes or a local gathering place. If you have a friend who is as enthusiastic about Sheffield as you are, consider teaming up! It can increase audience turnout, and allows you to share the financial and logistical responsibilities of hosting with a trusted partner.

CUSTOMIZATION

Our concerts have celebrated all kinds of wonderful occasions: birthdays, anniversaries, graduations, and even fundraisers for special causes. To suit the occasion, we may be able to play a special tune, such as “Happy Birthday,” or include a piece from our repertoire that is important to the honoree.



My concert is coming up! What now?

How do I invite my guests?

4-5 weeks prior to your concert, we'll provide some suggested invitation text, a link to your unique registration page, and an invitation image which you can share with your invited guests via email, on social media, etc.

When guests register, they are invited to make a suggested donation, leave a note for the host, and indicate who will be in their party. Registrations are collected on our website, and you will be given access to an RSVP list that updates once daily. Registered guests receive a confirmation email with your address and other pertinent details.

We ask that you make every effort to fill the capacity of your space. In addition, Sheffield invites guests from our mailing list and online community to most hosted concerts, so you may welcome a few fellow chamber music lovers from our list to your home.



photos by Michael Last

Tips for getting a good turnout:

Have a large enough list to send to – at least twice as many email addresses as the number of people we are aiming for. Consider co-hosting with a friend to expand the invitation list.

Send a save the date email 2–3 months in advance.

Send the invite at least 3–4 weeks in advance.

Mention the concert to friends, neighbors, and colleagues when you see them in person.

Send Reminders. People might be interested but can easily forget. Sending a reminder to those who didn't respond is a good idea as long as it's not more often than once a week.



photo by Deborah J. Karson

It's concert day! What's next?



Before the concert:

SEATING: Couches, armchairs, and dining chairs all make good seating arrangements, and can be supplemented with folding chairs to accommodate the full audience. We can bring up to 30 folding chairs to add to the seating already in your home.

SETUP: Large furniture that cannot be used for seating, such as dining and coffee tables, can be moved to another room. We'll make a plan for these items during the initial visit and can arrive an hour ahead of time to help out.

PROGRAMS: We will provide printed programs.

GREEN ROOM: One or more rooms where the players can leave their belongings, warm up, and rest before the concert and during the intermission break.

RECEPTION: You may want to start the evening with refreshments, inviting your guests to arrive about 30 minutes prior to the concert start time, and continuing the reception with the musicians after the concert. You can serve light snacks or more substantial food, and wine, beer, cocktails, or non-alcoholic beverages. Please save your receipts and we can provide you with an in-kind donation acknowledgement.



During the concert:

INTRODUCTIONS: We'd love for you to introduce us and tell your guests why you are hosting a concert in your home. A warm welcome from our hosts is a great way to start the concert. During the concert, the players will also tell the audience about the music, and about how they can support our work by hosting, donating, and/or following us online.

After the concert:

RECEPTION: The musicians would love to stick around after the concert to get to know everyone better! If you'd like the event to wrap up by a specific time, just let us know.

CLEANUP: We will take away the folding chairs and help you reset your space to its original layout.

HOST CULTIVATION: If any of your friends would like to become hosts themselves, please let us know and encourage them to stay in touch! Most of our hosting connections come from within our existing host network.

MUSICIANS & STAFF



SASHA CALLAHAN

Founder, Artistic Director, Development
Violin



LEO EGUCHI

Founder, Artistic Director, Institutional Advancement
Cello



CHRISTINA ENGLISH

Executive Director



MEGUMI STOHS-LEWIS

Artistic Director
Violin



ALEXANDER VAVILOV

Founder, Artistic Director, Host Relations
Viola



MISSION & VISION

Sheffield Chamber Players' mission is to bring world-class chamber music to diverse audiences in intimate settings, demonstrating the power of music to build community.

We believe that chamber music is a powerful tool for connecting with one another and ourselves. By performing varied repertoire in spaces that are familiar and comfortable for the listeners, we profoundly change the way audiences gather together, respond to the music, and connect over a shared artistic experience.

The arts are integral to our physical, mental, and emotional health, and experiencing art together can deepen internal and external connections. Each Sheffield concert is a shared experience for performers and audience alike that opens a pathway to these new connections, bringing participants closer to those around them and to their own selves.

In addition to dozens of privately hosted house concerts each year, we share many intimate performances annually in community gardens, memory care and retirement facilities, public libraries, art galleries, and other small spaces where listeners can experience the same immediacy and closeness as our in-home audiences. We believe that chamber music is for everyone, and our various offerings invite diverse communities to gather together, combating the loneliness and disconnection that is felt by so many these days.



Thank you!

Questions?

alex@sheffieldchamberplayers.org

or

christina@sheffieldchamberplayers.org



www.sheffieldchamberplayers.org