



**PARLOR** SHOWS

Parlor Live

House Shows, Intimate Performances, Creative Spaces

NOVEMBER 17, 2015 - <http://blog.parlorshows.com/super-host-spotlight-abbie-weisenbloom/>



We asked Portland-based ‘Super Host’, Abbie Weisenbloom, a host of questions about her experience over the last few years in hosting over 200 shows in her living room. Enjoy!

**Where does your passion for “live” music stem from?** Some live music experiences in childhood, playing music myself, and also the desire to share live music with my children as a way of connecting with the larger community and experiencing ‘what is live music?’.

*As a child* ~ I didn’t often go out to see live performances, but when I did, they made a powerful impression. Once a year we would see the Preservation Hall Jazz Band when they came to town. My grandfather was a big fan of that music. At the end of every show, the audience was invited to come up to the stage and dance across it and the musicians were very high-spirited and each one had a particular personality. I loved the clarinetist. Another experience that I particularly remember was the live band on stage for the 3 Penny Opera. I rarely traveled out of state with my family, but once with my grandmother I had vivid memory of seeing the 3 Penny Opera in NYC when I was 9. There was a live band on stage dressed in rags, I remember a clarinet and accordion, and I loved the passion and tragedy of the musical as well as the unique instrumentation of the band on stage. With the memory of the performance in my head, I played the LP to death when I got home and enjoyed sharing with my little sister and memorizing all of the lyrics along with all of the bad words I had learned!

**Playing music myself** I have played the flute since I was in grade school when we could all choose a band instrument. I remember that when we got my Dad's flute out of the storage shed and I saw it for the first time, I was completely mesmerized by the beauty, luxury, weight, and possibilities it offered. I was a very self-motivated practicer a few times practicing 5 hours a day in the summer just for the fun of it, and would check music out of the library way beyond my level to play. Since I didn't have lessons until later on, I could interpret it any way I liked. In high-school I played in the marching band and for musicals. I loved playing the music for West Side Story in particular. Much of my playing was in isolation as we lived in a remote location. I always wondered what it would be like to play more with other people or what it might be like to "jam."

**Having children** (Max & Zach) reignited my interest in music and created the conditions where I wanted to bring music into the home and ultimately led to our first house concert. Initially I took the kids out to performances once or twice a week when they were 3-6 years old. Many symphony performances, feeding them snacks to get them to get through ballets, operas, Portland Folk Music Society concerts, and Artichoke music concerts. I started them on piano and violin lessons when they were 5 or 6 and would take them sometimes to music gatherings or jams. My husband doesn't play music so we figured out ways to bring the family together while at the same time connect with the outside world. We started hosting shows when Zach was 6 and Max was 9 in 2009. Hosting those first few shows filled me with excitement, adrenaline, terror, and anticipation all at once, but that's another story. We have hosted over 200 shows since then on our home stage.

### What is the most memorable "live" show you have been to?

- Seeing my idol Jean-Pierre Rampal perform solo when I was a child. What I remember in particular about the "live" performance versus the recorded one was the very airy sound of his playing and that I was close enough to see him sweat and breathe under the lights. There was also a very annoying fly that was buzzing around him. The music was incredible but all of these details together put it forever in my memory.
- The 3 Penny Opera mentioned in question 1.
- Also, I don't know if a ballet w/ live orchestra counts, but I went to see Swan Lake w/ Nureyev dancing as a child. The oboe was my favorite instrument in the orchestra and figured prominently in the haunting opening overture of the music. I would have played that if I had the opportunity. Although, we were far from the stage and the dancers tiny, and a person with very large hair was sitting right in front of me so I couldn't see much ~ I vividly remember loving the music.



Jean-Pierre  
Rampal

### What makes a house show unforgettable?

A house show takes place in a small space, so you have this situation where the audience and the musicians are really in active conversation with each other. Precede the show with a mouth-watering potluck and beverages and time to visit with people that you either know or don't know ~ and you have a recipe for a memorable evening. I have also found that if you host an international artist, there is an additional level of the excitement with the discovery of another culture through music that is very powerful.

**What instrument feels like it was simply created for the house show setting?** Any acoustic instrument really ~ vocals and sing-a-longs, mandolin, harmony singing, cello, fiddle, a upright bass

resonating through the floor boards. But then again, once we had a wind quintet here that was so beautiful & intense, and also a sublime brass quartet. Have you ever heard an authentic chill pop show up close and personal? — amazing!

**What was the first concert you ever attended?**

The Preservation Hall Jazz Band

**What genre do you enjoy the most in the house show setting?**

Do I have to choose? Brazilian music comes to mind, but then there was this mind bending Bluegrass show recently.



Anat Cohen

**If you could invite one musician to your house to play a house show once a month for the rest of your life, who would it be?** Jazz clarinetist Anat Cohen.

**Why do you think house shows are crucial for the growth of DIY musicians?** House Concerts are a space for listening. Often DIY musicians are faced with playing in a bar or cafe where there are other competing noises and distractions. During a house show, people can really feel how an audience is responding, be nourished creatively by that, and get paid

for it too.

**Last but not least, what is your super power?** My super power is to visualize something seemingly impractical or crazy, and become obsessed by it until it becomes reality.

Thanks, Abbie!

*Abbie Weisenbloom is a creative individual who has dedicated the last 16 years to raising her kids alongside her husband in Portland, OR. For the past 6.5 years she has created and sustained a house concerts series in Portland, OR, presenting over 200 shows from all over the world on her home stage, and for the past 2 years additionally streamed on the internet on my channel via Concert Window. She always enjoyed experiencing other cultures and traditions, having lived in France for 3 years and speaks French fluently. In a prior work life, she worked in high tech. She enjoys biking, swimming, drawing, making music and eating delicious food!*



**Links:**

Find a calendar of house show events on her website - [www.froggie.com](http://www.froggie.com).

If you are not in the Portland area you can watch the house concerts streaming on Concert Window ~ <http://www.concertwindow.com/abbiewpresents> .

Follow her on: Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/abbie.weisenbloom>

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